



**Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
Comprehensive Plan Update
City of West Columbia, South Carolina**

Submittal Deadline: November 20, 2026, 4pm EST

Released: October 5, 2026

1. Introduction

The City of West Columbia, South Carolina, is requesting qualifications from professional and experienced planning consultants to prepare an update to its 2018 Comprehensive Plan. This plan will integrate modern planning best practices, robust public engagement, and resiliency planning. The Comprehensive Plan will address present and anticipated growth in a manner that ensures West Columbia aligns economic vitality with resiliency, equitable growth, infrastructure capacity, and the protection of community character.

The City of West Columbia desires a creative and dynamic Comprehensive Plan to guide its future long-term growth and development. This project will draft a plan to serve as the primary policy guide for development decision-making, including a format of short-, mid-, and long-term goals and strategies.

During the development of the plan, the consultant will meet with stakeholders throughout the City, including City Council, Planning Commission, City departments, local civic and community boards, and citizens. Outreach should be approached through multiple venues and opportunities, with a focus on creative and varied community engagement. The consultant will be under the coordination, guidance, and supervision of the Director of Planning and Zoning. The City Council will make the final adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan is anticipated as a full, ten-year revision, including a new Future Land Use Map that extends beyond the current city limits, as mandated by the State of South Carolina. The City is also emphasizing small-area zoning strategies and incorporating robust multimodal and resiliency planning.

Additionally, though not part of this RFQ, the City may seek services to complete a Zoning Ordinance update after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted. A statement of the consultant's capability for this work should be included with the proposal.

2. Background

West Columbia is a dynamic, growing community in the Midlands region of South Carolina. Situated along eight miles of the beautiful lower Saluda and Congaree Rivers, the City is known for being friendly, welcoming, and affordable. West Columbia offers top-level schools, a myriad of dining and shopping options, and exemplary health care within a three-mile radius.

West Columbia last updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2018. The City's population has grown an estimated 35% since 2000 and has remained steady at almost 18,000 since 2018. Much of the focus during this time has been on investing in the City's gateway along the Congaree River, with new developments and beautification projects along State Street and Meeting Street. This Comprehensive Plan will be the first to capture the census data following a large annexation of property west of I-26 on US-1 in 2016. Annexations of commercial property have continued to be the focus along Sunset Boulevard (US 378). Many plans created during this time have helped the City understand its strengths and opportunities, including the 2018 and 2024 Revitalization and Redevelopment Plans, a bike and pedestrian plan, the US-1 Corridor Study, and a Meeting Street Road Improvement Project now underway. Riverbanks Zoo continues to enhance its presence on the west side of the Saluda River, contributing to a greater influx of visitors to the City and plans for a new pedestrian bridge across the Saluda River get underway. With increased population and development growth comes greater demand on services, and the City must plan to meet those community needs as part of this update.

As West Columbia experiences this steady growth, it recognizes the need for a Comprehensive Plan update that better reflects where the City is now and where it wants to go in the next 10 to 20 years. This is a pivotal time for West Columbia, and it needs a visionary, creative, and user-friendly Comprehensive Plan that incorporates the City's planning efforts since 2018 and provides clear guidance for its future.

3. Project Scope

The Comprehensive Plan will include the inventory, analysis, and synthesis of information with a strong emphasis on land use, infrastructure, economic development, resiliency, and parks and greenspace. A fourteen (14) month timeframe is established for the completion of this project. Upon completion of this project, the City may update its zoning ordinance and land development regulations to correspond with the updated Comprehensive Plan.

The selected consultant will be responsible along with staff for a scope of work including, but not limited to:

1. **Project Management & Timeline:** Develop a 14-month timeline for completing the Comprehensive Plan, with clear deadlines and specific action items for each phase.
2. **Data Collection & Analysis:** Research and analyze existing land uses, environmental conditions, transportation infrastructure, and economic development to establish existing conditions. Data must include a comprehensive suitability analysis for future growth and development.

3. **Document Integration:** Evaluate and consolidate existing plans and studies into a unified, highly visual document. The plan must explicitly reference and integrate the 2024 Redevelopment and Revitalization Plans, the 2021 Bike and Pedestrian Plan, the US 1 and Botanical Parkway Corridor Study, and the recently adopted Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan, as well as county and regional plans that affect the City.
4. **Public Engagement Strategy:** Establish and implement a community outreach strategy ensuring appropriate stakeholder involvement. The proposal must explicitly describe public engagement techniques and targeted efforts designed specifically to reach underrepresented and business populations. Meetings will include bi-weekly staff discussions via virtual meeting platforms, stakeholder meetings, board/committee engagements, Planning Commission and City Council presentations, and a minimum of two (2) public workshops.
5. **Future Land Use & Growth Management:** Prepare an updated Future Land Use Map that intentionally extends beyond current city limits to capture surrounding growth areas and potential annexations in the unincorporated area surrounding West Columbia.
6. **Small Area Plans:** Identify opportunities and provide strategic frameworks for small area plans and small-area zoning strategies for defined districts, with a focus on redevelopment and Brownfield revitalization.
7. **Implementation Matrix:** Draft implementation measures the City can use to achieve its new goals, identifying responsible parties, funding opportunities, and timeframes.
8. **Statutory Compliance:** The plan must be developed pursuant to Section 6-29-510 of the South Carolina Code of Laws and include the required planning elements: Population, Economic Development, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Housing, Land Use, Transportation, Priority Investment, and Resilience.
9. **Branding Strategy.** Develop recommendations for branding the Comprehensive Plan project. Work with City staff to create an overall project identity that successfully translates into the project's community image and includes elements such as a project name, tagline, and logo with versions appropriate for print, web, and television coverage.

4. Submittal Requirements

Responses to this RFQ must be organized and include the following sections. Please note the specific formatting and length requirements detailed below.

Format & Formatting Restrictions

- Electronic submittal is required. One (1) PDF must be submitted to kcall@westcolumbiasc.gov. Hard copies are not required but may be submitted marked "Comprehensive Plan Update RFQ" to:
City of West Columbia
Attn: Katherine Call, Director of Community Development
200 N. 12th Street
West Columbia, SC 29169
- Length: A strict 25-page maximum (excluding the title page).

- Font Size: No minimum font size requirement.

Organization

1. **Cover Letter and Table of Contents:** A summary of the contents and a table of contents with page numbers.
2. **Introduction and Qualifications:** Overview of the firm, team lead, professional support staff, principal in charge, and known sub-consultant relationships. Include resumes for project team members and highlight relevant South Carolina projects.
3. **Summary of Experience:** A list of past and active projects (name, location, firm's role, and status).
4. **Public Engagement Approach:** List innovative public engagement activities utilized in past projects. Crucially, detail specific techniques and efforts planned to reach underrepresented communities and businesses in West Columbia.
5. **References:** A list of three references from past or current client relationships involving similar comprehensive planning projects.
6. **Anticipated Project Hours & Fee Schedule:** Submit a fee schedule of hourly rates and an estimate of overall project hours required to complete the Comprehensive Plan as outlined. Please include:
 - Schedule of Hourly Rates: Standard billing rates for all key personnel, project staff, and sub-consultants anticipated to work on this project.
 - Estimated Labor Hours: A breakdown of total estimated project hours categorized by major scope phase (e.g., project setup, data collection & suitability analysis, public engagement, plan drafting, implementation matrix).

Additional Items: Preliminary scope of services, proposed timeline, and sample documents demonstrating visual clarity and user-friendly formatting.

5. Evaluation

The City of West Columbia will evaluate the consultant's qualifications based on the following metrics:

- Creative, successful experience and examples of public engagement, especially efforts targeting underrepresented and business populations.
- Quality of the qualifications in terms of specifically addressing the submittal requirements.
- Project Scope tailored to the unique needs of a growing community with riverfront and economic development assets.
- Technical capabilities and specialized knowledge of comprehensive planning, land use suitability mapping, and zoning ordinance analysis.
- Professional qualifications, knowledge, and experience.
- References from comparable communities.
- Reasonableness of cost & labor proposal.

The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, waive technicalities, select the proposal determined to be in the City's best interest, and negotiate fees accordingly.

6. Submittal timeline and other information

Questions

Submit questions in writing via email to Katherine Call at kcall@westcolumbiasc.gov. The deadline for questions relating to the RFQ is **November 5, 2026, at 4:00 pm**.

The City will provide answers via an addendum issued on **November 11, 2026**.

It is the responsibility of each submitter to examine the entire RFQ, seek clarifications in writing, and review their submittal for accuracy before submitting their responses. The City will not request clarification from any individual relative to their submittal but reserves the right to ask for additional information from all parties that have submitted responses.

Timeline

The submittal is due November 20, 2026, 4:00 PM EST.

Electronic submittal is required. Submit one (1) PDF to kcall@westcolumbiasc.gov.

Following the submittal deadline, the City will conduct its initial evaluation of all proposals through the first week of December. Selected respondents will be notified and invited to participate in interviews at the beginning of January 2027, with final selection and contract negotiation scheduled to follow shortly thereafter.

Proprietary and/or Confidential Information

Your submission is a public document under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), except as to information that may be treated as confidential as an exception to disclosure under the FOIA. If you cannot agree to this standard, please do not submit a statement of qualifications. All information that is to be treated as confidential and/or proprietary must be **CLEARLY** identified. Each page containing confidential and/or proprietary information, in whole or in part, must be stamped and/or denoted as CONFIDENTIAL, in bold, in a font of at least 12-point type, in the upper right-hand corner of the page. All information not so denoted and identified will be subject to disclosure by the City.

The contract award shall be at the sole discretion of the City. The award(s) shall be based on evaluating all information the City may request. The City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all qualifications in whole or part and waive any informalities in the RFQ. Further, the City reserves the right to enter into a contract deemed to be in its best interest. The City intends to make every effort to be fair and equitable in its dealings with all candidates for selection. However, the City reserves the right to reject all Qualifications. Issuance of this Request for Qualifications does not commit the City of West Columbia to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in preparing an RFQ, or to procure related services or supplies.