



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Hardeeville currently has the distinction as the fastest growing municipality by percentage in the State of South Carolina and the third fastest growing by percentage in the United States. The City's Department of Planning and Development seeks to procure a consultant partner to assist in revising and updating the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, which will be used to broadly guide physical development practices across the City (among other activities). The plan is being prepared in response to the rapid growth of the community and the desire of the City to manage and direct this growth sustainably. Consultation with major stakeholders, committees, and the public is essential to the process. The Comprehensive Plan will primarily be a graphics-based document including updating maps, infographics, charts, and a clear and comprehensive executive summary.

2. BACKGROUND

As summarized by the [Municipal Association of South Carolina](#), the State of South Carolina's Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act (found in [SC Code Title 6, Chapter 29](#)) provides cities and towns with authority to undertake planning and adopt zoning and land use regulations as tools to guide their communities' development.

The law requires cities which undertake a planning program (as Hardeeville has) to establish and operate a local planning commission. The commission is responsible for developing a comprehensive plan, specifically addressing 10 planning elements. It must also reevaluate the municipality's comprehensive plan every five years and update the plan by resolution every 10 years and submit it to the city or town council. The council must then have a public hearing on the plan and adopt it by ordinance every 10 years.

Hardeeville last updated and adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2019, approximately 5 years ago. At that time, the City's population was approximately 7,000 residents. Current population estimates indicate that today's population is now in excess of 20,000 residents. This growth is largely due to annexation and entitlement to large tracts in the early 2000s. These tracts were annexed, zoned Planned Development Districts (PDD) and approved with Development Agreements with conveyances and



entitlements. This designation has vested these properties with substantial development rights.

The City seeks a qualified contractor to assist in proposing a new update in 2025. The City's rapid pace of growth, land annexation and urbanization are contributing factors prompting the City's Request for Proposals at this particular time. A digital copy of the most recent [2019 Comprehensive Plan can be downloaded here](#) for reference and background.

3. PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND OBJECTIVES

The selected consultant with direction from the Planning Director will engage the community in a participatory process; facilitate public meetings; prepare the proposed plan for review by the City; and based on this collective information and input, finalize the updated Comprehensive Plan. The Plan will be coordinated and reviewed by the Planning Commission. Once finalized, it will be submitted to the City Council for adoption.

The selected consultant will be responsible for the Comprehensive Plan process and scope of work included but not limited to the following items:

1. A statement of needs and goals.
2. Significant public input will be required throughout the process. The City desires an aggressive, creative, and far-reaching public input strategy which includes residents of all ages and property owners. The strategy should include but not be limited to stakeholder meetings, social media, website, surveys, and other creative input mechanisms. Public participation is essential to this planning effort and must include an outreach and public participation process designed to engage the public and stakeholders to envision the future of the City.
3. Prepare for and conduct workshops and visioning sessions with residents, business owners, and Town staff, and present formally to the Planning commission and Council for public input, plan consideration and final adoption.
4. Hold regular meetings and updates with Planning Director, provide updates on progress.
5. Research and analyze existing land use patterns, traffic patterns, and projects, environmental constraints, and regulatory codes to establish existing conditions as well



as identify major issues and opportunities. Data should also be used to prepare estimates, projections, and forecasts.

6. Develop implementation strategies with timeframes, provide a detailed plan for execution and estimate costs for implementation

7. The Comprehensive Plan should be developed pursuant to state enabling legislation, Section 6-29-510 of the South Carolina Code of Laws. the plan must include the following planning elements:

1. *Population element*

Includes information related to historic and projected population, growth and development trends and household demographic characteristics and distributions such as age, race, sex, income, and educational attainment.

2. *Economic development element*

This should address the characteristics of the workforce characteristics, trends and projections and employment distributions by place of work. Useful considerations can be manufacturing, tourism or revitalization.

3. *Natural resources element*

Identify types of water bodies, parks and recreation areas, agricultural land, forest land and wildlife habitats. This element also needs information on the area's flood plains, wetlands, topography and soils.

4. *Cultural resources element*

These can be historic buildings and sites; unique commercial, residential or natural resources; and educational, religious or entertainment institutions.

5. *Community facilities element*

Community facilities include many assets necessary for development. This can include water, sewer and wastewater services; solid waste disposal; fire protection; as well as medical, governmental and educational facilities and parks and recreational resources.

6. *Housing element*

Identify the locations, types, ages and conditions of existing housing. Include a discussion of affordability as well as occupancy and ownership characteristics and identify regulatory barriers to affordable housing.



7. *Land use element*

Includes an analysis of existing and future land uses, environmental opportunities and constraints, transportation and infrastructure influences, development capacity, and annexation priorities. A future land use map must be developed as part of this process. The City's current annexation policy should be used as a guide.

8. *Transportation element*

This element includes an inventory of the City's current transportation infrastructure including functional class of roadways, traffic characteristics, and availability of bike and pedestrian facilities. The transportation element should coordinate with the land use element to provide planning for sufficient transportation options for the current and future land uses.

9. *Priority investment element*

This element is intended to help prioritize and allocate funding for infrastructure improvement projects identified in the other elements of the plan based on projected revenues. The element will recommend a list of projects identified in the plan for inclusion in future CIP and priority investment planning. This is an analysis of projected federal, state and local funds for infrastructure and facilities in the next decade, and recommended projects for those funds.

10. *Resiliency element*

This element, added in 2020, considers the impacts of flooding, high water, and natural hazards on individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, economic development, public infrastructure and facilities, and public health, safety and welfare.

The final document shall be organized in such a way that each chapter focuses on one of the ten elements described above. Each chapter will begin with a discussion of existing conditions, including relevant maps, tables and figures, and will conclude with a list of goals, objectives, and implementable strategies that reflect the City's needs and priorities identified through the existing conditions analysis and discussions with Staff, Planning Commission, City Council and public participation.

This 5-year update should revisit the following three (3) questions:

WHO ARE WE? (Analysis)



WHAT IS OUR VISION? (Recommendations)

HOW WILL WE GET THERE? (Implementation)

Once these questions have been reviewed, the consultant will determine if updates are needed to bring the Plan current with both observed conditions and City Council’s most recent priorities from January 2025.

The consultant will be expected to provide the City with the methodology for implementation of the plan through a strategic process where the recommendations of the plan are incorporated into the City’s operating and annual budgeting process. The implementation program shall follow the S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) methodology of project management. Utilizing this methodology, each “Objective” identified in the “Recommendations” section of the plan shall be assigned a “SMART” designation.

The following are illustrative elements of a strategic implementation plan:

- SPECIFIC: Who is responsible: individual/agency;
- MEASURABLE: What metrics do we use to assess success
- ACHIEVABLE: How is it accomplished?
- RELEVANT: Where is it applicable?
- TIME-BOUND: When will it be accomplished: (short, medium, and long term)

4. TIMELINE & SELECTION CRITERIA

The City of Hardeeville will accept proposals from qualified contractors to facilitate the Comprehensive Plan update beginning at **Noon on June 17, 2025** through **Noon on July 17, 2025**.

Proposal Format

The proposal should consist of the following major sections in the order shown:

1. Transmittal Letter

- a. Name of firm responding, including mailing address, e-mail address, telephone number and names of contact persons



- b. Name of person authorized to make representations, binding the firm or lead firm to contract

2. Approach and Methodology

- a. Provide an overall description of the firm's approach to completing the project with specific detailed examples of the strategy and methods to be employed.
- b. Timeline for the completion of the Plan with clear deadlines and specific action items identified for each phase of the project including critical path and milestones
- c. Provide information regarding different approaches for providing effective stakeholder engagement and public participation. These alternatives should represent different levels of involvement, complexity and costs
- d. A statement regarding how the firm ensures that all members of the community are involved in the process and how do you reach underrepresented members.

3. Qualifications

- a. Brief description of the firm
- b. Provide a description of the project team to include resumes of all key personnel and all outside consultants and/or sub-contractors including longevity with the firm.
- c. Name and relevant experience of the principal in charge
- d. Provide a list of similar projects that the firm has completed in the past five years.
- e. Billing rates for everyone assigned to work
- f. Project examples of successful plans completed by the firm within the past five years

4. Fee Proposal

- a. Standard hourly rate for each team member



- b. Schedule of proposed hours to complete the task
- c. Total Cost inclusive of any associated reimbursable expenses

Criteria for selection include Staff evaluation of the applicant's degree of experience within the following subject areas:

- Community master planning
- Creation and development of comprehensive plans
- Public presentation skills
- Writing and communication skills
- Expertise in *Resiliency* and other required plan elements
- Ability to produce an exciting and engaging deliverable

City Department of Planning and Development staff anticipate working on the plan update alongside the selected contractor throughout 2025, and seeks to propose an update for Planning Commission review and City Council adoption by August 2026.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- 1. Firm's Relevant Experience – 35%**
- 2. Firm's Qualified Personnel – 15%**
- 3. Size, Ability and Capacity of the Firm – 15%**
- 4. Proposed Costs – 35%**

Evaluation Method

All responsive submittals will be reviewed and evaluated by a Review and Selection Team. This four (4) member committee will evaluate the submittals through the following processes:

- Individually provide a detailed review and thorough evaluation of each submittal;
- Individually score each submittal utilizing the scoring method given;
- Combining the scores of each individual team member to form an overall team score;



Eventual participation in a team discussion, including in-depth evaluations and group interaction after individual review and scores are achieved.

The City reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification of any information submitted by any respondent at any time during the evaluation process. This includes, but is not limited to, information that indicates financial resources as well as the ability to provide and maintain the services as requested. The City reserves the right to make investigations of the qualifications of the respondent as it deems appropriate, including but not limited to background investigations.

Firms exhibiting the ability to provide and maintain the services requested will submit a proposal that is formatted correctly and is inclusive of all the required forms to be considered a responsive and responsible proposer.

Selection Method

In general, the City of Hardeeville wishes to avoid the expense (to the City and to presenting firms) of unnecessary presentations. Therefore, the City will make every reasonable effort to achieve the ranking using written submittals alone.

The City may choose to conduct interviews with, or receive presentations from, one or more of the Proposers.. The City will not be liable for any costs incurred by a Proposer in connection with such interviews/presentations (i.e., travel, accommodations, etc.)

The Selection and Review team will rank all complete submittals received and/or formal oral presentations/interviews in order of preference and outcomes will be based on the determination of which firm will meet the needs and provide the best overall value to the City as it pertains to the requirements of the scope of work.

Negotiations

The City reserves the right to negotiate a final agreement with the top ranked proposal that meets the needs and is considered the best value to the City of Hardeeville. If a contract cannot be negotiated with the highest-ranking firm, negotiations may be conducted with the second, and then the third, and so on until a satisfactory contract can be agreed upon and executed.

Additionally, should the City choose to do so, it reserves the right to provide all responsive and responsible Proposers an opportunity to submit their best and final offers.



Award and Contract

Award will be made in accordance with the City of Hardeeville's purchasing policy and procedures. A contract resulting from an award shall be the City of Hardeeville's purchase order and/or contract, containing the City's terms and conditions.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions pertaining to this RFP please contact Brana Snowden, Planning Director.

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The deadline for submission of questions is **July 3, 2025**.