

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

HYBRID FORM-BASED CODE PLANNING CONSULTANT

FOR

MEDIA BOROUGH

DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



BOROUGH OF MEDIA, DELAWARE COUNTY, PA

February 19, 2021

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
HYBRID FORM-BASED CODE PLANNING CONSULTANTS
FOR
MEDIA BOROUGH
DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

The Borough of Media will accept proposals until **4:00 pm, Wednesday, March 17, 2021** at the Media Borough Municipal Building, 301 N. Jackson Street, Media, PA 19063, from qualified, professional planning consultants for the design and development of a Hybrid Form-based Code Planning Consultant for the Borough of Media. Proposals shall be sealed and addressed to Brittany N. Forman, Borough Manager, 301 N. Jackson Street, 2nd Floor, Media, PA 19063. An electronic version of the proposal should also be submitted to: bforman@mediaborough.com.

Brittany N. Forman
Borough Manager

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The Borough of Media seeks proposals for the services of a qualified, professional planning consultant for the design and development of a Hybrid Form-based Code Plan. Proposals are requested on or before **4:00 pm, Wednesday March 17, 2021.**

Specifications are available upon request at the Media Borough Hall between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; on the Media Borough website: www.mediaborough.com; and on the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission website: <http://www.dvrpc.org/asp/Consultant/default.aspx>. Media Borough reserves the right to reject any or all proposals at its discretion.

The successful consultant shall enter into an agreement with the Borough of Media further articulating the details of the arrangement between the consultant and the Borough of Media for form-based code planning services.

The successful consultant shall begin form-based code planning services starting **Monday, April 19, 2021.**

Should any questions arise, please contact Brittany N. Forman, Borough Manager in writing at: bforman@mediaborough.com.

CONSULTANT SELECTION

The Borough in evaluating proposals will consider the following:

1. Qualifications of the applicant (20 out of 100 points)
2. Expertise in form-based code planning, particularly with small municipalities (20 out of 100 points)
3. Familiarity with the local area and Media's specific zoning needs (10 out 100 points)
4. Quality and completeness of proposal, i.e., (30 out of 100 points)
 - a. how well the applicant addresses the project scope, goals and requirements as outlined in this RFP
 - b. how well the proposal offers a creative approach that fits Media Borough specifically
5. References provided (20 out of 100 points)

NOTE: The Borough will favor proposals that show experience with form-based code planning, yet also demonstrate the consultant's ability to offer creative solutions that address Media's unique zoning needs. We are not interested in cookie-cutter approaches. We wish to see proposals from consultants that address our particular circumstances.

SERVICE CONSIDERATIONS

The Borough of Media has secured funding from The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Transportation Community Development Initiative program to hire a form-based code planning consultant.

Project Summary:

Media Borough seeks to create a Hybrid Form-Based Zoning Code, that focuses on all future residential projects—both buildings and street design—in the borough. The Borough will hire a planning consultant to review Media's existing residential and mixed-use zoning, assess conditions and needs, review previous planning documents and work with Borough Council, staff, residents and key stakeholders to determine a vision for future residential development in the Borough. The consultant will deliver to the Borough a well-illustrated, streamlined, clearly written, hybrid Form-Based Code that is rooted in the community's values and goals and facilitates the development process.

Description of Project Area and Population:

Media Borough is a densely developed municipality about three-quarters of a square mile in size, located 20 miles from Philadelphia. The seat of Delaware County, it is home to 5,668 residents, a population that can swell up to 15,000 with employees and visitors to the courthouse, downtown shops and restaurants as well as the many special outdoor events Media holds during the year.

With the motto of "Everybody's Hometown." Media is a thriving urban community with many positive attributes: it is walkable, ethnically and economically diverse, and has strong neighborhoods. Founded in 1850, its housing and commercial building stock is varied, including late Victorian houses, bungalows and a Richardsonian Romanesque bank building. Residents are drawn to Media because of its diversity, small-town feel and its flourishing downtown. We offer small, one-of-a-kind shops, many fine restaurants and a professional musical theatre. Residents from the surrounding suburbs flock to Media for shopping, dining and entertainment.

Media is unusual in having a trolley running through our downtown main street. The trolley, along with our SEPTA bus and regional rail service, make Media a local hub, connected to Philadelphia's vast public transportation network. Motorists are well-served by our highways and roadways, including nearby Routes 1, 252 and 476. Our extensive sidewalk system and quiet neighborhood streets, marked with sharrows, further our reputation as a pedestrian- and bike-friendly town.

A green community, Media Borough and its residents support projects that increase sustainability and livability. The Borough has an outstanding environmental record for which it has been recognized with several awards. We have active programs for solar, clean energy and recycling as well as clean water, and are the first “Fair Trade Town” in the country, a movement that promotes environmental, agricultural and economic sustainability.

In the survey conducted for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, the factor that most respondents (77%) said drew them to live in Media was “Small Town Character.” Media Borough is a town of families that have lived here for multiple generations as well as newcomers attracted by Media’s unique character. It is a place that has held onto the qualities that made turn-of-the-century towns successful: an economically self-sufficient community with thriving shops of all kinds, where you can walk and bike everywhere, and with such access to public transportation that that you could easily live without a car. Media has the small town, pedestrian-friendly feel that some municipalities are now seeking to re-create with new “Town Center” developments. We have the strong goal of maintaining these assets and improving on them.

Population Trends:

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Borough data, the racial make-up of Media is approximately 83.4% white, 10.6% African American and 6% Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc. Of these groups, 2.5% describe themselves as Hispanic/Latino. The Borough is primarily residential with multi-family units, apartment buildings, townhouses, and single-family houses. Between one third and one half of all housing units were built before 1939 with half of the units owner-occupied. The median value per unit is \$286,600. In the last five years, approximately forty houses have been built. The median household income is \$58,635 and the per capita income is \$36,481. The largest percentage of residents live in two-person households or in single households. Population trends forecast by DVRPC (<https://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/PopForecast/>) have Media’s population increasing by 1.5% between 2015 and 2020, but with the 2018 development of West End Walk and West End Way (see below), the actual increase registered by the 2020 Census will probably prove to be closer to 5%.

Issues to be Addressed:

Our project, Form-Based Zoning for Media Borough, will address three Borough challenges:

1. Rapid development and physical changes to the Borough:

As a densely developed urban municipality, nearly all development here is **infill** development.

Over the past three years Media has undergone four massive development projects on Baltimore Avenue, our main thoroughfare:

- Two projects at the intersection of Baltimore Avenue and Providence Road, our eastern gateway:
 - a Super Wawa at the northwest corner
 - a four-story Hampton Inn at the southeast corner.
- And two at our western gateway:
 - West End Flats, a 310,000 square foot upscale apartment complex with 162 residential units
 - West End Walk, a complex of 27 townhouses across the street From West End Flats

Several undeveloped lots and decaying commercial buildings along the south side of West Baltimore Avenue are expected to be developed in the next five to ten years as mixed-use. In residential districts of the Borough, large new houses are rising rapidly on the dwindling number

of empty lots or over teardowns, and older houses are being renovated or expanded. Real estate prices are escalating. No affordable housing has been built in decades, and none is currently in the planning.

In addition, two long-time, landmark, multi-generational, family-owned restaurants in the heart of our downtown recently closed. One, in the middle of State Street, our downtown district, was immediately replaced by a Brick and Brew. On the site of the other, a full-block, mixed-use development with multiple high-end apartments, was proposed in 2018. The developer also purchased a second segment of property directly across Baltimore Avenue from the first, which includes a large ornate 1900s building considered by many residents to be the most architecturally beautiful in the Borough. The two properties were planned as sister developments.

Media residents greeted these proposed projects with strong reactions. Public meetings attracted large turnouts, with many public comments. Residents protested that the proposed design did not fit the street- and buildingscape of the site and its surroundings. They expressed the concern that they have no say on or control over the development Media is experiencing. They worried that Media will change beyond recognition; that beautiful old buildings can be torn down on a developer's whim; that Media will lose the qualities that give it its distinctive character – qualities that have kept families here for generations and that attracted many to move here. They wonder if their own children will be able to afford to buy a home in the Borough.

How can we nurture our residents' sense of community in the face of all this rapid change and ensure that it remains a livable place? How does affordable housing fit into the picture of Media's future and what would it look like?

With this form-based code planning project, the borough will address these concerns. The process of revising our Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and moving toward Form-Based Code will involve a concentrated period of community meetings and feedback. Residents and other stakeholders will get to be an integral part of planning for the look and feel of future Media—helping to consider and decide what will remain the same and what will change for the better.

2. Difference of opinion among Media residents as to what Media should look like.

Media Borough holds a wealth of architectural styles, from Victorian, Eastlake, Arts and Crafts, Richardsonian Romanesque, Mission Revival, to simple post World War II bungalows and ranch houses, Colonial Revival and Modernism. Residents hold various pictures in their heads as to what Media should look like. All are valid perspectives that will inform the new Form-Based code. The successful consultant for this project will be able to balance and synthesize the varying inputs obtained during the community engagement process.

3. Inefficiencies in the development process in Media.

When controversial residential development projects are proposed, considerable back and forth occurs between developers and Council, involving multiple public presentations and revisions of design plans. This process is costly both to Council, in terms of their time, as well as to developers in terms of time and the expense of multiple revisions. Residents become concerned when developers present plans that seem tone-deaf to and out-of-character with the qualities that make Media unique.

Creating a hybrid form-based code for Media will streamline the review process for both developers and the Borough. The new code will communicate clearly to developers up front what the Borough wants to see in plans. This will result in more successful projects that are satisfactory to all parties, as well as time and money savings.

4. Effective implementation of the Media Borough Comprehensive Plan

Our 2015 Comprehensive Plan, supported by TCDI funding, laid out an outline of community values, goals and a vision for Media's direction over the next five to ten years. The Land Use section of the Plan recommended that the borough move toward a hybrid Euclidean/Form-Based Zoning in mixed-use and residential districts. Its Transportation section advocates that the borough take steps to encourage alternative modes of transportation to automobile driving. A form-based planning process will ensure that the physical form and design of residential development matches the community's vision, and it will promote a streetscape that encourages walking and biking.

Project Goal:

Hybrid Form-Based Code for Media Borough is a planning project designed to shape residential development in the Borough in ways that are compatible with the current physical environment and community preference. It will be a hybrid code in that it focuses on residential projects and sites. The Borough believes that Media can sustain development that both reflects local values and overlaps with measures to increase livability for residents. We intend to create a plan that supports economic success while maintaining and building on Media's unique character.

Through the planning process, the project consultants and Steering Committee will look at how residences interact with the street and create pedestrian-friendly environments, controlling physical elements of buildings such as setbacks. The regulations will include specifications for sidewalks, street trees and other sustainable measures. The project will also consider the ways in which the borough can address the need for affordable housing through the form-based code planning process.

The resulting code will be tailored and calibrated for Media Borough, taking into account its character and unique qualities. Specific input from key stakeholders, community leaders and borough officials through such interactive processes as charrettes and image preference surveys will provide a valid representation of the Media community's interests. The project will loosely follow the process described in the Form-Based Code Institute-endorsed publication, *Form-Based Codes: A Step-By-Step Guide for Communities*.

The code, with its clear illustrations and straight-forward narrative, will also make the development process more streamlined and predictable for both local government and developers.

Objectives/Deliverables:

1. A hybrid Form-Based Zoning Ordinance focusing on residential building in the borough, clearly illustrated with an easily understood narrative, consistent with prior adopted planning documents. Delivered both in print (15 copies) and in electronic format suitable for in-house printing, codification and distribution through the Borough's website.
2. A revised Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, consistent with the new zoning ordinance.

SCOPE OF SERVICES:

The consultant's role will be to carry out the scope of services described below and to complete the project deliverables listed above. The proposal should clearly identify the method for documenting or illustrating the deliverables for each task.

The consultant may modify the desired scope of work presented below if, based on their professional expertise and knowledge, they can provide an approach that will more effectively address the goals of this project. However, the consultant shall not delete any requested scope tasks unless explicitly noted.

It is anticipated that the consultant shall establish a clear and consistent communication framework for the duration of the project. The proposed scope of work should include an effective project management approach that includes regular project updates and coordination between consultant team members. If this proposal involves a team of consultants, the lead firm and designated project manager shall be clearly identified.

The selected consultant shall provide, at their sole expense, do and perform all of the work and labor and furnish all of the necessary supervision, equipment, facilities, supplies, materials, forms, notices and the records necessary to perform the consultant services as outlined above.

Project Tasks:

Task #1: Project Management and Administration

The consultant will prepare an initial project schedule, identifying the critical path, milestones, all project meetings. The consultant will meet regularly with the Project Steering Committee and communicate frequently with appropriate Borough staff. The schedule and budget will be maintained and monitored on a monthly basis. The consultant will prepare and submit to Media Borough monthly status reports and invoices.

Task #2: Scoping Process

The project consultant will kick off the project by meeting with a Steering Committee made up of Borough officials, staff and a liaison from the Borough Planning Commission, taking them through a scoping process to better understand Form-Based Code and its possibilities and to decide on the desired balance between Form-Based and traditional code. In this meeting the consultant will:

- Provide a clear explanation of what Form-Based Code is and how it can forward Media's goals.
- Solicit input from the Committee on the Borough's desires and goals for the project.
- Review current zoning/overlays and advise the Committee on which districts and project types the form-based code should apply to.
- Describe the process of assessment, community engagement and timetable for the project.
- Show examples of different types of Form-Based Code and community design guidelines.
- Establish the degree of detail specificity of the design guidelines to be adopted by the project.

Task #3: Assess Existing Conditions

The project consultant will work with the Steering Committee to collect data, observe and map existing conditions and draw upon existing planning reports, studies and local and regional plans. The information gathered during this phase will be organized and analyzed to provide a basis for the creation of the new code. The consultant will be familiar with previous borough planning documents (links to borough plans may be found at: <https://www.mediaborough.com/planning>), and the eventual code will take into account their recommendations as appropriate. The consultant team will identify the unique characteristics of Media by documenting and analyzing our community's existing urban form at different scales:

- from the broad characteristics of our neighborhoods and streets, to

- the specific architectural details of typical buildings within each district of town.

Later, in public meetings, the assessment materials and findings will be presented to residents and stakeholders for an accuracy check and feedback.

Task #4: Visioning Process

The planning period will embrace a public design process. The project consultant will work with the community to create a detailed vision for the Borough's future. The community engagement meetings will begin with a brief but lucid explanation of Form-Based Code. The community will be shown the results of the assessment phase of the project and asked:

- which aspects of the community should remain unchanged?
- which should change?
- which should be a model for future development?
- What do they want, overall?

Meetings will involve active participation and discussion, including image preference surveys, using a variety of formats:

- public meetings (1 to 2)
- design charrettes (2 to 3)
- focus interviews with key stakeholders (8 to 10)

The charrette meetings and interviews will take place over several months during the project. The public presentation of the code will take place during the last two months of the project.

Public Outreach:

The stakeholders for this project include residents, borough officials, business owners and a range of community groups. We will call on a diverse swath of the Media community—civic, cultural, environmental, social justice and business groups—to advise us going forward. The Borough is proactive in including underserved communities in such meetings. We will advertise on various websites and social media, and we will reach out to specific groups and individuals who might not otherwise attend with emails, telephone calls and letters. We aim for representation from people of color, the elderly, people with disabilities, a range of income level and other criteria.

Task #5: Creating the Regulations

Based on these interactions the consultant will create detailed drawings — illustrative plans — that show the envisioned layout of the community, showing locations of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors, thoroughfares, civic spaces, buildings, and transit lines. These will be the basis of the illustrations for the final code.

Once this vision is in place, the code team will proceed to create the specific regulations and procedures of the hybrid Form-Based Code and recommend appropriate revisions to the general Borough code. The draft code will be presented to the community in a final public meeting, where comments and feedback will be received.

The resulting code will be a streamlined, easy-to-use, illustrated and straightforward narrative. It will promote the development of walkable neighborhoods, bringing economic benefits such as higher real estate values and revitalized downtown amenities. The Borough SALDO will be reviewed and revised to be consistent with the new Zoning Ordinance.

SCHEDULE

All project work and deliverables will be completed before June 30, 2022.

- Month 1: Scoping/Kick-Off Meeting with Borough officials and staff (Project Steering Committee).
- Months 2-5: Assessment of existing conditions: code review, planning document review, observation and mapping, data collection.
- Months 5-9: Community Engagement meetings and interviews.
- Months 10-13: New Zoning Code drafted, reviewed, edited. Public meeting to present the draft code. Final draft of code. Revisions to SALDO.
- Month 14: Grant Close-out. Adoption of new code and SALDO revisions.

Schedule will include monthly or as-needed meetings with the project Steering committee.

BOROUGH ROLE

Borough staff and the Community Development Committee (CDC) of Borough Council will be responsible for administering the project and overseeing the consultant's work on the project. Borough staff will provide information on related studies and planning initiatives. Borough staff and the CDC will be primarily responsible for planning public meetings and other community outreach related to this planning process. Printing and mailing costs associated with public communications shall be the Borough's responsibility.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals shall include the following and shall be organized using each of the elements listed below as section headings:

1. **Firm Description:** Provide a brief description of the firm including firm size and area of specialization, location of corporate headquarters, and potential satellite office proposed to handle this project.
2. **Project Team:** Provide names and resumes of key staff who will be assigned to the project. Each team member's education, experience and qualifications shall be listed. The project manager shall be clearly identified. If different consultants will be teaming together, indicate the lead consultant.
3. **Project Understanding:** Provide a statement summarizing how the consultant and/or project team is particularly qualified for this project.
4. **Scope of Services:** Describe the consultant's approach and technical plan for accomplishing the work listed herein. The consultant is encouraged to improve on the tasks listed in the RFP; however, the consultant shall not delete any requested scope tasks unless specifically noted.
5. **Project Schedule:** The consultant shall submit a schedule, itemized by task, for completing the scope of work. The schedule shall include project meetings, critical milestones and deliverables. It is anticipated that the project should take no longer than 14 months.
6. **Project Budget:** The consultant shall submit a proposed project budget **in a sealed envelope separate from the rest of the proposal.** In addition, please indicate in the proposal the hourly rates that would apply to any additional work beyond the scope of services.
7. **Comparable Projects:** Description of at least three (3) project experiences, including dates, with developing Form-Based Zoning code and role of key staff. Please also discuss how these projects provide relevant experience for this project in Media Borough.
8. **References:** At least three (3) references, including current contact name and phone number from prior Form-Based Zoning projects.
9. **Number of Copies of Proposal:** Eight (8) copies of the proposal document should be submitted by the appropriate date and time noted above. An electronic version of the proposal must **also** be submitted to: bforman@mediaborough.com.