

# Request for Proposals (RFP)

## Bethlehem Township 2027 Comprehensive Plan

**Purpose:** Bethlehem Township is soliciting proposals for a one-time contract to develop the township's 2027 Comprehensive Plan to replace the township's 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update. The consultant must have experience in community engagement, land use planning, and plan development. The consultant will collaborate with the township to establish the scope of work, project timeline, public involvement, and final plan. Joint ventures are welcome.

**Background:** Bethlehem Township – located in Northampton County, Pennsylvania – is one of a handful of first-class townships in the Lehigh Valley. The township's population at the 2020 census was 25,861. The majority of lands within the township are developed or planned for development. With that in mind, the 2027 Comprehensive Plan will focus on carrying a mature community through the next 10 years via realistic determinations about where the township is now and where it's going through concrete, actionable goals and objectives. The township's recently-adopted Active Transportation Plan will be considered and incorporated – as applicable and necessary – into the 2027 Comprehensive Plan. The township's Parks Master Planning Study and Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan will also be considered. The comprehensive plan will also generally comply with the FutureLV, the region's comprehensive plan.

**Project Timeline:** The project timeline is approximately 24 months. The township anticipates adoption of the 2027 Comprehensive Plan on or before October 18, 2027.

### Scope of Work:

- **Deliverables:**

- **Background Inventory & Study:**

- Develop a social-demographic profile of the township, including reflection to 2017 and projection to 2037.
    - Analyze the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update, along with other ordinances, plans, and policy documents pertinent to the 2027 Comprehensive Plan.
    - Create an inventory of existing assets, including transportation, community, utility, land use, industrial, natural, and cultural and historic resources.
    - Compile available information to assist in describing natural and man-made conditions.
    - Develop an assessment of goals and objectives completed versus incomplete, and relevant versus nonapplicable, from the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update.

- **2027 Comprehensive Plan:** Production of the adopted 2027 Comprehensive Plan in an engaging and easy-to-use format, together with all required maps and appendices. The final document must comply with all applicable local and state regulations, and will be provided to the township in PDF and editable versions of all documents and maps.

- **Future and re-development statement and objectives:** This chapter sets the framework of plan elements to follow, identified through the background inventory and study, as well as early public outreach. This future and re-development chapter will be further informed by a strengths/weaknesses and opportunities/threats analysis.
    - **Land use:** This chapter will inventory and identify existing land uses, zoning designations, and 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update future land use expectations. Recommended changes to land use classifications will be made based upon findings of this and other chapters, with a focus on quality growth within – and evolution of – a mature community.
    - **Housing:** The housing chapter will include conservation of sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods, and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels. Special housing problems, special housing requirements, and future housing requirements will be identified where appropriate.

- **Movement of people and goods:** The transportation chapter will incorporate data available via the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Lehigh Valley Traffic Study, and township resources. The township's Active Transportation Plan, along with township projects listed in PennDOT's Traffic Improvement Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan and the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority Enhanced Bus Service Study should be incorporated and/or considered as necessary.
- **Community facilities and utilities:** The community facilities and utilities chapter will include review, identification, and description of public, semi-public, and private community facilities, along with projected future needs for these facilities based on anticipated population growth. Community facilities and utilities includes sanitary sewer, electricity, stormwater management, municipal police and recreation services, volunteer fire and EMS services, schools, recreational areas, and other cultural services.
- **Interrelationships among plan components:** The plan components chapter will include an assessment of the environmental, fiscal, economic, and social value-adds and consequences of anticipated growth and plan recommendations.
- **Short- and long-range plan implementation strategies:** The implementation strategies chapter will determine the extent to which the plan is consistent with FutureLV, as well as how existing and future development guided by the plan is compatible with neighboring municipalities. That determination will identify measurable recommendations and implementation strategies for both the short- and long-range.
- **Compatibility with neighboring municipalities:** This chapter will inventory and identify existing land uses, zoning designations, and comprehensive plan expectations of areas bordering the township in neighboring municipalities. This chapter will also evaluate consistency of these features inside and outside of the township.
- **Protection of natural and historic resources:** This chapter will review, identify, and describe the township's physical setting, as well as significant natural, historic, and cultural resources. The inventory will allow for effective measures to be proposed for – and to encourage – preservation of flood plains, wetlands, unique areas and sites, and steep slopes.
- **Water supply:** The water supply chapter will review, identify, and describe water resources available to the township currently and in the future. A description of groundwater contamination issues will be included in the water supply chapter, as applicable.
- **Maps & Materials:** Maps and data will be developed for easy integration into the township's existing ArcGIS online. The consultant is responsible for providing all maps and other materials required for the project, including but not limited to materials for public meetings, steering committee meetings, public hearings, presentations, reports, and the final plan documents. Bethlehem Township will provide available GIS data at the start of the project.
  - Existing land use, including major environmental features.
  - Zoning and existing land use, easily identifying conflicts between the two.
  - Transportation, including Active Transportation Plan elements.
  - Future land use, including community assets and potential redevelopment areas.
- **Coordination, Engagement & Outreach:**
  - **Township Personnel:** Recurring virtual weekly check-in meetings will be held between the consultant and township personnel through the duration of the project. Meetings may be biweekly, at the discretion of township personnel.
  - **Steering Committee:** A minimum of four (4) in-person and six (6) virtual meetings will be held. Generally, meeting materials will be provided a week in advance. The steering committee will include elected and appointed board/commission members, and residents of varying interests, prioritizing those who haven't served with the township before. Steering committee members will receive a small stipend for participation in meetings, to be paid by the consultant.
  - **Board of Commissioners:** The consultant will make a minimum of three (3) presentations to the Board of Commissioners – kick-off, midpoint, and public hearing. Township personnel will provide monthly updates to the Board through the duration of the project.

- **Planning Commission:** A minimum of two (2) presentations will be made to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will be encouraged to participate in other engagement and outreach opportunities. Township personnel will provide monthly updates to the Planning Commission through the duration of the project.
- **Stakeholders:** A minimum of three (3) virtual stakeholder meetings will be held to gather input from the perspective of education, industry/business, transportation, and public services.
- **Public Outreach:** At a minimum, an online survey and one (1) in-person public meeting will occur. In conjunction with the background inventory and study, the survey will be utilized to inform goal development. Township personnel will facilitate public outreach via the township's website, newsletter and social media platforms.

**Proposal requirements:** The proposal shall include the following:

- Statement of interest and qualifications.
- Information about firm and all consultants.
- Names and resumes of all team members and relevant experience.
- Firm's relevant experience with comprehensive plans and Bethlehem Township.
- Three (3) professional references and contact information.
- Discussion of how the scope of work will be executed, including a detailed schedule and community involvement.
- Proposed lump-sum fee for services, with supporting documentation and hourly rates for all personnel. Proposed fees should provide for all reimbursable expenses, including travel.
- Any existing or potential conflicts must be disclosed.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Bethlehem Township will use the following criteria in the proposal evaluation process:

- Experience and qualifications of the firm and assigned staff.
- Qualifications, experience, and time commitments of the proposed project coordinator and technical staff.
- Understanding of the project, township, and region.
- Methods and procedures for completing the plan.
- Demonstration that the project will be original and site-specific.
- Willingness to meet with the steering committee and the public during the life of the project.
- Cost and cost effectiveness of the proposal.

**Submission:** Bethlehem Township reserves the right to deny any proposal that is not in conformance with the letter or spirit of these provisions. Selection of a consultant is the sole purview and responsibility of the Bethlehem Township Board of Commissioners. Submit the proposed fee in a sealed envelope, as well as five (5) physical copies and one digital copy (USB flash drive) of the proposal by 4 p.m. on August 22, 2025, to the attention of:

Samantha Smith, Community Development Director  
 Bethlehem Township  
 4225 Easton Ave  
 Bethlehem PA 18020

Please submit any questions to Samantha Smith at [ssmith@bethlehemtownship.org](mailto:ssmith@bethlehemtownship.org). Township personnel will endeavor to respond to questions at least three (3) business days prior to the deadline.