

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commissioners

From: Jill Thacher, City Planner

Date: April 8, 2011

Re: State Street Corridor RFP

Attached is draft of the scope for a request for proposals for professional consultant services. This is to work with staff and the Planning Commission to develop a corridor plan for South State Street. The draft will be reviewed at the April 12, 2011 CPC meeting, and staff is looking for your comments.

South State Street Corridor Plan RFP

Background and Issues

The South State Street corridor is a 2.15 mile stretch of automobile-oriented mixed office, retail, research, and limited industrial uses from Stimson Street south to Ellsworth Road. Major current land use influences in the area include: the University of Michigan, including the University Gold Course at the north end of the corridor and the Varsity Tennis Center below it; Briarwood Mall, a 982,000 square foot indoor retail center with 120 tenants at the southwest corner of State Street and Eisenhower Parkway; and the 33-site Ann Arbor Research Park between I-94 and Ellsworth Road. The corridor connects the downtown and central campus areas to I-94 and Pittsfield Township to the south.

Recent area, height, and placement amendments to the city's zoning ordinance allow greater lot coverage than was possible when the existing buildings were constructed. This offers new opportunities to expand or redevelop at higher densities. The city's current master plan contains several recommendations for the area that are obsolete or questionable due to changing land use patterns over time. This study will serve as an update to the City of Ann Arbor Master Plan Land Use Element, and will follow the state's required input and notification process for adoption as such.

Most development along the corridor has taken place in the last 50 years, and has predominantly office, limited industrial, and research uses, and retail concentrated in and around the mall. The existing and desired balance of these uses has not been assessed in many years and will be addressed in this study. The corridor has only a handful of residential uses, and whether additional residential uses should be introduced along the corridor, and under what circumstances, is another component of the study.

There are a number of transportation opportunities and challenges along South State Street, and transit mode shifts should play a part in future development to help address congestion mitigation. State Street's relationship with I-94 presents opportunities for an improved urban gateway into the city.

A comprehensive corridor plan is necessary to address a range of issues:

- Future growth demands and the ability of the corridor to accommodate all facets of that new growth;
- The appropriateness and extent of introducing land uses not currently found along the corridor, such as retail or mixed use development;
- Secondary issues, such as I-94/South State Street gateway improvements, and additional issues identified during the planning process;

and the plan must be:

- Compatible with other City of Ann Arbor plans, including several transportation plans, the Nonmotorized Plan, natural features plans, and the Capital Improvements Plan;
- Compatible with Pittsfield Township master planning efforts;
- Compatible with City sustainability initiatives and efforts; and

- Considerate of University of Michigan South Campus and other plans.

Process

The planning process must include dialogue with various stakeholders and the public in order to develop an agreed upon vision of the future. Two to four public meetings plus up to 25 targeted individual or small group interviews of key stakeholders should be utilized to gather public opinion, plus other appropriate means suggested by the consultant. The process must also include a market study to identify market demand and redevelopment potential. Individual firms, or a group of firms, are encouraged to submit responses to this request.

The selected firm will work with staff and the City Planning Commission, including their Master Plan Review Committee. The Planning Commission will serve as the ultimate decision-making authority for the corridor planning process.

A sample process is shown below; applicants should feel free to deviate from this process if it results in a more comprehensive planning effort.

1. Data Inventory and Analysis

A large amount of preliminary data on the corridor has been collected by staff, and includes information on related planning efforts, existing conditions for land use, transportation, natural features, and infrastructure, and issues and opportunities related to these conditions. A database of building parcel information, and a large number of GIS maps specific to existing conditions have also been collected. The consultant will utilize existing data and identify additional data requirements, and collect that data.

2. Market Analysis

A market analysis to identify market demand and redevelopment potential will be undertaken by the consultant. The analysis may include, but is not limited to, examination of existing conditions, identification of trends affecting demand for various land uses, identification of market and non-market based forces affecting the corridor, future market demand, and/or other relevant market information.

3. Identification of Goals, Issues, and Opportunities

Upon completion of market analyses and data collection, the selected consultant should analyze the data and work closely with the public, as well as business and institutional stakeholders, to complete a full SWOT analysis for the corridor. This analysis will be used to craft a preferred vision of future land use in the corridor.

4. Identification of Alternatives and Priorities

The consultant will work closely with staff and the Planning Commission, considering public input, to identify alternative scenarios that could be implemented over time as the corridor develops/redevelops.

5. Preparation of Plan Concepts and Selection of Preferred Scenario(s)

Using the alternatives and priorities identified via the ongoing public process, corridor plan concepts will be developed that address the priorities and needs identified. The

consultant will work with staff and the Planning Commission to recommend and select the preferred future land use scenario(s).

6. Identification of Action Strategies, Plans, Policies, and Best Practices

The consultant will work with staff and the Planning Commission to identify action steps and strategies needed for successful implementation of the preferred future land use scenario(s). This could include outlining methods to work with City leaders, local, regional, and state planning agencies, business groups, and members of the community at large to best implement the corridor plans, preserve the desired current aspects of the corridor, and to embrace future anticipated growth.

7. Development of Final Corridor Plan Report

Deliverables expected from the selected firm will include a final corridor plan report, in a format suitable for publication, including intermediate studies which were used in the planning process, such as future development scenarios, alternative scenarios, and market analyses.

We expect that this process will constitute a twelve-month work effort, starting in July, 2011. The final document should be user-friendly and compatible with the City of Ann Arbor Master Plan.

Deliverables should be defined in the proposal and must include summary documents to support the process steps. These could include:

1. Data Inventory & Analysis: Interview and meeting summaries; analysis maps; narrative
2. Market Analysis: Findings and summary report
3. Issues/Opportunities/Goals: Overview of SWOT analysis; preliminary goals summary
4. Choices/Trade-offs/Priorities: summary of criteria and methodologies used; summary of choices
6. Recommended Plans/Policies/Practices: draft plans and policies
7. Action Strategies: policy implementation and action strategies reports
8. Draft/Final Corridor Plan: Draft and final plan text, illustrations, executive summary
9. Two to four public meetings plus up to 25 targeted individual or small group interviews of key stakeholders

Alternative plan processes, components and deliverables that result in an improved but similarly comprehensive plan are welcomed. We are seeking a creative firm to go beyond formulaic planning processes in addressing this corridor's vast future potential.

Please email with questions by *date*. Responses to questions will be sent in digest format to all who were mailed the RFP or submitted questions.

Attachments:
Corridor Map