



DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN RFQ ADDENDUM

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Town of Ridgeland, SC

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Questions about Submissions

1. Is there a question deadline?

There is no absolute deadline to asking questions, but formal responses to the RFQ will be closed by October 2nd. There has also been a good response. Extending the submission deadline seems unnecessary.

2. What is the Town’s budget for the Downtown Master Plan?

The firm budget has not been determined, but early indicators point towards an amount not exceeding six figures. Therefore, a range of \$65,000—90,000 has been earmarked depending on services provided. Expect council to negotiate. Target key deliverables of the RFQ.

3. The RFQ identifies a response deadline of October 2, 2026, at 5:00 PM but does not appear to specify the required delivery method or number of copies. Will the Town accept the Statement of Qualifications electronically via email in PDF format, or are printed/bound copies also required?

The Town expects formal responses to be delivered electronically as a PDF, and for three hard copies to be mailed to Ridgeland Town Hall (1 Town Square) to the Attention of Aaron Rucker. Once the selection of the top three finalists are chosen, the Town may request additional hard copies in anticipation of those consultants presenting to Council.

4. Is there an overall page limit for the qualification’s submission? If so, do resumes, project descriptions, references, itemized fee sheets, and other required materials count toward the limit? The RFQ notes that “additional

supporting information” is limited to 20 pages; could you please clarify whether this is the only page limitation?

Yes, the only page limitation is 20 pages for additional supporting information, such as a portfolio or previous work.

5. What is the process for presenting firms to Town Council?

Staff will score each submittal and provide the top three firms to Council. Those three firms will then present to Council to determine the top applicant, with a strong preference for in-person. Presentations to Council are anticipated to take place at the regularly scheduled Town Council meeting as early as October 15.

6. The RFQ indicates that the preferred firm will have in-house resources to perform the work. Does the Town have any restrictions or preferences regarding the use of specialized subconsultants for components such as historic preservation, transportation, or economic development?

The Town has no objection to the use of subconsultants, provided this is disclosed to the Town prior to the selection of a consultant.

7. Is the Town requesting a binding, fixed-fee total broken down by task, or an estimated task budget based on hourly rates and scope assumptions?

Requesting a binding, fixed-fee total broken down by task should suffice.

8. We typically use fully loaded hourly rates that capture all costs such as travel, but the RFQ requests travel costs. For the requested dollar value per task, is it acceptable to list only the total dollar value and the fully loaded hourly rates?

It is acceptable, understanding that an itemized cost breakdown may be requested by the Town later in the process.

- 9. For the requested letters of recommendation and references, does your team want full letters from our references or just our references' contact information? If letters, are there any requirements that you have for this?**

Contact information should be adequate.

- 10. Are there any formatting requirements for the submittal package, such as page size, page orientation, minimum font size, margins, file size, or file naming conventions?**

There are no formatting requirements of this kind, except for the submittal package to be emailed in PDF format and for 3 hard copies to be mailed to Ridgeland Town Hall.

Questions about Project Timeline

- 11. Does the Town have an anticipated date for consultant selection, contract execution, and commencement of work?**

The Town anticipates selection of a consultant by the end of October or early November, and commencement of work to begin before the end of 2026.

- 12. What is the Town Council's target completion timeframe for the entire master plan—for example, approximately 10, 12, or 18 months?**

Presumably 12 months, to line up with the Town's budget which is passed each fiscal year (a 12-month timespan).

- 13. Would the Town consider a proposal that prioritizes and phases the work so that the most important or time-sensitive work is undertaken initially, with additional Planning Areas or components addressed in subsequent phases as additional funding becomes available?**

It is true that the scope is broad, and fiscal responsibility is important. It would be beneficial to understand how firms would take on the phasing and project scope. Help define what steps

are needed to revitalize, stimulate reinvestment, and provide the Town with the tools to achieve immediate, short-term, and long-term success.

- 14. The RFQ describes a phased approach in which the three planning areas would proceed through Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 in sequence: Historic Downtown, followed by Jacob Smart Boulevard, and finally Exit 21. What is driving the need to complete the three phases for each planning area sequentially rather than conducting some or all of the work in parallel? Unless there are known constraints, would the Town be open to opportunities to run the planning areas concurrently to improve efficiency and reduce public-engagement fatigue?**

If there are better ways to approach the project phasing, the Town is completely open to it, provided that the consultant is able to present their proposed approach and how it would benefit the Town.

- 15. If the three planning areas cannot proceed concurrently, does the Town envision the geographic areas proceeding in a strictly sequential order, with one area completed and adopted before the next begins, or should phases overlap to maintain overall project momentum?**

Phases may overlap if the consultant can make a reasonable case for doing so. The Town is particularly responsive to the time-effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of bids.

Questions about Deliverables

- 16. Will the Town provide the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, current SmartCode and related ordinances, current architectural/signage regulations, and other studies or datasets referenced in the RFQ? If these materials are already available for download, could you please direct us to them?**

Of course, go [here](#) for general information, [here](#) for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, and [here](#) for the Town's Smartcode zoning code. Information about the architectural and signage ordinances is answered on Question 28. Contact us if there is specific information you cannot find.

- 17. For the requested redesign of Jacob Smart Boulevard, East Main Street, and Grahamville Road, does the Town anticipate planning-level conceptual street design, or should the consultant include transportation-engineering analysis such as traffic operations, turn-lane warrants, roadway geometry, and formal coordination with SCDOT?**

The Town would prefer a planning-level concept for next steps on viability and implementation which can then blend with the SCDOT redesign plans occurring simultaneously at Exit 21. The other roads (Jacob Smart, West Main Street, and Grahamville Road) affected are simple enough and low-traffic enough that a planning-level concept would likely be viable without needing a detailed transportation engineering analysis or traffic study to back it up.

- 18. Given the anticipated I-95 widening, ramp redesigns, and the requested redesign of Jacob Smart Boulevard, East Main Street, and Grahamville Road, are there current SCDOT plans or transportation studies that should be incorporated into the team's work?**

Yes, work at the Exit 21 ramp and Main Street will be occurring. Design plans should be available.

- 19. Does the Town have an existing historic resources survey, National Register documentation, or previous preservation study for the Historic Downtown that should be considered as part of the proposal?**

The Town has multiple historic-resources surveys from 1996 and 2025 which it can use for historical research. This is in addition to the book *Reflections*, which extensively documents the modern history, people, and buildings of Ridgeland.

- The 1996 survey, which covers all of Jasper County, can be found [here](#).
- The 2025 survey, designed around the I-95 widening project, can be found as a 6-part series [here](#).
- An interactive map of documented buildings and sites can be found [here](#).

- 20. Does the Town anticipate a planning-level reconnaissance assessment, or should the consultant include a formal historic-resources survey and/or National Register documentation?**

The Town would like to have a planning-level reconnaissance of existing historic structures which could be identified for preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive re-use. The Town would also like guidance on what specific sites and properties, possibly the entire historic core, would be eligible for the National Register – the information gathered during this phase would allow the Town to submit nominations to the National Register, but the consultant is not required to prepare that information specifically in the format of a National Register nomination.

21. Have there been any standout methods or tools for engagement that the Town has found effective or ineffective for eliciting substantive feedback?

The Town has used surveys, flyers, direct contact with business merchants and stakeholders, the Town’s website, and the Town’s Facebook page. Public engagement should be done in both English and Spanish as the Town has a large Spanish-speaking population.

22. Does the Town have any preferred local vendors for branding, printing, or any other services that may be associated with the planning process?

Consultants can use Allprint Graphics if possible. <https://allprintgraphics.com/>

23. Are there any grant-imposed requirements that may impact the work involved in the Downtown Master Plan?

None that the Town is aware of.

24. Is the Town looking for zoning code redlines, substantial edits within the current structure, or a complete rewrite of the zoning code?

The Town is specifically interested in redlines or substantial edits within the existing structure of the Town’s zoning code, the SmartCode.

25. The RFQ does not appear to identify an existing TIF district. Has the Town previously evaluated a TIF district or similar value-capture mechanism? Should the master plan scope consider evaluating TIF as a potential funding tool?

The Town has not considered TIF districts up to this point, although we are certainly open to the concept.

26. Is the goal to refine the existing 2010 SmartCode transects, including T4 and T5 and the SD-Exit 21 zoning district, or to draft freestanding overlay districts for the three planning areas?

The final changes to code are not set in stone, but as per the Town’s current vision, here is what to expect:

- Refinement of the zoning codes for the T4 and T5 zoning districts, which cover most of the Main Street and Jacob Smart Blvd areas;
- A possible Downtown overlay district covering the Historic Downtown (though the goals of an overlay may be achieved by modifications to the T4 and T5 zones);
- A possible Historic District or Overlay specifically for the purpose of preserving historic structures;
- A complete overhaul of the SD-Exit 21 zoning district, in alignment with a completely new vision for that area.

Questions about Ongoing Initiatives

27. The RFQ references several initiatives that are “currently ongoing.” What opportunity exists to pause or coordinate those initiatives so that input from the Downtown Master Plan process can be incorporated and alignment can be maintained? If those initiatives must proceed concurrently, what draft materials or other information is available to help inform a more accurate response to the RFQ?

Initiatives about beautification, architectural code updates, and signage code updates are described in further questions. Aside from those, the single most important ongoing initiative is the development activity from the Ridgeland Development Group. This group is a local consortium of people who are interested in investing millions of dollars into the Historic Downtown of Ridgeland to rehabilitate historic buildings and build infill development on vacant lots. This group will be involved in the Downtown Master Plan as a key stakeholder. The Town does not want to pause their efforts, moreover wanting to align efforts, as development can be time-sensitive and the Ridgeland Development Group’s vision generally aligns with what is

stated in the Downtown Master Plan RFQ. RDG must be included in the process as the Downtown Master Plan is developed and implemented.

28. How does the Town envision the consultant's code-related deliverables interfacing with the architectural and signage revisions currently underway by Town staff?

This can be an overlapping and joint effort. The Town's existing architectural and signage codes are already integrated into the SmartCode in Article 5 sections [5.12](#) and [5.13](#). Staff has been working with the Planning Commission throughout the year to enhance both the architectural and signage code, and we are seeking input on these drafts as part of the Downtown Master Plan. The draft architectural standards can be found [here](#). At this point in time, the architectural code has been approved by Planning Commission and is slated to be presented to Town Council, though it has not been scheduled for Council's agenda. The draft signage standards can be found [here](#); Planning Commission and Staff could not put together signage standards they were completely comfortable with, so that effort has stalled out and been incorporated into the Downtown Master Plan.

29. What is the status of the public art and mural programs referencing the Town's history, described as currently ongoing on pages 10 and 12?

This is a work-in-progress initiative. The Town has hit roadblocks cooperating with private property owners when it comes to putting public art onto their buildings.

30. What is the status of the continued improvements to the Town's parks referenced on page 12, as well as the Blue Heron Nature Trail expansion referenced on page 20?

The Town recently expanded its staff to manage flowers and trees across the Town for beautification, resulting in improvements to several parks and squares around Town (particularly the Ridgeland Veterans Memorial Park, Town Clock, and Gopher Tortoise Square). The Blue Heron Nature Center has been expanding the Blue Heron Nature Trail; those expansions are under construction now and expected to open to the public in October. The Town is looking for further suggestions for beautification and to integrate these parks into the surrounding public realm, particularly in the Exit 21 area.

31. What is the status and anticipated timeline of the moratorium on certain uses currently allowed in the SD-Exit 21 zoning district, referenced on page 21? Will the moratorium create any interim deadlines or priorities that the selected consultant should address in the project schedule?

The moratorium has been drafted as an ordinance and is expected to pass through Town Council in the month of October. The moratorium targets specific uses which are wholly incompatible with the existing Exit 21 area (e.g. elementary schools), and the ordinance explicitly cites the completion of the Downtown Master Plan. The ordinance is written so the moratorium will be in effect for a minimum of 270 days upon passage by Town Council.