The City of Albany, New York is soliciting qualifications from urban planning and design consultants to help guide the development of the City’s first Comprehensive Plan. All submissions must be received no later than **4:00 PM on Friday, September 12, 2008** at the Department of Development and Planning, 21 Lodge Street, Albany, NY 12207. Fifteen (15) copies of submissions are required plus one complete proposal in a PDF format on a cd-rom. Please place proposals in an envelope or box clearly labeled “City of Albany: Comprehensive Plan RFQ” and send to:

Douglas Melnick  
Director of Planning  
Department of Development and Planning  
21 Lodge Street  
Albany, NY 12207

**Introduction**

The City of Albany is the fourth oldest city in the United States and the oldest city in the northeast. Located on a steep hill at the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, its first European visitor was Henry Hudson in 1609. It soon became a trading post and, soon thereafter, a Dutch village. In 1797, it became the permanent capital of New York State and during the 19th century, Albany became a major center of transportation, craftsmanship, and industry with the construction of the Erie Canal. During the 20th century, Albany has also become a major center of higher education and an emerging high-technology center. By 1900, Albany had a population of 94,151. The city’s population continued to grow until 1950, when it peaked at 134,995, only to drop to 95,658 during the 2000 Census.
As the City of Albany embarks on the preparation of its first Comprehensive Plan, it faces a complex mix of opportunities and challenges. Many of those opportunities stem from the city’s rich historic and architectural legacy and vibrant and diverse neighborhoods, all situated in a classically designed environment and network of open spaces. Others have to do with the economic opportunities created by the city’s role as a center of government, health care, higher education, and an emerging technology center. At the same time, much of the city’s legacy has been challenged by disinvestment and depopulation. The question is how can the citizens of Albany build a future that takes full advantage of its historical legacy and current opportunities and not only responds to the immediate needs and crises, but also addresses the increasingly critical long-term issues of environmental, economic and social sustainability.

How can people make better connections, complement each other’s efforts, and make the most of their resources and energy? The people of Albany must think about what it means to become a sustainable city in the long term—a city that offers economic opportunities along with an excellent and equitable quality of life for its citizens, who in turn can share the community with each other and live in harmony with the natural environment. The comprehensive plan will be the key to creating that vision and realizing that future.

**Comprehensive Plan Elements**

The goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a document that will create a community-wide vision, guide the growth, development and redevelopment of the community, improve the stability, physical condition and economic well being of the City, and make Albany a more livable and sustainable community of choice. Based on this goal, the Comprehensive Plan Board – a diverse group of stakeholders – in consultation with the City’s Department of Development and Planning will work with the chosen consultant to help guide the development of the plan.

The following is a list of Comprehensive Plan elements that will form the foundation of the Plan. The consultant may suggest additional elements as part of the RFQ response. The consultant shall take primary responsibility for completion of the plan elements, while providing a secondary support and assistance role to City Planning Staff on specific tasks as further detailed below.

**Potential Components**

- Community Profile and Demographics
- Sustainability and the Environment
- Built Environment and Urban Design
- Economic Development and Jobs
- Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement
- Housing
- Transportation and Mobility
- Culture, Art and Historic Resources
The City is also currently working towards the development of plans that complement the proposed comprehensive plan and should, therefore, be considered as potential supplemental plan elements. These plans are:

- Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan Update
- Bicycle Master Plan

To accomplish this goal, the City is looking for the process, content, and structure of the Comprehensive Plan that achieves the following:

- Builds upon previous plans while identifying areas of improvement.
- Incorporates and promotes the principles of Smart Growth and Sustainability.
- Identifies how to facilitate better connections within the Community, complements the current efforts of citizens, neighborhoods, businesses and other stakeholders, and ensures that the most is made of their resources and energy.
- Provides a solid foundation for the continued redevelopment and revitalization of the City of Albany.
- Develops a plan that identifies what it means to become a sustainable city in the short and long term.
- Establishes quantitative performance goals and service standards for essential public services, and outlines funding necessary to achieve those goals and standards.
- Suggests innovative implementation and fiscal approaches to ensure successful implementation of the policies and programs outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Promotes participation by all segments of the community by offering a wide range of communication media, including press releases, public displays, surveys, and interactive web based tools.
- Takes advantage of new and existing technologies to make it easy for the public to access information and incorporates all information directly into the City’s databases and GIS systems to achieve maximum return on the City’s investment in the consultant’s work.
- Minimizes cost and waste by making information easily and efficiently available, by providing electronic media and making printed copies available at the local library, city government offices, and other publicly accessible outlets.
During the Comprehensive Planning process, the Department of Development and Planning will be working on supplemental plans. Some of these plans may be completed under a separate contract and should be coordinated and incorporated into the plan. The timing of funding for these projects may impact the comprehensive plan schedule. The Comprehensive Plan consultant(s) will work together to include the other plans into the Comprehensive Plan.

Additional desired consultant skills and experience include:

- Experience with the principles of new urbanism, the revitalization of older, urban areas, pattern books, form-based codes, green building and infrastructure, and sustainability.
- Experience utilizing creative methods to generate public interest and involvement from diverse constituents in the comprehensive planning process.
- Experience engaging regional stakeholders in a local planning process.
- Experience with National Charrette Institute Charrettes and Dynamic Planning

Project Scope

The consultant will take a lead role in all public forums, workshops, meetings, and hearings. Consultants may contract with sub-consultants on the Comprehensive Plan, but a lead consultant must be identified and must take responsibility of all deliverables and the sub-consultant must be identified in the RFQ.

City staff shall be available to the consultant in a supporting role during this period. The Director of Planning shall be the main consultant liaison for the City.

Following is a list of expected tasks of the consultant to be detailed in the final contract with the selected consultant.

1. Initial meeting with the City Planning Staff to review and refine the project scope and schedule, as well as schedule initial meetings and begin the process of data compilation.
2. Obtain and review existing plans, maps and other documents relevant to the project.
3. Meet with the Comprehensive Plan Board for regular updates.
4. Conduct meetings with key elected officials and stakeholders. The purpose of these meetings will be to obtain input and guidance as it relates to the Comprehensive Plan process to obtain opinions on the future of the City from a wide cross-section of individuals and to complete a consensus building process on this future and the City’s goals for growth and development.
5. Conduct periodic review meetings (either in person, via telephone, or via email) with the City’s Department of Planning and Development to discuss project status.
6. Plan and manage extensive and diverse public participation process program, including, but not limited to: public meetings, charrettes, informational brochures, website materials, and other outreach mechanisms.

7. Provide materials to Planning Staff for a website that provides information on the Comprehensive Plan and provides draft documents, maps and other useful information to the public.

8. Conduct public meetings and topic-specific focus groups as necessary.

9. Create material for the public meetings and media venues to inform and educate the public on the Comprehensive Plan.

10. City Planning Staff will be responsible for the production of GIS maps and materials; however, the selected consultant may be required to provide supporting information.

11. Develop goals, objectives, implementation strategies, as well as benchmarks to measure implementation progress.

12. Analyze the consistency of current City ordinances and policies in relationship to the goals and objectives developed through this Comprehensive Planning process and create an implementation program.

13. Draft elements are to be completed and submitted to the City for review, comment, and approval individually based upon a schedule developed at the beginning of the planning process.

14. Make periodic reports to the Comprehensive Plan Board, the City Council, and various city committees.

15. Prepare a “Public Draft” document and present draft to the Comprehensive Plan Board, City Council, and various city committees.

16. Prepare a “Final Draft” document and make a final presentation at a public hearing and all associated meetings to secure adoption of the Plan.

17. Prepare all necessary State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) documentation as per General City Law § 28-a(9) and 6 NYCRR Part 617, specifically § 617.4(b)(1), including the preparation of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS).
Tentative Project Timeline

The following are tentative, milestone dates for the progress of this project.

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<tr>
<td>August-08</td>
<td>RFQ Distributed</td>
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<td>September-08</td>
<td>RFQ Response Reviews/Interviews</td>
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<td>October-08</td>
<td>Consultant(s) Selected</td>
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<td>November-08</td>
<td>Refine Scope</td>
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<td>January-09</td>
<td>Create Comp. Plan Sub-Committees</td>
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<td>Begin Gathering Baseline Data/Analysis and Current Plan Review and Analysis</td>
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<td>May-09</td>
<td>Begin Public Meetings/Charrettes</td>
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<td>Draft GEIS Complete for Review/Comment</td>
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<td>April-10</td>
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<td>Comp. Plan Adoption</td>
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Submission Requirements

The submission must be organized in the following sections:

1. **Title Sheet:** The title sheet must provide the name of lead consultant and name(s) of the sub-consultant(s) with the name of the prime contact clearly identified.
2. **Letter of Intent:** Describe your interest in this project and your understanding of the scope of work. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the lead consultant as well as any sub-consultants. (No more than three (3) pages in length).
3. **Lead Consultant Experience:** Briefly describe other projects you managed using interdisciplinary teams that demonstrate relevant experience. List all public sector clients for whom you performed similar work in the past five years. For each project mentioned, provide a reference and phone number we can contact regarding your performance. Provide resumes of key personnel (no more than one-page in length) who will be assigned to this project. Document the experience
of assigned staff in working on and completing comprehensive plans. Provide information/documentation as to the status of implementation of previously developed comprehensive plans. Document consultant experience developing comprehensive plans in small to mid-sized cities similar to Albany in terms of scale, demographics, location, and history.

4. **Sub-consultant Experience:** Provide information for each firm included in the team. Provide the names, titles and qualifications of individuals who will be assigned to the project. Discuss the experiences of team members on the example projects referred to above. Provide resumes of key personnel (no more than one-page in length) who will be assigned to this project.

5. **Project Approach:** Describe the key tasks you believe should be accomplished to complete the project and how you propose to execute them. Share your perspective on unique aspects of the project and possible alternative approaches for the City of Albany to consider. Particularly address your proposed philosophy and approach used to involve diverse perspectives and stakeholders, particularly from low-income neighborhoods, in the comprehensive planning process (no more than ten (10) pages in length).

6. **Project Schedule and Budget:** Describe your availability to provide the resources needed within the two-year timeframe described and your estimate of compensation for your services. Relate how your expertise and experience with similar projects will enable you to effectively complete the project in terms of time and cost.

7. **Submission Format:** Submit ten (10) hard copies of the complete submission as well as a cd-rom with the full submission in PDF and Microsoft Word formats. Brochures or other material that may be helpful in evaluating your qualifications may be included in an appendix.

**Selection Process**

A selection committee composed of members of the Comprehensive Plan Board will rank submissions based on the following weighted criteria, in priority order:

- Relevant Project Experience and References, including the successful completion of comprehensive plans - (40%)
- Project Approach – (30%)
- Capability to Perform Project within timeframe outlined and a cost-effective budget - (20%)
- Familiarity with the City of Albany or similar U.S. cities, either through direct planning work or research gathered from previous planning efforts (5%)
- Selection Committee discretion - (5%)

The Comprehensive Plan Board selection committee may choose to interview several of the top ranked individuals and reserves the right not to accept any of the submissions. Once selected, the City of Albany will seek to negotiate a contract, detailed scope of work, deliverables, fee, schedule, etc. with the preferred consultant. If unable to reach
agreement, the City of Albany will terminate negotiations and commence negotiations with the second-ranked firm, and so forth.

The City of Albany expects to evaluate proposals and provide written notification of the results within 45 days of receipt of qualifications. If interviews are held, you will be contacted at least one week before the interview date.

The City of Albany will not reimburse any firm or individual for any costs associated with the submittal of qualifications or in the negotiation of a final agreement for the work being considered. The successful consultant will be required to enter into an agreement for this project and procure and maintain at its own expense, insurance coverage as described in the attachment entitled “Insurance Requirements.”

**Additional Information**

Questions about the project should be directed to:

Douglas Melnick  
Director of Planning  
Department of Development and Planning  
21 Lodge Street  
Albany, NY 12207  
(518) 434-2532 x15  
melnickd@ci.albany.ny.us

In order for consultants to become familiar with the City of Albany, a few planning documents are available for review at the City of Albany website:

[http://www.albanyny.org/home.aspx](http://www.albanyny.org/home.aspx)

Additional plans listed in Appendix B are available electronically and can be requested from the Director of Planning at the address listed above.

**Insurance Requirements**

1.1 The selected consultant will be required to procure and maintain at its own expense the following insurance coverage:

(a) Workers' Compensation and Employer’s Liability Insurance: A policy or policies providing protection for employees of the selected consultant in the event of job-related injuries.

(b) General Liability Insurance: A policy or policies of comprehensive general liability insurance with limits of not less than $2,000,000.

(c) Professional Malpractice Insurance: A policy or policies with limits of not less than $3,000,000. The professional malpractice insurance must be issued by an insurer
licensed to do business in the State of New York and must have an A.M. Best rating of not less than "A".

1.2 Each policy of insurance required shall be in form and content satisfactory to the Corporation Counsel, and shall provide that:

(a) The City of Albany is named as an additional named insured on the Workers’ Compensation and General Liability policies.

(b) The insurance policies shall not be changed or cancelled until the expiration of thirty (30) days after written notice to the City of Albany Corporation Counsel's Office.

(c) The insurance policies shall be automatically renewed upon expiration and continued in force unless the City of Albany Corporation Counsel's Office is given sixty (60) days written notice to the contrary.

1.3 No work shall be commenced under the contract until the selected consultant has delivered to the Corporation Counsel or his designee proof of issuance of all policies of insurance required to be procured by the selected consultant. If at any time any of said policies shall be or become unsatisfactory to the City, the selected consultant shall promptly obtain a new policy and submit proof of insurance of the same to the City for approval. Upon failure of the selected consultant to furnish, deliver, and maintain such insurance as above provided, the contract may, at the election of the City, be forthwith declared suspended, discontinued, or terminated. Failure of the selected consultant to procure and maintain any required insurance shall not relieve the selected consultant from any liability under the contract, nor shall the insurance requirements be constructed to conflict with the obligations of the selected consultant concerning indemnification.
APPENDIX A

SPECIAL CONDITIONS
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
CITYWIDE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GENERAL INFORMATION
The proposal must be comprehensive and specify how the consultant would complete all of the elements of the “Scope of Services”.

SUBLETTING OF CONTRACT
The Consulting Firm will agree, after the contract is awarded, not to assign or sublet the whole or any part of the contract without the prior written consent of the City.

CHANGES IN SCOPE OF SERVICES
The Consulting Firm will agree that any change of scope in the work to be performed after the original contract has been signed shall be documented as a written change order, be accepted by all parties, and made a part of the original contract by addendum.

OMISSIONS
Should a prospective contractor find discrepancies in, or omissions from these documents, or be in doubt as to their meaning, the contractor shall notify the office of the Planning Director in writing at least five (5) days prior to the time set for the pre-proposal conference. If the point in question is not clear, a written addendum will immediately be mailed or delivered to those firms that received the Request for Proposals.

GENERAL
It is understood that the right is reserved by the City to thoroughly inspect and investigate the business reputation, or other general qualifications, of any firm and to reject any proposal, irrespective of quoted prices, if it is determined to be lacking in any of the essentials necessary to assure acceptable standards of performance. Proposals submitted in response to the Request for Qualifications shall constitute a binding offer. Acknowledgement shall be indicated by the original signature of a Principal legally authorized to execute contractual obligations and shall also signify acceptance of all terms and conditions including compensation, as set forth in the Request for Proposals. The firm

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW
Materials submitted to are subject to FOIL. If respondent provides material(s) of a confidential nature, the respondent should clearly indicate the specific material(s) it considers confidential. Subject to the provisions of FOIL and any other applicable laws, the City of Albany may agree to maintain confidentiality of such material(s) if
requested. The City of Albany assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage resulting out of any determination requiring disclosure of information pursuant to FOIL.

OWNERSHIP AND USE OF SUBMISSIONS
The City of Albany shall be entitled to retain and use for the Project without compensation to any party responding to the RFQ any additional information submitted, including but not limited to any concept, element or idea disclosed in, or evident from, the submissions or which may be revealed during any meetings or interviews with respondents.

MINORITY/WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS.
It is the policy of the city of Albany and its various agencies and authorities to ensure that all businesses, including minority and women-owned business enterprises have a fair and equitable opportunity to compete for and participate in city contracts. Therefore we encourage minority and women-owned business enterprises to submit RFQ’s for contractual consideration.
APPENDIX B

EXISTING PLANS

- North Swan Street Multimodal Accessibility Study
- Midtown Colleges and University Study
- Capital South Plan: SEGway to the Future
- AveNew2000 – A Strategic Revitalization Plan for the Central Avenue Commercial Corridor
- Delaware Avenue C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District Revitalization Program
- Townsend Park C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District Revitalization Program
- Lawn Avenue Gateway Design Study
- Streetscape Improvement Plan for State Street and Maiden Lane
- Hudson River Crossing Study
- Patroon Greenway Project
- New York Route 5 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Study
- Albany County Commercial Transportation Access Study
- Regional Trail Perspectives – A survey of Capital District Trail Facilities
- Capitalize and ReCapitalize Albany Reports
- Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan
- Albany Ahead
- Albany Abandoned Properties Strategy Report
- Partnership to Progress – Realizing Albany’s Future
- Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Plan
- Upper New Scotland Avenue Neighborhood Plan
- North Waterfront Redevelopment Strategy
- Revitalization Strategies for North Albany (UAlbany Studio)
- Central Avenue – Westgate Corridor Redevelopment Project (UAlbany Studio)
- Madison Avenue Gateway Project (UAlbany Studio)
- Mid-City University District – A Partnership for Positive Change (UAlbany Studio)
- The Problems and Potential of Vacant Buildings – Survey of Vacant Structures (UAlbany Studio)
- Harriman Campus-UAlbany-Fuller Road Transportation Linkage Study
- Sustainable Design Assessment Team Report
- A Living History Development for the Hudson River Waterfront
- PORT 2000
- Harriman Research and Technology Park Master Plan
- Park South Urban Renewal Plan
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan
- Upper Madison Block Planning Initiative
- Convention Center Studies
- City School District of Albany Facilities Master Plan
- Albany Public Library Citizens Library Advisory Committee Facilities Report