

Clarksville-Montgomery County Economic Development Council

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Request for Proposal

A. General Description of Project

The Clarksville-Montgomery County Economic Development Council (EDC) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify qualified economic development consulting teams for the preparation of an Economic Development Strategic Plan for the Clarksville-Montgomery County region. The EDC seeks an economic development firm that has specific experience in the preparation and implementation of Economic Development Strategic Plans. It is expected that the selected firm will prepare an EDC-specific Strategic Plan that contains specific economic development goals, strategies, and implementation measures. The EDC requires the Strategic Plan to also contain an Implementation Plan, outlining the timing, anticipated cost and funding source of each Implementation Action. The selected consultant will be one that has demonstrated experience in preparation of region-wide economic development strategic plans. The purpose of this RFP is to solicit responses from qualified economic development consulting firms that desire to be considered for this project.

B. Background

The EDC is a non-profit (501(c)(6)) organization with the purpose of creating prosperity for all citizens of Clarksville and Montgomery County by executing and coordinating member-entity efforts to attract and grow a robust economic base of jobs and investment, to expand opportunities for tourism, and to encourage a thriving environment for business. Its member entities include the following:

Clarksville Area Chamber of Commerce

Clarksville-Montgomery County Industrial Development Board

Clarksville-Montgomery County Tourist Commission (dba: Visit Clarksville)

It performs its economic development functions in strong association with the Aspire Clarksville Foundation [a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funded with the contributions of the region's businesses].

Montgomery County is the most populated of 4 counties within the Clarksville TN-KY MSA. Clarksville is the county seat, the only incorporated city, and the fifth largest city in Tennessee. Since 2010, The City has added nearly than 34,000 new residents and the County has added nearly 47,000 new residents. The area is projected to continue growth as new developments across multiple sectors continue.

Clarksville-Montgomery County has also recently been recognized with remarkable accolades including: #1 Place to Live (*Money*, 2019), #1 Most Desirable Zip Code for relocation (*Opendoor.com*, 2021), Hottest Zip Code (*Opendoor.com*, 2022), and #4 in Nation for Talent Attraction (*Emsi*, 2022).

The Clarksville-Montgomery County area also boasts a young median age of 31.9 due in large part to its largest employer, Fort Campbell and Austin Peay State University with approximately 9,300 students. Though technically located in Kentucky, a vast majority of Fort Campbell's acreage and personnel reside in the region. This army post boasts 27,308 soldiers, 8,146 civilian employees, and a total base population of 35,833 with an estimated annual economic output of \$10.1 billion (2019 calc.)

Industrial development has been a major factor in its continued growth. Since 2010, the industrial sector has seen 41 new and expanding businesses investing more than \$7.1 billion and creating an estimated 10,200 jobs. Recent announcements include LG Chem's new cathode manufacturing facility employing more than 860, Amazon's one-million-square-foot fulfillment center employing 500, and Microvast Power Solution's Lithium-ion battery manufacturing expansion employing nearly 300. Further, expanding businesses over the last five years include LG Electronics, Shinhung Global Inc., Florim USA, VK Integrated Systems, and Hankook Tire announcing a two-phased expansion and the addition of 400 employees.

Redevelopment is on the rise in downtown Clarksville with three active TIF Districts designed to spur redevelopment in the area administered by the Industrial Development Board of Montgomery County. Recent additions include the groundbreaking of Riverview Square, a vibrant outdoor shopping, dining and social district with over 45,000 square feet of retail and a new 156 room full-service hotel and the near completion of the F&M Bank Arena, affiliated with the Nashville Predators, expected to bring 600,000 guests yearly.

Greenway and Blueway development has taken place throughout the community with both the City of Clarksville and Montgomery County undertaking projects. The City currently has 18+ miles of greenway with two additional projects expected to be complete in 2023 adding a pedestrian bridge and additional non-motorized water recreation point to the greenway. The County has acquired an additional 8.3 acres to expand the greenway system with hopes of eventually running greenway to connect to adjacent Cheatham County along the banks of the Cumberland River and potentially connecting to the greenway system in downtown Clarksville.

The Nashville Region, including Montgomery County, is considering mass transit plans which could include interstate upgrades, light rail, and new bus routes for the region.

A new \$80+ million athletics complex is officially underway near Exit 8 on I-24 with the City Council breaking ground on the site in August of 2022. Phase 1 will include 11 new soccer fields, an accessible playground and walking trail, concessions, restrooms, and over 700 parking spaces.

Tourism is on a meteoric rise as well. Montgomery County has fully rebounded from the adverse effects of the pandemic as evidenced by record-breaking Hotel/Motel Tax receipts (\$4.7M in 2022). The addition of several venues like the athletics complex and downtown event center combined with an imminent 50,000 square foot conference center in Clarksville's major retail corridor will certainly help fuel even more growth the community's tourism industry.

The business community has facilitated much of this progress through private investment in the Aspire Clarksville Foundation which is over half-way through its sixth campaign (Aspire VI). This campaign and its leadership of more than 79 investors are leveraging over \$4.3 million to enable these and many more accomplishments.

The EDC engaged a consultant in 2008 to develop a Strategic Economic Development Blueprint (Blueprint) to guide the community into its promising future. The Blueprint was used to develop a five-year slate of initiatives for adoption by the EDC and its member entities and proposed funding by civic and private funds. The EDC has commissioned formal update of this Blueprint three times over the last

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fifteen years. It is currently in the fourth year of the current update and now seeking another updated plan to guide it toward meeting the economic growth needs of the next five years.

Copies of previous and current Blueprints are available at <https://clarksvillepartnership.com/strategic-blueprint/>

C. Contact Person

Responses to this RFP may be directed to the following persons:

Proposal Submission To:	Questions To:
Clarksville-Montgomery County EDC Attn: Buck Dellinger EDC President & CEO 25 Jefferson Street, Suite 300 Clarksville, TN 37040 931-647-2331 931-647-3315 (fax) buckd@clarksville.tn.us www.clarksvillepartnership.com	EDC V/P of Marketing and Communications Michelle Hueffmeier michelleh@clarksville.tn.us 931-647-2331 or EDC Board Administrator Crystal Trotter ctrotter@clarksville.tn.us 931-647-2331

D. Proposed Project Schedule

RFP Issued:	March 3, 2023
Deadline for Proposed Submission:	March 27 (10:00 AM), 2023
Consultants Selected for Interviews:	NLT March 31, 2023
2 Interviews Conducted:	April 3 – 13, 2023
Consultant Agreement Approved by Committee:	NLT April 14, 2023
Final Deliverable from Selected Consultant Due:	NLT June 30, 2023

E. Scope of Services

The overall responsibility and scope of work for the Consultant is to prepare an Economic Development Strategic Plan using qualitative and quantitative data gathered during the planning process. The Consultant will draft a plan with specific strategies, action items and performance targets that are realistic and attainable. The Plan will act as a guide and provide local leaders with the direction necessary to strengthen the region’s economic base. The Plan should focus on strategies and activities that have the greatest potential for creating jobs, increasing the tax base in the region, and lessening the tax burden on its citizens. There should also be a focus on those broader economic development activities through which the EDC can meaningfully influence the creation and retention of jobs. The Consultant will also provide any meeting facilitation services needed during stakeholder interview processes.

The Consultant shall provide professional services to support the following tasks:

- a. Review and analysis of existing demographic and socioeconomic data, labor force characteristics, sales tax revenue and other key economic data.
- b. Analysis of key demographic trends and forecasts, social factors, economic factors and financial indicators for inclusion into the strategic plan. This task should include preparation of a market study of the region's retail/commercial and industrial sectors.
- c. Identify the community's assets and competitive advantages, with proposed activities and programs to incorporate these assets and advantages into an overall economic development strategy. This task should include a SWOT analysis of the region and surrounding area.
- d. Review and analysis of local ordinances, policies, and rules, providing recommendations on making adjustments to favor economic growth.
- e. Preparation and facilitation of up to three (3) stakeholder workshops. These workshops will consist of a series of one-on-one and/or focus group meetings with stakeholders, residents, property owners, business owners, elected officials, Planning Commission Members, real estate professionals and developers, and other community leaders. The process/format developed for these meetings must ensure an open discourse with stakeholders that will help identify and inform the highest priority economic development issues and opportunities facing the region. The Consultant will prepare a document summarizing key points from these stakeholder meetings.
- f. Attend up to three (3) meetings with EDC staff and key community members to identify and prioritize economic development goals and objectives and proposed activities and programs.
- g. Preparation of a locally based Economic Development Strategy setting forth goals and objectives for taking advantage of the opportunities surrounding the Clarksville-Montgomery County area, as well as for solving the economic development problems of the area. Such a strategy, at a minimum, is to address the following program categories:
 1. **Global Business Development:** For purposes of this blueprint category, this may include strategies related to:
 - i. Existing Industry and Retention
 - ii. Focused Recruitment Efforts
 - iii. Business Attraction – Targeted Business Opportunities
 - iv. Innovation and Entrepreneurship
 - v. Education and Workforce Development
 - vi. Local Incentives
 - vii. Development of key Industrial assets (pad-ready sites, Mega-sites, spec buildings, etc.)
 - viii. Other related strategies recommended by the consulting team
 2. **Community Development:** For purposes of this blueprint category, this may include strategies related to:
 - i. Commercial Real Estate Development
 - ii. Comprehensive Planning
 - iii. Conference/Convention Center Development
 - iv. Resources for Living
 - v. Public Policy
 - vi. Community Leader Education
 - vii. Retail Recruitment
 - viii. Benchmarking

- ix. Downtown Development
- x. Other related strategies recommended by the consulting team
- 3. **Tourism Development:** For purposes of this blueprint category, this may include strategies related to:
 - i. Tourism Development
 - ii. Tourism Marketing
 - iii. Tourism Social Media and Public Relations
 - iv. Other related strategies recommended by the consulting team
- 4. **Marketing and Communication:** For purposes of this blueprint category, this may include strategies related to:
 - i. Branding
 - ii. Public Relations
 - iii. Public Awareness
 - iv. Media Relations
 - v. Private Investment Recruitment/Aspire Foundation Marketing
 - vi. Research, Benchmarking, & Analytics
 - vii. Other related strategies by the consulting team
- h. Preparation of an economic development action plan including prioritized target markets, suggested activities, projects, and programs to implement objectives and goals set forth in the strategy.
- i. Preparation of performance measures with timelines that will be used to evaluate whether and to what extent plan goals and objectives have been or are being met.
- j. Attendance of up to two (2) meetings and/or workshops with the EDC Board.

F. Minimum Requirements

Minimum requirements for submittal of a proposal in response to this RFP include the following:

- a. Demonstrated understanding of local economic development theory and practice, research methods, group consensus building, implementation methods, and monitoring and updating processes.
- b. Demonstrated familiarity with development and implementation of economic development policies.
- c. Demonstrated experience, competence, and qualifications of the consultant and the participating staff successfully providing similar services to similar entities.
- d. Understanding of the requested services and appropriateness of the proposed work program. (Particularly as pertains to the areas outlined in Section E, item g)
- e. Ability to perform the work in a timely manner, availability of staff and contingency plans.
- f. Proposals must state the proposer's federal and state taxpayer identification numbers.

G. Work Schedule

The Consultant's work schedule will begin immediately upon contract award and is expected to continue until the EDC Board approves the acceptance of a complete plan. A proposed work schedule for the Strategic Plan process should be submitted as part of the proposal. Our projected timeline for completion of this plan would be Three to Four months from contract award (final deliverable expected NLT 6/30/23).

H. RFP Proposal Submittal Requirements

Consultants interested in providing these services must prepare and submit a Proposal that includes the following and will be evaluated using the assigned values:

- a. **Cover Letter:** The Cover letter is to be signed by an officer of the firm authorized to execute a contract with the EDC.
- b. **Firm Qualifications (20%):** This section shall describe the areas of expertise of current permanent staff and the scope of services that can be provided by the firm without the services of an outside consultant under the consultant's direction. Additionally, within this section, include:
 - c. **Key Personnel Qualifications (20%):** Include a proposed project management structure. Identify the key contact for the project and all personnel who will be assigned to work on this project, including a description of their abilities, qualifications, and experience. A meeting facilitator shall be included as part of the project team. Include resumes for all key individuals. There can be no change of key personnel once the proposal is submitted without the prior approval of the EDC.
 - i. **Subcontractors:** Identify any portion of the scope of work that will be subcontracted. Include firm qualifications and key personnel, telephone number and contact person for all subcontractors. The EDC reserves the right to approve or reject all consultants or internal staff performing consulting services, proposed by the consultant during or after the consultant review and selection process.
- d. **References (10%):** A list of projects completed by the proposer under which services similar to those required by this RFP were performed shall be listed in your proposal. An emphasis should be placed on projects undertaken within the last five (5) years and those projects undertaken for similar entities located in similar sized communities of states bordering Tennessee. Include a brief description of the services, dates the services were provided, and name and telephone number or references familiar with the services provided.
- e. **Work Samples (10%):** Provide brief descriptions of two (2) projects dealing with economic development, community master plans, or similar topics prepared by or under the direction of your firm. Include in your description the techniques utilized in using the strategic plan process and the outcome of the planning process.
- f. **Project Workplan (10%):** A description of project understanding, detailed work approach and methodology will be identified. The workplan should list specific tasks and any specific considerations, options, or alternatives.
- g. **Project Schedule (10%):** Propose a timeline for completion for the Strategic Plan including start date, milestones, and target date of completion. Any assumptions regarding turnaround time for the EDC or its staff review should be clearly noted.
- h. **Fee information (20%):** Provide a detailed fee proposal by task for the services identified in the scope of services section E of this proposal. Identify sub-tasks and the respective cost in your fee proposal as necessary. This section of your proposal shall include a professional fee schedule (hourly fee chart) for the consultant's personnel and the subcontractor's key personnel identified above who would be working on this project. Hourly fees for additional or optional services that may be required shall also be included. Unless specified in the submittals, the professional fee schedule shall include any costs associated with complying with the EDC's insurance requirements. Identify the fee that will be charged for additional public or EDC meetings not identified in the scope of services provided here.

- i. **Interview:** Proposers may be requested to be available for an interview with the selection committee virtually or in person as part of the EDC's final selection process. The members of the consulting team who will be performing the work will be expected to attend any interviews scheduled with the committee.
- j. **Deadline and Delivery:** Five (5) copies of the proposal shall be submitted to the Clarksville-Montgomery County EDC, 25 Jefferson Street, Suite 300, Clarksville, TN 37040. Attention Buck Dellinger, EDC President & CEO. The deadline for submittal of a proposal is Monday, March 27th, 2023 at 10:00 AM CST. No information submitted by facsimile or electronic mail will be accepted unless otherwise requested by the EDC during the proposal review process. Proposals received after 10:00 AM CST on March 27th, 2023 will not be accepted.

I. Defense, Indemnification, Hold Harmless and Insurance Requirements

In addition to other standard contractual terms, the EDC will require the selected vendor to comply with the defense, indemnification, hold harmless, and insurance requirements as outlined below:

Consultant shall defend, indemnify, and hold the EDC, its officials, employees and volunteers harmless from any and all claims, injuries, damages, losses or suits including attorney fees, arising out of or resulting from the acts, errors, or omissions of the Consultant in performance of this Agreement, except for injuries and damages caused by the sole negligence of the EDC. The vendor shall procure and maintain, for the duration of this Agreement, insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of the work hereunder by the Contractor, his agents, representatives, employees, or subcontractors. The cost of such insurance shall be paid by the Contractor. Insurance shall meet or exceed the following unless otherwise approved by the Council.

Insurance Requirements

1. Workers' Compensation coverage as required by the State of Tennessee.
2. Comprehensive or Commercial General Liability: \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage.
3. Automobile Liability: \$1,000,000 combined single limit per accident for bodily injury and property damage.

Equal Opportunity Compliance

The EDC is an equal opportunity employer and requires all Proposers to comply with policies and regulations concerning equal opportunity. The Proposer, in the performance of this Agreement, agrees not to discriminate in its employment because of the employee's or applicant's race, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual preference, age, or physical handicap.

J. Review Process

Consultant Selection will be based upon a qualitative review of the proposals submitted. EDC staff may request additional clarifying information from any or all consultants that submit a proposal during the review process. EDC staff will evaluate the responses to this RFP, may interview the top rated consultants, and will make a recommendation to the EDC Selection Committee on the selection of the consultant determined to be the most qualified for the project. It is anticipated that the EDC and the selected firm will enter into a professional services contract for the time period beginning April 14, 2023 through project completion.