



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

### Consulting Services for a Thomas Street Corridor Master Plan

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The city of Wausau is seeking a qualified planning, development, design, and engineering consultant to develop a master plan for the Thomas Street corridor. The goal of the plan is to explore options for street reconstruction that add value to the properties along the corridor and in the surrounding neighborhood. The City feels that value can be added through improved street design that addresses not only traffic concerns, but quality of life factors for residents and the needs of small- and medium-sized businesses.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Thomas Street is an arterial street (part of County Trunk Highway N) on the southwest side of the city that runs east-west and crosses the Wisconsin River. The river essentially divides the city into east and west halves, and Thomas Street is one of only three bridges that connect the two sides. Because it is one of the few river crossings and because it connects to two north-south arterials in 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west, and Grand Avenue on the east, the street sees a moderately high number of vehicles per day. From the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in the year 2010 ranged from 10,100 to 15,700. Both of these estimates are west of the Wisconsin River, which is the focus of the proposed master plan.

From the river west to 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, is an approximately 1.25 mile stretch that runs through residential, small-scale commercial, and industrial areas. The street serves nearby manufacturers, small-scale commercial businesses, as well as schools, churches, and residences. The residential housing stock in the immediate area generally consists of small- to mid-sized single-family homes, the majority of which were built before 1970. Many homes, particularly east of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, were built prior to 1930. Figure 1 in the appendix is an aerial view of Thomas Street and the surrounding blocks, where the single-family lots can be seen mixed with larger industrial, commercial, and institutional uses.

The City's plan amendment number two for Tax Increment District Six (TID 6), addresses Thomas Street and the need for its reconstruction. The plan proposes several improvements for the street itself and for properties adjacent to it. One such improvement is to expand Riverside Park to the south along the river so that it intersects with Thomas Street. No specific zoning changes are proposed in the TIF plan, and the City expects the mix of zoning to stay approximately the same as it currently exists. The plan suggests that infrastructure improvements are critical for continued investment along Thomas Street – with the proposed master plan, the City hopes to detail how best to use the City investment into infrastructure and redevelopment, and to estimate the expected outcomes of this investment.

## **Reconstruction Planning History**

Planning for the reconstruction of Thomas Street has been taking place for a number of years, perhaps officially beginning in 2002 when the City entered into an agreement with WisDOT to study the Thomas Street corridor and its bridges. The *Thomas Street Corridor Study* was completed in 2004 by the consulting firm Short Elliot Hendrickson (SEH). The study examined six different design alternatives, mostly from the perspectives of traffic flow and safety. No recommendations for a specific design were given in the report – selection of the preferred alternative was left to the city of Wausau.

From 2004 to 2006, the City undertook planning efforts, holding multiple public information meetings to discuss different scenarios. In 2006, the Common Council of the city of Wausau approved a five-lane conceptual design, which would be an expansion of the current two-lane section. The five-lane concept was developed further with the consulting firm AECOM (then known as Earth Tech). In 2008, the alignment of the proposed street, which would require substantial real estate acquisition, was approved by the Council. The resolution approving the alignment also stated that the City would seek outside funding sources, because no funding had yet been allotted to the estimated \$15 million project.

Potential outside funding sources for the project did not materialize, and the City moved ahead with plans through TIF to construct the street and spark economic development in the area. Because of the high cost of the proposed infrastructure improvement, the City wants to ensure that a return on investment is realized and explore the options to maximize the investment. This may entail revisiting the previously approved alternative to see if it is the one to best maximize the City's investment, or if other designs may be better from an economic development standpoint.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The city of Wausau is looking to develop a master plan of Thomas Street that addresses not only the traffic and safety needs of its users, but the development potential of the adjacent and surrounding properties. Staff envisions that this will be accomplished through the following tasks, with the following deliverables:

### **Tasks**

- **Market study.** Assess the purchasing power of the neighborhood and the demand for local goods and services in the area.
- **Interviews of city officials.** Interview city council members by phone to gather feedback on how Thomas Street should be reconstructed.
- **Interviews with business community.** Talk to local business owners and developers in the area to assess the strengths and challenges of developing in the Thomas Street area.
- **Neighborhood input.** Assess the wants and needs of the larger neighborhood in regards to a reconstructed Thomas Street.
- **Traffic Analysis.** Review past studies, current traffic counts and crash data, and future traffic projections. Review similar corridors in Midwestern cities for design alternatives for Thomas Street.

## Deliverables

- **Market study analysis.** Summarize the potential opportunities along the corridor and in the immediate area for commercial and residential redevelopment.
- **Economic development plan.** Strategize how to maximize the investment of infrastructure improvements.
- **Street design alternatives.** Propose two street design alternatives that would be most suited to meet the goals outlined for Thomas Street. Summarize pros and cons of each.
- **Urban design plan.** Used in conjunction with the street design alternatives, show how the parcels adjacent to Thomas Street should be developed (with parking, buildings, and/or public spaces) in order to promote investment and an overall higher value for the area.
- **Presentation.** Present a summary of the master plan to Council and answer questions.

The consultant may propose additional tasks and/or a revised scope based on experience with similar projects in similar cities. Sub-tasks, such as conference calls, draft reviews, etc. shall be considered part of the proposed scope but will not be detailed in this RFP.

Upon selection of a consultant, the City would like to move quickly in developing the master plan. The City would like to have the plan completed by January 31, 2014.

## SELECTION PROCESS

A committee composed of city staff and council members will review proposals and recommend to the City's Board of Public Works a consultant with which to negotiate and reach a final agreement. The recommendation will be based equally upon the consultant's experience/capabilities, project approach, and cost, all of which are described below under "Proposal Specifications." The board's approval of the final consultant is expected to take place on or around September 2nd.

## TIMELINE

The estimated timeline for completion of the selection process is outlined below.

July 23	Distribution date of RFP
August 9	Deadline for submittal of questions
August 16	Deadline to submit proposal
September 2	Consultant is selected and final negotiations are commenced

The tasks leading up to the completion of the master plan will not have set deadlines, but the City is targeting the completion of the master plan for January 31, 2014. Consultants should respond to the RFP based on their ability to complete the proposed work by that date. If the timeline is not doable, the consultant may suggest a date by when all work can be completed.

January 11	Draft master plan is complete and presented to the City
January 31	Final plan is complete

## **PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS**

Consultants are asked to submit concise proposals describing their capacity to manage projects, their experience with similar projects, and their approach to the proposed project. Proposals should be prepared on standard size paper and limited to four (4) single sided pages, excluding resumes, references, and other attachments. Standard advertising brochures should not be included in the body of the proposal. The proposal shall include the following information:

**Business Organization** – This section shall include the firm’s name, areas of expertise, and a brief history of the firm, size, office locations, and business addresses. The name, address, and telephone number of a contact person and/or prospective project manager regarding the proposal shall be included. If sub-consultants are being utilized, similar information should be included for all subcontracted firms.

**Experience and Capabilities** - The consultant shall describe relevant qualifications of the firm and experience with similar projects. Special consideration will be given to consultants who have demonstrated an ability to work on projects that had a short time-frame, and/or required consensus-building. The City will evaluate the consultant's ability to create a vision/identity for the neighborhood with the analysis of the street design/capacity being coordinated with that vision. Consultants are encouraged to provide samples of work done in other communities in an appendix or through a web link.

**Project Approach** – The consultant shall describe the approach to the proposed project, the method of conducting the work, and how the final deliverables will be developed.

**Cost** – The consultant shall provide an hourly rate schedule and an estimated number of hours to complete the proposed project. Estimated hours to be spent on specific tasks should be broken out to the greatest extent practicable. If hours are to be billed at different rates, a breakdown of hours per wage rate shall be provided.

## **SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS**

One (1) original and five (5) copies of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope by **4:00 p.m. CST on Friday, August 16, 2013**. Please mark “Proposal for Thomas Street Master Plan” on the envelope.

The mailing and hand delivery address is:

**Wausau City Hall  
Attn: Brad Lenz, City Planner  
407 Grant Street  
Wausau, WI 54403**

## **CONTACT PERSON**

Questions about the RFP or the project should be directed to Brad Lenz, City Planner, phone (715) 261-6760 or email [brad.lenz@ci.wausau.wi.us](mailto:brad.lenz@ci.wausau.wi.us).

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or portions thereof without stated cause. Upon selection of a finalist, the City by its proper officials shall attempt to negotiate and reach a final agreement with the finalist. If the City, for any reason, is unable to reach a final agreement with this finalist; the City then reserves the right to reject such finalist and negotiate a final agreement with another finalist who has the next most viable proposal. The City may also elect to reject all proposals and re-issue a new RFP.

Clarification of proposals: The City reserves the right to obtain clarification of any point in a consultant’s proposal or obtain additional information. Any request for clarification or other correspondence related to the RFP shall be in writing or email, and a response shall be provided within three (3) business days.

The City is not bound to accept the proposal with the lowest cost, but may accept the proposal that demonstrates the best ability and most qualified to meet the needs of the City. The City reserves the right to waive any formalities, defects, or irregularities, in any proposal, response, and/or submittal where the acceptance, rejection, or waiving of such is in the best interests of the City. The City reserves the right to disqualify any proposal, before or after opening, upon evidence of collusion, intent to defraud, or any other illegal practice on the part of the consultant.

**SIGNATURE BLOCK**

Note: Please return this page with your proposal.

The undersigned, an authorized agent of his/her company, hereby certifies:

- ( ) the receipt of this letter to solicit bids (on this date): \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) familiarization with all terms, conditions, and specifications herein stated,
- ( ) company is qualified to perform work and services as proposed,
- ( ) that the proposal submitted is valid until \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Entity (S-Corp, LLC, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Web Site

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

Figure 1. Aerial View of Thomas Street



Thomas Street



1000 feet