

Request for Proposals R2005
Economic Development Strategic Plan
Lawrence, Kansas

1. Introduction & Intent

The City of Lawrence, Kansas is soliciting proposals from reputable consultants to create an innovative economic development strategic plan addressing the area's unique assets and challenges. The city expects to hire an accomplished consultant firm, seasoned in producing municipal, county, or state economic development strategic plans and economic resiliency reports, to help lead the community into the future with inventive thinking, new ideas, economic strategic tools/approaches, and implementable policies and action plans.

Lawrence supports a community of 103,000 and is situated along I-70, just west of Kansas City and east of Topeka, the state's capital. The city is home to nationally ranked educational institutions, international manufacturing companies, high-tech research facilities, various arts, theater and museum venues, shopping districts and iconic historic districts.

Once crafted, the strategic plan is anticipated to include the following components:

- 1) Economic overview with supporting data, market and economic trends analysis, and targeted industries analysis
- 2) SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, including an evaluation of the area economic resiliency and consideration of tax generation for local jurisdictions (city, county, state)
- 3) Strategic Plan identifying the city's economic development vision, goals, and measurable objectives.
- 4) Performance evaluation defining the criteria for evaluating and measuring the implementation of strategic action steps and progress made in achieving goals and objectives

2. Scope of Work

The development of the Economic Development Strategic Plan is anticipated to occur in three phases, although the extent of the final scope of services and components will be determined through the selection committee's review and discussion with the selected consultant firm. Candidates responding to the RFP shall offer additional insight into approaches and strategies that have been gained from similar projects and confirm the following is appropriate given your understanding of the city's circumstances.

Phase I: Data collection

- The consultant shall work with staff in selecting demographic, business, and workforce data to assess local economic conditions and to aid in developing and evaluating economic strategies and implementation tools. Staff have gathered some preliminary

data and existing reports and will be available to assist in compiling additional data, at the direction of the consultant.

- Working with staff, the consultant shall formulate a data and trends analysis report to inform stakeholder engagement in Phase II and III and to be used to in the Economic Overview section of the report.

Phase II: SWOT analysis

- The city highly values public engagement when developing strategic plans. The consultant shall lead the facilitation of workshops, surveys, and other insight gathering tools to obtain broad-based stakeholder input on area strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The city will be looking to the consultant for innovative engagement strategies given limitations on in-person meetings. The city has various social media platforms which can also be employed for engagement.
- The consultant, assisted by staff, shall formulate SWOT findings into a SWOT analysis report, which will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. This SWOT analysis will be used to inform the Commission and help guide plan development in Phase III

Phase III: Plan development

- Using the background data obtained in Phase I and SWOT findings in Phase II, the consultant shall facilitate workshops, surveys, and other insight gathering tools to obtain broad-based stakeholder input for identifying an economic development vision, goals, and measurable objectives for the area. As with the SWOT analysis, the city is available to assist but will look to the consultant for innovative ways to engage stakeholders and disadvantaged population under potentially limited rules for in-person meetings
- Consultant shall provide recommendations and assist in the selection of strategies, implementation steps, tools, resources, and performance metrics.
- Together with staff, consultant will craft the Economic Development Strategic Plan and present it to the City Commission and stakeholders.

3. Anticipated timeline

Given the current pandemic, the City is looking to pursue an aggressive timeline and will be seeking firms able to employ innovative strategies for connecting with stakeholders and disadvantaged populations. The anticipated RFP schedule is as follows:

RFP issuance	May 6, 2020
Proposals due	May 20, 2020
Selection committee evaluation and selection of finalist(s)	May 22, 2020
Interview of finalist(s)	May 26, 2020
Negotiation with selected firm	May 29, 2020
Project kickoff	June 8, 2020
Plan Delivered	August 4, 2020

4. Submission Materials

Provide a summary of the consultant team's background, capabilities, experience and qualifications related to this type of project. Include a synopsis of similar projects completed for municipal, county, or state jurisdictions. Submissions should be electronic in PDF format and no longer than 5 pages, excluding addendums. Specifically, include the following information presented in this order:

- Letter of Interest – include statement of interest in the project, understanding of the project and approach to this kind of project.
- Identification of Project Team – project lead, project team members, identification of responsibilities of each team member and a project organization chart. Include contact information for the Project lead (name, address, phone and email address). With regard to all members of the project team, please include the approximate percentage of this project each team member would support, and also include for each team member the approximate percent this project will represent in relationship to all work of that team member.
- Qualifications – brief resumes of team members working on the project, descriptions of similar projects completed by the principal staff assigned to this project including links to completed reports
- References – provide a list of references including a brief description of the projects and contact name and phone number for each
- Magnitude of budget – based on similar work, provide an estimated high-level range for the scope of services desired.

5. Criteria for selection

The successful consulting firm must provide a team with the demonstrated qualifications, experience, understanding and expertise to complete this project. The selection committee will examine the following as key criteria for selection:

- Professional qualifications and overall strength of the project team
- Relevant experience, creativity and technical competence with similar economic development strategic plans and economic resiliency reports for city, county or state jurisdictions.
- Capacity of the project team to deliver the desired project on time
- Past performance and client recommendations
- Ability to work with a diverse group of stakeholders
- Magnitude of budget

6. Selection Process

The city expects to hire an accomplished consultant(s) who will lead Lawrence into the future with inventive thinking, new ideas, economic strategic tools/approaches, and implementable

policies and action plans. While this RFP outlines a scope of services and Economic Development Strategic Plan components, the RFP interview process will be driven by the consultant's ability to challenge the city in the setting of our short and long range goals, and the consultant's skills in pitching modifications to the proposed process that will maximize the identification of creative solutions to ensure the city's goals are achieved.

Prospective consultants will participate in interviews with the selection committee to assess the qualifications and relevant experience of their project team, and provide an opportunity for the team to demonstrate their combination of skills and previous economic development experience comparable to the proposed scope of services for the City of Lawrence. Firms must include their Project Manager as part of the interview team and the Project Manager must be identified in the RFP response. The lead of the S.W.O.T analysis needs to be a dynamic, qualified facilitator who has previous experience leading similar exercises, however this person does not need to be the Project Manager. It is the expectation of the city that the Project Manager will lead the actual implementation of the scope of services if a contract is eventually awarded.

7. Directions for submission

Interested firms must provide one electronic submission no later than 5:00 p.m. (Central) on May 20, 2020 to Diane Stoddard, Assistant City Manager, City of Lawrence, dstoddard@lawrenceks.org. Firms should confirm receipt.

8. Terms and Conditions

- No oral submissions will be accepted.
- The city reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or portions of proposals, to waive minor deficiencies, or to solicit new proposals on the original project or on a modified project as may be deemed necessary or in the best interest of the consortium.
- The city shall not be responsible for any costs incurred in preparing, submitting or presenting a response to the RFP.
- The city reserves the right to award any contract to the next most qualified consultant if the successful consultant does not execute a contract within a reasonable amount of time after selection.

9. Contract and Compensation

The City of Lawrence will enter into a professional services agreement utilizing the City of Lawrence's contract template with the selected firm once a scope of services is finalized.

10. Questions and inquiries.

Questions regarding the project can be directed to Diane Stoddard, City of Lawrence, 785-832-3413 or dstoddard@lawrenceks.org. No interpretation made to any respondent regarding the meaning of the RFP shall be binding unless set forth in writing and distributed as an addendum to this RFP.