



Burk's Falls & Area Community Economic Development

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Almaguin Highlands Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan

March 2018

Pending funding approval through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation.

1.0 Background

The Village of Burk’s Falls, in partnership with The Burk’s Falls & Area Community Economic Development Committee (BACED), The Central Almaguin Economic Development Association (CAEDA), The Municipality of Powassan, and The Labour Market Group (LMG), is seeking a consultant specializing in Economic Development to prepare a regional economic development strategic plan (RED Plan). The RED Plan will guide collaborative efforts between regional stakeholder municipalities and organizations for the next five years.

The Almaguin Highlands refers to the East Parry Sound District. For the purposes of the RED Plan, the municipalities included in the study area are displayed below:



The Lead Contact between Burk’s Falls and the Proponents will be the Community Economic Development Officer (CEDO, BACED) outlined in Section 5.2. The Village of Burk’s Falls is the administrating municipality for this project and shall handle all matters associated with contract signing and payment.

The Economic Development landscape in the Almaguin Highlands has seen many positive progressions over the last five to ten years. These progressions have been broken in to three specific areas: economic development partnerships, economic development priorities and economic development staff.

1.1 Economic Development Partnerships

Municipalities in the Almaguin Highlands have begun to realize the many benefits of working collaboratively to undertake joint economic development projects. Over the last 10-15 years, several economic development partnership organizations have formed throughout the region. These partnerships are:

- **The Central Almaguin Economic Development Association (CAEDA)**
Formed in 2008. Partners: The Township of Strong, Township of Machar, Township of Joly, Village of Sundridge, and Village of South River.
- **The Burk's Falls & Area Community Economic Development Committee (BACED)**
Formed in 2006 as the South Almaguin Highlands Economic Development Committee.

Original Partners: The Township of Armour, Township of Ryerson and Village of Burk's Falls. In 2018 BACED partnered with The Township of Perry, Township of McMurrich/Monteith and Municipality of Magnetawan.
- **EcoDev – (2015-2017) Dissolved**
Consisted of The Township of Perry, Township of McMurrich/Monteith, Municipality of Magnetawan and Town of Kearney. EcoDev Merged with BACED in 2018.
- **Almaguin Highlands Economic Development Committee (Dissolved)**
Formerly a regional advocacy committee focused on information sharing and encouraging the implementation of the Almaguin 2000 ED Plan. The group was dissolved as stakeholders began to invest in to staff positions and their governing committees.
- **Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce (AHCC)**
Formed in 2013 as the Burk's Falls & Area Chamber of Commerce, the AHCC incorporated federally in 2015. The AHCC has been a strong partner and leader in economic development initiatives throughout the region.

While some changes to these partnerships have occurred in the last two years, these organizations currently represent 10 of the 14 municipalities in the Almaguin Highlands. There are four municipalities currently not participating within any organization, however, they have expressed interest in participating in regional efforts.

The Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce (AHCC) has been growing alongside the ED organizations described above. Since 2012, they have been growing their membership and partnering with the municipalities and ED organizations on projects of shared interest such as the 2016 Almaguin Highlands Business Retention and Expansion Project, which they took the

lead on. As of 2018, the AHCC has joined both BACED and CAEDA as a paid voting member and actively promoted the development of a regional economic development department.

1.2 Economic Development Priorities and Activities

Each of the organizations listed above have developed economic development plans or strategic plans to guide their past and current efforts. In some cases, additional research and studies have been created and / or commissioned to provide insight in to specific areas of interest or to provide evidence for various decision making processes. Below is a list of the documents that have been created to date:

Economic Development Strategic Plans (only shows active plans):

- 2008 Kearney Strategic Plan (In House)
- 2009 Central Almaguin Strategic Plan
- 2012 Perry Township Strategic Plan (In House)
- 2013 Burk's Falls & Area Economic Development Plan (updated in 2015) (In House)
- 2013 Magnetawan Economic Development Strategy
- 2013 Powassan Strategic Plan
- 2016 EcoDev Strategic Plan (In House)
- 2017-2018 Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan (In House)

Relevant Studies and Reports (Since 2013)

- 2013 CAEDA Market Study & Needs/Gap Analysis Report
- 2013 Powassan Target Market Study and Business Opportunity Overview
- 2014 BACED Asset Inventory, Gap Analysis and Market Study
- 2016 Almaguin Highlands Business Retention and Expansion Report (BR+E)
- 2018 BACED Target Sector Analysis Final Report

The documents listed above highlight that the member communities and organizations are making economic development a priority. Further, the work illustrates a willingness to invest in drafting and adhering to strong, evidence-based plans for the advancement of individual ED priorities.

When reviewing these plans, there is an abundance of shared priorities, target areas for growth and desired activities that have at times contributed towards the duplication of efforts and the unnecessary use of additional funds and resources. These documents will be made available to the successful proponent upon request.

1.3 ED Staff

Since 2012, there have been a variety of positions created to undertake ED initiatives both for ED organizations and for individual municipalities. Most of these positions have been made possible through funding support from provincial and/or federal levels of Government. The presence of ED staff over the last five years has been dependent on this senior level government support, as well as participation in a municipal partnership such as BACED or CAEDA. The common theme in this dependence is that individual municipalities in the region simply cannot allocate sufficient financial resources to both maintain a staff person and fund projects that will yield positive results. Currently, there are three active ED Staff positions serving the region:

- Kearney: Community Development Officer Intern (NOHFC Funded)
- CAEDA: Economic Development Officer (FedNor CIINO Funded)
- BACED: Community Economic Development Officer (FedNor CIINO Funded)

The current staff members in BACED and CAEDA have achieved many positive successes through partnering to undertake projects of shared interest, and they continue to promote collaboration and resource sharing where mutual benefits exist. Examples include:

- Execution of the 3R Volunteer Recruitment Campaign;
- Delivery of over 6 business development and training events;
- Development of the Villages of Almaguin Regional Marketing Partnership (and subsequent content marketing partnership project with Explorers Edge (RTO12).

1.4 Conclusion

The collective past experiences of the economic development organizations in the Almaguin Highlands demonstrate the need for us to evolve in to a more collaborative partnership. We have come to understand that:

1. Partnering with neighboring municipalities and organizations, where mutual interest and benefits exist, yields more positive results for all stakeholders;
2. The plans and studies that exist in the region identify an incredible amount of shared priorities and desired outcomes amongst stakeholders; and
3. None of the individual stakeholders can afford to sustain a long term economic development presence by themselves.

Given these realizations, it is paramount that we work together to ensure the continued delivery of economic development services. Further, to ensure that these services are delivered in a fair and equitable way for all stakeholders, a regional economic development plan must be created to establish a 'level' regional playing field.

2.0 Project Goals:

The RED Plan is a major milestone in the progression of regional partnerships and collaborative efforts. Creation of the plan is intended to achieve the following broad goals:

1. Align the current priorities of individual and clustered stakeholder municipalities and organizations in one inclusive, mutually beneficial strategy;
2. Guide the implementation of recommendations and action items defined in current strategic plans and in past studies such as the 2016 Almaguin Highlands BR+E Final Report.
3. Create a united vision and direction for the execution of economic development activities throughout the region that eliminates the risk of duplication and maximizes shareholder investment.
4. To identify and prioritize new economic development tactics and sector best practices as they relate to the strategic development of the Almaguin Highlands Region.
5. Secure long term recurring funding from regional shareholders through defining clear actions and desired outcomes.

3.0 Scope of Work

The following scope of work outlines the minimum components that are required to meet the goals listed above and MUST be included in all proposals. Additional components or inclusions may be recommended by proponents so long as they fit within the project budget listed in section 9.2.

- 1) Economic situational analysis of the Almaguin Highlands that encompasses the following information:
 - a. Demographic analysis of the Almaguin Highlands region as identified in Section 1.2.
 - b. Labour force analysis for the region that encompasses both the labour force available within the region, as well as reasonably available to the region (1 hour drive).
 - c. Economic base analysis for the region.

- 2) Thorough review of all past plans and studies as listed in section 1.2 as well as any other reports the project committee provides.
 - a. Must include a consolidation and prioritization of relevant recommendations to carry forward in to the new plan.
 - b. Any carried forward action items / recommendations must be scaled to a regional scope where possible.

- 3) Comprehensive community consultation strategy that includes:
 - a. Major employers and businesses in priority sectors,
 - b. Elected officials and municipal staff,
 - c. Supportive organizations and services, and
 - d. Other relevant stakeholders.

- 4) A detailed five-year economic development strategy that includes the following:
 - a. A prioritized list of action items and initiatives pertaining to the economic development functions such as:
 - i. Workforce Development and attraction;
 - ii. Community improvement and Placemaking;
 - iii. Business Support, retention and attraction;
 - iv. Tourism development and Regional Marketing; and
 - v. Any other core areas of opportunity.
 - b. Action items must be prioritized in an effective manner over the course of the five-year plan and must include budgetary considerations for future planning purposes. Expected budgetary considerations must be fit within a reasonably achievable total implementation budget over 5 years. Detailed budget projections will be discussed with the successful proponent.
 - c. Action items and initiatives must be accompanied by measurable and realistic outcomes.

- d. Action items must outline potential project partners and funding streams where they are known to exist.

4.0 General Expectations

Burk's Falls is committed to ensuring a fair and open process throughout the proposal evaluation and selection process. Further, Burk's Falls will ensure a fair and equitable environment throughout the project implementation. To protect the interests of both parties, the Proponent agrees to adhere to the following provisions:

4.1 Proposal Documents:

The individual or firm submitting a proposal shall verify that these documents are complete and assume the responsibility to notify the Village of any discrepancies. The Village will issue any changes/additions/deletions to specifications and/or terms and conditions. Any and all addenda issued by the Village shall form an integral part of the document. The cost of complying with the addenda requirement (if any) shall be included in the price submitted by bidders. Where a Respondent finds discrepancies or omissions in the documents or instructions, or otherwise requires any clarification, the Respondent should contact the Village in writing by fax or e-mail as listed below as soon as possible.

Proposals and pricing shall be valid for a period of 60 days from the submission requirement date.

4.3 Incurred Costs:

The Village shall not be responsible for any liabilities, costs, expenses, loss or damage incurred, sustained or suffered by any proponent(s) prior to or subsequent to or by reason of the acceptance or non-acceptance or delay related to this proposal.

4.4 Errors and Omissions:

The Village shall not be held liable for any errors or omission in any part of this RFP. The information in this RFP has been provided solely as a guideline for proponents. The information is not guaranteed or warranted to be accurate by the Village nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. Proponents are to form their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in the Request for Proposal.

4.5 Agreement with Terms:

By submitting a proposal the Proponent agrees to all the terms and conditions of this RFP. Any electronic documents received cannot be altered with the exception of adding the information requested. To do otherwise would invalidate the proposal.

4.6 Acceptance or Rejection of Proposals:

The Village reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to waive formalities as the interests of the Village may require without stating reasons

therefore. Notwithstanding and without restricting the generality of this statement, the Village shall not be required to award or accept a proposal or recall the proposal later:

- 4.6.1 When only one proposal is submitted
- 4.6.2 Where the lowest responsive and responsible submission exceeds the estimated cost of the goods/service
- 4.6.3 When all proposals received fail to comply with the proposal terms
- 4.6.4 Where a change in scope of work or specifications is required
- 4.6.5 Where the proposal is not in the best interest of the Village

4.7 Notice of Award:

Village staff will open and evaluate each bid opportunity submission in accordance with mandatory requirements and evaluation criteria. Evaluation criteria when not listed separately will be respondents statement of understanding of area and project, methodology, experience with similar projects and pricing.

Council reserves the right to interview any, all or none of the respondents that submit a proposal to provide additional insight as to the respondent's ability to meet the requirements of the bid opportunity. Interviews may be by telephone or in person and as soon as possible after the opening.

Staff may negotiate with the two Proponents who score highest on the evaluation to ensure that project costs meet the project scope and available budget.

Village staff will notify all respondents in writing and/or by email whether they are successful or unsuccessful. Council for the Village of Burk's Falls reserve the right to NOT award any or all submissions and the lowest tender is not necessarily accepted.

Once awarded the contractor cannot assign, transfer, convey, sublet or otherwise dispose of the contract or his/her right, title or interest therein to any other person, company or corporation without previous written consent of municipal representatives, which consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

4.8 Ownership of Proposals and Freedom of Information:

All documents, including proposals, submitted to the Village will become the property of the Village. If you wish any or all of the documents that you submit to the Village as part of this Proposal to be protected from disclosure under the above legislation, please provide a signed letter enclosed with the Tender outlining the parts of the Proposal to be protected. This letter will not guarantee that there will never be disclosure, but it does lay the groundwork for handling an application for disclosure by a third party under this legislation.

4.9 Budget Approval:

The Village of Burk's Falls reserves the right to remove and/or delay portions of the contract depending upon approvals and or budgetary restraints, or for any other reason that may arise.

4.10 Harmonized Sales Tax (HST):

H.S.T. is applicable to the item(s) listed, however, is NOT to be included in the unit cost. Please submit all prices HST Extra.

4.11 Terms of Payment:

The normal terms of payment for the Village will be net 30 days. Council meets the fourth Tuesday of each month to approve all expenses and invoices. It shall be the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that invoices are submitted for verification and approval the Monday prior to the Council meeting to ensure payment within their terms.

4.12 Unbalanced or Incorrect Tenders:

Where the amount of an item does not agree with the extension of the estimate quantity and the tendered unit price, the unit price shall govern and both the item amount and the total proposal price shall be corrected accordingly. If both the unit price and the total price for an item are left blank, then both shall be considered a zero.

4.13 Performance:

Any undue delays in the execution of the work and or costs incurred by the Village due to inefficiencies in the performance on behalf of the successful respondent shall be deemed to be the responsibility of the contractor and as such, any and all costs, as deemed appropriate and reasonable compensation for the Village will be assessed to the successful respondent.

4.14 Taking the Work Back:

Where the successful contractor becomes bankrupt or insolvent, delays commencing or diligently executing the Work, abandons the work or has otherwise failed to perform any of the provision of the contract, the Village may, without previous notice and without process or suit at law, take the work out of the contractor's hands and have it completed by whatever means are considered necessary. In addition to any other remedy available in law or equity, the Village may use all monies due on the contract to correct or complete the work.

4.15 Indemnity:

The successful contractor will indemnify and save harmless the Village, its employees and agents from and against all claims, demands, losses, damages, costs and expenses made against or incurred, suffered by the Village at any time where the same or any of the them are based upon or arise out of or from anything done or omitted to be done by the contractor or their firm, excepting always liability arising out of the independent acts of the Village.

4.16 Insurance:

The Proponent shall maintain and pay for Comprehensive General Liability Insurance with an insurer acceptable to the Village. This insurance coverage shall be subject to limits of not less than Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) inclusive per occurrence for bodily injury,

death and damage to property including loss of use thereof for any one occurrence. In addition, Professional Liability Insurance is required, in an amount of not less than Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) inclusive per occurrence. All required insurance would be endorsed to provide the Municipality within 30 days advance written notice of cancellation or material change. The Service provider will provide the Municipality with evidence of the required insurance, in the form of a completed Certificate of Insurance, immediately following execution and delivery of the Contract that names the Village as an additional insured.

4.17 Employees / Subcontracting:

Subcontracting must be outlined within the submitted proposal. That awarded proposal must state all individuals to be employed as part of this project.

4.18 Conflict of Interest:

The proponent shall identify and detail any potential conflict of interest in the proposal.

5.0 Submission Requirements

To ensure that all proposals are evaluated fairly, each Proponent must provide all of the information set out in this section. Failure by the Proponent to provide all the requested information may affect their evaluation score or result in the disqualification of their proposal.

5.1 Each Proponent shall **submit identical hard (2) and soft copies (1)** of their proposal using the contact information outlined in Section 5.2. Each proposal must include:

- A cover page with the Proponent's contact information, with the title "Almaguin Highlands Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan";
- A description of the relevant experience and qualifications of each member on the Proponent's team including examples of similar work in the public sector and any subcontractors;
- Acknowledgement of the Proponent's understanding of the project goals and requirements;
- A detailed methodology outlining how project tasks will be met including the identification of expectations of the Proponent and BACED in each task;
- A detailed schedule of activities including milestones, project meetings and status reports;
- A detailed, itemized budget for all major project costs; and
- Identification of any terms or conditions that the Proponent may have, as well as an additional fees schedule for any proposed activities outside the scope of the contract.

5.2 **Proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope before 3:00PM EST on Wednesday, April 4th, 2018.** It is the responsibility of the Proponent to ensure that the Lead Contact receives hard copy proposals by mail or courier on or before the submission deadline. All submissions and further communications shall be directed to the Lead Contact:

Dave Gray, Community Economic Development Officer
Burk's Falls & Area Community Economic Development

P.O. Box 160, 172 Ontario Street
Burk's Falls, ON P0A 1C0
CEDO@Burksfalls.ca
(705)571-1564

5.3 All questions or requests for clarification of the information provided in the RFP must be directed only to the Lead Contact. This is to ensure that all Proponents receive the same information and that there is no unfair treatment of any Proponent during the process. **Failure to comply with this provision may result in the disqualification of the Proponents submission.**

6.0 Proposal Review and Evaluation

To ensure fair evaluation of all proposals, Burk's Falls will be implementing the following evaluation expectations and criteria:

6.1 Maximum Evaluation Points Summary

<u>Understanding of Project</u>	25 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstration that the needs of the RFP are understood and will be met; any features or advantages uniquely proposed by the Proponent which have not been identified in the Project Requirements.	
<u>Proposal and Methodology</u>	50 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quality of the proposal, including level of detail, project plan including schedule is clear, comprehensive, and manageable.	
<u>Breakdown of Costs</u>	25 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Breakdown of costs is complete and reasonable	
Maximum Points Available	100 points

6.2 Burk's Falls and the Evaluation Committee reserve the right to contact any Proponent to request additional information, clarification or demonstration of the information within their proposal.

- 6.3 Burk's Falls may award the project on the basis of the proposals received without further discussion with Proponents. Therefore, each initial offer should contain the Proponent's best terms and information.
- 6.4 Burk's Falls reserves the right to refuse/reject any or all proposals that do not meet the requirements set out in this request for proposal.

7.0 Timeline

The following schedule represents the best estimate of Burk's Falls of the schedule to be followed. Please note that it is intended as a guideline.

Proposed Schedule:

RFP issue date	Wednesday, March 14 th , 2018
Deadline for submission of questions (in writing)	Friday, March 23 rd , 2018 3:00PM
RFP amendments & question responses posted on the BACED Website	Monday, March 26 th , 2018 3:00PM
Proposal Submission Deadline	Wednesday, April 4 th , 2018 3:00PM
Notification of Award by the project lead	Friday April 13 th , 2018
Estimated Project Start Date	Monday, April 18 th , 2018
Submission of Draft reports by the proponent for review. Leadership team review and feedback to follow.	Friday, July 20 th , 2018
Submission of final reports by the successful Proponent	Friday, August 3 rd , 2018

8.0 Project Funding

This project is pending funding approval through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation Northern Communities Capacity Building Program.

9.0 Additional Information

- 9.1 Proponents are encouraged to carefully review this RFP. If questions arise regarding clarification of any point of this document, these questions must be presented in writing to the Lead Contact before **Friday, March 23rd, 2018 at 3:00PM**. This is to allow time for any necessary amendments or addenda.
- 9.2 Should amendments or addenda to the RFP be necessary, they will be publicly posted on-line at: <http://baced.ca/business-support-investing/plans-and-studies/> on or before **Monday, March 26th, 2018**. Proponents are encouraged to check back to this site during the submission period to ensure their awareness of any additional information.
- 9.3 By submitting a proposal, the Proponent acknowledges that they have read, completely understood and agree with the terms and conditions of the RFP in full. Burk's Falls is not responsible for any misunderstanding of the RFP.