

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**Whitehall, Montana
COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN**

Professional Consultant Services for

Town of Whitehall

Comprehensive Master Plan for the Community of Whitehall, MT

Introduction

Whitehall is a rural community located in Southwestern Montana, near the Jefferson River. With a population of just under 1,200 residents, the community has experienced rapid growth due to its proximity to Bozeman and Big Sky. The community is requesting the assistance of a qualified firm to develop a master plan to guide local decision makers, ensuring that the community can grow while maintaining its unique character, which is attractive to both residents and visitors.

Overview of Whitehall, Montana

Located near the Jefferson River, and in one of the fastest growing regions of Montana, Whitehall is a rural community in transition, from a farming, ranching and mining town to a community that welcomes tourists. The local economy remains largely focused on agriculture and agricultural support services, with tourism as a bonus. Housing and childcare remain a challenge in Whitehall, particularly for the service sector jobs that support many families in the community.

townofwhitehall.org

<https://southwestmt.com/communities/whitehall.htm>

Vision Statement

The Master Plan will create a broadly accepted guiding tool focused on implementation that ensures a high quality of life; maintains character; and supports diverse economic vitality in Whitehall.

Project Overview

The community of Whitehall is highly supportive of adopting a new master plan. Funding has been committed by the Town, and with the support of county and state resources, the community is excited to develop a plan to help shape the future of development.

The Whitehall Master Plan should adopt a strategic planning process, including: analysis of existing opportunities and issues; direction setting (mission statements, vision and values, goals and objectives, etc.); alignment (determining our path); implementation and execution (lay out an action plan for achieving the stated goals); and evaluation (regular check-ins, measuring performance and success, and course corrections).

Potential Scope of Work

- 1.) Site Analysis - An examination of existing conditions in downtown Whitehall, including transportation, land use and business inventory and opportunities.
- 2.) Economic & Market Analysis - An examination of factors shaping the local economy including key demographic and economic indicators, a retail trade analysis and potential market opportunities.
- 3.) Priority Improvements & Recommendations - The deliverable will be outlined and executed based on community feedback, analysis, "shovel ready" projects, etc.

Stakeholder Involvement

Whitehall is a community full of passionate residents that are hoping to see great success for the town in the future. Public meetings are regularly attended and public input in planning processes is easy to solicit. The project is being led by the town, in coordination with the Jefferson Local Development Corporation and the regional economic development organization, Headwaters RC&D.

Summary of Previous Planning Efforts

In recent years, the Town of Whitehall has upgraded its water and wastewater systems. The Town has a civil engineering firm on retainer that helps with on-going needs and future infrastructure planning. The Town has an existing Urban Renewal District (URD). The URD has a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) provision. The URD/TIF boundary includes much of the Town's central business district, main street, parks, and other amenities.

Project Approach

The intent of this plan is to build a coalition of supporters who can work toward common goals. Success of The Whitehall Master Plan will be contingent on inclusivity and the integration of multiple perspectives. The entire community should be engaged in this strategic planning process, including, but not limited to, business owners, government officials, residents, the arts community, historic preservation organizations, recreation enthusiasts, economic development groups, and clubs and organizations, among others.

The success of The Whitehall Master Plan will rely on open, inclusive public processes. One of the challenges will be integrating and involving disengaged groups and constituents who have an interest in the area or can provide meaningful input, but do not typically participate in public processes. This may involve assembling small, focused-interest groups in order to foster creativity and candid insights. The consultant

team will be tasked with implementing innovative public engagement strategies to capture the input of this diverse sector of the community.

The strategy should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A strong emphasis on public participation which brings together representatives from a broad range of stakeholders and maintains an inclusive process through community dialogue, consensus building and action.
- Through broad and wide-ranging community engagement, the process will be highly visible and engaging to all.
- Analysis of existing zoning, codes, and ordinances, to ensure growth and development in Whitehall is in line with community goals.
- Analysis of existing land use, building ownership and vacancies, and ownership patterns with an emphasis on redevelopment and new business opportunities.
- Analysis of the current market.
- The development of marketing strategies for Whitehall.
- Visual elements including graphic depictions or video animations that illustrate possible future development based upon key findings from the Master Planning process.

Considerations

This section describes factors and considerations that are important in Whitehall. Solutions or recommendations should emerge from the master planning process.

Clean and Safe

Having a clean and safe Whitehall is critical to the success of the community. A complete analysis of existing services and amenities related to garbage cans, cleaning services and security patrols, etc. and recommended solutions, should be included in the final master plan document.

Infrastructure

- Walkability – emphasis on creating a walkable downtown
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Bicycles: Whitehall, like many Montana communities, is seeing a significant increase in bicycle tourism. Protected bike lanes, general connectivity of recreational resources outside of the commercial district, and other alternatives, should be examined in the master planning process.
- Vehicular Circulation
- Technology (including fiber and wireless connectivity)
- Signage / Wayfinding

- Street Lighting
- Utilities
- Urban Design and Streetscaping- Community members have identified the need for parking analysis and the opportunities for unique design elements including, but not limited to, parklets, design guidelines and extended sidewalks/bump outs.

Arts and Culture

Arts and culture will be vital to economic activity in Whitehall. The Master Plan should include a strategy related to growing this resource and to the implementation of a public art initiative.

Parks, Trails, and Recreation

Whitehall and the surrounding areas have numerous parks, trails, and recreation amenities. These parks, trails, and recreation opportunities should be leveraged to further the community's goals for Whitehall.

Public Spaces

High quality public spaces create economic value, add to a sense of place, and contribute to shared experiences, positively impacting physical and mental health; reducing crime and fear of crime; and adding biodiversity.

Analysis and feasibility of enhancements to existing spaces and the creation of new spaces should be included in the final Master Plan.

Design Guidelines – Land Use Analysis

The Whitehall Master Plan should explore the use of design guidelines and land use and how both relate to the future growth of Whitehall.

Tourism Development

The economy of Whitehall is largely dependent upon tourism, primarily during the summer season. This asset can be leveraged for sustainable future growth and the Master Plan should incorporate ideas to continue this growth while maintaining the culture of the community.

Implementation Costs, Strategies, and Timelines

Implementation is critical to the Whitehall Master Plan. The chosen consultant will have a strong track record of working with communities on implementation. Action plans will be developed for each project, goal, or initiative including responsible parties, timelines, cost, and funding sources. Implementation may also include education, training, and

rollout of initiatives. Evaluations or checks-ins should be scheduled to evaluate progress, create accountability, and adjust resources or timelines moving forward. The master plan should be focused on the next 5 years.

Submittal Requirements

Consultant Requirements / Qualifications

Firms submitting proposals should have broad experience in public involvement, community visioning, urban planning and design, landscape architecture, historic preservation, transportation, market analysis, and implementation. The Master Plan will create a framework to guide decisions impacting Whitehall, including modifications to land use and planning regulations, public and private investment decisions, and prioritization for allocation of community resources.

Proposal Content

The following information should be included, at a minimum:

- **Project Understanding:** A description of your understanding of the project and the community's needs. Also, address how you propose to meet those needs, including project approach and methodology.
- **Project Team:**
 - A description of the lead firm and all firms proposed to be part of the consultant team with an emphasis on the qualifications needed to provide the services requested in this RFP, along with their web presence and contact information.
 - Identification of the key personnel who will be assigned to the project, including resumés, with a description of their respective roles and an estimate of their participation in the project. Resumés should list related project experience and general project duties.
 - A description of the relationships between the firms being proposed as part of the consultant team with specific details about similar projects on which the firms have worked together and identification of their respective roles.
- **Public Participation:** A general discussion about methods you have used to broaden public participation and input into the process. Please discuss how you plan to implement a holistic, inclusive process, including the use of social media.
- **Schedule:** A discussion of your proposed timeline with key milestones for implementation of a Master Plan process, including project implementation (project development, funding strategies, early wins or low hanging fruit, etc.). In this section, please describe how you will measure the success of this master plan.

- **Estimated Cost/Budget:** Please provide an itemized estimate with each item/activity proposed in your response. Total project cost cannot exceed \$40,000.
- **References:** Provide at least three references for similar projects undertaken by the lead firm, including name, address, phone number and email where a contact person may be reached. References for other firms comprising the consultant team should also be included.

Proposal Format – Electronic Submission

No specific format will be required; however, proposals are to be prepared in such a way as to provide a straightforward, concise delineation of the consultant team’s capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Emphasis should be concentrated on the elements addressed in the project scope with a clear delineation of proposed methodology and project approach. Proposals are limited to 10 pages, not including appendices. Resumés can be placed in an appendix.

Proposal Submission

All Proposals must be received by **5:00pm MST on Friday, April 30, 2021**. Proposals received after that time will not be considered by the Selection Committee. Electronic versions of the Proposal shall be submitted to all three of the following:

- Mary Hensleigh, Mayor, Town of Whitehall, marymt1304@hotmail.com
- Eric Seidensticker, Jefferson Local Development Corp., jldcwhitehall@gmail.com
- Kelly Sullivan, Headwaters RC&D, ksullivan@headwatersrcd.org

Questions and requests for information should be directed to Kelly Sullivan, 406/490-8439 or via email.

Selection Process

The Selection Process will be conducted by Mary Hensleigh, Town of Whitehall; Eric Seidensticker, JLDC; and Kelly Sullivan, Headwaters RC&D.

This committee will review all submittals and choose the most qualified consultant. The committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any informality or irregularity in received proposals.

Proposal Review Criteria

Consultant selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Experience with similar projects 20%
- Professional qualifications of key personnel assigned to the project 15%
(emphasis will be placed on the project manager)

- History of the team having worked together on similar projects 15%
- Approach to public involvement 20%
- Project approach and methodology 20%
- Reference responses 10%

Estimated Time Frame

It is anticipated that a consulting firm will be chosen within 60 days of the close of proposal submissions.