

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PROJECT: RETAIL RECRUITMENT & BUSINESS RETENTION STRATEGY AND SERVICES



City of Lancaster
P.O. Box 1149
216 S. Catawba Street (29720)
Lancaster, SC 29721

February 4, 2021

Submittal Deadline March 8, 2021 by 4:00 P.M. EST

Request for Proposals
City of Lancaster
Retail Recruitment & Business Retention Strategy and Services

Overview

The City of Lancaster invites interested and qualified consulting firms and/or consultants to provide services to develop a retail development strategy that maximizes the retail and restaurant potential for the City with special attention on downtown, as well as provide business retention tools and analytic portal to customize report.

The City is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) in order to attract consultants that specializes in developing retail strategies that focuses on facilitation of commercial growth and retention as well as understanding the retail landscape of a geographic area and can identify retail gaps.

The goal of the overall project strives to address the following:

1. Market Analysis
2. Development of a “Result Driven” Recruitment Plan
3. Implementation of the Plan
4. Marketing and Representation

The City understands the importance of public engagement and endeavors to have a thorough public engagement process as part of the Plan development. However, the City’s past attempts at public participation has not been ideal; therefore the City has developed a close partnership with the Arras Foundation to assist facilitating public engagement. The City would encourage the winning firm to work with the Arras Foundation and the University of South Carolina Lancaster TRiO Programs in order to garner the best information from the most people possible. The City wants to ensure that our retail development vision is shared by participating business owners and citizen and not applied externally, or solely from the consultant and/or the City’s leadership.

The City will not be responsible for any costs incurred by any firm to respond to this request. Firms who wish to submit proposals must provide the information outlined in the RFP by March 8, 2021. Five copies of the response must be provided in a sealed envelope clearly marked “Response to RFP for Retail Recruitment & Business Retention Strategy and Services” by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 8, 2021. Electronic (email) or facsimile submissions will not be accepted, and late submittals will be rejected. Proposals should be submitted to:

Tracy Rabon, City Clerk
P.O. Box 1149
Lancaster, SC 29721

The tentative timeline is:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
RFP release	February 4, 2021
RFP due	March 8, 2021

Review by City Administrator & staff
Selection by City
Negotiations on contract terms
Contract approval

March 9 – March 19, 2021
March 22, 2021
March 22 – March 29, 2021
April 6, 2021

The City may conduct inquiries and request additional information from firms as the City deems necessary to assist in its evaluation.

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals submitted and/or negotiate terms with firms who submit proposals. The City reserves the right to select the firm that best meets the needs of the City in the sole judgement of the City, and the selection will be based on experience, qualifications, and/or economic benefit to the City.

All questions must be in writing and directed to:

Tracy Rabon, City Clerk
P.O. Box 1149
Lancaster, SC 29721
(803) 289-1453
(803) 286-9690 (fax)
trabon@lancastercitysc.com

About the City of Lancaster

The City of Lancaster is located in Lancaster County, South Carolina, and is the County seat of the fourth fastest growing county in South Carolina and the 37th fastest of the country. The City itself has a population of 9,119 people (based on the 2019 US Census population estimate) and is 5.9 square miles large.

Just being 45 miles south from Uptown Charlotte the City sees itself as having great potential in becoming a prime location for both residential and industrial development and growth. However, we are cognizant that rooftops follow commercial development and it is better for the City to be actively recruiting retail instead of taking a passive role. The pre-pandemic economic boom that the County and the Charlotte region has experience in the last few years has not yet made a tremendous impact in the City. The City's median household income and per capita income in 2019 dollars is \$30,122 and \$23,744 respectively. The 2019 American Community Survey listed 35.3% of the population living in poverty.

The City is home to the University of South Carolina Lancaster, the oldest of the University of South Carolina four regional Palmetto Colleges. In the Fall of 2020 USCL enrollment was 1,810. The University of South Carolina Lancaster also has the Native American Studies Center located

in downtown. This comprehensive center for the study of South Carolina's Native American people, their histories, and their culture offers visitors the opportunity to view the single largest collection of Catawba Indian pottery in existence.

In 2019 the City hired MKSK to develop the Lancaster Downtown Revitalization Plan. This plan, which was completed and adopted by City Council in February 2020, did include a market assessment for downtown. This assessment identified the local market base and examined demographics, market segmentation, commercial, residential, and employment markets. The complete plan can be found at the link below:

<https://www.lancastercitysc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LDRP-Final-Report-with-Appendices-1.pdf>

The City understands this RFQ may not fully describe the work envisioned. The information contained in this RFQ is the City's best understanding on how to develop a retail and restaurant recruitment plan that supports economic development efforts, especially in downtown. We feel that the assessment should take into consideration and include:

- Population and household increases
- Competition
- Existing retail firms
- Retail leakage/surplus
- Retail development in similar cities
- Cannibalization
- Retail trends
- Market viability
- Provide analytic Customer Propensity Models to assist local retailers with merchandising and marketing decisions
- Healthcare assessment report
- Physician intelligence report
- Mobile GPS analysis to understand who comes to the market, where they came from, and what type of customer they are
- Match the customer profiles with profiles of specific retailers and restaurants that would consider the City for a location or expansion
- Conduct outreach efforts for each of the retailers and restaurants identified, including the preparation of custom marketing materials as appropriate
- Provide on-going support to the City throughout the recruitment process.
- Result driven retail recruitment plan.

Scope

The firm or consultant selected will be expected to:

- Conduct and update demographic and psychographic analysis, retailer gap analysis, and identify key retailers that are a fit for of the City and that represent an increase in retail quality for the City.
- Develop an overall retail recruitment strategy for the City based on the abovementioned items and other relevant factors.
- Provide a healthcare analysis to understand the gap between demand and supply in the City. Include insights into gap size by healthcare specialty area.
- Identify potential healthcare systems that are a fit for the City and the larger trade area.
- Develop a strategy and approach to attract retailers and restaurants to downtown.
- Provide mobile GPS analytics to understand and identify visitor profiles and to quantify the regional trade area to support retail attraction efforts.
- Develop presentation quality materials, pitch decks, maps, demographic profiles, etc. for use in recruiting and engaging retailers, brokers, and developers.
- Assist the City in implementing the retail recruitment strategy by helping develop meaningful relationships, conducting meetings with retailers and their agents, and facilitating handoffs to developers when mutual interest is established.
- Present draft report for review and comment to the City Administrator.
- Furnish the City with an electronic source file of the final master plan and deliver ten (10) printed and bound copies.
- Present final report to Lancaster City Council.

Submittal Information and Requirements

Five Statements of Qualification will be accepted at City of Lancaster, P.O. Box 1149, 216 S. Catawba Street (29720), Lancaster, South Carolina 29721, until 4:00 P.M., March 8, 2021. All respondents are requested to provide the information specified along with any supplemental information that provides a comprehensive view of the firm, team assigned to the project, and proposed execution plan. Information shall be provided in an organized, clear, and concise manner. The packet shall be placed in a sealed envelope marked clearly, "Response to RFP for Retail Recruitment & Business Retention Strategy and Services."

Late proposals will not be accepted under any circumstance and will not be opened or reviewed. Electronic (email) or facsimile submissions will not be accepted.

Proposal Format

1. **Coversheet / Cover Letter:** This should include the highlights of the proposal, such as an overview of the firm's organization, most relevant experience, specific staff specialty and facilities involved in servicing the City, and the name, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address of a contact person for questions concerning the proposal submitted (preferably who will be in responsible charge of the project).

2. Qualifications & Experience of the Firm: Brief history and organization of the firm, legal entity that will enter into the contract, location of the office where the work will be performed, and the name and title of the person that is authorized to enter into a master contract agreement. List any sub-consultant firms that will support your firm.

Provide a narrative of your firm's prior experience and qualifications as it pertains to the above scope of work and provide a list of projects with similar scopes.

3. Project Team: Provide a list of the project team members (including the office location where they currently work) that you propose to use and identify the responsibility of each team member. You do not need to list all of your subconsultant employees that may be on the team, but you should list your subconsultants and the primary contact at your subconsultants. Provide a brief resume for each person listing specific similar project experience, educational experience, and licensure/certifications. List any their specialty or role on the team. Provide an hourly rate summary for project team members.
4. Project Management Approach to the Project & Quality Control: This should include a proposed project schedule (project milestones including but not limited to the initial meeting/conference to kick off the project implementation, periodic progress meeting, and project completion), detailed approach to complete this project, familiarity with this project, identification of unique issues related to the project, and the process proposed for communications with City stakeholders. Briefly describe anticipated roles and responsibilities of the City and the firm.
5. Capacity and Response Capability: Provide a statement of your firm's current workload, and capacity to meet the project schedules.
6. References: Must provide a list of projects or clients which services similar to those required by the RFP were performed. An emphasis should be placed on projects undertaken within the past three years, and those projects undertaken for public agencies located in similar sized communities. Include a brief description of the projects, dates the service were provided, location, budget, and current client contact name and telephone number. For each project, indicate which proposed team member worked on the project and describe the role/work they performed and their levels of involvement. By submission of the references, you are authorizing the City of Lancaster to contact these references.
7. Work Samples: Provide brief descriptions of two projects dealing with retail recruitment, redevelopment, analysis, or similar topics prepared by or under the direction of your firm. Include in your description the techniques utilized in the analysis process and the outcome of the planning process.

8. Fee Estimate: The proposal should include consultant's staff fee hourly rates, along with applicable escalation clauses, and miscellaneous billable costs. Furthermore, the proposal shall include a project fee.

Evaluation Criteria

The following factors will be used in evaluating the proposals and awarding a contract:

- Demonstrated understanding of the project, and the firm's overall experience with similar projects comparable in type, size, and complexity. (30 points)
- Qualifications of the firm's staff assigned to perform the work with the project (20 points)
- Project work plan and schedule (20 points)
- Fee Proposal (20 points)
- References and work samples (10 points)

Qualifications will be ranked and graded on what has been submitted. It is possible that the City may develop a shortlist of candidates who will present their qualifications and answer questions presented by staff.

The City of Lancaster will rank all responsive offers and select not only the highest ranked firm but also the one most advantageous to the City. If contract negotiations with the selected firm is unsuccessful, the City will discontinue the negotiations and begin negotiations with the second highest ranked firm.

RFO Revisions

If a proposing firm finds discrepancies in or omissions from the specifications or should require additional clarification of any part, a written request for interpretations shall be submitted to Tracy Rabon, City Clerk. Any interpretation of or changes made to the RFP will be made by written addendum to each proposing firm and shall become part of the request for any contract awarded. The City will not be responsible for the accuracy of any other oral explanations, interpretations, or representations. It shall be the responsibility of each proposing organization or individual to verify that every addendum has been received prior to submitting proposals.

All addenda will be posted to the City's bids and opportunity website at:

<https://www.lancastercitysc.com/bids-rfps-and-rfqs>

Consultant Certification

The submission of proposal shall be deemed a representation and certification that the proposing consultant:

- Has carefully read and fully understands the information provided by the City in this RFP;
- Is financially solvent and has the capability to successfully undertake and complete the responsibilities and obligations of the proposal submitted;
- Represents that all of the information contained in the submitted proposal is true and correct;
- Acknowledges that the City of Lancaster has the right to make any inquiry it deems appropriate to substantiate or supplement information provided by proposing vendors and hereby grants the City of Lancaster permission to make these inquiries.

City Conditions

- No proposals will be accepted from any person or organization that is in arrears for any obligation to the City, or that otherwise may be deemed irresponsible or unresponsive by City staff.
- The City of Lancaster is not obligated to enter into any contract as a result of the RFP.
- All prices quoted must be firm for a period of 90 (ninety) days following the proposal deadline.
- The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or any part thereof and to select the most responsive proposal that is deemed in the best interest of the City of Lancaster.
- The City reserves the right to negotiate with any, none, or all of the proposing vendors.
- All costs, including travel and expenses, incurred in the preparation of this proposal will be borne solely by the proposing company.
- The City will not return proposal materials to those submitting proposals.
- No agreements with any selected firm shall be binding until a contract is approved and signed and executed by the City Administrator and authorized representatives of the firm.
- The City requires the selected firm and any subcontractors to provide proof of insurance to include professional liability, workers compensation, employer's liability, error and omissions, general liability, and auto liability prior to commencing work.
- The selected firm and any subcontractor, upon award of the proposed contract, shall obtain a City of Lancaster Business License for the project. The business license fee is calculated on a rate base of the project's gross income. For more information on the estimated license fee please contact Karen Proctor, Business License Specialist at (803) 289-1462 or kcproctor@lancastercitysc.com

The City of Lancaster is an Equal Opportunity employer. The City of Lancaster reserves the right to disqualify from consideration statements received after the date and time specified above. Any proposals may be withdrawn or modified by written request prior to the date and time of receipt provided above. In submitting these qualifications, it is understood by respondent that the City of Lancaster reserves the right to 1) reject any and all proposals and to be the sole judge of the value and merit of the statements offered; and 2) eliminate from consideration any statement deemed substantially or materially unresponsive to the requests provided herein.