

Our West Bayfront Request for Proposals (RFP)



**Neighborhoods Plan • Strategic Plan Update • Board Leadership Retreat •
10-Year Anniversary Communications Plan**

January 2026

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1. General Information

Project Objective

To develop an integrated Neighborhoods Plan, Strategic Plan Update, Board Leadership Retreat, and 10-Year Anniversary Communications Plan.

Issuing Organization

Our West Bayfront (OWB)
404 W 8th Street
Erie, PA 16507
www.ourwestbayfront.org

Primary Contact

Gretchen Kerr, Executive Director
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Phone: 814-871-5596

RFP Timeline

- **RFP Issued:** January 11, 2026
- **Questions Due:** January 22, 2026
- **Responses Posted:** January 26, 2026
- **Proposals Due:** February 6, 2026
- **Interviews:** February 16–17, 2026
- **Request for Cost Proposal (finalists only):** February 19, 2026
- **Consultant Selection:** February 23–26, 2026
- **Project Start:** March 2, 2026
- **Project Duration:**
 - **Planning & Communications:**
March 2026 – February 2027
 - **Implementation Support (as applicable):**
March 2027 – February 2028

2. Summary and Background

Our West Bayfront (OWB), incorporated in 2017, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening and revitalizing the historic, diverse neighborhoods along Erie's West Bayfront.

- ❖ OWB focuses on:
 - Home Ownership & Property Maintenance
 - Local Business Support and Marketing
 - Beautification and Maintenance of the Public Realm
 - Community Building/Events

About the Neighborhood

OWB includes approximately 15,000 residents, historic housing stock, multiple community anchors, and key institutional partners. The area is racially, economically, and culturally diverse.

Project Context

OWB values proposals that demonstrate experience working in neighborhoods that are historically underserved or undergoing significant change, and an approach grounded in equity, cultural humility, and meaningful resident partnership.

As OWB approaches its 10-year anniversary in 2027, the organization seeks a consultant partner to:

- Deepen resident engagement
- Clarify strategic direction
- Identify internal organizational priorities
- Build an implementation-ready plan
- Celebrate the organization's collective impact

3. Project Purpose and Description

One project. One flow. One lead. One unified outcome.

This is a single integrated project, not a set of separate contracted services. Proposals must demonstrate a cohesive approach in which each component (Neighborhoods Plan → Strategic Plan → Board Retreat → Communications Plan) builds upon the insights and outcomes of the previous phase. The project requires a single lead firm responsible for overall management, communication, quality control, and subcontractor coordination. OWB seeks qualified consultants to prepare an integrated planning suite including:

A. Comprehensive Neighborhoods Plan

A community-led and data-supported plan that builds on Our West Bayfront's strengths and addresses shared priorities including quality housing, safe and connected streets, vibrant public spaces, support for local businesses, and a clean and healthy environment for all neighbors.

B. Strategic Plan Update (2026–2030)

Building on current planning documents, create a five-year plan aligning OWB's organizational structure, mission, governance, and programs with community priorities.

C. Board Leadership Retreat

A facilitated retreat to align governance and leadership around strategic organizational priorities.

D. 10-Year Anniversary Communications Plan

A messaging and engagement strategy celebrating OWB's history, impact, and future vision. Consultants should provide examples of prior projects where the lead firm demonstrated strong communication and subcontractor coordination, including references who can verify performance.

E. Implementation Plan

A focused action plan for first 12-18 months of strategic plan implementation.

Integration Across Components

- Neighborhoods Plan → informs Strategic Plan
- Board Retreat → prepares leadership for implementation
- Anniversary Communications Plan → amplifies and shares results

NOTE: We strongly encourage out-of-town firms to incorporate at least one small, diverse, local subconsultant for local expertise and knowledge.

4. Project Scope: The selected consultant will serve as the lead coordinating entity, responsible for day-to-day project management and communication with OWB. Any subcontractors must be clearly identified, with roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols included in the proposal. The workflow must be designed as one continuous process with explicit connections between deliverables, ensuring that findings from the Neighborhoods Plan directly shape the Strategic Plan, which in turn sets the foundation for the Board Retreat and informs a compelling Communications Plan.

Phase 1: Project Initiation

- Kickoff meetings
- Project work plan + engagement plan
- Review of prior plans and data

Phase 2: Community Engagement & Assessment

- Resident workshops, interviews, listening sessions
- Surveys and stakeholder panels
- Neighborhood conditions assessment

Phase 3: Neighborhood Plan Development

- Market, demographic, and economic analysis
- GIS mapping
- Opportunity site identification
- Draft and final plan

Phase 4: Strategic Plan Development

- Mission/vision refinement
- Organizational capacity assessment
- Governance recommendations
- Five-year financial and operational model

Phase 5: Board Leadership Retreat

- Retreat design
- Agenda and materials
- Summary report

Phase 6: Communications Plan (10-Year Anniversary)

- Message platform
- Communications timeline
- Sample content (press releases, social media, slide decks)
- Stakeholder engagement strategy

In-Person Requirement: OWB prefers in-person facilitation for major engagement sessions and the retreat.

5. Deliverables

- Neighborhoods Plan (Draft + Final)
- Strategic Plan (Draft + Final)
- Community Engagement Summary
- GIS Maps & Infographics (editable files)
- Implementation Matrix & Funding Recommendations
- Raw data files (GIS, Excel, survey data)
- Board Retreat Agenda + Summary
- 10th-Year Anniversary Communications Plan with sample assets
- Presentation materials for rollout

6. Submission Guidelines

Submit proposals electronically (PDF only) to:

Gretchen Kerr, Executive Director

Email: gretchen@ourwestbayfront.org

Proposal Format Requirements

- Maximum 10 pages (excluding appendices)
- 11+ point font
- PDF format only

Proposal Must Include

A Qualifications-Based Selection process. Proposals must not include cost or fee information. Any proposals including pricing will be deemed non-responsive.

Team Structure & Communication Management Plan

Proposals must identify:

- The Lead Firm and primary contact
- All subcontractors and how they will be coordinated
- A clear approach for internal communication, decision-making, and issue escalation
- Tools and methods for ongoing communication with OWB staff and stakeholders

A single, unified approach to all scope elements — proposals that treat these components as separate, stand-alone projects will not be considered responsive.

Proposals should also include:

- Cover letter
- Firm background & brief bios
- Methodology and engagement strategy
- Work plan & timeline
- Examples of similar work
- Three references

Finalist Interviews

OWB expects to interview 2–4 finalist firms.

7. Cost Proposal Process

This procurement will follow a Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) process.

Consultants should not include any cost or fee information in their proposal submission.

After scoring and ranking qualifications, top finalist firms will be invited to submit a pricing proposal and participate in a scope refinement discussion with OWB. Contract negotiations will begin with the highest-ranked firm. If a contract cannot be reached, negotiations will proceed to the next-ranked finalist.

Do not include pricing or fees in this initial submission.

8. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Understanding of OWB mission, goals, and neighborhood context
- Experience with neighborhood and strategic planning
- Demonstrated engagement and facilitation capacity
- Team qualifications and relevant experience
- Thoughtful and feasible approach to project scope
- Demonstrated communications and design capability
- Effectiveness and transparency of project management and communication approach
- Demonstrated integration across all project components
- Clear connective logic between phases and deliverables
- Strength and clarity of team integration and leadership structure
- Quality and relevance of past work and references
- Ability to commit to proposed timeline

Pricing will be evaluated in Phase 2 after shortlist selection.

9. OWB Team, Partners & Stakeholders

- OWB Board
- OWB Staff
- Residents and community groups
- Local nonprofits
- City of Erie
- Erie County
- Gannon University
- Local businesses
- Faith-based partners
- Philanthropic organizations
- Funders

10. Post-Shortlist Scope Refinement

Following evaluations, top-ranked firms will work with OWB to refine scope elements including:

- Level and style of community engagement
- Meeting expectations (in-person vs virtual)
- Deliverables formatting and graphic standards
- Communications support level
- Contractor and staff roles

The refined scope will be used for cost proposal evaluation.