

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
CONSULTING SERVICES FOR
UPDATING A MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
VILLAGE OF GURNEE, ILLINOIS
AUGUST 2, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

The Village of Gurnee is seeking to retain the services of a qualified and experienced consultant/firm to assist in updating its multi-year Strategic Plan.

GENERAL BACKGROUND:

The Village of Gurnee (the “Village”) was incorporated in 1928 with 200 residents and since that time has grown to over 31,000. At the 2010 Census, the Village had a population of 31,295, representing an increase of 128% over the 1990 Census population of 13,701. Gurnee is a balanced community with approximately 58% of its land zoned residential, 21% commercial, 12% parks/open space, and 9% industrial. The Village is located in central Lake County along I-94 at the midway point between Chicago and Milwaukee. It is eight miles west of Lake Michigan and covers an area of approximately thirteen and a half square miles. Historically the Village has experienced strong growth in taxable valuation with new residential, commercial and industrial construction. Today, Gurnee is nearly built out and is transitioning to redevelopment of properties. Neighboring communities include Wadsworth and Old Mill Creek to the north, Libertyville and Lake Bluff to the south, Waukegan and North Chicago to the east and Grayslake and Lindenhurst to the west.

The Village of Gurnee has not levied a property tax since 2000, instead relying on sales, amusement, food & beverage and hotel taxes to fund government operations. The Village’s expenses, driven largely by the cost of personnel, have been climbing at a rate higher than the growth of the economically sensitive revenues on which the Village relies.

The COVID-19 pandemic created additional strain on Village revenues and operations. The Village was able to navigate a nearly \$7M loss of revenue with creative cost saving measures of almost \$6M that included a strategic hiring freeze, delaying wage adjustments, adjusting capital programs and general belt tightening. The Village bridged the \$1M gap with the use of excess reserves and continues to maintain a reserve balance above policy limits. These actions helped the Village avoid layoffs or other major operational impacts. The Village remains in a solid financial position with strong reserves and low debt.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

In March 2016, the Village Board adopted the Fiscal Year 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. This plan served as the guiding policy of the Village during that time and was the catalyst for innovation in operating departments. The goals in the plan led to projects such as implementing a new enterprise financial

software, deploying a body worn camera program for police officers and consolidating dispatch services with neighboring communities. The FY 2017-2021 Strategic Plan was developed with the assistance of an outside consultant. This effort included elected official interviews, management surveys, community focus groups and a leadership retreat. Status updates to the plan were conducted biannually by Village staff. The updates were presented to the Village Board as an accountability measure to track progress on the plan. In total, the goals in the FY 2017-2021 Strategic Plan were approximately 90% completed and/or accomplished for the final plan update. A few of the many accomplishments are listed below:

- Initiated substantial improvements to community outreach/communications
- Conducted comprehensive updates to Village financial policies
- Improved Public Safety technology and manpower
- Developed a [Multiyear Financial Forecast](#)
- Adopted [Compass 2040: The Village's updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan](#)
- Renewed focus on the [East Grand Gateway](#)
- Released [Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendations](#): strategies to increase pedestrian mobility
- Established new partnerships related to consolidation of public safety dispatching services
- Implemented body-worn cameras in the Police Department

The Strategic Plan, as well as the biannual progress reports, can be found online at:

http://www.gurnee.il.us/strategic_plan

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT:

The Village is a home-rule unit by virtue of its population. As a home-rule unit, the Village has no tax rate or debt limitations, nor is it required to conduct a referendum to authorize the issuance of debt or to increase taxes. The Village President and six-member board, elected for overlapping four-year terms, govern the Village. The Village Clerk is elected for a four-year term. In addition, the Board appoints a Village Administrator, Attorney and other key department heads. The Village Administrator oversees the day-to-day operations of the Village.

The Village's current President (Mayor) is Tom Hood, who is serving in his first term as President after two terms as Trustee. Mayor Hood replaced retiring Mayor Kristina Kovarik, who served four terms in the role.

VILLAGE SERVICES:

The Village of Gurnee is a full service organization. Village services are divided among five major areas including Administration, Community Development, Police, Fire, and Public Works. Within each department are specialized divisions which further delineate responsibility centers. The Village has 216 full-time employees and 20 seasonal/part-time employees. Police officers are represented by the Fraternal Order of Police, while Police Sergeants and Communications personnel are represented by the Illinois Council of Police. Firefighter/paramedics are represented by the International Association of Firefighters. In addition, the International Union of Operating Engineers represents groups in the Public Works Department and a second Administrative Unit that includes clerical, building, engineering, and fire inspectors.

The Village operates in coordination with other taxing bodies in the area and has historically maintained close relationships. Quarterly meetings are held between taxing body leaders to discuss shared concerns

and identify improvements that may cross organizational boundaries and benefit larger stakeholder groups.

CURRENT MUNICIPAL CONCERNS:

The Village of Gurnee experienced a significant growth spurt in the 1990s. Municipal operations and budgets grew with the community to meet the challenges that resulted. Today, Gurnee is almost fully built out less a few large undeveloped parcels. Current Village services and facilities are meeting core resident needs. The Mayor and Trustees are committed, seasoned veterans who work together very well. They share values and goals and work in unison to move the community forward. The executive-level leadership team is comprised of tenured public servants; however, there are key employees that will be eligible for retirement in the near future. Where feasible, staff continues to identify and prepare mid-level employees to fill these vacancies. The general consensus is there are no huge underlying or festering issues that are ready to erupt in the community, however the Village understands and appreciates the need to constantly assess operations, community needs, changing trends and improvements in technology. As such, from an elected leader/municipal perspective the following are a few areas where greater focus/resources will be needed in the future:

- Exiting the COVID-19 pandemic
- Continued heavy reliance on elastic revenues to support municipal operations
- Ensuring the continued viability of our business community and the “Big 3” revenue generators:
 - Great Wolf Lodge
 - Six Flags Great America
 - Gurnee Mills Mall
- Increasing efficiencies across departments by centralizing tasks and promoting cross-training
- Police Department staffing
- Upcoming executive level retirements
- 9-1-1 Consolidation
- Ethylene Oxide concerns
- Lack of a downtown-style/communal gathering area

SCOPE OF PROJECT:

The Village of Gurnee requests qualifications from consultants/firms with appropriate expertise to directly assist the elected officials and Village staff in the update of its multi-year Strategic Plan. The process will culminate in the development of a workable plan by defining key issues, strategies and objectives for the next three to five years.

SCHEDULE:

1. Written Inquiries Accepted – August 2nd – August 15th, 2021
2. Written Response to Inquiries Posted to www.gurnee.il.us/bids – August 16th, 2021
3. Statement of Qualifications Due Date – August 31st, 2021
4. Short Listed Consultants/Firms Interviews – Week of September 20th, 2021 (approximate)
5. Evaluation Team Selects Consultant/Firm – Week of October 4th, 2021 (approximate)
6. Recommendation of Award to Board – October 18th, 2021

SCOPE OF SERVICES:

Respondents will directly assist the Village Board and senior management of the Village of Gurnee in updating the Strategic Plan. The project seeks to identify the most significant issues and challenges facing the organization, major strategic initiatives, measurable objectives and actions and/or strategies to achieve the objectives. Specific requirements include, but are not limited to:

Phase I:

1. Work with executive leadership to outline the Strategic Plan development process.
2. Develop a road map/time line for accomplishment of all responsibilities.
3. Organize and facilitate community focus groups to assist in updating the plan.

Phase II:

4. Organize and facilitate meetings with the Village Board and senior staff members to review Mission Statement, Core Values, Village-wide Goals as well as solicit feedback on operational concerns or areas of needed focus.
5. Assist staff in finalizing goals, objectives, strategies and performance targets related to objectives.
6. Assist staff in developing communication strategies and methods.
7. Publish the Strategic Planning Document.
8. Provide input for 6 month evaluation, 12 month and 18 month staff action planning.

Throughout the process, the Village shall:

1. Provide to the consultant all the information in its possession which is necessary for the completion of a Strategic Plan document. This includes organizational charts, elected officials' background information, survey results, etc.
2. Assist the consultant in setting meetings with the public, Village Board, senior management and departmental representatives as necessary for the completion of the Strategic Plan.
3. Review and provide input/feedback on all drafts, studies, results, reports, proposals, and any other documents submitted by the consultant.
4. Designate a person(s) to act as the representative of the department with respect to the work performed herewith. Said person(s) shall have authority to transmit instructions, receive information and interpret and explain Village policies and decisions with respect to services to be performed by the consultant.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

Five (5) copies resumes or professional qualification statements of the key persons that will be working on this project shall be submitted by August 31, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. to the following address:

Village of Gurnee
Strategic Planning Initiative
325 N. O'Plaine Road
Gurnee, IL 60031

An experience statement for the consultant/firm with examples of similar projects completed by the assigned staff and a listing of references for each of these projects is also required.

The following items will be considered when evaluating the consultants:

1. Professional qualification.
2. Experience with developing a strategic plan at the municipal level.
3. Experience with working with governmental organizations and community groups in workshop settings.
4. Ability to analyze, organize and present data.
5. Overall cost.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Individuals requiring further information should contact:

Jack Linehan
Assistant Village Administrator
847-599-7514
jlinehan@village.gurnee.il.us

All questions posed by prospective bidders must be submitted by August 15th. Answers to the questions will be posted at www.gurnee.il.us/bids as an addendum to the bid on August 16th.