



Town of Harrisburg NC
Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Harrisburg Planning Department



Date Issued: March 10, 2023

Responses Due: April 10, 2023 (By 4:30 pm)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Introduction.....	3
II. Project Background and Purpose.....	3
III. Scope of Work.....	4
IV. Public Engagement and Stakeholder Input.....	8
V. Project Time Frame.....	9
VI. Proposal Submittal Format and Content.....	9
VII. Consultant Evaluation and Selection Process.....	10
VIII. Submission of Qualification Statements.....	11
IX. Additional Information.....	11
X. Advertisement.....	11

(RFQ): Harrisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

I. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Harrisburg, North Carolina (“Town”) is seeking Qualification Statements from professional economic development consultants or teams of consultants (“Consultant”) to develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan (“SEDP”) for the Town. The SEDP will serve as a guide for the Town’s efforts to catalyze economic growth and development over a five-year timeframe. The SEDP is intended to be an action-oriented plan that will inform and guide Town officials, residents, property owners and developers in making sound policy and investment decisions which will lead to the expansion of the Town’s tax base and economic wealth.

All sealed Qualification Statements must be received by 4:30 PM on April 10, 2023. Inquiries, amendments, or submissions received after the time and date listed above shall not be considered for evaluation. The selected Consultant will be required to complete the scope of work as outlined in this RFQ.

Written questions regarding this RFQ shall be submitted by 4:30 pm EST on March 20, 2023. Questions should be emailed to Zac Gordon, AICP, Planning Director at: zgordon@harrisburgnc.org. Formal responses shall be made by the Town only in response to written questions. **Responses to questions will be posted on March 22, 2023 by 4:30 pm EST on the Town’s website.** Any questions that the Town feels are pertinent to all proposals will be sent to all respondents who have submitted Qualification Statements.

The Town of Harrisburg reserves the right to reject any, and all submissions for any reason or no reason. This RFQ does not obligate the Town to pay any cost incurred by respondents in the preparation and submission of a response nor does it obligate the Town to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The [Town of Harrisburg NC](#), incorporated in 1973, located in Cabarrus County, immediately adjacent to Mecklenburg County and within the [Charlotte metropolitan region](#). With a population of approximately 21,000 residents, Harrisburg is one of the fastest growing communities in NC. It is known regionally for its high quality of life and as an ideal place to live and raise a family. Located in close proximity to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and the Charlotte Motor Speedway (CMS), Harrisburg is only a 30-minute drive from Uptown Charlotte and is within five miles of I-485, which connects to I-85 and I-77. In recent years, the area has been attracting mostly residential development, but with the completion of I-485, it is becoming increasingly more attractive as a destination for commercial and industrial growth and development. The Town’s motto: *“The Right Side of Opportunity”*, captures the essence of the Town as a community that welcomes new residents and businesses.

In 2018, the Harrisburg Town Council adopted the [Harrisburg Area Land Use Plan \(HALUP\)](#), developed in partnership with Cabarrus County. This plan provides the vision and framework for future development of the Town through 2040, and adopted “Foster Economic Development” as one of its goals with following recommendations as it relates to Economic Development (ED) goals:

- ED-1: Identify and protect key employment and industrial locations from other development,
- ED-2: Create greater opportunities for office development, and
- ED-3: Encourage retail development in mixed-use walkable location

Prior to the adoption of the HALUP in 2018, the Town created an [Economic Development Strategic Plan](#) in

(RFQ): Harrisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

2013 and a [Market Analysis & Economic Development Implementation Plan](#) in 2015. The Consultant selected to prepare the Harrisburg SEDP shall consider these adopted plans and other relevant documents for the Town and surrounding communities, along with the [Cabarrus EDC Strategic Action Plan](#), to ensure that the SEDP is synchronized with local and regional economic development policy, in the context of current economic conditions while foreseeing opportunities for future economic growth. To accomplish this goal requires two equally important components. **First**, is to provide in-depth analysis of the Town's economy, focusing on the identification of key strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats associated with the Town's current economic advantages and long-term sustainability. **Second**, is to develop an actionable plan that identifies implementable strategies for enhancing and development of the Town's economic base.

In summary, the Harrisburg SEDP is intended to be an action-oriented plan that will guide the Town's future economic development program and not simply a background study of the Town's current economic development condition.

The SEDP shall recommend goals for strengthening and building the Town's economy, along with recommended strategies, tactics, guidelines, and timelines for achieving such goals. Charts and graphics (e.g., dashboards) should be utilized to represent and convey this information in a manner that is clear, concise, and easily understood by those responsible for implementation of the plan, elected officials, citizen boards, developers, and the public.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The SEDP process should answer three main questions:

1. **Where are we** (What is our current economic base)?
2. **Where do we want to go** (What are the opportunities for economic base expansion and what can we do to fully share the benefits of economic growth across the Town)?
3. **How do we get there** (What is our implementation plan)?

Preparation of the SEDP will include assembling and analyzing data and utilizing that data to develop policies, action steps, and an implementation plan to guide future economic development and decision making.

Respondents to this RFQ are expected to address the following in their Qualification Statements:

A. Assess Existing Conditions and Trends (Where are we?)

Review of Existing Plans

As part of the assessment phase of the SEDP, the Consultant, shall review and be familiar with all applicable Town land use, transportation and economic development plans, including the [Harrisburg Area Land Use Plan](#), [Highway 49 Corridor Plan](#), [Economic Development Strategic Plan](#), and [Market Analysis & Economic Development Implementation Plan](#). Consultant shall also review and assess land use, transportation and economic development plans for the surrounding communities in the region, including the recently adopted [Cabarrus EDC Strategic Action Plan](#) prepared for the Cabarrus Economic Development Corporation (CEDC).

At a minimum, the Consultant selected to prepare the Harrisburg SEDP will undertake the following tasks:

A.1 Assessment, Benchmarking & Evaluation

The Consultant will conduct an economic analysis of the Town and its economic relationships to the surrounding Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The purpose of this analysis will be to better understand Harrisburg's economy in the context of the larger metro economy to identify both unique opportunities for the Town, and regional synergies for economic growth and diversification.

During this phase of the study, the Consultant will review relevant previous economic studies, reports, and other related information to ensure that the SEDP meshes with existing plans while remaining distinct. To the extent possible, Town staff will make available local data requested by the Consultant, understanding that the Consultant may have better and more convenient sources of data than Town staff. Any gaps in available deemed necessary to inform the development of the SEDP will be discussed with Town staff to identify solutions to these gaps. The Town will also provide information regarding its current economic development programs, staffing and budget, as well as provide a listing and general function of its local economic development partners, as applicable.

The assessment, benchmarking and evaluation portion of the plan should include:

- a. **Demographic Analysis** – The report should contain a detailed demographic profile of the Town. The demographic profile shall consider such factors as population, household income, wealth and credit levels, the impact of poverty, education levels, property values and trends in property ownership, skills gaps, joblessness, underemployment, and race, among others for up to the past ten years.
- b. **Local (Town) Economic Assessment** – Produce a report containing a detailed analysis of the Town of Harrisburg's economic base including:
 - i. **Large Tier:** An overview of the Town's economy and the drivers responsible for much of the economic activity in the Town. The Local Economic Analysis shall include the following information, at minimum: the private employers with the largest number of employees in the Town; largest government employers in the Town; industries that are employing the most people within the Town; employers that employ the most Town residents; businesses that produce the most sales tax revenue for the Town; businesses that produce the most earnings tax revenue for the Town; and identifying sectors of the economy that produce the most employment and generate the most tax revenues to the Town.
 - ii. **Small Tier:** An Overview of the micro-enterprise, small business, and gig economy component of economic activity within the Town.
 - iii. Analyze economic trends and determine their impact on Harrisburg's future economic composition.
 - iv. Identify Harrisburg's position within the greater area (State of NC, Charlotte metropolitan area and the region), how the shared economies interact, and how each business sector contributes to the local economy.
 - v. SWOT analysis to identify major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the market, particularly as they compare to similar, competitive (or emerging competitive) markets. SWOT analysis to include identification and evaluation of exposure to systemic risks or shocks.

(RFQ): Harrisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

- c. **External Economic Development Network Ecosystem** – Evaluate the relevant existing reports, initiatives, and resources to ensure that the SEDP recommendations are properly informed. These would include:
- i. Existing reports and relevant recommendations
 - ii. Current Economic Development Initiatives (Façade Improvement Grants)
 - iii. Existing data and data infrastructure (Cabarrus EDC)
 - iv. Existing resources to be leveraged (State, federal, philanthropic)
- d. **Internal Assessment** – Review current Town’s internal operations related to Economic Development to inform strategy implementation. This assessment should address the Town’s current economic development activities, tools and policies and the effectiveness of those tools and policies, along with the analysis of additional or revised tools and policies that could be leveraged to support desired outcomes. Included in this analysis should be an assessment of whether the Town should consider hiring a full-time director (or manager) of economic development, to oversee and execute the Town’s economic development program; or, alternately, if these responsibilities should be vested in an existing Town department.

This assessment should include:

- i. Programs
- ii. Policies, practices, procedures
- iii. Management
- iv. Organization Structure

A.2 Market & Industry Cluster Analysis

The Industry Cluster Analysis portion of the SEDP is intended to identify the economic sectors where Harrisburg currently has, or could have, a “competitive advantage” and can be highly competitive at the regional, State, and national levels. Following identification of these sectors, this portion of the plan should identify action-oriented strategies for building upon and growing these sectors with the goal of creating a diverse, sustainable, and resilient economy that is sufficient to support the needs of the Town and its population. To address the resilience of these industries, risks associated with their stability and growth in Harrisburg shall be identified and factored into this part of the analysis.

In addition to identifying economic sectors at the regional/State/national scale in which the Town of Harrisburg would be competitive, a second objective for the SEDP is to identify the local industry clusters or strengths that enable the Town to stand out within the region and to prescribe strategies for growing and sustaining these industries. Examples of these types of industries could include biotech, advanced manufacturing, entertainment, and tourism.

This sub-task should:

- a. Identify industries by three-digit NAICS in the Town that are:
 - i. Dominant and expected to grow
 - ii. Dominant but waning due to industry/economic/technological or other trends or lack of infrastructure
 - iii. Emerging and a good match; expected to grow
 - iv. Currently non-existent but for which a good match exists
- b. Provide a summary analysis of industry cluster targets of previous Harrisburg economic development strategies and outcomes of such focus.

(RFQ): Harrisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

- c. Analyze trends, drivers and risks affecting existing industry clusters.
- d. Conduct Interviews with key industry corporate executives, entrepreneurs, and others to gain insight into challenges and opportunities for the Town.
- e. Identify the key occupations where Harrisburg has a competitive advantage over other parts of the region, State or the nation and show how the Town can leverage these strengths to grow our industry sub-clusters and/or create new ones. Identify risks to maintaining the occupational advantages of Harrisburg vis a vis evolving technologies, employer requirements, and educational/certification standards.
- f. Benchmark analysis of the top industry sub-clusters with opportunity for growth.
- g. Identify the of Top 5 investment opportunities that the Town and its partners can pursue to grow its tax base as efficiently as possible to achieve financial sustainability.
- h. Design a 5-year industry sub-cluster growth strategy and implementation program; This should include a plan for multiplying those industries with the greatest growth potential, as well as ideas for either sustaining (or making the Town more resilient to) foundational industries that are threatened or at great risk of downsizing.
- i. Identify marketing strategies – what messages and campaigns ought to be implemented to inform and influence site selection decision makers and consultants to attract targeted industries/businesses. Who are some of the major decision makers and consultants in the respective targeted industries? What information should be posted on the Town of Harrisburg’ website that will be most useful to corporate decision makers and national site selection consultants within each targeted industry?
- j. Provide actionable strategies to grow sub-clusters.

B. Develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan (Where do we want to go?)

Recommendations & Best-Practices

A strong and resilient economy requires a myriad of elements to be successful. These range from a vibrant entrepreneurial culture and small business growth to a vibrant and dynamic workforce. In this section of the plan, Harrisburg is seeking best practices in these and many other areas that are critical to our economic success. More than simply listing out what other municipalities have done; however, we are also interested in learning how Harrisburg can apply these best practices ourselves through strategic tasks and actions that the Town and our economic development partners can implement. Specifically, the Town is looking for the Consultant to:

- a. Identify key best practices for Harrisburg to pursue as determined by looking at the Town’s SWOT analysis.
- b. Identify other best practices, such as business retention and expansion strategies and how Town and its partners (namely, the Cabarrus EDC) could pursue these in an efficient manner.
- c. Identify key resident/talent attraction strategies for growing the Town’s population.
- d. Identify tourism strategies for the Town to pursue to make the most use of our many amenities and proximity to a growing Charlotte metro-area.
- e. Provide recommendations for maximizing the Town’s entrepreneurial & small business ecosystem including strategies for recruiting early-stage companies and entrepreneurs.
- f. Identify local incentive programs that will help attract new job growth and/or retain existing job growth in targeted industries.
- g. Identify strategies for guiding Harrisburg Town Center to its maximum potential, whether that be primarily as a Central Business District, mixed-use residential/commercial/retail district, or some combination of these or other possibilities.
- h. Identify best practices for ensuring that growth and development is equitable to attain the maximum reach of the economic benefits that are expected as a result of the successful execution of this plan.

(RFQ): Harrisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

Establish an Economic Development Incentive Policy

The Town has the desire to provide economic development incentive assistance for companies seeking to locate in the Town or expand their current business operations, which would result in a significant increase in the number of jobs and local tax revenue. The Town's economic development incentive policy should encourage both the recruitment and expansion of employment and tax generating development within Harrisburg, in areas identified as having high growth potential. The economic development incentive policy should include an eligibility matrix or chart listing such items as eligible project types, qualifying standards, and funding participation.

Economic development assistance shall be offered through a development agreement as authorized by Article 10 of Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 158-7.1 et seq. and may include lump sum payments and/or ad valorem property tax refunds.

C. Create an Implementation Plan with Action Steps and Timelines (How Do We Get There?)

This segment of the SEDP is focused on tying together all the previous elements of the plan into a clear set of strategic actions and tasks that the Town and its economic development partners (including businesses, Cabarrus EDC, Cabarrus Chamber, and others) can implement to reach our goal of developing a resilient and equitable economy in the Town.

Our objective is for this plan to be a "tool kit" that can be implemented in real time to achieve sustainable business and tax base growth and stability for the Town.

The SEDP implementation plan shall:

- a. Make policy, law, or procedural change recommendations, as needed, for the Town to achieve the economic growth and resilience strategy's goals identified by the SEDP.
- b. Recommend any changes needed to the Town's economic development toolbox, including changes to incentive programs (including new incentive or financing tools), or the addition of programs or services to promote business development.
- c. Based upon prior assessment of the Town's economic development program (including operational capacity, programs, and services) provide recommendations for any structural organizational changes (including the addition of personnel) needed within the Town's economic development program to enhance the program's effectiveness in achieving the goals identified by the SEDP plan.
- d. Identify areas in which increased collaboration would accrue economies of scale and benefit all parties and community partners that will help achieve strategic objectives. This could include key partnerships (government, private and non-profit) that will improve the success of the plan. Provide recommendations as to the appropriate level of involvement from each party of these collaborations and recommend practices for developing coalitions with and maintaining effective communication and coordination between economic development network partners as it relates to implementation of this plan.
- e. List out the metrics that the Town should track to best measure the success achieved by the implementation of the strategic plan.
- f. The plan should include an implementation matrix that explains the "who, what, when, where, why and how" of the recommended strategies. This should include designation of leaders, partners, timeline, resources (both current and potential funding sources), priority levels, and measures for each goal and objective. The plan should clearly indicate overall milestones for successful implementation

(RFQ): Harrisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

of the strategies, services, and programs.

- g. Recommend ways that the Town and its partners can work together to develop an agile approach to implementation of this strategy, so that the Town can be flexible and adaptable in its implementation of this plan, as economic conditions change.

IV. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

It is expected that the Consultant will develop and oversee a comprehensive public engagement plan with input (at a minimum) from the following stakeholders within and outside the Town of Harrisburg: business owners, CEOs, community leaders, foundations and philanthropic leaders, site selection consultants, developers, and venture capitalists. The exact form of public engagement will be determined by the Consultant in close consultation with the Town. Additionally, it is expected that the chosen firm will present the deliverables to the community in a forum open to the public

V. PROJECT TIME FRAME

The Town anticipates the following schedule for completion of the SEDP, with key dates noted below. A final schedule will be adopted as part of the contract between the Town and Consultant chosen to prepare the SEDP.

PROJECT SCHEDULE:

Action	Date
RFQ Advertised	March 10th
Questions Due from Consultants	March 20 th
Response to Questions from Consultants	March 27 th
RFQ Responses Due	April 10th
Firms Short-listed for Interviews	April 14 th
Firm Interviews	April 18 th & 19 th
Firm selected and notified	April 24th
Contract Negotiated	April 24 th – May 1 st
Contract Awarded by Town Council	May 8th
Plan Kickoff	June 4 th (no later than)
Plan Completion	September 30th

VI. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

The submitted proposal must address all elements of scope of work as outlined in the RFQ and should include (at a minimum) the following elements:

- **Cover Letter**
The letter must be signed by an individual with the authority to authorize the consultant to enter into a contract with the Town for the services to be provided.
- **Project Understanding and Approach/Work Plan/Demonstrate Project Experience**
This section should include a detailed description of the proposer's understanding of the intent of the project and its objectives, the character of the required deliverables, and overall approach to the project. The proposer should identify the level of assistance required from the Town and/or Project

(RFQ): Harrisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

Partners to complete each task.

- **Detailed project schedule (in Gantt chart form) showing all milestones, critical stakeholder/public meetings, and deliverables to maintain project progress by the project end date.**

- **Consultant(s) Company Information**

Firms shall provide the following information. (The same information must be provided for each sub-consultant or each member of a joint venture):

- Firm name and business address, including telephone number and email contact.
- History of the firm.
- Identify the state in which the firm was organized or incorporated.
 - a. Type of ownership, and name and location of parent company and subsidiaries, if any.
 - b. Number of full-time employees. Part-time employees or consultants routinely engaged by the Consultant may be included, if clearly identified as such.

- **Qualifications and Experience of the Consultant Firm(s)**

Please describe prime consultant's recent experience relevant to this project. Include brief project profiles with total project cost as well as a key project reference with address, phone, and email contact information for each profile. Particular emphasis should be placed on projects managed by the key personnel proposed for this project. If the respondent anticipates the use of sub-consultants, the respondent shall identify:

- The role and extent to which sub-consultants will participate in the project.
- The means by which the prime consultant will oversee the work of these parties.
- The experience and credentials of these parties relevant to this project.
- References: Please submit names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least two references familiar with the sub-consultant's ability, experience, and reliability in the performance and management of projects of a similar nature.

- **Qualifications and Experience of Key Staff**

Identify key individuals to be assigned to this project and include the function and/or responsibility of each of the identified individuals. Experience summaries of these key individuals shall be provided, with emphasis on previous experience on similar projects in similar roles. Resumes of these key individuals may be included.

- **Project Cost Estimates**

Provide an estimated cost of the project with a not-to-exceed price for all services. This estimate should be provided in a separate document marked "**SEDP Cost Estimate**". This estimate is not binding but will be used by the Town as the basis for determining the final scope of services.

VII. CONSULTANT EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Qualification Statements will be evaluated by Town staff including Town Manager, Deputy Town Manager and Planning Director, based on the Consultant's ability to meet the requirements of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Evaluation criteria, among other factors, will include:

- Demonstrated experience in creating similar work product, working with a diverse group of stakeholders and ability to prepare user-friendly documents. Qualifications of the firm and personnel (including any sub-contractors) to be assigned to this project demonstrating the Consultant's capacity to complete

(RFQ): Harrisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)

requested services, their experience completing similar projects, including experience with research and analysis related to the scope of work elements.

- Demonstration of overall project understanding and clarity of the proposal and creativity/thoroughness in addressing the project objectives and deliverables outline in the RFQ.
- References to previous similar work, including work performed by all sub-consultants.
- Completeness of Qualifications Statement

The Town reserves the right to seek clarification of any submitted Qualifications Statement, reject any and all submittals received in response to this RFQ, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFQ if it is in the best interests of the Town. A short list of qualified consultants will be selected from the submittals received for follow-up interviews, as deemed necessary.

VIII. SUBMISSION OF QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS

Firm(s) interested in being considered for this project should submit both electronic versions (via email or flash drive), along with five (5) (hard copies of their Qualification Statements by 4:30 pm April 10, 2023 to the attention of:

Brian Lee, CPA, CLGFO

Finance Director

Town of Harrisburg

4100 Main St.

PO Box 100

Harrisburg, NC 28075

blee@harrisburgnc.org

QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M. EST APRIL 10, 2023.

IX. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This RFQ in no way obligates the Town to award a contract. All submittals become the property of the Town upon submission. The cost of preparing, submitting, and presenting Qualification Statements is solely with the responder. All data, databases, reports, designs and materials in digital and hard copy format created under this project shall be transferred to the town upon completion of the project and become the property of the Town. Ten percent (10%) of total contract cost will be withheld as retainage pending successful project completion to Town's satisfaction.

Questions regarding this RFQ should be directed to Zac Gordon, Planning Director, Town of Harrisburg at zgordon@harrisburgnc.org **Questions will be accepted until 4:30 pm EST on March 20, 2023, and answers will be posted by 4:30 pm EST on March 22, 2023.**

The Town will maintain a list of questions and answers on its website: <http://www.harrisburgnc.org>

X. ADVERTISEMENT

An advertisement for the RFQ will be posted on the Town website: <http://www.harrisburgnc.org>