



REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM

Serving the Governments and Municipalities of Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair and Walker Counties

July 25, 2008

To: All RPC Mayors and County Commission Chairs

From: Charles Ball, Executive Director

Subject: **Call for Projects**
2009 Community Planning Assistance Grant Program

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPC) is pleased to announce a second opportunity to participate in the Community Planning Assistance Grant program. This successful program provides governments (county or municipal) within the RPC's six-county planning area access to affordable community planning services. This year's application is simpler and shorter. Also, there is an online version of the application that can be completed, saved and emailed to us.

The new application includes check boxes for the type projects you may propose. You may select multiple projects. There is also an "Other" box if none of our categories fit your project concept.

Tips

- 1) If you have recently completed a Master Plan and supporting zoning and subdivision codes, you may want to consider a capital improvement program or an in-depth major street plan.
- 2) If your town or master plan is nearing the decade mark, you may want to undertake a plan update or revisit the supporting zoning and subdivision codes.
- 3) If your master plan, zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations are serving you well, you may want to consider updating your plan review and approval polices and procedures.

The RPC staff will meet with all applicants and assist them in developing a scope of work and budget appropriate for the project and the community.



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The deadline for retuning a project application is the close of business on Friday **September 5, 2008**. You may email the application to cpa2009@rpcgb.org or mail to:

*Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
Center for Regional Planning and Design
1731 First Avenue North, Suite 200
Birmingham, Alabama 35203*

Approval of all projects is subject to program funds availability. Applicants will provide a cash match of 50 percent of the project cost.

We look forward to receiving your application and working with you to help you meet the needs of your community.

Section 1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program Background

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPC) has established a Community Planning Assistance Grant Program to assist local governments with the development, adoption and implementation of various community planning projects, including, but not limited to, master plans, zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations.

The goals of the Program are:

- ✓ To provide local governments in the RPC region with affordable, community planning services.
- ✓ To increase the number of community planning projects in non-urban RPC counties.
- ✓ To identify candidate projects for implementation assistance through RPC's economic development program.

Eligible Grant Applicants

Grant applicants must be current dues-paying RPC member governments or sub-agencies of local government such as an industrial development board. Eligible local governments are those located within Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby and Walker Counties.

Funding & Local Match

There is no cap on the amount that can be requested. However, the total funding available for all projects for FY 2009 is \$240,000. Applicants will provide a cash match of 50 percent of the total project cost. The Review and Selection Committee will attempt to distribute grants across the region as widely and as equitably as possible.

Resolution of Project Support

Upon award of a Program grant, the Sponsor will prepare and adopt a resolution stating its intention to move ahead with the project in an expeditious manner. This resolution should be adopted within 45 days of the grant award date.

Completion of Project Work

RPC staff will perform all project work. The RPC may on occasion employ a third-party consultant to complete some specialized tasks associated with a project. The RPC shall be the contract administrator.

Section 2 ELIGIBLE PLAN TYPES

Master Plans

A master plan is the official adopted document that guides the physical development of a community. In a master plan, a community's existing conditions, demographics and land uses are assessed and a community vision and goals for future physical development are established. Future development based on projected demographic changes in population and employment, future land use plans, development patterns and projected revenue follow from the master plans.

A master plan will contain, at a minimum, the following elements: demographics, land use, transportation, historic character, community facilities, housing, parks and greenways, environmental and natural resources, and implementation.

Area Plans

Area plans are generally focused on a smaller geographic area than a master plan. Because of the narrower focus area, more detailed information, analysis and recommendations can be provided. Area plans typically fall into one of the following categories:

- **Town Centers** - A town center is the historic center of a municipality and typically has a mix of uses including commercial, residential and institutional. A town center should have a recognizable boundary.
- **Employment Centers** - An employment center can be either high-density or suburban. A high-density employment center is typically urban in character and contains a significant concentration of employment measured by jobs per acre. A suburban employment center is more dispersed and has a lower density of jobs per acre. Typically found in suburban areas, it may contain a mix of office and light-industrial uses. It is characterized by abundant parking and is typically located on or near a major roadway.
- **Mixed-Use Centers** - These are generally urban in character and found in areas that include a mix of office, service and retail, residential and institutional uses that, together, create a central focus for a larger area.
- **Neighborhoods** - Neighborhoods are predominantly residential but may include other uses commonly associated with residential areas. Planning areas should generally include the land that can be covered during a five-minute walk from the center of the neighborhood. Neighborhood planning areas may cross political and legal boundaries.

- **Corridors** - Corridor are the areas adjacent to major streets, railroads or even natural transportation amenities like rivers. Corridor plans are created to coordinate public and private investments within the defined area.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Plan** - This involves the compilation of information needed to create a Tax Increment Financing District. TIF Districts are used by local governments to generate funding for slum and blight removal and community redevelopment projects and programs.
- **Economic/Retail Market Analysis** - These studies inventory an area's strengths and weaknesses in order to create an appropriate economic development strategy. The analysis should explore various elements including number/types of existing jobs, job growth and decline, tax structure, economic base, existing labor force characteristics, future labor force requirements, location and geographic characteristics of the area and surrounding region, existing business and quality of life measures.
- **Historic Preservation Analyses** - This involves the inventorying and assessment of a community's historic resources. This information is then used to prepare an historic preservation plan.
- **Transportation-Related Analyses** - These involve the collection and analysis of data concerning transportation-related issues such as: street network capacity, movement of people throughout the community, public transit systems, freight movement systems, and environmental issues related to transportation. This process is significant because of transportation's impact on land use, land-use planning, economic development, quality of life and environmental protection.

Master Plan Implementation Tools

- **Subdivision Regulations** - Subdivision regulations, at a minimum, specify the administrative procedures that guide the division and development of land, design standards for subdivisions, and the identification of the minimum improvements required for development. These regulations are a key tool in implementing the policies, vision and goals of the master plan.
- **Zoning Ordinances** - Zoning ordinances are another key tool for master plan implementation. They establish districts and provide regulations concerning land use within those districts. They also regulate the placement, spacing and size of structures in those districts.
- **Capital Improvement Plans** - These plans help local governments anticipate and budget for the full cost of capital improvements. Capital Improvement Plans usually cover a three to five-year time span and include all capital projects identified in the adopted master plan. They also identify funding sources, the year in which expenditure is expected, and the party responsible for implementation.

Additional Plan Requirements

All stakeholders and public interests must be given opportunities to provide input in the development of all aspects of a plan.

Ineligible Project Types

Applications that will not be considered are:

- Projects too dissimilar from project types identified in the sections above.
- Projects with a poorly-defined plan area or plan type.

Section 3
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE GRANT APPLICATION

Grant Application Package

Grant application packages should include the following documents:

1. **Letter of Transmittal** - A cover letter from the chief elected official or chief administrative officer should include the following:
 - **Title** of proposed project.
 - **Applicant** information including full name of the jurisdiction, telephone and FAX numbers, and email addresses of the person(s) who will represent the jurisdiction in matters related to the project.
 - Indicate if the community has a **planning commission**.

2. **Application** - See Attachment A: Grant Application
 - **Project Information** - Select the type of project you wish to complete plan from the options provided. Please include a brief written description of the project area and a project description. Please name the government unit or office that will be the project sponsor. Please provide a description of the major project components and your anticipated outcome from the completed project.

 - **Prior Planning Activities** - The application should provide a master list of all prior planning efforts, including master plans and regulatory plans, the approximate years those were completed and/or adopted and who assisted in the preparation of the plan(s).

 - **Stakeholders** - The proposal should identify the stakeholders to be engaged in the planning process.

Application Delivery Options - Grant application packages may be delivered to RPC by mail, in person, or via email to cpa2009@rpcgb.org

Number of Copies - If you submit a paper copy of the application please provide the original plus four (4) copies (5 total) of all documents requested in the grant application package. In addition, submit a CD containing the grant application documents. If you submit an electronic copy of the application via email, only one copy is needed.

Due Date - Grant application packages must be received by the RPC by the close of business on Friday, September 5, 2008.

**Section 4
PROJECT SCOPE DEVELOPMENT**

Project Scope Development

Upon receipt of the application, the RPC staff will meet with each applicant to discuss the project concept. The end result will be a complete scope of work and project budget. The project scope and budget, along with the original application, will then proceed to project evaluation and selection.

**Section 5
PROJECT EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

Project Selection

The RPC staff will evaluate and rank applications based on the criteria identified below and will establish a “short-list” of proposed projects. Staff will then prepare a final list of the projects with a recommendation to accept or reject each the application, as well as funding recommendations for each. The RPC Executive Director, under authority of the RPC Board of Directors, will enter into an agreement with those local governments whose applications are approved for funding.

Criteria for Evaluation of Applications

Each application will be given a score of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the highest) for each criteria. Each score will then be multiplied by a weighting factor. The resulting numbers for each factor will then be combined to create a total score, with the maximum total score being 100.

CRITERIA	STANDARD	RANK (1 - 10)	WEIGHT FACTOR	SCORE
Previous Planning Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project will be an update of an existing adopted plan. ▪ Project will implement all or part of an adopted plan. ▪ Project is derived from a Small Town Design Initiative. 		3.0	
Commitment & Ability to Implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposal demonstrates a commitment from the applicant to implement projects and programs. Funding in addition to the required match will be used to complete the project.		3.5	
CRITERIA	STANDARD	RANK (1 - 10)	WEIGHT FACTOR	SCORE
Project Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposal clearly demonstrates the need for the project. 		3.5	
TOTAL SCORE (Maximum 100)				

Award of Contract

The RPC reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all applications, or portions of applications
- Reissue the Call for Projects
- Modify the scope of a project to meet funding limitations
- Cancel a project

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