



Date: June 3, 2019

To: Wendell M. Davis, County Manager
Through: Jay Gibson, General Manager
From: Patrick O. Young, AICP, Planning Director
Subject: Presentation on the new Comprehensive Plan

Executive Summary

The City and County are beginning the process of developing a new Comprehensive Plan to replace the one from 2005. The Comprehensive Plan will guide development in Durham and accommodate future growth, setting a cohesive vision for the community. In September 2018, the Planning Department issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for planning and engagement consulting services for the development of a new Durham Comprehensive Plan. The contract has been awarded to PlanningNEXT. This presentation is intended to introduce the community engagement consultants to the Board.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board receive the presentation.

Background

As part of the FY 2019 budget submittal, the Planning Department requested a new initiative to partially fund a new Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the \$250,000 budget item was to hire a consultant to assist Planning staff with the substantial community engagement facet of the process.

A qualified engagement consultant is essential to the success of the Comprehensive Plan. Robust community engagement is critical to having residents genuinely have a say in their future. As elected officials, appointed officials, and staff come and go, the Comprehensive Plan should endure and transcend these changes because it is deeply rooted in the vision of the community. Without a clear vision and actions grounded in extensive community engagement, Durham risks constant re-litigation and debate of the issues and possible solutions, wasting time that could be spent implementing the Plan and making meaningful, long-lasting changes in the community.

The Planning Department will conduct the data collection, analysis, policy drafting, and document publishing in-house, while PlanningNEXT will be responsible for the community

outreach and collaboration process, marketing and branding, and will also provide technical review and advisement services to the staff team. The consultant will be the lead on these efforts but Planning and other City and County staff will still be deeply involved with the various community engagement efforts. The tasks PlanningNEXT will lead include:

- Branding of the project and associated collateral;
- Hosting an interactive project website that is user-friendly and available in English and Spanish;
- Developing promotional materials (e.g. press releases, flyers, posters, etc.) and educational videos in English and Spanish;
- Providing and managing community engagement software and web tools;
- Conducting surveys, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and roundtables (with Spanish translation available);
- Hosting community workshops (both large and small) and “pop-up workshops” (with Spanish translation available);
- Presenting to community groups, boards, and commissions (with Spanish translation available); and
- Facilitating City-County staff working groups.

The consultant team and Planning staff will work together to determine engagement strategies that will best engage different stakeholders within the community and at different points within the project timeline. Both PlanningNEXT and the Planning Department are committed to fully following the Equitable Engagement Blueprint. This work will include requesting demographic and geographic data from participants in order to determine who our engagement efforts have reached. The project scope and timeline accounts for reassessment of engagement strategies, to correct the balance of participation when it does not appropriately represent the cross section of communities in Durham.

Staff Contact

Scott Whiteman, AICP, Planning Supervisor, (919) 560-4137 ext. 28253 or
Scott.Whiteman@DurhamNC.gov

Attachments

Attachment 1: Scope of work