

Sample Request for Qualifications (RFQ) For Consultants to Prepare a Form-Based Code

COMMENTARY: This information has been assembled by the Form-Based Code Institute to assist municipalities that are issuing requests for qualifications for preparing form-based codes. Preceding the suggested scope of services in an RFQ, background information typically explains why the municipality desires a form-based code, what previous planning efforts or documents exist, and the current character of the area to be coded. The “Consultant” referred to below is the individual, firm, or team of individuals/firms who may respond to this request for qualifications.

SUGGESTED SCOPE OF SERVICES:

PRIMARY WORK PRODUCT: This contract will result in a proposed form-based code, meant to supersede (either entirely or in part) the present zoning ordinance and other local land development regulations that apply to [insert name of area]. This code is to be consistent with the definitions and evaluation criteria established by the Form-Based Codes Institute (FBCI); see www.formbasedcodes.org for more details.

1. INITIAL REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

- a. **Interviews.** The Consultant will interview appropriate stakeholders involved with the project. These interviews will include groups and individuals including elected officials, nonprofit organization leaders, property owners, neighborhood representatives, local design professionals, developers, business organizations, and municipal staff.
- b. **Site Analysis.** The Consultant will become familiar with the physical details of [area to be coded] and the historic patterns of urbanism and architecture in the surrounding region.
- c. **Media coverage.** The Consultant will participate in a press conference with local officials and draft a press release to inform the local citizenry about the planning efforts to be undertaken.
- d. **Website.** The Consultant will provide information for [the municipality’s] website. As officials deem appropriate, the Consultant will provide materials including text, photographs, maps, renderings, and other images for the web site. This material will describe the Consultant’s credentials and help explain the project’s process.

2. PUBLIC DESIGN PROCESS

- a. **Generate necessary background maps.** [Municipality] will provide all necessary base map information as needed by the Consultant. These documents will be used to produce the maps that will be used during the preparation of the form-based code.

COMMENTARY: The next sections describe a public process for generating the detailed physical plan that underlies a form-based code. In some circumstances this step will already have been completed and the code work can begin without the full step of a new planning charrette; but in most cases, this critical planning step must be undertaken first.

- b. **Public Workshop and/or Design Charrette.** The Consultant will organize and lead design workshops or a full planning charrette to engage the community, gather ideas and goals, and formulate implementation strategies. The Consultant will tailor the workshop or charrette to obtain maximum community input so as to produce the best possible master plan on which to base the new code. The charrette format will also take into consideration the findings of the initial site analysis, input from staff, and information obtained at previous meetings, workshops, and interviews. While the end result will be new land development regulations, the public process will include discussions of alternatives for street design, street connectivity, and town planning strategies that create vital town centers, corridors, and livable neighborhoods. At the conclusion of the workshop(s), the Consultant will present the work generated to-date. Plans, renderings, and initial coding ideas that reflect ideas articulated in the workshops will be publicly presented and further feedback solicited from the community. It is essential that local government officials attend this presentation along with citizens, stakeholders and technicians.

3. DRAFTING THE FORM-BASED CODE

- a. **Design Parameters for the Form-Based Code.** The new code will regulate development to ensure high-quality public spaces defined by a variety of building types and uses including housing, retail, and office space. The new code will incorporate a regulating plan, building form standards, street standards (plan and section), use regulations as needed, descriptive building or lot types (optional), and other elements needed to implement the principles of functional and vital urbanism and practical management of growth. Sections of this document would typically include the following:

- Overview, including definitions, principles, and intent; and explanation of the regulations and process in clear user-friendly language.
- Regulating Plan (a schematic representation of the master plan) illustrating the location of streets, blocks, public spaces (such as greens, squares, and parks), and other special features. Regulating plans may also include aspects of Building Form Standards such as “build-to-lines” or “required building lines” and building type or form designations.
- Building Form Standards governing basic building form, placement, and fundamental urban elements to ensure that all buildings complement neighboring structures and the street. These standards should be based upon study of building types appropriate for the region, climate, and neighborhood vitality.
- Public Space/Street Standards defining design attributes and geometries that balance the needs of motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders while promoting a vital public realm. These standards should include design specifications for sidewalks, travel lane widths, parking, curb geometry, trees, and lighting.

COMMENTARY: Optional sections here may include building or lot types, architectural standards (exterior materials and quality), landscape standards, parking location and parking management standards, etc.

- b. ***Integration of the Form-Based Code.*** The form-based code must be integrated into [*municipality*’s] existing regulatory framework (zoning and land development regulations) in a manner that insures procedural consistency, meshes with state and local legal requirements, provides clarity as to applicability of existing regulations, and maximizes the effectiveness of the code.

COMMENTARY: Integration of the form-based code may be undertaken by the Consultant, by municipal staff, or some combination thereof.

4. REFINING THE FORM-BASED CODE.

- a. ***Presentation of First Draft.*** The Consultant will present the first draft of the form-based code for the purpose of gathering comments. Copies of the first draft will need to be in hardcopy and digital form and posted on the website. The presentation may be made to a special audience of neighborhood residents or stakeholders, or may be presented before a joint gathering of municipal boards and committees, as determined by [municipality].
- b. ***Presentation of the Second Draft.*** After making revisions in response to comments on the first draft, the Consultant will present the second draft of the form based code at a another meeting convened by [municipality].
- c. ***Meetings with Stakeholders.*** The Consultant will attend and participate in up to [insert number] additional meetings with key stakeholders to explain the details of the new code and obtain further input and comments.

5. APPROVAL PROCESS

- a. ***Public Hearing Presentations.*** The consultant will make formal presentations to the [planning commission] and the [city council].
- b. ***Additional Revisions.*** The Consultant will be responsible for two rounds of revisions that may become necessary between presentations. [Municipality] staff will be responsible for collecting comments, questions, and suggestions for these refinements from various sources and consolidating them into a series of action items for revision or responses.

SUBMITTAL SUMMARY:

Submittals should be provided in [#] identical copies and include the following items, along with other material to demonstrate Consultant's expertise and capability:

1. A brief written description of the Consultant's approach to the project.
2. The expertise of the team assembled by Consultant to carry out the work.
3. A list of comparable projects undertaken by Consultant and/or team members.
4. A copy of at least one municipal form-based code previously created by the Consultant and adopted into law.

RECOMMENDED FORMAT FOR SUBMITTALS:

1. **DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH:** Up to two pages describing the Consultant's typical approach to projects similar to this one, including the nature of the public process and intended extent of public involvement.
2. **TEAM EXPERTISE:** Brief description of general qualifications, the multi-disciplinary nature of the team assembled for this project, specific evidence of relevant experience creating form-based codes, and a listing of key personnel that would be available to work on this project.
3. **COMPARABLE PROJECTS:** Summary of form-based code projects in progress or completed, with the following information for each code:
 - a. Reference name, with current contact information
 - b. Current status of code (drafting in progress; drafting completed; adopted?)
 - c. Nature of public involvement in formulation of code
 - d. Client type (clarifying role of private sector client, if any)
 - e. Was the vision plan created as part of this process, or done separately?
 - f. Size and scale of geographic area
 - g. Type of development (greenfield? infill/redevelopment? city-wide code?)
 - h. Type of code
 - i. Mandatory (integrated into existing code, or freestanding?)
 - ii. Optional "parallel" code?
 - iii. Floating-zone code?
4. **SAMPLE CODE DOCUMENT:** Please include one or more sample code documents selected from the list of comparable projects. If this document is the code as originally proposed by Consultant, please also include the code as formally adopted by the municipality and a brief explanation of differences between the two. Photos of designed or built results of the code are encouraged but must be accompanied by a description of their specific relationship to the form-based coding process.

EVALUATION OF SUBMITTALS:

Consultants responding to this RFQ must demonstrate the following:

- Experience in preparing municipal form-based codes that regulate development and redevelopment in other communities.
- Experience in building community consensus to support innovative regulatory structures.
- Strong graphic skills.
- Strong skills in written and oral communication.
- Experience in identifying, evaluating, codifying, and explaining the essential qualities of community design and character.
- Experience in writing or implementing municipal land development regulations.

[*Municipality*] will evaluate all submittals to determine which Consultants have the experience and qualifications that are most suited for this project. [*Municipality*] may request personal interviews with the highest-ranked Consultants or may request one or more prospective Consultants to submit detailed proposals, which may include the following:

1. Detailed description of the methodology being proposed.
2. Work program detailing:
 - Tasks to be performed.
 - When each will be completed (timeline).
 - Tentative allocation of person days by task.
 - Schedule of work products.
3. Methods the Consultant proposes to use to manage the project and communicate with [*municipality*] and the public as to project progress, reviews, and conduct of public meetings.
4. Identification of key personnel to be assigned to the project and their roles, with resumes of all key personnel.
5. Hourly rates (inclusive of overhead and profit) for personnel or personnel categories.
6. Data expected to be provided by [*municipality*].