



Request for Proposals

Engagement & Transit Supportive Strategies

Notice

Knoxville-Knox County Planning (Planning) is soliciting proposals from qualified firms for assistance in engaging stakeholders and providing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) planning expertise in the City of Knoxville (COK).

Proposals are due Tuesday, October 1, 2024 by 4:30 pm EST and can be submitted electronically. More detailed instructions are outlined in a later section of this document.

Knoxville-Knox County Planning retains the right to reject any and all proposals and may re-advertise, waive formalities in the request for proposals, or abandon the project.

Contact Information

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Project Background

Knoxville is located in the heart of East Tennessee and has a population of 198,162. Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) is the city's public transit system, offering fixed-route buses and paratransit services and carrying about three million passengers annually. Very recently, the KAT fixed-route system underwent a major review that resulted in significant changes, including increased frequencies along major corridors.

City administration, KAT, and Planning are dedicated to aligning economic development with transit service to give residents increased access to transportation, affordable mixed-income housing, jobs, education, healthcare, and shopping opportunities. KAT was awarded a grant from the Federal Transit Administration under the Areas of Persistent Poverty Program to assist in fulfilling this mission. With this support, KAT contracted with Planning to manage a new project, named Priority Investment Areas.

Scope of Work

Following the consultant selection process, a scoping meeting will be held to determine and negotiate a refined and final scope of work and a contract for services. This overview, therefore, represents the major

tasks and associated activities that are envisioned, but it is preliminary and, as such, Planning reserves the right to make revisions as deemed necessary.

The Priority Investment Areas project comprises two core efforts. Part One, to be accomplished by Planning, will create a transit-based opportunities map that identifies locations for development along transit corridors. The opportunities map will be built using a data-driven approach, identifying areas of opportunity that leverage existing urban infrastructure and underutilized land parcels to support mixed development and redevelopment, including affordable housing and employment generators, an important strategy to reduce persistent poverty.

Part Two, to be led by the consultant, will include stakeholder engagement, prioritization of viable corridors for TOD investment, and recommendations for the creation of TOD policies and investment strategies. More specifically, the consultant should be able to bring expertise to tackle several elements comprising Part Two of the initiative:

- Conduct stakeholder interviews and community surveys to inform the planning process.
- Identify and prioritize TOD target areas that can serve as catalysts for redevelopment and revitalization.
- Provide guidance on ways to embark on this work to ensure success and build momentum for continued investment in TOD.
- Create a TOD implementation toolkit - related to land use code, economic incentives, transportation policy, or other approaches - to guide COK, KAT, Planning, and other partners in this work.

Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

The consultant will create a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) that focuses on how input will be collected to inform decisions to create policies and advance redevelopment and development along Knoxville's transit corridors and within opportunity areas. The plan will identify target audiences, the type of input needed, and recommended methods for engagement.

Planning will create a list of stakeholders and policymakers who have influence or direct input into implementation of TOD projects, including land developers, real estate brokers, economic development agencies, property owners, bankers/lenders, and others. The consultant will develop interview questions, then engage stakeholders and policymakers through one-on-one interviews and small-group meetings.

This input will be used to assess potential affordable and market-rate residential, commercial, and institutional (re)development opportunities.

In addition to interviews and small-group meetings, there will be a survey of stakeholders and policymakers. A community survey will also be distributed to neighborhoods, groups, and organizations affiliated with the identified target areas. The consultant will help prepare, distribute, and analyze the findings of these surveys and provide guidance on the best way to incorporate feedback into the planning process.

TOD Planning Efforts

Based on Planning's Part One work to identify opportunity areas and corridors, the consultant will help prioritize the selection of development/redevelopment areas and will recommend best practices to create an economically vibrant and desirable transit corridor that provides a range of housing choices, maximizes opportunities and benefits of mixed-use development, and connects residents to employment centers, healthcare, and other quality of life essentials.

The consultant will bring expertise in property market evaluation, investment, financing, construction, property assemblage, land pricing, and rents. Gaps between feasible development and available resources will be identified, and the consultant will examine opportunities for creative strategies and tools to close those gaps – the consultant will identify land-use opportunities and recommend zoning regulations, placemaking strategies, projects, and development policies along the corridor/opportunity areas, which will promote appropriate and well-timed transit-supportive development. Also, assessment of long-term tax base potential will be conducted to demonstrate to public leaders that a transit-supportive strategy is fiscally sustainable, and anti-displacement measures will be developed to ensure existing vulnerable communities can benefit from the economic development that the transit corridor/opportunity area will attract. This work will be coordinated with city officials to ensure recommendations align with other priorities, such as their affordable housing strategy and Vision Zero Action Plan.

Additional Tasks and Deliverables

Additional value-added tasks and deliverables, based upon the consultant's expertise and experience in TOD, are encouraged. For example, the consultant could develop high-level concept drawings that illustrate the contribution of accessible multi-modal connections, including transit, rideshare, bike, and pedestrian facilities, to a successful transit supportive initiative. As a second example, the consultant could develop a Place Typology to differentiate the opportunity areas by location, connectivity, land use, urban

form, and intensity, using both inspirational and aspirational visual images.

The consultant will be expected to refine the scope of work to include necessary steps to achieve the desired deliverables, such as developing a Project Management Plan, in consultation with Planning.

Consultant Selection Process

Planning shall designate a Consultant Evaluation Committee (CEC) comprised of staff members and other key project stakeholders. The basic elements of the selection process are outlined below.

Evaluation of Submittals

The proposals submitted by each consultant/team will be evaluated by the CEC and scored according to the following criteria (relative weight):

- **General Qualifications (30 points):** Staff qualifications, credentials, overall firm experience, and time availability of the staff assigned to manage and conduct the study.
- **Subject Area Experience (25 points):** Past experience with projects that have similar or related subject matter and/or reporting requirements.
- **Approach (25 points):** Demonstrated understanding of the project scope and the proposal's overall completeness, organization, innovation, and strength of approach to the project tasks.
- **Project Management (15 points):** Clearly articulated project schedule, major milestones, and approach to management of the project along with a demonstrated ability to meet schedules and budgets without compromising final products of the project.
- **Local Knowledge (5 points):** Demonstrated understanding of the City of Knoxville and awareness of opportunities and constraints of the project.

From the evaluation process, the CEC will make a final ranking of the consultant team(s). Based on the outcome of the initial proposal evaluations, the CEC reserves the right to request interviews from shortlisted firms. Knoxville-Knox County Planning will negotiate with the most highly qualified firms in rank order until successful execution of a contract for the project is completed.

Selection Schedule

The process for selecting a consultant team, including the commencement of contract and notice to proceed, are tentatively scheduled as follows:

Proposal Submittal Deadline October 1, 2024

Consultant Selection	November 5, 2024
Contract Commencement	November 19, 2024
Kickoff Meeting	December 3, 2024

Rejection Rights and Cost of Proposal Preparation

A selected consulting firm shall provide professional services in full accordance with federal, state, and local regulations, policies, and/or standards specific to the project’s funding source, where applicable. Knoxville-Knox County Planning reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted, to advertise for new proposals, or to accept any submitted proposal deemed to be in the best interest of Knoxville-Knox County Planning. Further, all costs incurred by consulting teams in the preparation and submittal of proposals, including interview travel if held, are not reimbursable by Knoxville-Knox County Planning. Additionally, any costs incurred by a selected consultant prior to a notice to proceed are not reimbursable by Knoxville-Knox County Planning.

Compliance with Laws

The consulting firm(s) shall conduct all operations under contract in compliance with all applicable laws. The consulting firm(s) shall comply with all state and federal regulations pertaining to minimum wage and fair labor standards. The consulting firm(s) shall not discriminate in hiring or any other practice with respect to gender, race, age, creed, religion, or nationality. Knoxville-Knox County Planning and its officers, officials, agents, and employees shall be indemnified and held harmless for any failure by the consulting firm(s) to comply with any applicable laws, rules, and/or regulations.

Addenda and Supplements to RFP

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP or if additional information is necessary to enable the proposer to make adequate interpretation of the provisions of this Request for Proposal, a supplement to the RFP will be posted on the Knoxville-Knox County Planning website.

Proposals to be in Effect

Each proposal shall state it is valid for a period of not less than ninety (90) days from the date of receipt. All proposals shall become the property of Knoxville-Knox County Planning and will not be returned.

Inquiries

Questions or inquiries about the proposal are to be made in writing (email) prior to September 20, 2024, and answers may be posted to the website. Origin of the questions will not be identified.

Please direct questions via email to Doug Burton at doug.burton@knoxplanning.org.