



## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

### DUE DATE AND TIME FOR RESPONSE SUBMITTALS:

Tuesday, March 31, 2020 @ 3 PM EST

SUBMIT PROPOSAL TO  
Van Wert County Foundation  
Attn: Hall Block, Project Manager  
138 East Main Street  
Van Wert, OH 45891

PLEASE ADDRESS QUESTIONS TO [hall@vanwertcountyfoundation.org](mailto:hall@vanwertcountyfoundation.org)

**VAN WERT COUNTY FOUNDATION  
Van Wert, Van Wert County, Ohio**

**Request for Proposals  
Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan**

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**I. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

The Van Wert County Foundation is issuing a request to interested planning firms and professionals to submit their qualifications to provide a master development plan for the area described on the following pages called "Downtown Van Wert Area" which includes Foundation-owned buildings and properties, as well as for streetscaping, outdoor amenities, and parking provisions.

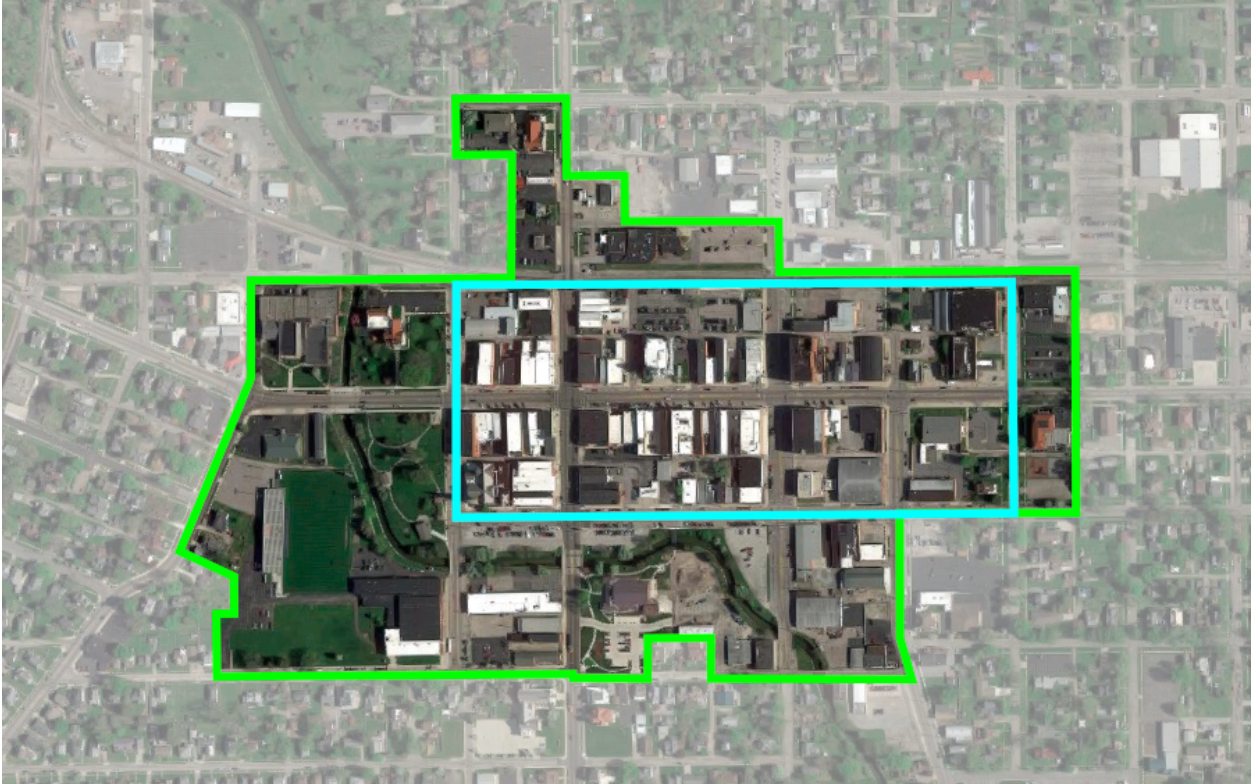
The firm must have demonstrated expertise and experience in similar redevelopment and planning projects involving historic preservation within an urban setting.

This is a Request for Qualifications, in which respondents are asked to submit their qualifications following the requirements as outlined on the following pages. The Van Wert County Foundation reserves the right to invite respondents based on their skills and eliminate companies that do not meet the criteria.

**II. PROJECT AREA SUMMARY**

The outer boundary of the Downtown Van Wert Area shall receive a general focus, whereas the inner boundary and Foundation properties shall receive the majority of the focus of resources. See the Map of Downtown Area below for reference.

## Map of Downtown Area



### 1. Total Project Area

- a. Number of Parcels: 188
- b. Total Area: 69.81 Acres (45.39 Acres in Parcels)
- c. Zoning: B2 - 156 (23.78 Acres), B3 - 14 (14.62 Acres), City - 6 (4.68 Acres), R2 - 7 (1.29 Acres), R3 - 5 (1.02 Acres)

### 2. Foundation-Owned Property

- a. Number of Parcels: 740
- b. Zoning: B2

**3. Location Context:** The downtown area is generally bounded by Shannon St on the West and Cherry St on the East, the railroad tracks on the North and Crawford St on the South. The boundary extends north to include both St. Mark's Lutheran Church and the County Jail and east to include the YWCA and the Salvation Army.

**4. Characteristics:** Existing buildings house a mix of business, institutional, and limited residential uses; 350-foot square grid city blocks; relatively recent streetscaping improvements but limited greenery. The rail line has stunted growth of business at the northern extents of the district. Several significant anchors serve as the west entrance to downtown, including the YMCA, Brumback Library, Fountain Park, and the Van Wert City School Football Stadium. The Wassenberg Art Center delineates the southern boundary. The YWCA and post office create a natural end to the district at the eastern edge.

5. **Access:** Old Lincoln Highway east-west on Main St; Hwy 127 north-south on Washington St to Hwy 30 on the north end of town. Norfolk-Southern Railroad line along Jackson St.
6. **Surrounding Land Uses:** Residential, institutional, light industrial, County Library, City Park, Art Center

### III. **BACKGROUND**

The Van Wert County Foundation is beginning a significant redevelopment and revitalization of several downtown Van Wert properties. The revitalization is expected and intended to affect the entire downtown area, which includes several properties not owned or operated by The Foundation. The aim of this project is to spur redevelopment of other features, both public and private-owned, along with a renewed interest in downtown living and small business growth.

The properties that are owned by The Foundation have been acquired in a brief timeline and are expected to be incorporated in the project similarly. The Foundation continues to work with additional property owners within the boundaries described in Site Information to gauge interest in supporting and participating in the project.

### IV. **OBJECTIVES**

The Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan is expected to guide the development of current and potential future Foundation owned buildings and properties, including the integration of public space elements such as streetscape, outdoor amenities, and parking provisions. The Van Wert County Foundation would like to ensure that each of the following components is a part of the selected firm's involvement in the creation of the final master plan:

#### 1. **Master Plan**

- a. Elements of a downtown plan
- b. Public realm design elements, including landscape architecture:
  - i. Streetscape improvements
  - ii. Public gathering areas including patios, seating, and green space
  - iii. Integration of native plantings, including affirmation of the value of street trees
- c. Transportation elements:
  - i. Walkability and improved ADA access
  - ii. Consideration of the existing road network, parking, and long-range inclusion of multimodal transportation options
- d. Parking recommendations which include options for shared parking for contrasting uses to the maximum extent possible, and identifying

properties with existing structures that may be better utilized as surface parking.

- e. In collaboration with the Wassenberg Art Center and Main Street Van Wert, craft a Public Art plan:
  - i. Connecting the various spaces of the downtown area by revealing but also differentiating between their identities;
  - ii. Establishing a renewed identity while celebrating the existing local culture;
  - iii. Challenging norms and expected outcomes;
  - iv. Devising installations that interact with the buildings and their uses, enticing residents and visitors alike to discover new places.
- f. A rough cost estimate for each of the improvements recommended in the master plan, itemized both by location and by end product.
- g. A clear delineation shall be maintained in all of these facets between public areas and private, regardless of the possible use of private funds for all improvements.

## **2. Community Engagement**

- a. The selected firm will interact with the greater Van Wert community to gauge interest in support of specific elements of the project and to ensure that ideas and concerns are documented and represented in the final master plan. It is the understanding that the master plan will be tailored to meet the needs of the community and the goals of The Foundation's vision.
- b. A specific concern for community engagement is the feedback regarding structures (some of which may have deep sentimental value) that may potentially be demolished, as discussed under the following sub-section (Phasing).
- c. Community engagement should incorporate the standard practices recommended by the American Planning Association.
- d. Active community engagement will focus on meeting a certain threshold of engagements that work to obtain and portray an accurate picture of both stated and implied needs of the community.
- e. A rough guideline of all community engagements, including those in which the planning firm facilitates and those managed by The Foundation – pertaining to the project (i.e., through each phase of the plan and construction).
- f. A community engagement report - including feedback from the community and selected stakeholders - completed by June 30, 2020.
- g. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and specific implications for the state and local levels, the firm may be required to devise creative and equally effective methods of community engagement.

## **3. Phasing**

- a. The overall project will need to be separated into multiple phases for funding and logistical purposes and may be as large as an entire block or as

small as a single business in a multi-tenant building. The Plan will help guide the selection of specific properties for each phase.

- b. Phase selection shall be based on a number of factors, including: business owner desire to relocate and/or expand, availability of suitable vacant space, unique or critical space amenities and characteristics, construction limitations, etc.
- c. A critical facet of phase selection will be the determination of whether to demolish specific structures for parking facilities or retain them for redevelopment. This determination will be coordinated with developers as selected by The Foundation and any architecture or engineering professionals involved in the project.
- d. The firm will coordinate with developers as selected by the Foundation on all phasing decisions.

#### **4. Coordination**

- a. The master plan will be an essential document for The Foundation as well as several additional organizations including the Main Street Van Wert non-profit organization, the City of Van Wert, Van Wert County, Van Wert Area Chamber of Commerce, Wassenberg Art Center, Van Wert Area Economic Development Corporation, and many more. The selected firm will need to acknowledge the various organizations during and after the master planning process through a Foundation-led steering committee to ensure that the Downtown Van Wert Redevelopment Master Plan can be fully implemented.
- b. The project expects to incorporate numerous financing mechanisms to support the completion of the project. The selected firm will need to coordinate with developers as chosen by The Foundation, as well as other possible consultants, to optimize the master plan for integration with proposed financing mechanisms.
- c. The selected firm shall ensure that proposed alterations exceed city, state, and federal regulations, codes, and standards. If any modifications are recommended which conflict with existing rules, the selected firm shall advise The Foundation of methods to either request substantial variances to obtain approval and provide support in that effort or to advise against such changes if necessary.

#### **5. Consultation**

- a. To support the objectives detailed above as well as the vision of The Foundation, the firm shall provide a discussion on the appropriate scope of the project and proper method of execution on an ongoing basis.

## V. EMAIL OF INTEREST

All firms interested in receiving any future notices related to this RFQ may email Hall Block, Property Manager, at hall@vanwertcountyfoundation.org no later than Monday, March 23, 2020. The email shall contain the firm's name, contact person, mailing address, phone number, and email address. The purpose of the Email of Interest is to provide the City with a contact person to receive future notices related to this RFQ.

## VI. SUBMITTAL AND SELECTION PROCESSES

Submittals must include all of the materials in order listed. Please note that the selection team may refuse a submission if all materials requested are not included.

The Foundation is proposing the following three-part process to select a firm that will ultimately be responsible for developing the plan in accordance with the Project Objectives as provided in Section IV.

1. Interested firms should submit their proposal that demonstrates the firm's expertise in master planning and historical redevelopment projects. At a minimum, the following items should be included in the submittal:
  - a. Cover Letter (1 page max)
  - b. Planning Team Organization (3 pages max)
    - i. Describe the lead planning organization and identify any other members of the planning team, such as architecture, engineering (civil, structural, etc.), finance, public engagement, and landscape architecture. (1 page max)
    - ii. Provide the following information for the planning firm (2 pages max):
      1. Planning philosophy and business model
      2. Name, address, email, and phone number of the person who will serve as the contact regarding the RFQ and interview process
      3. Introductions of key project personnel
      4. Location of principal offices
      5. Description or form of organization (corporation, partnership, non-profit, etc.)
      6. List of other names under which the firm has operated or major recent acquisitions of other firms
  - c. Project Experience (3 pages max) – Provide the following information on recent projects that align with the scope and complexity of this Plan. Please include no more than three projects. For each project please include:
    - i. Plan name, location, and description.
    - ii. Status of project (completed, implementation, planning, etc).
    - iii. A link directing to a PDF version of the plan.

- iv. Photos, site plans, layouts, and renderings of plan or project.
- v. At least two references with each project and plan (one government representative and one project representative preferred).
- d. Project Understanding and Approach (2 pages max)
  - i. Describe the planning team's understanding of the project.
  - ii. Provide a detailed description of the firm's approach to the project and master plan development.
  - iii. Incorporate elements of the firm's understanding of the community.
- e. Project Cost Estimate (3 pages max)
  - i. Estimated Cost to complete the Plan on schedule. (Account for hours, community engagement, necessary marketing, necessary travel expenses including per diem food and lodging, design, revisions, and printing).
  - ii. Rate sheet including the per-hour rate of each team member and how many hours each team member expects to participate in the plan.
  - iii. Submit the following documents (not included in the page limit):
    - 1. Standard conflict of interest form
    - 2. Draft copy of a professional services agreement
    - 3. Commercial general liability form that protects the firm with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
  - iv. As a separate form, to be in addition to the appendices, please note a cost associated with ongoing support services to assist The Foundation in plan implementation efforts. This would be subject to a separate agreement that would be decided near the completion of the master plan. Interested firms must submit the following
    - 1. Document showcasing their willingness to continue consulting on the project after completion
    - 2. Estimated hourly cost to provide professional support services to The Foundation after the end of the master plan.
- f. Appendices (4 pages max)
  - i. Submissions may include additional relevant information such as supplementary information from similar plans and non-binding letters of support from past projects and partners. Appendices must be attached to the end of the submittal.
- 2. Based on the responses from Step One, The Foundation will select firms for a community visit to include a site tour and information session. This will provide an opportunity for the selected firms to meet with the representatives from The Foundation and share their collective vision for the site and answer questions.
- 3. Based on the firms' competency of Step One and Step Two, The Foundation will select one firm to move into negotiations to develop the master plan.



## VII. SCHEDULE

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and specific implications for the state and local levels, both current and future, the submission deadlines for both the RFQ response and the Plan may need to be postponed. This will be at the sole discretion of The Foundation; please confer with Foundation staff directly if you feel that a deadline cannot be met and with details on your firm's specific hardship.

<b>PLAN ELEMENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>RFQ Issued</b>	<b>March 17, 2020</b>
<b>Email of Interest due</b>	<b>March 23, 2020</b>
<b>RFQ Question Deadline</b>	<b>March 25, 2020</b>
<b>Step One - RFQ Submittal Due</b>	<b>March 31, 2020</b>
<b>Step Two - Community &amp; Site Tour</b>	<b>Week of April 6, 2020</b>
<b>Step Three - Firm Selection</b>	<b>April 10, 2020</b>
<b>Contract</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report</b>	<b>June 30, 2020</b>
<b>Draft Recommendations Due</b>	<b>July 31, 2020</b>
<b>Draft Plan Due for Review</b>	<b>August 14, 2020</b>
<b>Final Master Plan Due</b>	<b>September 7, 2020</b>