



CITY OF BISHOP

377 West Line Street - Bishop, California 93514
Post Office Box 1236 - Bishop, California 93515
760-873-5863 fax (760) 873-8473

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The City of Bishop, California, is seeking a qualified consultant to assist in the preparation of an update to the Economic Element of its General Plan.

Background

The City of Bishop is located in the spectacular Eastern Sierra region of California roughly half way between Los Angeles and Reno, Nevada. It is the only incorporated community in Inyo County and has a population of 3,879. Although a small city, Bishop and its surrounding area is the primary commercial and population center in the region and supports a total area population of roughly 14,000. Primary industries include tourism and recreation, government, and related support services. However, mining and agriculture are also important to Bishop's heritage.

Bishop is surrounded by public lands administered by the United States Bureau of Land Management and the USDA Forest Service, lands owned and administered by the City of Los Angeles, unincorporated Inyo County, and is abutted by the Bishop Paiute Reservation.

Purpose

The city is currently engaged in a comprehensive update of its General Plan. The 2014-2019 Housing Element update is now nearing completion in accordance with the schedule mandated by the state. The City's Mobility Element Update was completed early in 2012, and the Land Use Element and Municipal Code are scheduled for review and updating over the next few years (depending on funding availability). The Economic Development Element must address programs that are sustainable from a long-term business perspective, reflect the strengths of the community and surrounding jurisdictions (including the County of Inyo, the Bishop Paiute Tribe and the Town of Mammoth Lakes in Mono County), its small-town atmosphere, values regarding protection of its unique environmental setting, and opportunities recently created through installation of a fiber optic cable providing high quality bandwidth to communities along the entire length of the Owens Valley.

The Economic Development Element will outline the basic strategy for enhancing the community's economy as well as outlining policies for implementation. It should:

1. Coordinate economic development goals with land use and mobility policies.
2. Address the recommendations of the 2011 Retail Gap Analysis.
3. Coordinate economic development policies with Inyo County and the Bishop Paiute Tribe.
4. Identify strategies and implementation programs - develop specific programs for sustainable business retention and growth, attraction of new investment, and job creation.

The City was recently awarded a Planning and Technical Assistance Grant through the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The grant will be used to revise the City's Economic Development Element consistent with discussion in this RFP. More information on this grant program can be found at the HCD web site: http://www.sgc.ca.gov/planning_grants.html.

In January of 2011, a Retail Gap Analysis was prepared for the community. The Economic Development Element should build on the findings of that report. It is available on the Bishop web site at www.ca-bishop.us/Administration/RetailGapAnalysis.htm. An additional resource for background on Bishop is ABC (About the Bishop Community)/2000. This document, prepared by a citizens committee, establishes a vision for Bishop and principles for achieving that vision. It provides excellent information on the community and its issues as they existed in 1999. ABC/2000 can be found at <http://www.ca-bishop.us/Misc/ABC2000.pdf>

Tourism is a major driver of the Bishop area economy. The demand for visitor services comes from both local visitation and from travelers on U.S. 395 passing through Bishop on the way to other regional destinations. Major destinations in the region include the numerous attractions of the Inyo National Forest, Death Valley National Park, Yosemite National Park, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

Recreational activities in the area encompass the full gamut of outdoor pursuits including fishing, hiking, equestrian, off-highway vehicles, running, bicycling, photography, and sightseeing. In recent years, Bishop has also become an internationally renowned Mecca for rock climbing. Bishop hosts numerous events and activities throughout the year. Foremost among these are Mule Days, the Tri-County Fair, and the Millpond Music Festival.

Other regional initiatives are under way that could provide opportunities for economic expansion. Two of particular note are the Digital 395 project and expansion of the Bishop Airport. Digital 395 is a broadband “middle mile” project that will construct a fiber network along U.S. 395 from Barstow, California to Reno, Nevada, providing vastly expanded opportunities for broadband connectivity within the region. The recent procurement by Inyo County of a long-term lease for the Bishop Airport now allows for investment and improvement of facilities to permit commercial air service and to enhance general aviation. The Economic Development Element should explore the opportunities provided by these improvements and make recommendations for capitalizing on the enhanced infrastructure.

As noted above, the majority of the population in the Bishop vicinity lives outside the city limits. The Economic Development Element will consider and integrate the economic development interests of the Bishop Paiute Tribe, Inyo County, and Mono County.

Scope

The Economic Development Element must include an analysis of existing conditions. This can build on existing studies including the Retail Gap Analysis and the Bishop Paiute Tribe Community Development and Diversification Plan.

The Economic Development Element will identify issues and opportunities, develop strategies to address opportunities, build on existing strengths, and provide program prioritization. A SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) assessment should be included.

Guiding principles for Economic Development identified to date are:

1. Build on Bishop’s strengths, values, and interests
2. Take advantage of new technologies and opportunities
3. Integrate effectively with other regional initiatives
4. Provide diversity and stability

Strategic Approach

The Economic Development Element will provide overall strategic direction. It will provide recommendations for land use policies and programs to integrate with and direct the later General Plan Land Use Element Update, and will provide direction to the City for actions to take advantage of opportunities and to reinforce existing strengths.

Project Management

The Economic Development Element Update should include strong project management as part of the overall process. Management tasks and responsibilities are outlined below:

- Conducting monthly meetings of a working group including City representatives, the consultant team, and potentially including representatives of the surrounding key jurisdictions (Paiute Tribe and Inyo County). Tasks will include agenda preparation, meeting management, preparation of meeting summaries, and follow-up on action items.
- Establishment of and coordination with a committee of community representatives that will provide input on potential economic development activities, review and comment on draft documents, and engage the ensure that the larger community is informed and given opportunities for general input as appropriate.
- Coordination of community outreach open house meetings and ongoing updates including information for the City website, announcements in the local newspaper, and presentations at meetings of local community groups (Rotary, Chamber, etc.).
- Assistance to the City in managing the budget and communicating with the City Council and Planning Commission at key points.

Proposal Requirements

All proposals must include:

- A Letter of interest signed by an authorized representative summarizing the approach and highlighting the main components of the proposal.
- An overview of the firm(s) identifying principals and including resumes.
- Relevant experience in the areas of rural communities; recreation and tourism; agency coordination (counties, cities, federal agencies, and tribes); sustainability; broadband infrastructure, general plan preparation, and California planning laws and policies.
- Approach to services covering public outreach, interagency coordination, document preparation and delivery, and such other components as the consulting firm considers appropriate to the task.
- Analytical approach, describing data sources and collection, addressing knowledge gaps, integrating community objectives, and overall strategy.
- Budget and schedule

Submission requirements

Proposals must be submitted by February 21, 2014. Please provide one electronic copy in .PDF and 5 hard copies.

Proposals shall be submitted to:

Keith Caldwell, City Administrator/Planning Director
City of Bishop
377 West Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514
Phone- 760-873-5863

Expect that an interview will be required, most likely during March and consultant selection is anticipated be made in April of 2014. Final terms may be modified in response to State of California grant requirements. Consultant selection will be based on the strongest overall proposal, not necessarily the lowest cost.

Questions may be directed to:

Keith Caldwell, City Administrator/Planning Director
377 West Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514
Phone- 760-873-5863

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



For:
Keith Caldwell
City Administrator