

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR STRATEGIC MARKETING AND ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY SERVICES

WV Region 2 Planning & Development Council (Region 2) is seeking a consulting firm with qualified market economists and strategic consultants with proven skills in heritage attraction and tourism-themed development to work with regional stakeholders to conduct a Market Strategy and Feasibility Study for Exit 8 on Interstate 64 and along WV State Route 152 and surrounding areas in Cabell, Wayne, Logan, and Mingo Counties, West Virginia. This economic diversification initiative is critical to the progress of a region that is at the heart of the nation's struggling coal economy. This initiative is anticipated to create a new heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism hub through:

(a) Construction of a new West Virginia Welcome Center at the interchange of Interstate 64 and WV State Route 152 in Cabell County, WV (I-64 Exit 8), adjacent to a planned Water Park and Lodge; and

(b) The connection of key hubs along WV State Route 152 in southern WV's Cabell, Wayne, Logan, and Mingo Counties through upgrades to roadways, signage, and marketing campaigns. These key hubs include Heritage Farm Museum & Village, Huntington Museum of Art, Hatfield-McCoy Trails, Beech Fork State Park, East Lynn Lake, Cabwaylingo State Forest, Rustic Ravines, and West Huntington including its Central City Antique District and WestEdge Factory.

Region 2 notes that other, complementary planning studies have been conducted or are underway that can help inform the Marketing & Feasibility studies requested here, which can be provided upon request.

Project activities may include the following:

Phase I. Initial Project Assessment

- a. Review of past and current attendance profile and operations of key existing tourism hubs.
- b. Location and site analysis at the Interstate 64 / Route 152 interchange and key hubs.
- c. Resident and tourism market definition for the proposed projects.
- d. Analysis of defined markets for the projects.
- e. Selected case studies of multi-venue destinations in similar rural areas.

Phase II. Feasibility of Individual Project Elements: Feasibility studies for plan components, including a West Virginia Welcome Center at Exit 8, Heritage Farm expansions, Hatfield-McCoy Trails expansions, West Huntington including its Old Central City Antique District, and transportation/marketing connections among key hubs. Each of the feasibility studies may include:

- a. Location analysis for appropriateness of visibility, accessibility, and site characteristics.
- b. Local and regional competitive context.
- c. Attendance potential including visitors by type (ticketed, group, member, season, pricing).
- d. Throughput, facility capacity and parking demand analysis where applicable.
- e. Earned revenue by type analysis.
- f. Operating expense by type analysis.
- g. Pro forma financial analysis including as appropriate cash flow, ROI.
- h. Summary of project feasibility and contribution to overall plan success.

Phase III. Consolidated Market and Feasibility Study.

- a. Evaluation of total site attendees and ability to attract multi-day visitors.
- b. Plan elements that are attendance drivers.
- c. Consolidated feasibility study (attendance, revenues and operating expenses) for entire plan.
- d. Multi-year implementation of the plan (attendance, revenues & operating expenses by year as facilities are brought on line) and overall operational feasibility as the plan is implemented.

Phase IV. Project Economic Impacts Analysis: for the local, regional and state economies.

Procurement of said services shall be made in accordance with section 5G of the West Virginia State Code. Contracts are to be awarded on a lump sum/fixed fee basis. All consulting firms interested in being considered for this project must submit seven (7) copies of their proposal detailing technical expertise, qualifications, and related prior experience. Proposals must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, March 1, 2019, to the following address:

Chris Chiles, Executive Director
Region 2 Planning & Development Council
400 Third Avenue
Huntington, WV 25701

If forwarded by mail, the sealed envelope containing the proposals must be enclosed in another envelope with the consulting firm and project name highlighted on the outside of the outer envelope and must allow for sufficient time for mailing to reach the above referenced address prior to the scheduled closing time for the receipt of proposals. Responses not post marked and/or received by 4:00 p.m. on the response due date will not be considered. Should there be any questions, please contact Chris Chiles, Executive Director, Region 2 Planning & Development Council, 400 Third Avenue, Huntington, WV 25701 (Telephone: 304-529-3357). Interviews will be held, and final selection of a consultant will be made during the month of April, 2019.

Proposal Content:

1. Firm name, address, phone number, email.
2. A list of key staff members who will play significant roles in the project, including the Project Manager, and resumes listing the background and qualifications of those persons.
3. A general description of the techniques, approaches, and methods to be used in the firm's proposed project approach.
4. A representative listing of projects similar to the proposed project performed by the firm.
5. At least two references with contact information from organizations that have used the firm's services for similar projects.
6. A list of the firm's present workload relative to capacity and availability to provide the requested services.
7. If applicable, a list of significant subconsultants, their current prequalification categories and DBE status, and the percentage of work to be performed by each.
8. The location of the primary office where most of the work will be performed.

The goal of the competitive process is to objectively select the firm which will provide the highest quality of service at a realistic fee. Accordingly, qualifications and experience will be weighed heavily. A committee of representatives as determined by Region 2 shall evaluate the statements of qualifications and other material submitted by interested firms and select a minimum of three firms which, in their opinion, are best qualified to perform the desired service. Interviews with each firm selected shall be conducted and the committee shall conduct discussions to evaluate the presented information. The committee shall then rank in order of preference no less than three professional firms deemed to be the most highly qualified to provide the services required, and shall commence scope of services and price negotiations with the highest qualified professional firm for said services. Should the committee be unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with the professional firm considered to be the most qualified, at a fee determined to be fair and reasonable, price negotiations with the firm of second choice shall commence. Failing accord with the second most qualified professional firm, the committee shall undertake negotiations with the third most qualified professional firm. Should the committee be unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with any of the professional firms in order of their competence and qualifications, it shall continue negotiations in accordance with these procedures until an agreement is reached.

All work shall be performed in accordance with the regulations issued by the federal funding source (Appalachian Regional Commission) and the State of West Virginia pertaining thereto. The selected firm will be required, if applicable, to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, President's Executive Order 11246, Section 109 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1974, Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, Conflict of Interest Statement, Access to Records provisions, and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970. The selected firm must also fully comply with the Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise and Affirmative Action requirements. If a portion of the project is subcontracted, then "positive efforts" must be made to subcontract to Minority/Women-Owned Businesses. This shall be done in compliance with the six (6) affirmative steps as outlined in 40 CFR 33.240.

Region 2 will afford full opportunity to minority business enterprises to respond to this request and will not discriminate against any interested firm or individual on the grounds of race, creed, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin in the awarding of this contract.

Attention is directed to the fact that Region 2 will not enter into an agreement for consulting services for this project unless, in Region 2's opinion, funding is imminent or actually received which is sufficient to complete the project. If sufficient funding is received or anticipated, this contract will be awarded to the responsible offeror whose proposal is within the competitive range and determined to be the most advantageous to Region 2, price and other factors considered. Region 2 will conduct negotiations on an individual project basis following the hierarchy of rankings as determined during the selection process. However, Region 2 reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals.

Chris Chiles, Executive Director
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