

August 2023

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

FOR

MASTER PLANNING SERVICES

FOR

GREATER DOWNTOWN AREA MASTER PLAN

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA and NORTH AUGUSTA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Augusta Tomorrow, Inc., on behalf of itself, the City of Augusta, Georgia, and the City of North Augusta, South Carolina, issues this request for qualifications (RFQ) for professional planning services to develop a new master plan for the greater downtown area.

Planning Area. The geographic area covered by the master plan includes the Downtown District of Augusta, institutions, canal district, river corridors, and riverfront district of the City of North Augusta, South Carolina. [A map of the planning area can be found here on the Augusta Tomorrow website.](#)

Background. In 1982 a public/private partnership of the City of Augusta and local businesses embarked on a master plan for the downtown area of the city. That plan emphasized development along the Savannah River, and by 1995 many of the projects envisioned in the plan were completed. In that year the City of Augusta and Augusta Tomorrow, Inc. again undertook a public/private endeavor to update the original master plan, concentrating on linkages between successes of the riverfront area and Broad Street, the main business street of downtown. The organization sponsored another plan which was revealed in 2009 as the *Westobou Vision*, to target a broader area including surrounding neighborhoods. By 2014 this updated plan was substantially implemented and Augusta Tomorrow commissioned an update that was substantially approved by the Augusta City Commission. With these two plans now nearing 90% completion, Augusta Tomorrow is embarking on a new vision for the two cities to focus on the central city areas on both sides of the Savannah River.

New Master Plan. It is now desired to take a fresh look at the City Center to develop a vision for its future over the next five to ten years. While it is proposed to build upon the previous master plans by continuing good ideas and filling in gaps, these documents will be used only as history.

Goals. The plan is envisioned as a roadmap and agenda for the City Center to continue as and to become a great center of commerce, culture, government, and urban life. The plan will focus on ways to be sure the downtown is a special place for all citizens and visitors alike. The plan will encourage downtown improvement and development in a renewed City Center that is a vibrant location for business and investment, a good residential address, a center for culture, arts, and religion, a setting where historic resources are protected and appropriate new development is encouraged, an attractive, urban place to visit, live, work, or play, a place where enhanced cooperation among the public and private sector leaders, stakeholders, and the general public is a major key to success. A parking management plan as well as key highlighted projects should be priorities for the proposed master plan.

The plan will involve elements of physical, programmatic, and strategic planning and will include developing a specific agenda for implementation. The planning program and process will involve engaging the citizenry in a

public participation program and consensus building among groups, business interests, and governments.

Professional Services. Augusta Tomorrow, Inc. would like to select the most highly-qualified, single firm (with supporting associated design team members as needed) to develop the master plan. The team must have specialized experience in preparing regional master plans, and the team must have specific experience with urban, downtown, waterfront, historic, and economic development projects. The planning and proposed development work must also be sensitive to ecological, environmental, floodplain, market, and archeological issues. Additionally, expertise or experience in the following will be beneficial to the project team:

- Regional Planning
- Architecture
- Civil Engineering
- GIS Mapping
- Land Use Planning and Zoning
- Urban Design
- Design Guidelines
- Transportation Planning
- Environmental Documentation
- Market Analysis
- Economic Studies
- Cost Estimating
- Implementation Planning
- Parking Management Planning

The selected design team will be asked to produce a true master plan that is both visionary and strategic, with a specific implementation agenda. Augusta Tomorrow will furnish input on specific projects that may be highlighted in the planning process, to go along with new ideas and projects, design guidelines, and further planning may be stimulated by the master plan. These future projects may or may not be awarded to the firm selected for the master plan.

Selection Process. Augusta Tomorrow, Inc. will review the qualifications, relevant experience and references submitted by interested firms and design teams. At least three and no more than six firms will be asked to make presentations to the selection committee. Based on the information provided in the interview process, Augusta Tomorrow will shortlist three firms with the intention of negotiating a firm, fixed-price contract for professional services with the top-rated firm. The selected firm will be requested to attend a pre-negotiation meeting and site visit within ten days of the notification of selection and to submit a fee proposal within ten days after the site visit.

Submittals. Interested firms and design teams should send a letter of interest and qualifications for receipt by Augusta Tomorrow no later than the close of business on October 6, 2023. Submittals should be sent to:

Master Plan Selection Committee
Augusta Tomorrow, Inc.
1450 Greene Street, Suite 85
Augusta, Georgia 30901

Submittals shall consist of 4 hard copies and one digital copy (pdf format on flash drive) of the response to this request for qualifications, and shall include at least the following information:

- Letter of interest that identifies the team members and a brief summary of not more than three of the most relevant projects
- Firm name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address
- Contact person for the duration of the selection process, including email address
- Identification of key members of the planning team with project team assignment, resume, relevant personal experience, and the approximate percentage of each key persons time that will be available for devotion to the plan
- Examples of recent relevant experience for at least three projects, including an identification of which

- design team members worked on them, and a client contact with telephone number
- Description of the specific project approach to this downtown plan with an associated process timeline
- Additional (brief) relevant information that may assist Augusta Tomorrow’s decision making process

Submittals should address this project specifically, and inclusion of excessive marketing materials is discouraged.

The key planning team members that are identified should be only those who will be actively involved throughout the life of the project, and those people should attend the interview.

For multi-firm teams, indicate the approximate percentage of the project that each firm will be responsible for.

Shortlisted consultant teams will be asked to submit an outline of a more detailed public participation approach. Its methodology will be designed to account for the differences among groups within the planning area, as well as to maximize overall public participation.

All inquiries must be submitted by email by September 1, 2023 with a subject line to include the firm name and “Inquiry Submission”. Site visits, if requested before the final submission date, will be scheduled by Zoom or in-person starting September 5, 2023.

This is not a request for proposal.

Neither fax nor email submittals will be accepted.

Further information about the organization and previous planning is available at www.augustatomorrow.com.

Any inquiries should be directed to Lauren Dallas, Augusta Tomorrow, Inc. at the address above, or telephone 706-722-9100, or email lauren@augustatomorrow.com.