

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP-2023-05-15)  
STEWARD AND CARON ROADS  
INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Issued on May 15, 2023, by:**



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Rock Falls, IL  
815-625-3854

**Questions?**

Please contact us at [info@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:info@blackhawkhills.com).

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP-2023-05-15)**  
**STEWARD AND CARON ROADS INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR STRATEGIC PLAN**  
*Proposals due on or before 11:59 PM CDT, June 12, 2023*

*Blackhawk Hills Regional Council (BHRC) invites consultants to submit proposals for this project, which is to complete a strategic plan for the Steward and Caron Roads Industrial Corridor addressing freight, economic development, and land use as described in this scope of work. Please read each section carefully for information regarding the proposal and submittal instructions.*

## **SECTION 1. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 About BHRC**

BHRC is Northwest Illinois' regional planning organization, economic development district, and resource conservation and development district for Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside counties.

### **1.2 General Information**

As a result of responses to this RFP, BHRC will review submissions and conduct interviews with consultants it determines can best meet the requirements outlined below. The contract awarded will be for a period ending approximately 12 months from contract initiation.

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## **SECTION 2. PROJECT SCOPE**

### **2.1 Project Background**

The City of Rochelle, located largely in Ogle County, IL, has experienced remarkable economic growth within the past twenty years. A significant portion of this growth is attributable to industrial development along the Steward and Caron Road Industrial Corridor (see Figure 2.2.1). About 30 miles south of Rockford and nearly 81 miles west of Chicago, it lies in proximity to the intersection of I-88 and I-39 as well as near the intersection of two Class I railroads, the BNSF and Union Pacific. The corridor continues attract investment because of its proximity to major metropolitan areas and connection to high-capacity road and rail transportation systems.

Rochelle has already acquired land in Lee County (south of Ogle County) – on which rests a municipal water tower and city-owned shortline rail – and contemplated further extending utilities including electric service through the Rochelle Municipality Utility and rail through the City of Rochelle Railroad. Local economic development organizations have previously and continue to negotiate land options to acquire parcels within the project area. The Lee-Ogle Enterprise Zone, a place-based incentive program, is available throughout large portions of the corridor. Lee County and Ogle County each recently passed legislation permitting commercial property-assessed clean energy financing (C-PACE) that allows companies to finance energy efficiency improvements. The area is defined as underserved by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity; this status allows enhanced state incentives for new and

expanded businesses. Currently, the City of Rochelle Railroad is expanding its [capacity for transload and intermodal operations](#).

However, stakeholders have concluded that future growth should not continue without an overarching vision. Development without a strategic plan could lead to disjointed public investment, inefficient and unsafe freight traffic flows, and growth pressure on various jurisdictions, like the Village of Steward in Lee County. Steward-area officials have reported concerns about freight movements impacting Steward Elementary School and village residents. Truck drivers navigating the Steward and Caron Roads Industrial Corridor typically cross the BNSF railroad twice, increasing congestion, causing delays, and increasing CO2 and other emissions harmful to both human health and the natural environment.

The general goals of this strategic plan are as follows:

- Quantification and qualification of existing assets
- Reduction in user, land use, and transportation conflicts and efficient use of space through better design
- Optimized freight routing supported by worker, industry, community, and city/county/state transportation interests that improves safety for vulnerable road users and road-adjacent populations
- Identification and prioritization of projects, programs, and policies that support employers, employees, residents, etc. as well as improve transportation safety and environmental sustainability
- Identification and recommendations for supporting, growing, and attracting industry clusters that lead to higher wages and improved benefits for those employed in the corridor and its environs
- An industrial corridor that builds with nature, reducing the impact of future hazard events, increasing access to renewable energy, and incorporating self-sustaining and interconnected ecosystems

## **2.2 Project Location**

The project will impact an approximately 6.4-mile stretch of Steward Road and Caron Road from the City of Rochelle, IL to the Village of Steward, IL. The study area is roughly bounded by IL-38 to the north, Perry Road to the south, IL-251 to the west, and I-39 to the east. However, the study should include transportation systems and land beyond this footprint to ensure that traffic and development patterns are fully understood and that remedies presented will be effective. The primarily affected counties are Lee and Ogle.

Figure 2.2.1 – Outline of Study Area

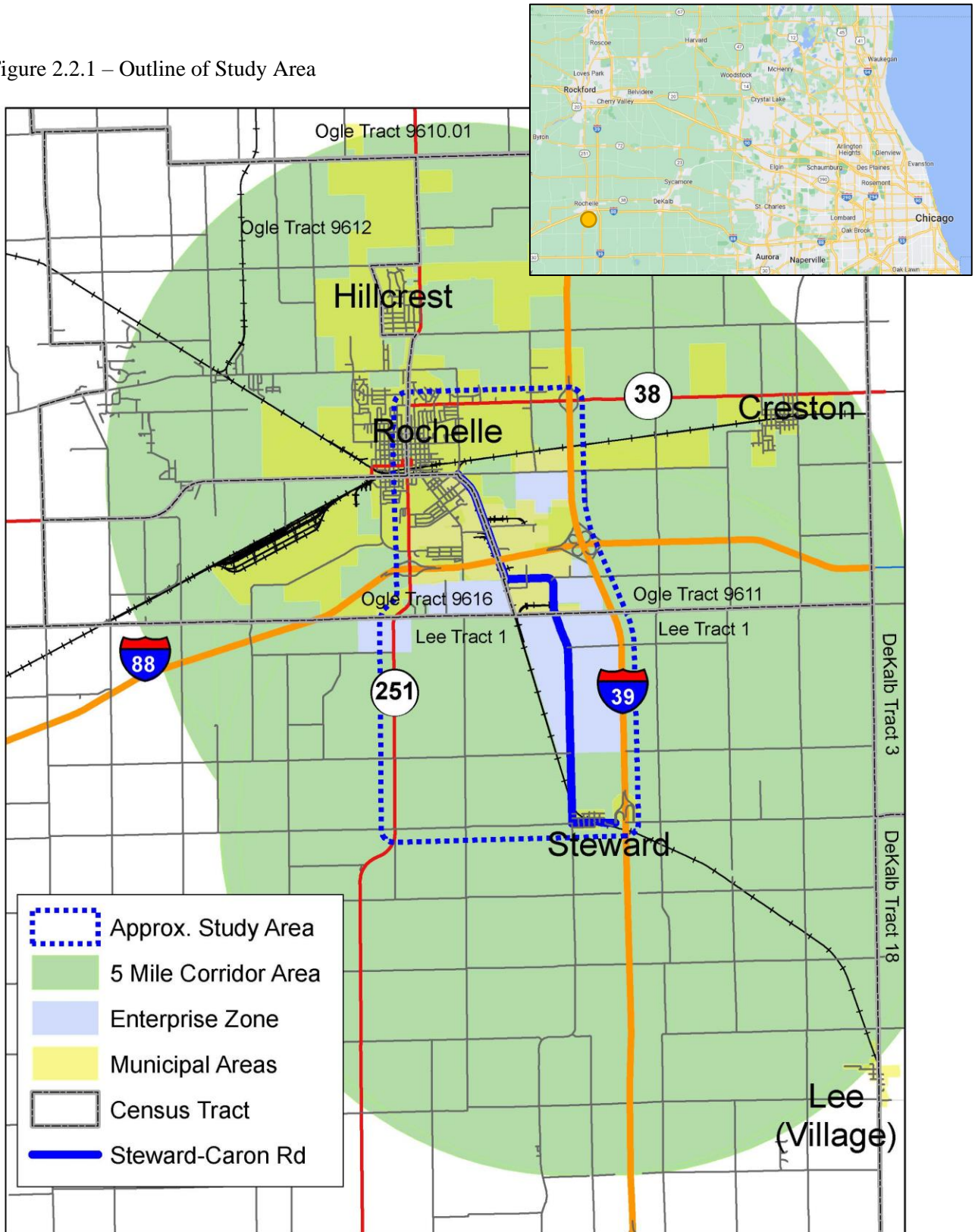
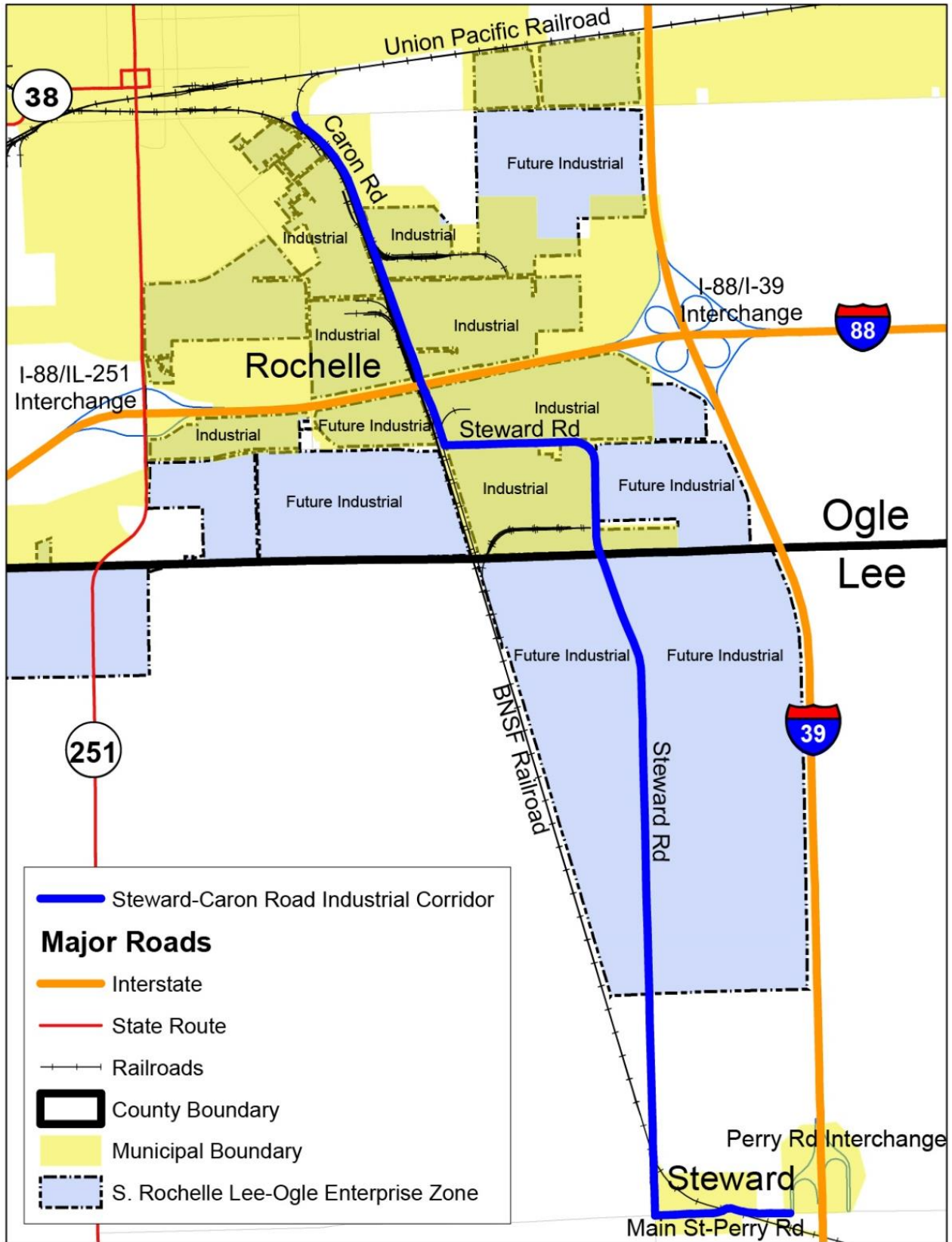


Figure 2.2.2 – Close-Up of Study Area



## **2.3 Scope of Work**

Expected project activities and timelines are described below. Limited flexibility will be allowed regarding specific format and contents of deliverables produced. Items considered essential or as a value-add by the consultant but not included in this scope are permissible to add.

### **2.3.1 Project Components**

The consultant will complete a strategic freight, economic development, and land use plan with the following components:

#### **Part A: Develop an existing and future conditions report**

This report will assess the present state of multiple modes of transportation and various forms of development within and adjacent/near adjacent to the Steward and Caron Roads Industrial Corridor. Data, models, and analysis will be used to construct scenarios for freight routing, economic development, and land use. The report will include:

- a. Population and demographic trends for the region
- b. Stakeholder outreach, including interviews of local, state, and federal officials, trade associations, unions, workers, businesses, etc.
- c. Road, rail, air, and other transportation infrastructure inventory and conditions analysis
- d. Traffic analysis focused on traffic generation, freight movements, and truck routing
- e. Truck and rail parking review
- f. Overview of floodplains, wetlands, endangered species, sensitive habitats, historic/archaeological resources, etc., potentially impacted by development
- g. Brownfields map
- h. Review of existing/proposed plans, studies, reports, maps, zoning, ordinances, policies, programs, land use, etc.
- i. Review of proposed infrastructure projects impacting the communities of Rochelle, Steward, and Lee County

#### **Part B: Analyze economic and market data**

This portion will include a review of the region's workforce and key clusters as well as sector and occupation trends (e.g., the expected expansion or contraction of industries and jobs). Food production and processing, renewable energy generation (including impacts of the potential closure of the Ogle County-based Byron Nuclear Generating Station), manufacturing, technology, transportation, distribution, and logistics will be emphasized. The consultant will review multimodal trends likely to impact the Steward and Caron Roads Industrial Corridor. Further analysis will address what private sector developments are desirable, placing attention on businesses that support workers with middle income wages, ample benefits, and advancement opportunities. Environmental impacts associated with the industries noted above will be listed and used to build scenarios.

#### **Part C: Conduct scenario planning**

Informed by the existing and future conditions report and economic and market analysis, the consultant will use a community-based outreach process to review multiple freight routing, economic development, and land use scenarios and select the preferred scenario. The preferred scenario will articulate guiding principles, a vision, goals, and objectives for shaping the Steward

and Caron Roads Industrial Corridor. It will also acknowledge and address the disparate interests of workers, businesses, conservation organizations, and residents impacted by the corridor's development.

#### **Part D: Corridor site plan**

This portion of the strategic plan will provide design options and guidelines for the preferred scenario, articulate ideal public projects, programs, and policies, specify the placement of public infrastructure, and indicate the form of land development. Eco-industrial and technology park principles (ones that reference Smart Growth, green infrastructure, and multi-hazard mitigation best practices, among others) will undergird the plan as well as guidelines found in Complete Streets and Vision Zero. The plan will also flesh out what constitutes a shovel-ready site, address the feasibility of extending transportation systems and utility infrastructure (including sidewalks/shared-use paths, road, rail, water, sewer, electric, renewable electricity generation, electric vehicle charging, and broadband) within and nearby the Steward and Caron Roads Industrial Corridor, and suggest locations for such systems and infrastructure. Additional work will include:

- a. Annexation: where annexation might take place and related considerations.
- b. Special zoning district or form-based code overlay: developing maps and model ordinances that define how the corridor is to develop.
- c. Public sector investments prioritization: in order to optimize limited resources, benefit-cost analysis will be included and used to order capital improvements and other investments within the corridor.
- d. Quality of life: identify how the corridor might support or provide access to facilities like parks, trails, housing, education, worker support services, etc.
- e. Protected areas: designating contiguous greenways, articulating characteristics that should be present in such areas, and mapping them into the site plan.
- f. Brownfields: creation of a general approach for redevelopment that ensures best practices for remediation are integrated into reuse plans.
- g. Natural hazards mitigation: neither the 2019 Lee County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan nor the 2019 Ogle County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan identify places of significant industrial development with respect to the floodplain; however, because FEMA indicates a special flood hazard area is present, the consultant will be tasked with delineating sites that should and should not be developed, determining what kinds of infrastructure are necessary to protect life and property, and establishing non-traditional strategies for dealing with water, such as onsite stormwater retention through bioswales and landscape-scale planting of native vegetation.

The impact of [new](#) and [pending](#) state laws, including legislation introduced over the course of the project, will be considered. The consultant will also propose methods of applying incentives consistent with corridor goals as well as suggest approaches to incentive controls (e.g., recissions, clawbacks/recapture, recalibration, etc.).

#### **Part E: Assess freight routing optimization and road/rail safety**

The assessment will identify transportation system deficiencies and ways to improve truck/rail routing and parking, mitigate congestion and air quality impacts, reduce modal conflicts between

users, and protect vulnerable road users and road-adjacent populations (e.g., school-aged students). It will include a list of action items – including capital projects – and a benefit-cost analysis for each item listed. In addition to traditional benefits and costs, the analysis will consider each action item’s potential to exacerbate or reduce exposure of the transportation system to natural hazards. Moreover, key locations for placing electric vehicle charging infrastructure and wildlife crossing areas will be mapped. Incorporating action items that alleviate road/rail safety impacts in the Village of Steward are essential.

### **2.3.2 Project Tasks**

#### **Project Management**

The consultant will be responsible for holding regular project coordination meetings, including producing all meeting materials, notices, attendance lists, minutes/summaries, etc. A project time-line/schedule for each project should be provided in the proposal.

Consultants should be aware that the City of Rochelle is updating its comprehensive plan and is expected to complete the process by August 2023. Additionally, Ogle County is also in the process of updating its comprehensive plan. Coordination and information exchange between these efforts is not required but would be beneficial to all projects. BHRC will be responsible for oversight of the project, including programmatic and financial reporting. BHRC will also review all drafts of and approve the final plan along with a project advisory committee consisting of local stakeholders.

#### **Public Outreach**

Public outreach should be used throughout the development of the strategic plan. Consequently, the consultant is expected to create an engagement strategy for both public and key stakeholder outreach. The engagement strategy should include the overall outreach and engagement framework, approach, process and schedule, strategies and format. It should also include a list of materials and/or media to be developed to implement that framework, including notices and announcements, public meeting agendas, publicity materials, presentations, display boards, project website, etc. A variety of engagement strategies should be considered in order to gather the information necessary to prepare a final deliverable that responds to stakeholder interests and concerns.

An initial advisory committee has been formed; along with BHRC staff, it will be responsible for providing advice and reviewing outputs over the course of this project. The consultant will be responsible for creating of attendance lists and meeting summaries of public and stakeholder meetings including interviews, focus groups, working sessions, and others.

### **2.4 Project Timeline**

July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. RFP timeline follows in section 3.1.



## 2.5 Project Costs

The recommended not-to-exceed cost is \$247,500.00. Consultants should produce a project scope that involves a level of effort consistent with this cost.

## SECTION 3. SELECTION PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

**Proposals must be received by BHRC on or before 11:59 PM CDT, June 12, 2023.**

### 3.1 Request for Proposals (RFP) Timeline

Item	Date
RFP Issued	May 15, 2023
Last Date to Submit a Question	May 26, 2023
Last Date to Submit a Response	June 12, 2023
Review Committee Evaluation, Ranking, and Recommendation	June 2023
Selection/Contract Authorization	June 2023
Contract Preparation, Amendment, and Approval	June 2023
Contract Work Begins	July 1, 2023
Contract Work Ends	June 30, 2024

### 3.2 Pre-Proposal Meeting and Interviews

There is no pre-proposal meeting, and interviews are not scheduled. However, if BHRC finds it necessary to conduct interviews, BHRC will schedule the interviews between the review/ranking and contract portions of the RFP process and amend the timeline as it sees fit to do so. In general, BHRC reserves the right to modify the RFP timeline as necessary.

### 3.3 Proposal Requirements and Evaluation

BHRC staffers along with the project advisory board will review and rank proposals using the criteria in the subsequent table. The BHRC Board of Directors will ultimately select a proposal and authorize work.

#### Proposal Information

Requirement	Points	Subrequirements
Project Understanding and Work Plan	25 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate project understanding, including scope of work items</li> <li>• Explain how planned tasks will accomplish the project</li> <li>• Illustrate previous relevant work and coordination with stakeholders</li> <li>• Enumerate organizational tools available for use during the project</li> </ul>
Project Schedule and Timeline	20 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate time required to complete individual tasks</li> <li>• Note relationships between tasks, including any dependencies</li> <li>• Describe key events, as well as associated items to deliver</li> <li>• Set input points from BHRC and stakeholders</li> </ul>
Organization Description	20 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe background and organizational stability (years in business, etc.)</li> <li>• Describe relevant projects completed</li> <li>• If applicable, similarly describe subconsultants</li> <li>• Provide up to three (3) references from individuals or organizations that can attest to your organization's ability to accomplish this project; include name, address, and email addresses</li> </ul>

Proposer Experience with Similar Projects	20 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List staff and hours assigned to each</li> <li>Describe extent of principal or project manager involvement</li> <li>Describe key staff roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Explain experience or qualifications of principals (including technical and managerial), project managers, and key staff with similar projects</li> <li>Each portion of the project is assigned to a particular staffer or subcontractor</li> </ul>
Desired and Value-Added Capabilities	15 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit any information believed relevant to proposal</li> <li>Submit any innovative approaches to working on the project</li> <li>Submit any complimentary approaches not anticipated or known</li> </ul>
TOTAL	100 points max.	

**Cost Information**

Requirement	Points	Subrequirements
Cost Information	Meets/ Does Not Meet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm availability for each contractor and subcontractor</li> <li>Estimate total hours and cost to complete individual work elements and entire project</li> <li>List tasks not performed by the consultant or subcontractor that must be performed by BHRC</li> <li>Identify what your organization considers reimbursable expense and detailed costs of each</li> <li>Meet or be less than the recommended not-to-exceed cost of \$247,500</li> </ul>

Proposals above the project’s not-to-exceed amount will be considered but re-ranked at BHRC’s discretion.

**3.4 Proposal Requirements and Evaluation**

BHRC must receive all proposals on or before 11:59 PM CDT, June 12, 2023. Late proposals will not be considered. Proposals may be emailed to:

Daniel Payette, Executive Director, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council  
 309 1st Ave, Rock Falls, IL 61071, [info@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:info@blackhawkhills.com)  
 Subject: SCRIC Strategic Plan Proposal

**SECTION 4. PROPOSAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**4.1. RFP Document**

Information provided in this RFP is intended solely to assist proposers in the preparation of their proposals. To the best of BHRC’s knowledge, it is accurate. However, BHRC does not warrant such accuracy and any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this RFP.

**4.2. Ownership of Records**

BHRC will retain ownership of all interim and final documents and related materials that are either produced or developed in conjunction with the consultant’s contract. The consultant is prohibited from copying or distributing any of these documents or other reports developed in conjunction with BHRC without written permission from BHRC.

### **4.3. Inquiries**

Email all inquiries to [info@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:info@blackhawkhills.com) no later than 11:59 PM CDT, May 26, 2023. BHRC will review all inquiries received prior to, and respond to questions as soon as possible, publishing responses to <https://www.blackhawkhills.com/opportunities>. If a proposer discovers any errors, omissions, or ambiguities within the RFP document, that proposer should identify and email them to BHRC prior to the RFP submission deadline.

### **4.4. Acceptance of Proposal Content and Public Information**

As much as possible, BHRC will treat all proposals as proprietary and confidential from the time of receipt and throughout the review process; however, the proposer agrees that all submitted proposals become the property of BHRC and information included in or attached become available to the public after recommendation for endorsement of contract is made. Any specific portions of the proposals which the submitting firm desires to remain confidential due to legitimate “proprietary information” or “trade secret” must be identified in an attachment to the proposal entitled “Attachment C - RFP-2023-05-15 Request for Confidentiality.” In the event that BHRC judges the information to be non-confidential, the proposer will be notified and given the opportunity to change the designation or withdraw the proposal prior to evaluation.

### **4.5. Withholding Content**

To the extent permitted by law, it is the intention of BHRC to withhold the contents of the proposal from public view until such times as competitive or bargaining reasons no longer require non-disclosure in the opinion of BHRC.

### **4.6. Subcontractors**

It is intended that a single contractor will have total responsibility for all services identified in the Steward and Caron Roads Industrial Corridor Strategic Plan RFP. Therefore, any proposer desiring to use a subcontractor(s) must identify each on a document supplied as an attachment to the proposal entitled “Attachment B - RFP-2023-05-15 Subcontractor(s).” It should include:

- the company’s name and principal owner(s),
- a description of their involvement in the project, and
- qualifications for each aspect of the scope of work with which they are involved

The subcontractor(s) cannot be changed after submission of the proposal except with the written permission of BHRC. The consultant is responsible for all subcontractor actions, workmanship, performance, and payment.

### **4.7. Proposal Costs**

BHRC is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by any proposer in responding to this RFP. BHRC is not liable for payment of any amount to the selected proposer until the contract has been awarded and executed by BHRC and the consultant has performed services pursuant to the contract that entitle the consultant to receive payment under the terms of the contract. Proposed consultant costs for each phase (as described in Section 3.3) of this project must be submitted in XLSX format (please use Attachment A) with a file name as follows: “Attachment A - RFP-2023-05-15 Project Costs.” The spreadsheet should be password protected with the password “sealed.”

#### **4.8. Rejection of Proposals**

BHRC reserves the right to waive any informality, and/or to reject, at any time and for any reason, proposals received as a result of this RFP. BHRC's intent is to enter into a contract following this process. However, if after reviewing the proposals received BHRC determines that it should not enter into any contract or to enter into a partial or different contract from the contract contemplated by this RFP, BHRC will act in accordance with what BHRC determines at that time to be in its best interest. No proposer or any other party has any entitlement, interest, or right in this decision by BHRC and by submitting a proposal, acknowledges BHRC's right to exercise its discretion in this regard without any right of recourse by the proposer.

#### **4.9. Insurance and Hold Harmless**

The successful proposer will be required to provide proof of insurance prior to contract execution. In addition, "hold harmless" provisions will be contained in the contract with the successful proposer.

#### **4.10. Contract Negotiations**

BHRC reserves the right to negotiate the award and conditions of the proposal prior to entering into a written agreement.

#### **4.11. Applicability of State and Federal Regulations**

The selected consultant will comply with all applicable terms and conditions of the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and other applicable regulation. This includes policies related to nondiscrimination, equal employment opportunity, and lobbying.

#### **4.12. Rights Reserved**

BHRC reserves the following rights if using them will be more advantageous to BHRC:

- Withdraw this RFP at any time without prior notice
- Accept or reject any and all submissions or any item or part thereof
- Postpone due dates
- Not award a contract to any proposer
- Discuss a proposal or negotiate a contract with any proposer
- Award a contract without discussions or negotiations