



**Seneca Regional Planning Commission
Request for Proposals
SENECA COUNTY, OHIO
Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation
Plan**



Closing Date: Friday, June 26, 2015

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Seneca Regional Planning Commission, SRPC, located in Tiffin, Ohio, is requesting proposals from qualified individuals and/or consulting firms to update the *Seneca County Comprehensive Plan* that was completed in 2001. Several other documents have been completed since that time; however, the focus for this plan update will include a comprehensive outlook at the general overall development pattern of the county to include an assessment of zoning, land use, infrastructure, and the transportation and circulation network. We seek qualified candidates who have experience with farming and agricultural communities, small cities, villages and townships and related transportation and circulation network systems.

COUNTY HISTORY

Seneca County, situated in Northwest, Ohio, is predominantly a farming community with a current population of 56,754. The population has been falling since 2000 and according the US Census, is projected to fall slightly in the years to come. The county was created in 1820 and later organized in 1824 and is named for the Seneca Indians.

The county was barely inhabited until the 1830s, but by 1860 its population had massively increased to about half the current number of inhabitants. It grew slowly from thereon, with periods of more marked increase towards the end of the 19th century, during the Great Depression and the post–World War II baby boom. In 1980 the population peaked at 61,901, and has been declining since. Since about 2000, the county's population declines by about 100–300 persons annually, mainly due to a migration deficit of about 300 persons annually.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 553 square miles (1,430 km²), of which 551 square miles (1,430 km²) is land and 1.8 square miles (4.7 km²) (0.3%) is water. Consequently, almost 80% of the county's total area is agricultural land. The terrain of Seneca County is nearly level and most of the county belongs to the Sandusky River drainage basin which bisects the county from north to south slightly west of its middle, running through Tiffin, Ohio.

The county seat is Tiffin, Ohio, with a population estimated at 17, 832 and the other major city located in the county is Fostoria whose population is currently 13,244.

Seneca County is home to two universities, Heidelberg and the University of Tiffin, the Fostoria Glass Heritage Gift Shop, Chrystal Traditions of Tiffin, farmer's markets and Seneca Caverns. We also host seasonal activities such as a jazz festival and county fair in the summer and family ice skating in the town square during the winter months.

COUNTY OVERVIEW

Seneca County has suffered large losses in manufacturing jobs from 2009 to the present. Unemployment figures for 2009 -2011 are as follows: 12.4%; 11.5%; and 9.3%. (Ohiolmi.com). In 2007, the American Standard Plant closed taking nearly 200 jobs out of Tiffin, Ohio and relocating them in Mexico. These jobs were high-paying union jobs that cannot be replaced overnight. Citizens began traveling outside of Seneca County in search of work. Many that found jobs went back to work for significantly lower wages. Others were forced to leave the area. As a result, the foreclosures increased, and subsequently the condemnations.

However, most of the jobs in the county can be found in the city of Tiffin and Fostoria, Ohio. The county is working diligently to increase the job availability and attracting new businesses to the area. We believe, Seneca County's roadway system has limited us in attracting new industrial business to the area so we seek options and opportunities to improve the highway system while embracing a growth strategy to spur growth and development in designated areas of the county. However, we continue to maintain a strong push to preserve land for farming and agricultural use.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Seneca Regional Planning Commission, Executive Director, Roxyanne C Burrus, MCRP, will serve as the consultant's lead contact throughout the entire comprehensive planning process and will attend all community workshops and stakeholder meetings to the greatest extent possible.

Our approach to this process will be as follows, the Seneca Regional Planning Commission will establish an ad hoc Steering Committee that will review the proposals, assist with selecting the teams/consultant to interview and the final selection of the consultant. They will be part of the planning process throughout the duration of the development of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, we will also include a public review and input process for the overall community at designated points during the planning process.

The final approval will come from the Regional Planning commission Board of Directors. And they, along with the County Commissioners, will adopt and implement the plan.

The proposed project will include an update to comprehensive plan as well as a Transportation Plan for the County. The ultimate goal is to provide the road map for the elected officials and community to work on. The purpose is to give county a guideline for managing resources, creating the environment for development that will bring jobs to the area, assessing the needs for better roadways and a circulation system for the

county, and to foster ideas that identify opportunities for growth and development for the county while we engage in preserving the environment. Ideally, an implementation plan summary will be included.

The previous plan identified the following categories:

Community Participation
Demographics
Goals and Objectives
Land Use and Zoning
Housing
Economic Development
Open Space and Recreation
Natural Resources
Infrastructure
Transportation
Utilities
Strategic Implementation

COMMUNITY INPUT and STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS:

The consultant will be responsible for organizing and facilitating community visioning and input, meetings that will include key stakeholders during the planning process. We will agree on the suggested frequency of the meetings, and will be conducted with the assistance of the Executive Director.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

All proposal submissions must be received in this office no later than **Friday, June 26, 2015 by 4:00 pm EST. Any proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed.** Please submit six hard copies of the proposal, one (1) electronic PDF copy and one sealed copy of the cost estimate with your proposal. Please mail or drop off hardcopies to the following address:

Seneca Regional Planning Commission
109 S Washington St. Suite 2002
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
Attention: Roxyanne C. Burrus, Executive Director
Mail electronic copy to roxyanne.burrus@senecarpc.org

LIMITATIONS AND LIABILITIES:

The Regional Planning Commission Board of Directors assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by Proposer in responding to the RFP or in responding to any further requests for interviews and/or additional data.

MATERIALS:

Consultants will be responsible for providing all necessary preapproved materials at all meetings and workshops. The consultants shall provide the SRPC with a PDF version and editable version of all documents and maps. All mapping will be prepared in ArcView Format and will be provided for reproduction and inclusion in our mapping system.

SUGGESTED PROPOSAL FORMAT:

- Executive Summary
- Brief organizational profile including background and experience of consultant/firm.
- Previous project summaries including three reference contact information for a minimum of three (3) projects similar in scope to the proposed project as described here. The SRPC reserves the right to contact any references provided in the proposals.
- Proposed operation plan and draft project schedule detailing the scope of work. Limit the timeframe for completion to six months unless it is very clear more time is needed to accomplish goal.
- Identify lead personnel and project managers who will be working on the project. Please include their resumes and/or summary of work experience.
- Costs estimates and typical billing rates.
- Assist with the final formal plan presentation to SRPC Board and County Commissioners and County Engineer.

RIGHT TO REJECT PROPOSALS:

The SRPC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. The selected consultant or firm will be approved by the SRPC Board of Directors.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:

Proposals submitted will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Clear Understanding of project and capability of the firm to do the job.
- Approach to complete the project.
- Quality of work determined from samples and discussions from references.
- Demonstrated ability to write clearly and concisely.
- Qualifications of consultant/Firm/Teams.
- Proposed project costs.

DELIVERABLES:

A final document that incorporates a plan for the county inclusive of all agreed upon information. Information and outcomes accumulated through community and stakeholder meetings inclusive of recommendations for improvement and an implementation summary.

Four (4) hard color copies of the final document, professionally printed in color and an electronic copy of the complete plan document in pdf formatted version upload able to website.

Copies of all maps, graphs using ArcView software and any marketing completed to gather interviews or inform the public of the planning process including meeting and workshop notes and reports.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

ITEM	DATE
RFP Distribution	May 25, 2105
Deadline For RFP Submission	June 26, 2015
Review/Select Consultants For Interview	July 17, 2015
Interviews	July 31, 2015
Recommendations to SRPC Board Of Directors	August 7, 2015
Contract Award	August 14, 2015.