

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR MASTER PLANNING SERVICES



William D. Underwood, President



Sarah Gerwig-Moore, Co-Chair and Kevin Dubose, Co-Chair

College Hill Corridor Commission, acting as Managing Agent

Closing Location, Date and Time

Economic and Community Development
Department
200 Cherry St.
Suite 300
Macon, Georgia 31201

One electronic copy of the proposal must be
received by 5:00 p.m. on **June 26, 2008**

Mercer University and
its agent, The College Hill Corridor Commission
with staff support from the Economic and Community Development Department, The City of
Macon, GA

College Hill Corridor/ Mercer Village Master Plan
Request for Qualifications

Introduction

The College Hill Corridor project in Macon represents a timely opportunity to connect people and organizations to each other in a worthwhile place. Inspired by a student project, the former Mayor of Macon and the President of Mercer University established the College Hill Corridor Commission to achieve the redevelopment of the corridor between Mercer University and downtown. A generous grant for Master Planning from the James S. and John L. Knight Foundation has made it possible to request qualifications for Master Planning of this Corridor and Village including infill construction, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, improving cultural and social connections, increasing visual appeal and connecting the needs of our “anchor” institutions and destinations. This project will be contracted by Mercer University and managed by the College Hill Corridor Commission with staff support from City of Macon’s Economic and Community Development Department.

Background

Macon has a rich social and architectural heritage, with a larger and more diverse inventory of buildings on the National Register of Historic Places than Savannah or Charleston, SC. Unfortunately, Macon suffers from significant disinvestments in its central city. Population decreases since 1950 find the current population at 92,000 with many residents living in suburban communities outside the city’s borders. The city is committed to a coordinated and comprehensive redevelopment of downtown and intown Macon as a sound and sustainable investment for the future. A market study by Zimmerman/Volk Associates suggests significant population growth in these areas if the right amenities exist.

Convinced by this and other studies, public and private leadership identified the College Hill Corridor as a necessary project to enable economic vitality, stability and quality of life. This Corridor, beginning at Mercer Village, will provide a physical and social link among our institutions, neighborhoods and destinations.

Downtown Macon is anchored by several key institutions including the City of Macon, Mercer University and the Medical Center of Central Georgia. These institutions provide thousands of jobs, recruit many new residents to the city and form an economic base for the region. Several historically important neighborhoods also exist along the Corridor, some serving as national models for intown regeneration and others ripe for reinvestment. The College Hill Corridor project serves as a mechanism to tie all of these organizations, their master plans, the adjacent neighborhoods and downtown together in a comprehensive redevelopment strategy.

In addition, the Plan should include a redevelopment and sustainability strategy for Mercer Village, the underutilized commercial district anchoring Mercer University’s end of the Corridor.

The President of Mercer has already recruited and rehabilitated space for the first three tenants of this Village. In addition to existing vacant commercial space, the Village offers an opportunity for new-build infill to accommodate student housing and additional commercial space. All partners hope to develop this area as a “College Town” with a mix of uses.

This master planning process coincides with the creation of an Alliance of redevelopment efforts to manage long-term growth and change. Preliminary work has created and cemented all the necessary relationships to plan and act. All of our partners agree on basic goals for the Corridor, providing a great opportunity for a professional planner to provide guidance and ideas for a project that will be completed.

Purpose

This project will create a walkable, bikeable, sustainable and beautiful Corridor between Mercer University and downtown Macon employing a process of consensus building, which will ensure its success. All planning will occur consistent with existing Master Plans for redevelopment. The process and plan will respect the unique history, culture and heritage of our neighborhoods and our city as an opportunity for reinvestment. The Master Plan will provide us with a strategy to realize the full potential of our city, maximizing private investment, sustaining the historic mix of land use patterns and connecting people to each other in a beautiful place to live and work.

Scope of Work

Overview

The successful firm will work closely with one full time city employee, the directors of our development partners, the College Hill Corridor Commission and the general public to complete the following steps:

1. Analyze applicable information from the following documents (available online at www.collegehillcorridor.com/plans)
 - a. Downtown Urban Design and Economic Development Plans by NewTown Macon (2001-2007)
 - b. Beall’s Hill
 - i. Master Plan by EDAW and Trinity/Brookwood (2001)
 - ii. Consolidated Plan by EDAW and Trinity/Brookwood (2002)
 - iii. Urban Design and Architectural Guidelines by the Knight Program in Community Building (2004)
 - c. College Hill Corridor Student Report
 - d. Un-implemented Previous Streetscape designs for the Corridor
2. Reference Corridor organizations’ web sites and digital libraries for mission statements, goals and histories
 - a. www.mercer.edu
 - b. www.mccg.org
 - c. www.cityofmacon.net
 - d. www.collegehillcorridor.com
 - e. www.newtownmacon.com
 - f. www.historicmacon.org
 - g. www.mbpz.org
 - h. www.beallshill.net

3. Conduct interviews with constituent non-profit organizations, anchor institutions, neighborhood associations and businesses to develop design consensus.
4. Conduct and lead public design charrettes and incorporate findings into development of the draft Master Plan
5. Develop a draft Master Plan, including a specific Implementation Strategy and Financing Strategy for review and comment by City and University staff and the public
 - a. Design solutions to traffic and parking issues within the College Hill Corridor
 - i. Traffic calming at Mercer Village and along College St.
 - ii. Enabling safe, fast and enjoyable cycling
 - iii. Evaluating on-street parking on College St.
 - iv. Proposing creative and attractive solutions such as roundabouts
 - b. Design new-build infill within the Corridor and at Mercer Village (including student housing and commercial space)
 - c. Design improvements to public parks, especially Tattnall Square Park
 - d. Propose strategies for recruiting and retaining best use retail, commercial and residential tenants including incentive suggestions
 - e. Propose design changes to induce spontaneous and planned neighborhood events, public events and everyday interaction
 - f. Propose strategies for attracting walkers, bikers, students and neighbors to use the Corridor, parks, businesses and residences
 - g. Develop design guidelines as a planning overlay for the Corridor
 - h. Propose a phased implementation strategy and timeline
 - i. Propose funding strategies linked to implementation strategy
6. Prepare and present the updated Plan to the College Hill Corridor Commission and the City Council for adoption
7. Provide final working document in both electronic and hard copy format (suitable for the web and editable).

Deliverables

The selected firm will deliver a comprehensive Master Plan in digital and print format along with a turn-key public presentation (PowerPoint) and a web-friendly summary. These materials will be the joint property of the City of Macon and Mercer University. As much of our target market consists of students and young professionals, the visual impact and aesthetic of these materials is critical. In addition, all deliverables should be unique to Macon, engaging our history and heritage. The Master Plan should include:

- Redesign of the College Hill Corridor streets and sidewalks
- Design new site layout and propose design guidelines for Mercer Village
- Design improvements to public parks, especially Tattnall Square Park
- Propose site-specific retail, commercial and residential recruitment recommendations and appropriate incentives
- Illustrate how design changes will induce desired use of existing and new amenities
- Design traffic improvements within the Corridor
- Create an implementation strategy and timeline
- Propose creative strategies to finance improvements

Elements

The primary purpose of this plan is to create the College Hill Corridor, including physical, social economic and programming improvements. Therefore the primary elements of study will be:

- Transportation (Streetscapes, Bicycling, Parking, Traffic Calming, etc.)
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Urban Design
- Student Housing
- Public Event Space
- College Town Planning
- Funding Strategies

Public Involvement

The College Hill Corridor Commission will be responsible for convening and managing public design charrettes. Already, this project has been created and advanced by public forums. The College Hill Corridor Commission is a diverse cooperative group, which operates by building consensus. The Commission has built a recognizable brand and significant social capital around the project. Solid relationships exist in the community making charrettes the ideal mechanism for design.

Timeframe

A vendor for Master Planning services will be selected in late June 2008. The Master Plan will be developed over a six-month timeline with the draft Plan being delivered in January 2009.

Requirements

Applicants should submit a Statement of Qualification by 5pm on June 26, 2008. Applications should include one digital copy by email. One print application or digital copy on electronic media may also be submitted by mail. Applications should be limited to 10 pages (excluding appendices) and include:

1. A Cover Sheet including quick facts about the firm (website, contact info)
2. A 1-5 Page Statement of Qualification specifically addressing the firm's fitness to carry out the Scope of Work outlined here including:
 - a. A statement illustrating the firm's proficiency in streetscape design, traffic calming, college town planning, community engagement, economic development, planning and urban design.
 - b. A record of implementation, successful function and sustainability for urban design proposals and master plans.
 - c. Evidence of inclusive planning practices and community engagement.
 - d. Past examples of cost control, adherence to timelines and quality of work.
 - e. Experience in Macon or the region, if any.
3. Resumes for key team members and their proposed roles in delivering this project
4. Two examples (either print or digital) of the firm's best previous work illustrating expertise relevant to this project
5. All submittals shall be sent or delivered by the deadline to:

Address

Josh Rogers
Economic and Community Development
The City of Macon
Suite 300
200 Cherry St.
Macon, GA 31201

Email

josh@collegehillcorridor.com

Selection

A committee with representatives from our key partners will be established to review all applications. This committee will select the most qualified candidate firms and solicit proposals from these firms. This committee will review the proposals and the committee will invite one or two firms for interviews with the College Hill Corridor Commission in July 2008. Selection will be based upon submission materials and interview results. Selection of the most qualified firm will be in accordance with applicable Georgia Statutes. The committee reserves the right to reject all interviewees. Staff will negotiate a contract at a reasonable fee with the most qualified firm. If a contract cannot be successfully negotiated with the most qualified firm, staff will proceed to negotiate a contract with the second best qualified firm. Subject to appropriate approvals and successful contract negotiation, Mercer University will execute the contract and initiate project activities around July 2008.

Liability for Errors

While the City has made considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation of information in the Request for Proposal, the information contained in this Request for Proposal is supplied solely as a guideline for Consultants. The information is not guaranteed or warranted accurate by the City, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive.

Questions or concerns should be directed to Josh Rogers using the following contact information:

Josh Rogers
Economic and Community Development Department
City of Macon
200 Cherry St.
Suite 300
Macon, GA 31201

(478) 803-2436 office
(478) 751-7390 fax

josh@collegehillcorridor.com