

# City of Centralia | Request for Proposals

## Purpose

The City of Centralia has initiated an RFP process to identify a qualified vendor to guide and execute a strategic planning process for the City.

## About the City of Centralia

The estimated population of Centralia in 2018, was 17,495. The City is a non-charter code city, Council-Manager form of government. The City is a full-service municipality including law enforcement and leisure services, water, wastewater, stormwater and electric utilities. The City has 150 full-time employees with an annual budget of approximately \$65 million dollars.

## Project Overview

The City has used a staff driven visioning/planning process over the past decade. This was a by-product of declining revenues from the 2008 recession. This process annually resulted in a largely viable list of goals and objectives for the City to work towards. The process gradually evolved into establishing a short-list of “Strategic Priorities” that helped to further refine and focus City resources. The latest version of Strategic Priorities is published in the 2019/2020 City of Centralia budget document.

While the Strategic Priorities have been an effective tool for prioritizing resources during relatively prosperous times, the City questions the effectiveness of this process in the challenging times ahead. The changing landscape that includes COVID-19 fallout and homelessness, among other issues, requires in-depth discussion and focused community participation. The City feels a professional facilitator is required to lead this visioning/planning process that will guide the 2021/2022 budgeting process.

## Scope of Work and Deliverables:

While the City seeks the consultant’s recommendations regarding the best process to develop an actionable strategic plan, the City envisions the scope of work being completed in stages.

### **Stage 1. Orientation and Preparation with City Council and City Staff**

This stage includes consensus building among the City Council members to:

- Level set on the purpose of a strategic plan, shared language
- The alignment of a strategic plan to other required planning documents (for example, comprehensive plan)
- The planning horizon to be used
- Information/requirements for the discovery phase
- Guiding principles for City Council’s process

## **Stage 2: Discovery**

This stage should produce substantive documentation of current situation and forecasted future metrics for the City that will inform the vision and strategic plan.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Housing and population
- Growth forecast
- Resource status and forecast
- Financial forecast
- Gap analysis between current and future state
- 3-4 scenarios of the future to be used to inform planning process

Methodology:

- City staff will provide/produce as much documentation as possible
- Consultant should plan to conduct 1:1 interviews with City Council members, City manager and Department Heads
- 3-5 focus groups for broad input and representing a range of City residents and invested stakeholders

## **Stage 3: Vision and key goals with City Council**

Working with the City Council and City Manager, this stage entails the development of an actionable strategic plan. This plan will serve as the overall blueprint for the work, so should include a clear vision for the future that describes the “competitive advantage” the City will build through this plan, 3-5 strategic priorities and possibly objectives for the priorities.

- discover a shared strategic vision that:
  - is clearly stated
  - is compelling
  - is relevant
  - describes a clear need
  - motivates people to act
  - is a worthwhile challenge

This plan should include:

- An executive summary
- A comprehensive, detailed plan that identifies:
  - Shared vision
  - Goals/Priorities
  - Strategies
  - Responsible partners and their roles
  - Measures

## Stage 4: Implementation Planning

This final stage develops the plan for implementation. The consultant will seek overall direction from City Council, and then work closely with the City Manager to develop the implementation plan.

The plan should include:

- Recommended approach for strategic plan status checks and calibration
- Communication plan
- Steps required with accountabilities assigned for producing a time-bound, detailed plan
- Resource development strategies

## Proposal Requirements

### Proposal must include the following:

To best evaluate the ability of the vendor to meet our goals, please include the following in your proposal:

1. **General Information:** Organization description, size and structure. Indicate whether the firm is a small or woman- or minority-owned business. Include location and contact information.
2. **Consultant Qualification and Roles:** The proposal must describe the organization's qualifications to conduct the RFP scope of work activities, including expertise, knowledge, and experience.

Describe qualifications of all staff to be assigned to the project and specify the engagement manager. Include resumes of staff to be assigned to the project: education, position in firm, years and type of experience, continuing professional education, etc. Resumes are not included in the total page limit.

Vendor is not able to sub-contract any of the work without pre-approval by the City.

To accomplish the scope requested, the consultant will need to possess the following qualifications:

- a. Experience at successfully developing consensus-based strategic plans
- b. Experience with government, open public meetings and working with elected officials
- c. Strong facilitation skills
- d. Experience at creating a neutral environment for, and soliciting input from, individuals from various sectors
- e. Experience at gathering and utilizing data to inform the strategic planning process
- f. Ability to constructively challenge key stakeholders
- g. Experience inspiring others to think innovatively
- h. Flexibility to develop appropriate dates and timelines for working with various constituencies
- i. Ability to attend City Council meetings as scheduled when needed

j. Project management experience

If more than one consultant is proposed, the proposal must indicate which activities each consultant will conduct as well as information about their level of expertise, knowledge and experience to conduct those specific activities.

3. **Work Plan:** Demonstrate an understanding of the work to be performed. Include your philosophy and approach to strategic planning, including specific methodologies, theories or constructs you utilize.

The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- a. the specific activities to be conducted at each stage and who will conduct them
  - b. a timeline for the activities at each stage
  - c. milestones and deliverables tied to those activities
  - d. a detailed budget for each task, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables
4. **References:** The proposal should include at least three references of individuals who can speak to their experience with the consultant/firm in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include the individual's name, address, telephone number and email address.
5. **Previous Work Product:** The proposal should include a summary of strategic planning experience and examples of similar projects. Include at least two examples of written work similar to the scope of work requested within this RFP (e.g., strategic plan).

Proposals should be no more than 20 pages and text no smaller than 11 pt font.

## Scoring

Award of the contract shall be to the lowest responsible bidder whose proposal meets agency requirements as determined by the City. In determining the lowest responsible bidder, in addition to price, the following may be considered (if applicable):

- the bidder's ability, capacity, and skill to perform the contract
- the bidder's character, integrity, reputation, judgment, experience, and efficiency
- whether the bidder can perform the contract within the time specified
- the quality of the bidder's previous contract performance
- the bidder's previous and current compliance with laws relating to the contract or services
- the bidder's history of fiscal responsibility and administrative compliance

The City's determination that a bidder is not qualified may result in rejection of the bid submitted.

Responsive proposals will be evaluated strictly in accordance with the requirements stated in this solicitation. The evaluation of proposals shall be accomplished by an evaluation team that maybe composed of City Council members and staff, which will determine the ranking of the proposals (refer to Table 1: for the scoring structure).

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Qualifications**
  - Consultant has the qualifications necessary to successfully complete the scope of work
  - The consultant has prior experience working on similar projects
  - The consultant has prior experience working with similar organizations
- **Scope of Proposal**
  - The proposal demonstrates an understanding of the project objectives and desired results
  - The proposal illustrates an approach to the scope of work that will likely lead to the successful development of an actionable strategic plan
  - The proposal illustrates the consultant’s ability to successfully execute the proposed approach
  - The proposal includes an appropriate process to interact with Council members and staff
- **Work Plan**
  - The proposal adequately details project activities and milestones, or deliverables associated with each stage of the scope of work
  - The proposal includes a detailed timeline for each stage
  - The work can be completed within a reasonable project timeline
- **Budget**
  - The proposal includes a detailed budget for each stage of the scope of work
  - Proposed costs are reasonable

**Table 1: Scoring Structure**

<b>Qualifications of consultant(s)</b>	25
<b>Scope of Proposal</b>	25
<b>Work Plan</b>	25
<b>Budget</b>	25
<b>Total</b>	100

## Process for Proposal Submission and Evaluation

### Instructions for submission

- a) **Closing Submission Date:** Proposals are due by 5:00 pm on June 15, 2020.
- b) **Inquiries:** Inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to Rob Hill at [rhill@cityofcentralia.com](mailto:rhill@cityofcentralia.com) or by phone at 360-330-7674 no later than 5:00 pm on June 3, 2020.
- c) **Conditions of Proposal:** All costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP are the responsibility of the bidder and will not be reimbursed by the City of Centralia.
- d) **Submission Instructions:** Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to [dbilodeau@cityofcentralia.com](mailto:dbilodeau@cityofcentralia.com) or mailed to City Manager’s Office, PO Box 609, Centralia Washington 98531, before the closing submission date. If the file is too large for email, a link to the file should be provided.

Late arrivals will not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that the response is received by the City by the closing submission date. A response may be judged nonresponsive and excluded for further consideration if it is not received by the deadline or does not follow the specified format.

e) **Right to Reject:** The City reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any and all responses received in response to this RFP. A contract for the accepted response will be based upon the factors described in this RFP.

f) **Small Businesses, Minority-Owned Firms, and Women's Enterprises:** The City will make efforts to utilize small businesses, women's business enterprises, and/or minority-owned firms. A bidder qualifies if it meets the definition established by the Small Business Administration.

g) **Confidentiality:** If the bidder deems any material submitted to be proprietary or confidential, that must be indicated in the relevant section(s) of the response.

h) **Notification of Selection and Timeline:** It is expected that a bidder will be selected within two to three weeks of the closing submission date, although this timeline is subject to change. The City reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time. Upon conclusion of negotiations with the successful bidder, all bidders submitting responses to this RFP will be informed in writing of the name of the successful firm or individual.

- RFP Released: May 26, 2020
- Questions concerning RFP due: June 3, 2020
- Answers to questions concerning RFP posted: June 5, 2020
- Submission deadline for proposals: June 15, 2020
- Interviews may be requested the week of June 15, 2020
- Vendor selection made: June 23, 2020
- Project begins: June 24, 2020
- Draft Final Plan submitted by: September 30, 2020
- Final Plan submitted by: October 31, 2020

i) **Criteria for Selection:** The City will select the proposal which it feels will deliver the highest quality deliverable at the best value. Proposals will be initially reviewed by the City Manager. Selection of vendor will be made by the City Council with input from the City Manager.

Price will be a significant, but not the only, criteria in evaluating the proposals. See Scoring section above.

The City, in its sole discretion, may request proposal presentations by meeting with any or all bidders to clarify or negotiate modifications to proposals. However, the City reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted. Therefore, proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, from both technical and price standpoints, that the bidder can propose.

j) **Conflict of Interest:** The Bidder must disclose, in an exhibit to the proposal, any possible conflicts of interest that may result from the award of the Contract or the services provided under the Contract. Except as otherwise disclosed in the proposal, the Bidder affirms that to the best of its knowledge there exists no actual or potential conflict between the Bidder, the Bidder's project manager(s) or its family's business or financial interests ("Interests") and the services provided under the Contract. In the event of any change in either Interests or the services provided under the Contract, the Bidder will inform the City regarding possible conflicts of interest, which may arise as a result of such change and agrees that all conflicts shall be resolved to the City's satisfaction or the Bidder may be disqualified from consideration under this RFP.