

# City of Helena

## Request for Proposals

### Helena Consolidated Downtown Zoning

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#### Summary

The City of Helena has received a federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award in the amount of \$25,000 by the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) to consolidate Helena's downtown zoning bylaws in a manner that emphasizes the area's unique cultural and aesthetic qualities, while also promoting vitality and livability in the historic core. Total project cost is budgeted at \$35,000, not including in-kind City staff support to administer the grant throughout the grant lifecycle.

Contingent upon this award, the City of Helena is soliciting this Request for Proposals for planning consultant services to assist the City in developing a Consolidated Downtown Zoning Code in accordance with all the requirements of Montana state law. These efforts and activities are viewed as key tools to implement the city's long range planning goals. Payment terms will be negotiated with the selected offeror, in accordance with CDBG program administrative guidelines.

The work activities include holding and facilitating several public hearings and additional meetings as necessary in Helena, and to include providing the final product both in one (1) printed and one (1) electronic copy form.

#### Helena and the Surrounding Area

The capital city of the State of Montana, Helena is located in the central part of the State halfway between Yellowstone National Park and Glacier National Park. Downtown Helena is approximately one mile long, stretching from Euclid/Lyndale to the North, to the intersection of Park Avenue and Cruse Avenue to the South and approximately Park/Benton to the West, and Cruse/Jackson to the East – roughly 40 blocks. In 2010, the US Census Bureau determined the population of Lewis and Clark County was 63,395 and the county seat, the city of Helena, was 28,190 people. The Helena region is centrally located within the populous region of western Montana with a total population of 428,000 people living within 2 hours of the capital.

#### History

The discovery of gold in Prickly Pear Canyon in 1864 by four men (the "Four Georgians") looking for their last chance for a find before heading home marked the start of Helena and Downtown Helena. Helena became the "Queen City of the Rockies," following the boom brought on by the 1864 gold strike in what is now Helena's main street: the aptly named "Last Chance Gulch." Situated on Last Chance Gulch, formerly Main Street, at the base of Mount Helena, Downtown quickly grew from a tent camp and miners' cabins to a thriving business, retail, fine dining, arts and entertainment district.

Helena's glorious past can also be seen in the spectacular 19th-century mansions, historic Last Chance Gulch businesses, and restored pioneer dwellings in Downtown Helena and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

In 1964, 100 years after the Four Georgians' discovery, a group of downtown merchants gathered to create Downtown Helena Incorporated (DHI) to work with downtown businesses to attract visitors, shoppers, and patrons of the over 500 businesses located Downtown. The upheaval of the 1960's and 1970's led to a nation-wide movement called urban renewal, where communities worked to eliminate the old and create the new. In Helena, urban renewal contributed to the shaping of what Downtown Helena is today with the demolition of several historic structures and the creation of the State's only walking mall. Encompassing two blocks with a mix of architectural styles and unique businesses, the walking mall is the heart of the historic downtown and provides a pedestrian friendly park-like setting for downtown visitors and businesses to enjoy.

Downtown property owners and merchants created the Helena Downtown Business Improvement District in the late 1980's as a way to work together for the betterment of downtown. The organization was a state-filed nonprofit. By 1993, as urban renewal was closing, downtown property owners approached the City to tax themselves to create a pool of funds to help with revitalization efforts. The Helena Business Improvement District was created to enhance the physical environment of the greater downtown area and to improve the value of properties in the area. The BID has worked to maintain a thriving downtown, and works closely with Downtown Helena, Inc. to market and promote Downtown Helena. HBID is a quasi-governmental agency created by State statute through resolution of the City of Helena. After its initial creation, the BID has been renewed in 2000 and 2010; it is up for renewal in 2020.

The 1990's also marked the redevelopment of the rail yard just north of the historic part of Downtown. The Great Northern Town Center sits on the former site of the depot for the Great Northern Railroad. Infrastructure construction began in 1998 and today houses the nation's 10th Best Western Premier Hotel, an interactive museum of science and culture (ExplorationWorks), unique boutiques, galleries, salons, restaurants, and some of the Northwest's top accounting, financial planning, and engineering firms. The centerpiece of the Great Northern Town Center is the carousel. Completely hand-built, the carousel is one of the world's most stunning, with vibrant, hand-carved animals and adornments. Judged by the National Carousel Association as the finest new carousel in the United States, the Great Northern Town Center's carousel features animals that call Montana home: buffalos, big horn sheep, antelopes, otters, bobcats, grizzly bears, a cutthroat trout and more.

Today, you can still trace our history in downtown: envision the early mining days at Reeder's Alley, wander along Last Chance Gulch to admire the late 19th century architecture and visit the many local merchants, eateries, and establishments that provide the charm of downtown, and progress to the modern era by ending in the Great Northern Town Center where contemporary Helena merges with historic Helena. Known as the most historic mile in Montana, Downtown Helena's colorful history and exciting future provide a strong foundation on which to build the downtown's zoning code.

## Project Objectives

Helena's downtown area is a roughly 200 acre section of the city that is characterized by a mixture of uses within 7 different types of zoning districts. The intent of this project is to consolidate these seven zones into one large zoning district, comprised of three distinct sub-districts, as noted within the 2016 Downtown Neighborhood Plan. This new district is to be form-based code or a hybrid code. Successful implementation is seen as a step toward further adoption of a similar type of zoning throughout the city's other districts.

The Downtown Neighborhood Plan will be instrumental in crafting the revised downtown code. The plan sets forth a clear vision for what the City, its partners, and the area's stakeholders hope to achieve in coming decades. A clear understanding of the plan's guiding principles and vision is essential to writing a code that encourages a vibrant and sustainable downtown core for the benefit of the entire Greater Helena community.

The City of Helena seeks to hire a consultant or team of consultants to develop the consolidated downtown zoning over a 9 month period. The consultants will work with the City of Helena Zoning Commission, Community Development Department staff, and the City Attorney to refine the scope of work upon hire, and will collaborate with these parties in drafting the revised code. The City of Helena envisions a scope of services for the project as follows:

1. Initial Review and Analysis
2. Public Outreach and Design Process
3. Drafting the Code
4. Code Finalization for Adoption

## Scope of Services

### Initial Review and Analysis

- *Interviews.* The Consultant will interview appropriate stakeholders involved with the project. These interviews will include groups and individuals including zoning commissioners, the Helena Business Improvement district staff and board members, other nonprofit boards and staff, property owners, local design professionals, developers, business organizations, elected officials, and city staff.
- *Policy Review.* Familiarization with existing City policy documents and codes will be required to align the proposed consolidated code with existing policies, programs, and ordinances, including the 2011 City of Helena Growth Policy, 2016 Downtown Neighborhood Plan, and 2015 Greater Helena Area Long Range Transportation Plan.
- *Site Analysis.* The Consultant will become familiar with the physical details of the Downtown Helena District, including the architectural form and distribution of buildings as well as the prevalence of use types within the city's historic core. These physical characteristics of the downtown must be reviewed through the lens of the City's policies and codes, as noted above.

## Public Outreach and Design Process

- *Generate necessary background maps and documents.* Inventory and document the existing built environment and streetscapes to build a form-based code, design regulations, or a hybrid thereof that is based on the characteristics of the Helena’s downtown. The City of Helena will provide all necessary base map information as needed by the Consultant. These documents will be used to produce the maps that will be used during the preparation of the consolidated code.
- *Public Outreach.* The consultant will develop a public outreach strategy designed to engage and inform community stakeholders and the general public well as conducting regular meetings and web/social media interaction throughout the process.

## Drafting of the Code

The consultant(s) will work with the City Attorney’s Office in drafting the new code. The consultant will draw heavily on the concepts and actions from the Downtown Neighborhood Plan as well as the public outreach process utilized during its drafting process. The downtown code must be integrated into the City of Helena’s existing regulatory framework in a manner that ensures procedural consistency, meshes with state and local legal requirements, provides clarity as to applicability of existing regulations, and maximizes the effectiveness of the code. The new code may incorporate a regulating plan, building form standards, use regulations, and other elements that may be needed to implement the vision for the Downtown District.

## Code Finalization for Adoption

Once a first draft of the code is in hand, the Consultant will conduct a meeting with the Zoning Commission, city staff, and stakeholders to discuss the draft code and, in particular, its consistency with existing City policies and projects. Questions, suggestions, and comments will be accepted at this time and throughout the code finalization process, both in written and electronic form unless otherwise provided verbally. City staff will consolidate all comments received as action items for revision or responses, which will be incorporated into a final draft.

A second, public meeting will take place to present the draft code to the general public for the purpose of gathering additional comments, presented by city staff with support from the Consultant. This will necessitate city staff having both a hardcopy and electronic format available for distribution in city offices and online. All comments will once again be consolidated by staff and, where appropriate, revisions presented for inclusion in a final draft.

When the final draft is in complete, it will be the responsibility of the Community Development Department staff to conduct the formal adoption process through Zoning Commission and City Commission meetings for adoption, as required in Montana statutes.

The Consultant will be required to develop an informational brochure to assist potential applicants on how to use the consolidated downtown code.

## Proposed Timeline

December 16, 2016	RFP Issued
January 6, 2017	Proposal Packets Due
Mid-January 2017	Evaluations of packets and selection of finalists

Mid-January 2017	Presentations and interviews with finalists
Mid-January 2017	Selection of consultant
February 2017	Contract executed
September 30, 2017	Final deliverables due

## Budget

The total project budget for the consolidated downtown code project will be \$35,000. This figure does not include the in-kind support the City will provide in the form of staff hours, use of premises for meetings and outreach events, or internal administrative expenses. All consultant applications that adhere to the budget noted above will be considered by a selection committee upon submission.

The selected consultants must be comfortable with reporting and payment constraints of public funding, and comply with all sub-recipient requirements regarding supporting documentation, compliance with laws and payment. Selected consultants will need to show proof of professional liability insurance and not be on any public entity debarment list. Any procurement under this contract will need to follow DBE and Section 3 procedures.

## Desired Consultant Qualifications and Submission Requirements

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate competency and experience in form-based code and design regulation or hybrid code and its development and implementation. They will possess experience working with community groups, stakeholders, City staff and boards, and elected officials. .

Firms interested in being considered for this project must submit five (5) hardcopies of their proposals and statements of qualifications by mail to Sharon Haugen, Community Development Director, 316 N. Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, Montana, 59623 or by sending one PDF copy electronically to [shaugen@helenamt.gov](mailto:shaugen@helenamt.gov). Only submittals under 20 pages (or 10 double-sided sheets, if printed) will be accepted, in addition to an introductory letter. Responses should include:

1. The firm's legal name, address, and telephone number;
2. The principal(s) of the firm and their experience and qualifications;
3. The experience and qualifications of the staff to be assigned to the project, with an emphasis on experience with form-based code and design regulations;
4. A description of the firm's prior experience, with links to at least two examples of past projects and appropriate references ;
5. A description of the firm's current work activities and how these would be coordinated with the project; and
6. The proposed work plan and schedule for activities to be performed.

## Submission Instructions

Questions and responses should be directed to Sharon Haugen, Community Development Director, 316 N. Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, Montana, 59623. All submissions must be postmarked no later than January 6, 2017 or received at the above address by 5 P.M. As noted, electronic copies may be accepted

via e-mail to Sharon Haugen at [shaugen@helenamt.gov](mailto:shaugen@helenamt.gov). Please state "CDBG City Planning Consultant Services Proposal" on the outside of the response package or in the e-mail subject header.

Respondents may review the CDBG application, which includes a description of the proposed services including activities, budget, schedule, and other pertinent information, by visiting the City of Helena Community Development Department offices during regular office hours. A copy of the application is also available for review at the offices of the Community Development Division, Montana Department of Commerce, 301 S. Park Avenue, P.O. Box 200523, Helena, MT 59620-0523.

## Scoring and Selection Process

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors:

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| 1. The qualifications of the professional personnel to be assigned to the project | 30% |
| 2. The consultant's capability to meet time and project budget requirements       | 15% |
| 3. Present and projected workloads  | 15% |
| 4. Related experience on similar projects   | 40% |

The selection of finalists will be based on an evaluation of the written responses. Interviews will be held with the top-ranked firms. The award will be made to the most qualified offeror whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the City of Helena, all factors considered. Unsuccessful offerors will be notified as soon as possible.

## EEO and Compliance with Laws

Consistent with the requirements of Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968, CDBG regulations governing the grant require that, to the greatest extent feasible, opportunities for training and employment arising in connection with this CDBG- assisted project will be extended to local lower-income residents. Further, to the greatest extent feasible, business concerns located in or substantially owned by residents of the project area will be utilized. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises are encouraged to apply.

For more information, please contact Sharon Haugen, Community Development Director, via e-mail to [shaugen@helenamt.gov](mailto:shaugen@helenamt.gov), by calling (406) 447-8490, or by visiting the City of Helena Community Development Department.

This solicitation is being offered in accordance with federal and state statutes governing procurement of professional services. Accordingly, the City of Helena City Commission reserves the right to negotiate an agreement based on fair and reasonable compensation for the scope of work and services proposed, as well as the right to reject any and all responses deemed unqualified, unsatisfactory or inappropriate.

## Award

The City of Helena reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Proposals received from this RFP, or to negotiate separately with any Proposer. After any responses are open, conversations may take place between the City of Helena and consultants for purposes of clarification regarding the selection

process only. Consultants shall be bound by the information submitted in their Proposals and subsequent negotiations.

Those submitting Proposals may be required to make a presentation to the City of Helena as part of the selection process. The presentation team should include the Project Manager and any other key personnel necessary to address administrative and technical issues.

The City of Helena reserves the right to award the contract to a consultant that it deems to offer the best overall Proposal. The City of Helena is therefore not bound to accept a Proposal on the basis of lowest price, The City of Helena reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Proposals received from this RFP. The City of Helena has the sole discretion and reserves the right to cancel this RFP, to reject any and all Proposals, to waive any and all irregularities, or to re-advertise with either the identical or revised specifications if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the City.

**THE CITY OF HELENA IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING ACCESS TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FOR ITS MEETINGS, IN COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND THE MONTANA HUMAN RIGHTS ACT. THE CITY WILL NOT EXCLUDE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FROM PARTICIPATION AT ITS MEETINGS OR OTHERWISE DENY THEM THE CITY'S SERVICES, PROGRAMS, OR ACTIVITIES.**

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES REQUIRING ACCOMMODATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CITY'S MEETINGS, SERVICES, PROGRAMS, OR ACTIVITIES SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY'S ADA COORDINATOR, ELROY GOLEMON, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME TO ARRANGE FOR THE REQUESTED ACCOMMODATION, AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:**

**(406) 447- 8490**

**TTY RELAY SERVICE 1-800-253-4091 OR 711**

**CITYCOMMUNITYDEVELOPMENT@HELENAMT.GOV**

**316 NORTH PARK AVENUE- ROOM 445, HELENA, MT 59623**