

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
FOR THE  
TOWN OF GATE CITY'S BUSINESS DISTRICT  
REVITALIZATION

The Town of Gate City is soliciting proposals and/or statements of qualifications from firms for a Downtown Economic Restructuring Plan, and a Physical Improvement Plan. A complete copy of the scope of work maybe obtained from the Town of Gate City's website at, [www.gatecityva.us](http://www.gatecityva.us) or Mr. Jason Stewart, Town Manager, at (276) 386-3831. Proposals must be submitted to Mr. Stewart by 5:00 PM on Friday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Late proposals will not be considered.

**DRAFT**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**FOR THE**  
**TOWN OF GATE CITY'S BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION**

Since August 2005, the Town of Gate City has been participating in the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Business District Revitalization Planning process. As part of the DHCD planning process, the Town was required to hold management team meetings to discuss planning efforts, to compile a building and business inventory, to complete a downtown user survey and to hold a visioning session with a professional facilitator. The preliminary tasks have been completed and the Town has been awarded a Planning Grant from DHCD. This grant will be used for professional services to continue its revitalization planning efforts.

The Town of Gate City is soliciting proposals and statements of qualifications from a qualified, licensed firm or a team of qualified, licensed firms for a *Downtown Economic Restructuring Plan* and a *Downtown Physical Improvement Plan* for its business district revitalization project.

**1. Downtown Economic Restructuring Plan**

The Downtown Economic Restructuring Plan will be a comprehensive study to identify trends, major problems, economic opportunities, and strategies to address the Town's economic blight. It shall include implementation recommendations, timeframes and the following minimum elements:

*Downtown Business Market Analysis-* An analysis of Gate City's downtown business market should detail the economic goals, competitiveness, leakage, potential markets, and opportunities. The consultant will use economic data available from local, state, and federal agencies as well as information from the downtown user survey that was conducted by the management teams. Over 300 shopper surveys were collected by community volunteers from shoppers at different businesses throughout the Town. Questions were asked regarding where shoppers bought items, if they were satisfied with the business establishments within the Town, improvements they would like to see within the town, etc.

*Downtown Housing Market Analysis-* An analysis of the market potential for revitalized or new housing opportunities within the downtown business district of Gate City. This analysis should focus on potential low- to moderate- income housing in existing downtown building's vacant and unused space, as well as, adaptive reuse techniques to see this process through.

*Business Development Strategy-* This strategy should include techniques to improve the economic viability of the Town of Gate City, including business recruitment strategies,

opportunities to complement “The Crooked Road,” and other musical heritage funding strategies, and financial, policy, and/or tax incentive strategies.

*Marketing Strategy*-This strategy should develop a marketing plan of action to expand Gate City’s existing markets, particularly tourism, due to Gate City’s deep roots in musical heritage. The strategy should identify a “theme” for Gate City that will tie into its potential marketing strategies, history, culture, and architectural styles. A logo or “brand” will be created that represents the community. As tourism increases, the Town of Gate City desires a seamless brand that will consistently reinforce its image. In addition, the strategy will identify potential costs and sources of revenue. A monitoring and evaluation system will be identified.

## **2. Downtown Physical Improvement Plan**

A downtown physical improvement plan will be developed for the future physical layout and characteristics of the downtown business district based on the community’s vision and the economic restructuring plan. Physical improvements should include techniques to improve and establish historically themed building façade along the downtown district, as well as, techniques to improve the streetscape, parking, signage, traffic flow, vacant lots, and other physical and aesthetic aspects of the downtown business district in Gate City. The Plan will contain current cost estimates, on an itemized basis, for the improvements and be organized in a phased action plan. It will also contain schematics and/or renderings of the proposed improvements. Additionally, it will make recommendations for funding opportunities for implementation such as traditional local, state and federal sources, tax credits, and historic preservation tax credits.

The Town of Gate City has completed building inventory surveys, which contains photos of all the buildings in the Town’s downtown business district, as well as additional information that included square footage, tax assessments, current use of building, owner information, etc. Also, business inventory surveys have been completed which includes information regarding the type of businesses, number of employees, hours of operation, parking needs, and broadband internet needs for all businesses within the Town’s downtown business district. In addition, a downtown user survey was completed that solicited input from shoppers on needed physical improvements.

### **Proposal Requirements**

The Town of Gate City desires to secure professional services from a qualified, licensed firm or firms for the completion of a **Downtown Economic Restructuring Plan** and a **Downtown Physical Improvement Plan** for its business district revitalization project. The Town will apply to DHCD in March of 2007 for construction funding; therefore both products must be satisfactorily completed no later than December 1, 2006. All payments will be made based on performance benchmarks to be determined during contract negotiations.

The firm or the team of firms will provide representatives who shall attend all public meetings to provide regular updates, to seek community input at critical stages, present results and conclusions. In addition, these representatives will also attend any meetings with the management team to discuss planning, product development, funding opportunities, etc.

The successful offerer(s) will provide five (5) final copies of the Plans to the Town and will provide them in full digital format (software specifications will be discussed during contract negotiations). The Town of Gate City will retain all copyrights to all materials produced.

The following information should be included in the statement of qualifications:

1. A detailed outline of the tasks proposed to achieve the identified outcomes described above and justification for the estimated Plans costs. Approximately \$30,000 total will be available for the Plans.
2. A timetable for completion of said tasks identified item #1 (to be completed by December 1, 2006) and actions to be taken if said timetable is not met.
3. A breakdown of the individuals that will work on these Plans, including but not necessarily limited to, their education, experience, and training expertise related to these proposed Plans and what their specific roles will be. In addition, information regarding the firm's familiarity and experience working with DHCD's Community Development Block Grant program and the Virginia Main Street Program should be included. Each firm should provide three references of similar projects and contact information for the localities.
4. A visual example of what the Plans would look like in terms of format, printing quality and mapping.

The Town of Gate City is not liable for any costs incurred by contractors prior to issuance of a contract. For the responder's benefit, a pre-submittal meeting can be conducted between the Town and/or the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, if requested.

#### **Selection Criteria:**

The criteria for review of qualifications statements and selection of a firm will include:

- Experience and success in planning sustainable local economic development projects.
- Knowledge and familiarity of the firm with Southwest Virginia.
- Knowledge and familiarity of the firm with this project.
- Past record of performance on contracts with the Town of Gate City or other clients in the LENOWISCO service area, including quality of work, timeliness and cost control.
- Past performance on similar downtown revitalization projects.

- Experience with DHCD and the Virginia Main Street Program.
- Average time frame for completion of past projects similar in size and scope.

Qualifications statements will be evaluated based on the criteria contained herein by a committee chosen by the Town of Gate City. Interviews will be conducted with at least two of the top-ranked firms. The final selection will be based upon those interviews. The highest ranked offerer will enter into contract negotiations and a final scope of services, amount, and method of compensation will be determined. If a mutually acceptable contract for services cannot be successfully negotiated, the committee will commence negotiations with the next highest rated offerer until a contract is successfully negotiated. The Town of Gate City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to negotiate with the most qualified responder.

If the Town of Gate City is awarded funding from DHCD for construction, the Town reserves the right to enter into contract negotiations with the selected firm for final construction plans and specifications, project management, and/or construction administration should both parties be mutually agreeable.

The Town of Gate City is an Equal Opportunity Employer and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap. Minority-Owned Business Enterprises and Female Owned Business Enterprises are encouraged to submit. By submitting this statement of qualifications, the respondent certifies that it does not and will not during the performance of this contract violate the provisions of the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which prohibits employment of illegal aliens.

### **Submittal of Proposals and Statements of Qualifications**

All statements should be submitted to Mr. Jason Stewart, Town Manager, Town of Gate City, 176 E. Jackson Street, Gate City, VA 24251. Statements must be received by 5:00 PM on Friday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006, in order to be considered. Five (5) copies of the material should be submitted for review by the Town's selection committee. Additional information may be obtained from the Town of Gate City's website, [www.gatecityva.us](http://www.gatecityva.us), Mr. Stewart at (276) 386-3831, or Ms. Lou Ann Johnson, Regional Planner II, LENOWISCO Planning District Commission at (276) 431-2206.

Authorized by:

Mark Jenkins, Mayor  
Town of Gate City