Project Purpose
Charleston Area Alliance is soliciting proposals from qualified firms, groups of firms, or individuals (the “Consultant”) to provide a residential feasibility study for the Central Business District of Charleston, WV (the “Downtown”). The consultant will be chosen based upon the highest value to Charleston Area Alliance and the consultant’s demonstrated value in helping to meet the community’s goal of creating more density in Downtown.

Proposals must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the requirements, format, and guidelines presented in this Request for Proposal.

The resulting contract will be coordinated and managed by Susie Salisbury, VP Community Development, Charleston Area Alliance Housing Task Group, and the City of Charleston’s Planning Department. Charleston Area Alliance is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the community, creating jobs and investing in people. More information on the Charleston Area Alliance can be found at www.charlestonareaalliance.org.

Project Background
Charleston Area Alliance desires to increase residential density in Downtown by recruiting mixed-use residential developments to expand the number of downtown housing units by 500. Due to this interest, Charleston Area Alliance wishes to determine the feasibility of such development and the market for it. To orient the consultant, and for the purpose of this solicitation, Downtown is defined as the area bounded north by the railroad tracks, south by Kanawha River, east by Morris Street, and west by Elk River. A map of this area is attached as part of this RFP.

Downtown is home to many dining, financial, entertainment, professional, shopping, lodging and other service-related businesses. It serves as the main professional, governmental and cultural hub for the state. It is home to a successful 1 million square foot mall and soon to be expanded convention center.

Recently, the City completed an update to their citywide comprehensive plan which included a downtown redevelopment plan. The effort titled, Imagine Charleston, was finalized last year and the Charleston Area Alliance in partnership with the City and the Charleston Urban Renewal Authority, are charged with the implementation of the downtown plan. The team has been awarded funding from the WV Community Partnership Program and Charleston Urban Renewal Authority to complete a downtown housing feasibility study with the goal of increasing the number of downtown living units by at least 500.
There are several local resources that may be able to assist with the collection of information about Downtown. General information about the city of Charleston can be found online at www.cityofcharleston.org. A community profile, created by the Charleston Area Alliance, can be found online at http://charlestonareaalliance.org/economic-development/our-community/ and information on the Charleston Urban Renewal Authority can be found at http://curawv.org/. The full Imagine Charleston Plan can be found at www.imaginecharleston.com.

PROJECT SCOPE

Project Tasks
The successful consultant is expected to carry out the following general tasks:

- Analyze real estate acquisition and development within Downtown.
- Provide an inventory of available development sites.
- Assess market feasibility for downtown housing.
- Provide an implementation plan for Charleston Area Alliance and the City of Charleston in the recruitment of market rate and mixed-use housing.

The winning proposal will provide specifics regarding how the consultant plans to carry out the tasks, which will be a critical element in consultant selection. In addition, the winning proposal will demonstrate the consultant’s creativity and knowledge and outline the consultant's experience with similar projects. See “Proposal Content and Criteria” for complete requirements.

After the consultant is selected, work will begin with the following groups: Charleston Area Alliance Housing Task Group, staff, retailers, restaurants, City of Charleston leadership, commissions, realtors, local residences, and property owners. These groups will provide information, host focus groups and community meetings, and complete any steps that would facilitate preparing an analysis of housing potential in Downtown.

Project Deliverables
The consultant will assemble the components into a final document or documents and at a minimum, provide Charleston Area Alliance with five paper copies of the deliverables as well as an electronic version in a quality resolution PDF format. After the delivery of the written product, the consultant will conduct a presentation of the findings to a group to be determined.

Related to the tasks above, Charleston Area Alliance expects that the consultant will be able to provide the following information as part of the deliverables:

- An assessment of the downtown’s current housing market.
- An assessment of the demand for residential housing in the identified area broken down by type: multi-family, single-family, condo, etc.
- The anticipated price-points for each type of housing identified.
- An assessment of the appropriate mix of residential housing to be considered for the area.
- An estimate of the demand for rental and owner-occupied units based on income.
- The period of time over which housing demand is anticipated to exist or occur.
• An identification of target markets for the housing demand anticipated and their demographics.
• Recommendations concerning the strategies for approaches that might be taken to satisfy the identified housing needs.
• Identification of specific areas of the downtown that may be most amendable to new residential development in order to provide additional focus to local redevelopment and housing efforts.
• Identify current and future housing gaps.
• Make recommendation for addressing gaps and meeting housing needs.
• Identify barriers to downtown housing from both the developer and end user point of view.

Proposals should provide a straightforward, concise description of the proposed work to be done and the consultant’s ability to meet the requirements of this RFP. This proposal is not a public relations document. All information provided should relate directly to this project.

An officer of the consultant, or a designated agent empowered to bind the consultant in a contract, shall sign the proposal and any clarifications to that proposal.

The proposal shall contain the following in the order described:

I.  Cover Letter

Each submission should be accompanied by a cover letter, which includes:

1) The consultant’s name and address.
2) A clearly identified point-of-contact for the consultant, including name, title, telephone number, and email address.
3) A statement that the proposal is in response to this RFP.

II. Work Plan

The proposal shall include a detailed work plan that also demonstrates the consultant’s understanding of the project and the proposed scope of services. This shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

• Description of tasks, activities and/or procedures, and the approach to be undertaken by the consultant for each.
• A description of any deliverables to be provided as an outcome of each task.
• Data updates or information that would be required for each task. Specific note should be made of any data, information or other resources that the consultant anticipates will be needed from Charleston Area Alliance for the successful completion of the project.
• Any issues or problems expected to be encountered and an approach for resolving them.
• Schedule for consulting Charleston Area Alliance staff during the project and keeping Charleston Area Alliance informed on the progress of the work.

III. Schedule of Project Activities

The consultant shall provide a schedule for the work tasks and deliverables. Charleston Area Alliance wishes for the project to be completed by March 30, 2015.

IV. Preliminary Budget

Budget information should be provided in a line-item format that includes direct labor (itemized by hourly direct salaries and estimated hours), overhead (as a percent of direct salaries), and other direct costs (including travel, lodging, meals, sub-contracting, printing, etc.). The consultant need only provide a summary tabulation rather than estimated costs per task or activity.

Personnel costs should be specifically called out by individual and salary separated from fringe benefits.

Charleston Area Alliance estimates that the work contemplated will require a financial commitment between $20,000 - $25,000.

V. Statement of Consultant Qualifications

The consultant selected is expected to: have recently (within the last 2 years) been engaged in a similar assignment; have specific personnel experienced in similar projects assigned to the project; and have demonstrated the ability to work well with local entities and agencies. The following consultant information shall be included with the proposal:

• The principal in charge for this project with current contact information.
• A list of, and a detailed resume for, each professional or technical person assigned to the project which includes experience or expertise that qualifies the person for this project.
• A summary of similar projects prepared by the personnel assigned to this project. Include contact information for the principal user for these projects.
• At least three references with contact information regarding recent relevant work. The consultant should specify its role in each of these projects.

SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

Submission of a proposal to Charleston Area Alliance indicates the consultant’s ability to meet the requirements of this RFP. All proposals shall be submitted by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 20, 2014 by email to the contact below:
It is the consultant’s responsibility to ensure that Charleston Area Alliance has received the proposal. Confirmation of receipt will be sent by email to the consultant when the proposal is received.

No changes will be accepted after 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time November 20, 2014. The consultant has the right to submit questions concerning this solicitation and project. Charleston Area Alliance reserves the right to provide the question asked and its answer to all Consultants.

Charleston Area Alliance reserves the right to reject any submission for failure to adhere to the requirements described in this solicitation, and to waive irregularities therein. All submitting firms grant Charleston Area Alliance a non-exclusive right to use, or cause others to use, the contents of the submission for any purpose. All submissions will become the sole property of Charleston Area Alliance.

Charleston Area Alliance reserves the right to select more than one Consultant.

All contracts will be subject to final negotiation.

Selection Criteria
Proposals will be received and reviewed by Charleston Area Alliance for this project. Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Methodology proposed, including timetable of work.
- Additional information the consultant provides that brings value to the analysis.
- Successful work experience with similar projects demonstrating that the consultant can perform the services described in the Project Scope.
- References. The consultant shall have completed at least two similar engagements during the past two years, and provide references pertaining to these engagements.
- Experience of firm, including resumes of staff who will be assigned to this project.
- Project cost.

PROPOSAL OBLIGATIONS

The contents of the proposal and any clarifications to the contents submitted by the successful applicant shall become part of the contractual obligation and shall be incorporated by reference into the contract.

Preparation Costs
All costs incurred under this solicitation for proposal preparation, presentation or contract negotiations are the responsibility of the consultant. Charleston Area Alliance is not responsible for the cost of any information solicited or received.
Award
The award shall be made by Charleston Area Alliance, as noted above. Charleston Area Alliance anticipates that the selection of a consultant will be made within fifteen business days of the proposal submission deadline, but will not be bound by this timeframe. Contract negotiation will begin immediately following consultant selection.

Should contract negotiation not prove successful, Charleston Area Alliance reserves the right to select no consultant, offer a new solicitation, or select another offer from one of those previously responding to this RFP.

Term of Agreement
The term of any agreement will be negotiated. The successful consultant will be expected to commence the provision of services immediately upon full execution of the agreement, the final report of which is expected to be completed and submitted to Charleston Area Alliance no later than March 30, 2015.

INFORMATION CONTACT

All inquiries concerning this solicitation should be addressed to:

Susie Salisbury
Charleston Area Alliance
1116 Smith Street
Charleston, WV 25301
304-340-4253
ssalisbury@charlestonareaalliance.org
www.charlestonareaalliance.org

No other individuals, groups, organizations or other agents are authorized to respond to such inquiries.