



## **City of Fargo responses to questions regarding the RFP for Core Neighborhoods Master Plan**

August 2019

### **What is the project budget?**

**What is the budget range that the City has allocated for this process? This will factor into the number and type of meetings that we propose.**

**Budget — In order to size the team and proposed deliverable to be responsive to local constraints, is it possible to share a likely budget range for this project?**

The City of Fargo has not defined a specific budget for the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan. While cost is one of the factors that will be used in the consultant selection process, the City is most interested in finding a consultant that is the right fit in terms of their approach to the project and ability to meet the project objectives. While there is no defined budget for the project, we recognize that an estimated budget would be helpful when drafting a proposal. As such, the City would estimate a final budget to be somewhere around \$250,000. This estimate is meant only to be a general gauge to help inform the creation of a proposal.

**Budget – wondering if the city may be using CDBG or other funding sources that have specific reporting requirements?**

The City does not anticipate the use of CDBG funds or other funding sources that have specific reporting requirements at this time.

**Does the City have a disadvantage business requirement for this project?**

There is no disadvantaged business requirement for this project.

**Is the city still actively using the (outdated) neighborhood plans? If so, to what extent?**

The “Neighborhood Action Plans” referenced within Appendix B of the RFP are no longer actively used by City staff, although they are still used as a reference as neighborhood-specific issues are raised. The

exception to this is the Roosevelt-NDSU Neighborhood Plan, which contains a Future Land Use Plan that was adopted in 2009. This Future Land Use Plan is used to inform the decision making process for development entitlement applications within this neighborhood, along with other policy documents such as the *Go2030* Comprehensive Plan. While most of these plans are no longer actively used by City staff, it should be noted that many of the recommendations of these plans have been implemented, continue to be met, or are to be led by organizations/agencies other than the City. As such, although they are older and may be outdated, they should still serve as a reference and provide some context to the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan.

**Why did you select the neighborhoods in the study area? What was the process for selecting these neighborhoods?**

These neighborhoods were selected through consensus building conversations among elected officials, staff, and community members. These neighborhoods were grouped together as “core neighborhoods” due to their general commonalities such as proximity to the City’s growing downtown; the age of the neighborhoods, buildings, & infrastructure; and the general issues described within *Background & Context* section of the RFP.

**Please define the groups of “underrepresented stakeholders” that are mentioned on pg. 8 of RFP?**

**Please explain who the typical *under-representative stakeholders* would be in this process – are there certain neighborhoods, population segments, etc.**

The term “*underrepresented stakeholders*” was used within the RFP to describe those stakeholders who do not typically voice their opinions or participate in these types of planning efforts. As part of this process, the City desires to hear from as many voices as possible, not just the loudest voices.

**How many face to face meetings do you expect to see throughout the process?**

The City does not have a set expectation for the number of face to face meetings.

**Does the City of Fargo currently subscribe to, or use, any online community engagement platforms such as Mindmixer, Bang The Table, Socialpinpoint, NextDoor, etc.?**

The City of Fargo Department of Planning & Development currently subscribes to mySidewalk and has used its affiliated platform, Mindmixer, in the past. Additionally, the Fargo Police Department utilizes NextDoor for some communications. The City also maintains a number of social media accounts, such as Facebook and Twitter.

**How well was mindmixer used during the Go2030 process? Did the consultant contract with mindmixer or did the City? Are you expecting a similar online engagement portal?**

For the Go2030 process, the City contracted with the prime consultant, BNIM and Mindmixer was a subcontractor. The City believes the use of Mindmixer in the creation of Go2030 was highly successful. The City does not have a requirement for an online engagement portal or expectations for the use of one for the development of the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan. The City would expect the prime consultant to incorporate suggested engagement methods within their proposal.

**Does the City have a preferred engineer that the chosen consultant will work with or shall we provide one on our team?**

The City of Fargo doesn't have a preferred engineer, nor does the City require an Engineer to be included on the project team. The City of Fargo is looking for consultants to form a project team made up of what they feel (when taken into account with their overall proposed work program) will best achieve the project objectives, based on their expertise and professional judgement.

**What level of involvement and in which tasks do you anticipate City staff participating in this project?**

**What will be the role of the City staff during the process?**

City staff will have a relatively limited role during this process. The City will provide a primary staff point of contact (i.e. the City's project manager) for this project in order to streamline communications with the consultant project manager. In addition to communications, the staff point of contact will be available to the consultant throughout the study to provide oversight; to act as a resource for information and data needs; and to facilitate interactions with City staff, board/committee members, and project stakeholders.

Additional staff can be available at identified steps/points throughout the process to assist in such things as the facilitation of meetings, the review of draft deliverables or project materials, etc. Staff can also be available as a resource for information and/or to participate in any needed interviews, focus groups, etc.

The City would emphasize that staff will have a relatively limited role during this study and that the consultant should not rely on City staff to supplement the work of the consultant team outside of the limited role of city staff described above.

**Is there a page limit for the proposal submission?**

Aside from the cover letter, there is no page limit for the proposal submission. However, the City would note that communications is one of the general evaluation criteria. As such, consultants are encouraged to submit succinct proposals that effectively communicate necessary information.

**p. 8 – Scope of Work elements – Will the Fargo Neighborhood Coalition and the School District be represented and participate on the Project Steering Committee?**

**Has the project steering committee been defined, or can the selected consultant help shape the makeup?**

The project steering committee has not been defined and, as such, it is not yet known if the Fargo Neighborhood Coalition or the Fargo School District will be represented on this committee or participate in some other capacity. It is anticipated that the selected consultant will have an active role in shaping the makeup of the steering committee, as part of the comprehensive public & stakeholder participation strategy. With that being said, the City considers both the Fargo Neighborhood Coalition and the Fargo School District to be primary stakeholders.

**Please list any successful engagement strategies that the City has utilized recently to interact with these Core Neighborhoods?**

**What engagement strategies have not been successful in the recent past for these Core Neighborhoods?**

The City primarily focuses on current planning strategies. Neighborhood planning level work has primarily been funded through CDBG programs or volunteer driven methods for the past two decades. No metrics of successful engagement were measured with these efforts.

**What percentage of the process/effort is the City expecting to be focused on public engagement?**

The City has not identified an expected percentage of focus on public engagement. However, we would emphasize again that broad support of the plan is paramount to the success of this project. While we recognize not everyone will agree on all aspects of the plan, there should be a clear and transparent understanding amongst stakeholders of why specific recommendations or decisions are made, as well as clear evidence and data supporting those decisions. As such, the City anticipates that there would be an emphasis on communication with the public and project stakeholders, including: input, education, participation, dialog, etc.

**What involvement is anticipated from North Dakota State University's Administration and/or Facilities Management in the planning process?**

It is anticipated that North Dakota State University administration/facilities management would be a project stakeholder and would be invited to participate in the planning process as such.

**What involvement would be ideal from North Dakota State University students throughout the planning process?**

The City has not identified an ideal level of involvement from North Dakota State University students or from any other stakeholder.

**p. 5 – Paragraph 7 – What has the city done to educate neighbors about redevelopment and infill, particularly regarding the overall relationship between infill and tax base?**

Outside of documenting this nexus within development application staff reports via reference to the Go2030 Comprehensive Plan, the City has done very little to educate residents and neighbors about redevelopment and infill. It is the City's hope that a great deal of education can come out of this planning process, for all stakeholders. One of the project objectives is to improve trust and understanding between and amongst stakeholders.

**p. 8 — Public & Stakeholder Participation — One of the stated top priorities of the RFP is improved relations with stakeholders. While the consultant can provide guidance and in-person facilitation, is the City staff and the Project Steering Committee interested in the consultant providing training and capacity building for post-completion on-the-ground City staff outreach during the implementation phase?**

The City would be open to considering training and capacity building for staff outreach during post-completion implementation. The City would encourage unique approaches to this project, especially in areas where planning efforts tend to fall short of stated objectives. As noted within the RFP, the consultant will be innovative and proactive in their approach to implementation, in order to ensure the highest chance for success.

**The scope seems loose on recommendations being made at both the specific neighborhood or “core area” level—will policies and associated implementation recommendations be needed for each neighborhood specifically or for the “core area” as a whole (or both)?**

Any solution, strategy, recommendation, result, conclusion, etc. that is developed as part of the planning process should appropriately correspond to the scale or scope of the issue that is to be addressed. While these issues won't really be known until the planning process is underway, it is likely that there will be general issues which affect the entire “core neighborhoods” study area as well as specific issues which may only affect one neighborhood or maybe only a couple of blocks within a neighborhood. As such, it is also likely that responses to these issues will likewise vary in terms of this scale. In short, the City anticipates a mix of recommendations at various geographic scales.

**\*\*\*NOTE: The following questions are grouped together as they deal with project scope and seek clarity regarding the Scope of Work Elements listed in the RFP.\*\*\***

**How would you like the “Potential other topics that may be addressed by the plan” identified on page 9 of the RFP to be included. Should they be included as optional tasks with a separate cost proposal?**

**How detailed do you anticipate the utilities analysis to be for the plan?**

**Will parks and open space be a consideration within this Study?**

**What level of market analysis is required for this project and what are the specific needs (i.e. housing, commercial, retail, industrial, etc.)?**

**p. 9 — Existing Conditions & Data Analysis — Since the majority of redevelopment within the Core Neighborhoods has been residential, we assume that new market analysis within this scope should be aimed at residential?**

Based on questions received, the City would like to clarify the *Identification of Focus Areas* scope of work element on Page 9 of the RFP. The Core Neighborhoods Master Plan shall focus on a number of specific topics that are of special concern and/or interest to the City, public, and stakeholders. There are four core topic areas that must be addressed during the planning process:

- Development Regulation & Land Use
- Affordability & Housing Choice
- Neighborhood Context, Property Maintenance, & Blight
- Livability, Safety, & Quality of Life

It is anticipated that additional topics of interest/concern may be identified during the initial discovery phases of the project. As such, the consultant's proposed work program should account for the potential to include additional or alternative focus areas. The list of "potential other topics that may be addressed by the plan," provided on Page 9 of the RFP, is included only as a set of examples of some topic areas that may be identified during these initial discovery phases of the project.

It is not the City's intent for any additional focus area to be included as optional tasks or to otherwise be separated from the total project cost. Rather, the City would anticipate the need to prioritize and to restrict the number of identified focus areas during the planning process in order to limit the focus of the plan so that the most pressing issues receive sufficient attention. In order to limit the focus of the plan and be able to dive deep into the topics of greatest need, it is anticipated that some topics will need to be excluded and/or identified for future study.

**p. 9 — Plan Development — While the general scope sounds more like a vision plan than a comp plan or a physical master plan, the scope is somewhat vague about what level of detail the City is expecting in the final product. Would you expand on how much of the scope of the plan development should be policy planning versus physical planning? Is the City open to capacity analysis during early phases of the project to determine the appropriate level of plan detail that would be in keeping with political support as well as staff capacity?**

The City's intent is for the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan to include a range of comprehensive, visioning, physical planning, and capacity building elements, and, more importantly, to result in an actionable plan. While the overall scope of the project may seem somewhat vague, the City has generated a list of project focus areas that may become apparent through the discovery and investigative stages of the planning process. Therefore, until the outreach, engagement, and data analysis work is underway, staff doesn't have clarity in terms of the exact direction the process will lead. Using the scope of work elements provided within the RFP, the consultant should propose a work plan that accounts for this needed flexibility. Staff looks forward to approaching these questions during the scoping phase and actual planning work.