



## Draft Request For Qualifications

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### Background

An important City Council Priority is the completion of a new Comprehensive Plan and appropriate Small Area Plans for certain parts of the City. These include the Roswell Road corridor, PCID, the Powers Ferry Landing Area, and Marta Station sites. Although the mandated approval date of the Comprehensive Plan is not until 2017, the significant number of development proposals under consideration warrant and the often disconnect between the Comprehensive Plan and what is desired result in a sense of urgency in moving these items forward as quickly as possible.

Over the last several years there have been several steps taken by City Council to address growth management issues. These include:

- Three moratoriums to allow time to make significant Zoning Ordinance Amendments that bring the Ordinance into alignment with the Comprehensive Plan
- Sixteen Zoning Ordinance Amendments since 2012, including apartment and townhome development standards, prohibiting apartments as an allowable use in commercial zoning districts, modifying parking requirements, and restricting the location of auto uses and big box commercial uses
- Holding a focused natural resource protection special called work session that focused on addressing the impact of development on the City's natural resources
- Directing Erosion Control Ordinance Amendments (approved), Tree Conservation Ordinance Amendments (under consideration) and Stormwater Ordinance Amendments (under development) that strengthen the protection of natural resources

Review of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan reveals a number of issues and opportunities. A large number of these have been addressed but many more remain. The update of the Comprehensive Plan, development of specific Small Area Plans, and adoption of implementation codes and plans will move the City much further along the road to having the appropriate tools in place to guide appropriate development. Some of the most relevant issues identified in the 2007 Plan that must be addressed now include:

- "Fixing" Roswell Road
- Redeveloping older apartment complexes
- Addressing infill development issues
- Addressing the interface between protected neighborhoods and commercial areas, especially within the Roswell Road corridor.
- Managing access points along corridors
- Emphasizing transit oriented development.

In addition City Council has identified several other priorities that must be addressed through the process. These include:

- Ensuring the plan is economically responsible and reflects projected market conditions
- In appropriate areas (near transit) limit multi-family development to mixed-use high to mid-rise developments rather than lower density walk-up apartment NOTE: I am not sure the Council is in agreement regarding this concept. (Let's discuss further)

As stated above there are several points to this planning process that need to be completed to give City Council the tools needed to guide growth in the most appropriate manner. These are described below:

***Comprehensive Plan-*** Georgia law requires that Comprehensive Plans be updated every ten years. As outlined in Georgia Code, there are specific benefits to the City adopting a vibrant, meaningful plan that directly addresses current issues and opportunities:

“The highest and best use of comprehensive planning for local governments is to show important relationships between community issues. A local comprehensive plan is a fact-based resource for local constituents that tracks implementation of community-based policies. Furthermore, local comprehensive planning creates an environment of predictability for business and industry, investors, property owners, taxpayers and the general public. In addition, the plan helps local governments to recognize and then implements important economic development and revitalization initiatives.”

Georgia Code also requires that certain elements be contained in each Comprehensive Plan:

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Capital Improvement Programs
- Economic Development Element
- Land Use Element
- Transportation Element
- Housing Element

These Plan elements are addressed at a very high level and include broad and general policies that apply City wide. A review of the 2007 Sandy Springs plan reveals that an update, but not major overhaul, is warranted. The Comprehensive Plan is an important part of the process however, because it sets the direction for the more detailed planning effort. The Plan should establish the overarching goals defining community desires; the small area plans provide the specific area based direction on how to achieve these desires. To be an accurate reflection of the community’s vision, the goal setting effort will involve significant community engagement.

***Roswell Road Small Area Plans-*** A plan for Roswell Road is an important priority for City Council. At the January 27, 2015 City Council Retreat the Roswell Road corridor was described as:

- A community hub
- Address for more than 1,000 businesses
- Contains over 1,500 acres of non-residential zoning
- Major north/south state route
- 30,000 vehicles per day
- Approximately 12.6 million square feet of non-residential development

Those characteristics present outstanding opportunities for economic success and quality of life improvements for residents. However, that same report identified a number of challenges along the corridor:

- Vacant or underutilized commercial properties
- Depth and size of some properties
- Location of the majority of the City’s Class C apartment stock
- Lack of street grid and inter-parcel connectivity
- Too many curb-cuts
- Lack of shade

- Lots of visual clutter

A small area plan should address those issues and provide a specific direction for the entire length of Roswell Road. While a plan for the entire corridor is desired it is understood that the corridor does not share the same character for the length from north to south. The plan should result in identification of unique character nodes and provide plans specific to each. When complete it will include very detailed recommendations and implementation steps to accomplish the stated goals. Due to the sense of urgency to address development pressures and ensure successful implementation of the plan, the process will also include new zoning code for the corridor.

***Perimeter Center Improvement District Small Area Plan-*** Areas within Perimeter Center have also been identified as in need of a more detailed small area planning effort. Traffic congestion, multi-modal connectivity, lack of housing near and adjacent to Marta stations, and the lack of workforce housing are all concerns that have been identified within this area.. This plan should focus on the implementation steps to achieve the desired mix of uses and densities to encourage a multimodal live-work environment. Issues of connectivity will also be addressed. Revised zoning codes that achieve the desired results will be produced as part of this effort as well. The plan must also focus on achieving a mix of housing types and address parking needs and best practices for parking to help meet transportation mode split goals.

***North Springs and New Station Small Area Plans-*** Working with MARTA this small area planning effort should also address the North Springs Station area and planned new northern station area. MARTA has adopted Transit Oriented Development (TOD) guidelines that include four basic goals that should guide City planning efforts in these areas:

1. Station-area development that is compact and dense relative to its surrounding.
2. A rich mix of land uses.
3. A great public realm.
4. A new approach to parking.

The current 2007 Comprehensive Plan calls for the areas around the station to be dense with a good mix of uses, therefore, the intent of these plans will be to refine the details and establish mechanisms to guide appropriate growth.

***Powers Ferry Landing Area Plan-*** The relocation of the Atlanta Braves stadium to Cobb County, just across the Chattahoochee River from Powers Ferry Landing, constitutes a changed condition that will likely exert transportation and development pressures on this area. In order to be proactive and address future development pressures a small area plan for this area is also warranted.

## **Scope of Work**

As stated above this planning project will entail a significant coordination of a traditional update of the Comprehensive Plan along with several small areal plans with the development of zoning code to be adopted to guide implementation. An additional component will be a strong economic analysis to ensure that the recommendations of the plan make economic sense for the community. It is envisioned that the successful proposer will be a team with a lead consultant and several additional team members with skills and experience in several disciplines.

Specific work elements are outlined below.

**Comprehensive Plan** – The review and updating of the 2007 Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan is the first in the many planning efforts that must be undertaken. The current plan was essentially a continuation of the Fulton County Plan goals and direction although it was done specifically for the city. The feeling of the planning staff is that the current plan adequately addresses the big picture growth goals but that the details must be addressed in the small area plans. The Comprehensive Plan goals and land use elements must be the beginning point of the planning process in order to define the framework for the small area plans. Elements to be included in the Comprehensive Plan are those elements required by Georgia Planning law. They are:

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Capital Improvement Program
- Work Program

**Economic Development** - A major emphasis of the Comprehensive Plan and each of the small area plans will be a comprehensive look at economic and market issues. For these plans to be achievable guidelines for the future of Sandy Springs, they need to be grounded in economic reality. A scope of work for the planning process should include at a minimum the following components:

- Inventory and evaluation of existing commercial enterprises and other land uses within the City and each small planning area.
- Analysis of available square footage for commercial uses and comparison to overall market.
- A market analysis to determine the best mix of uses for each planning area.
- Evaluation of the potential for building/property re-use.
- Assessment of parking requirements and location of parking.
- Recommendations regarding appropriate uses for each corridor.
- Recommended character themes for each small planning area.
- Recommended changes to code and policy that address parking ratios, include definitions of mixed use that achieve legitimate mixed-use projects, and incentivize more dense residential development in the appropriate areas.
- Evaluation of the transition from commercial to non-commercial uses and recommendations for approaches to address any adverse impacts and take advantage of the unique settings of the areas.
- Evaluation of the potential redevelopment of older, dated apartment complexes and recommend approaches to take advantage of the unique opportunities.
- Analyze the current and potential housing market with projections by unit mix and type

**Citizen Engagement and Communications** – A critical component of successful planning efforts is community engagement. Details being fleshed out by staff will be further refined in coordination with the selected consultant teams, but it is envisioned that the process will begin with communitywide visioning and goal setting charrettes. This process will be very similar to the process followed by Goody-Clancy in the development of the City Center Master Plan and include charrettes, open houses and stakeholder meetings.

Comprehensive and effective communications and citizen participation must be a part of the Comprehensive Plan process.

The plan must provide for, and encourage, citizen participation. Offeror should provide an overview of process/procedures for proactively engaging and soliciting input from the community. Including:

- Scheduling of small group stakeholder meetings as well as community-wide public meetings
  - Notification process: including methods for outreach and budget considerations
  - Determination of location and settings to host meetings
  - Mechanisms to reach diverse audience base
- Staffing plan for citizen engagement meetings
- Outline of how information is taken in during these public engagement sessions and utilized in development of a Comprehensive Plan
- Development of a community engagement plan to facilitate interaction with relevant stakeholders.
- Development of community engagement marketing and public presentation materials.

Access to Information is a critical component in development of a Comprehensive Plan. Citizens and other interested parties must have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments. Offeror should describe tools and methods planned to ensure that information is available, accessible and interactive. In particular, the use of web and online forums, in addition to traditional methods of outreach and submission of information.

Development of a Comprehensive Plan is a complex undertaking, and not widely understood by the general public; however, community engagement and input is vital for a successful outcome. Offeror should explain how it plans to market and brand the program so that the Plan Development process is easily understood by the public and encourages participation.

- Branding
- Marketing Plan
- Graphic Design

As the final Comprehensive Plan will become a public document, Offeror should detail how it plans to ensure that the Plan will meet the City's high standards for writing, including strong grammatical editing.

Offeror should explain how it plans to interact with the various departments within the City – outlining key areas where it will need staff support and where it plans to lead process with staff input.

- Experience Consideration: Consultant should demonstrate qualifications and project experience that includes:
  - Civic Engagement and Involvement Programs
  - Other Communications and Marketing qualifications relevant to the proposed project

**Small Area Plans** – As described above this planning effort will also include Small Area Plans for the following areas:

- Roswell Road with priority one north of I-285 and two south of I-285
- Perimeter Center Improvement District
- North Springs and new Marta Station Areas
- Powers Ferry

Each of the small area plans shall be specific to the area but all should include a common set of work items. In addition each should include the analysis called out in the economic, transportation and land use elements at the small area level. Work to be included in each is outlined below.

### Inventory

- Vacant and underutilized properties
- Properties that lack width or depth for redevelopment
- Redevelopment opportunities

### Land Use

- Desired type and mix of uses
- Defined undesirable uses
- Desired design standards
- Standards for open and green space and green infrastructure

### Transportation

- Improvements to the street network
- Improvements to the bike/ped network
- Details of the network cross sections
- Recommendations for mass transit improvements and incentives

### Short Term Work Program

- Prioritized capital improvement program
- Prioritized implementation items

These planning efforts also need more detailed analysis and recommendation on several topics than the typical comprehensive plan. The following scope items are intended to elicit the detail desired to ensure that this is a plan specific to Sandy Springs and a plan that is a living useful document.

### **Transportation**

- Elements for Evaluation
  - Roadway
    - Safety
    - Demand, Capacity
    - Travel Patterns
    - Connectivity
    - Asset Management
  - Traffic Operations
    - Intersections
    - Intelligent Transportation System
    - Intersections LOS, Safety
    - Traffic Calming
  - Freight / Logistics
    - Demand
    - Routes
  - Transit
    - Local service
    - Transit Oriented Development
    - Last Mile Connectivity
  - Bicycle (refer to Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trail Plan)
  - Pedestrian (refer to Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trail Plan)
  - Trail (consider recreational in Parks and Recreation Plan update)
  - Travel Demand Management

- Perimeter District Assessment
  - Strategic Review of Existing Plan Recommendations
  - Selection Criteria
  - Update Cost Estimates
  - Create 5 and 10-year Prioritized Capital Improvement Program
    - Funding Availability
    - Unmet Needs
  - Review of Transportation Demand Management Program
    - Rideshare
    - Transit (MARTA, GRTA, Private Shuttles)
    - Bicycle, Pedestrian
  - Review of Transit Circulator Recommendations
  - Station-Area Development and Connectivity Studies
    - Medical Center
    - Sandy Springs
    - North Springs
- Roswell Road Corridor Assessment
  - Node Street Connectivity
  - Transit Operations
  - Access Management
- Zoning and Development Ordinance Evaluation
  - Assessment of Required Transportation Infrastructure
  - Complete Streets Policy Development
  - City Center Street Grid Verification
  - Development Standards and Details
  - Summary of Unmet Needs
  - Review of Goals and Performance Measure
- Inventory of Existing Conditions and Planned Projects
  - Baseline Data
  - Project Compilation
- Needs Assessment and Identification of Unmet Needs
  - Peer Cities Benchmarking
  - Safety
  - Existing and Future Demand, Capacity (travel demand model) – Horizon year: 2040,
  - Major Corridors
  - Asset Management (Pavement, Bridges, Stormwater)
  - Land Use – Transportation Compatibility (Roadway Classification)
  - Multimodal Needs
    - Transit
    - Travel Demand Management
    - Freight
    - Bicycle/Pedestrian (refer to Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trail Plan)
  - Emerging Technologies
- Transportation Strategies
  - Policy Modifications
  - Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation
- Program of Projects
  - Performance and Selection Criteria
  - Capital Improvement Element (constrained plan)

- Long-Range Plan (unconstrained plan)
- Financial Assessment

***Zoning Code Development*** – the team will develop new zoning code for the small area planning areas. 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 regulating plans for each district, building form standards, street standards(plan and section), use regulations as needed, descriptive building or lot types, and other elements needed to implement the principles of functional and vital urbanism and practical management of growth. Sections of the code would 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, and other special features. Regulating plans should 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 neighborhood structures and the street.
- Street Standards defining design attributes and geometrics 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, tree and lighting.
- Civic Space Standards defining the types of spaces appropriate for their location promoting civic spaces within walking distance of residences and workplaces.
- Architectural Standards that capture the elements in draft design guidelines including exterior materials and quality.
- Landscape Standards defining plantings required to create high-quality environments, provide shade, and contribute to the goals of the City’s stormwater standards.
- Parking Types, Amount and Location that promote walkability and the use of alternative transportation, while providing the minimum needs for development and commerce.
- Appropriate land use restrictions/qualifications were warranted to ensure compatibility and public safety/health.
- Integration of the New Code into the existing regulatory framework in a manner that meets all state and local legal requirements, ensures procedural consistency, provides clarity regarding the applicability of existing regulations and maximizes effectiveness.

Timeline- A general schedule should proceed as below:

* Council Briefing	March 3, 2015
RFQ Release	March 10, 2015
RFP Responses	April 26, 2015
* Council approval of contract	May 18, 2015
Project Kick-Off	June 1, 2015
Initial Community Meetings	July, 2015
Data Analysis Draft	August 2015
*Economic Analysis Draft	October, 2015
Small Area Plans Stakeholder Meetings	September 2015

*Comprehensive Plan Completed Draft	December, 2015
Roswell Road Draft Small Area Plan	January 2016
Roswell Road Draft Form Based Code	March, 2016
PCID Draft Small Area Plan	January, 2016
PCID Draft Form Based Code	March, 2016
* Council approval of Codes	May 2016
Other Small Area Plan Drafts Complete	April 2016
Other Small Area Plan Final Plans	June 2016
* Council Approval of Other Small Area Plans	July 2016
Other Small Area Plans & Form Based Code Drafts	June 2016
* Other Small Area Plans & Form Based Code Approval	August 2016

\* Critical Decision Points

Deliverables- What will we have when all this is done?

- Updated Comprehensive Plan that meets DCA requirements.
- Roswell Road Corridor Small Area Plans
- Roswell Road Corridor Zoning Code
- Roswell Road Corridor Design Guidelines
- PCID Small Area Plan
- PCID Zoning Code (including TOD guidelines)
- Other Small Area Plans
- Other Small Area Zoning Changes (TOD guidelines)
- Short Term Work Program