

Prologue

Culver City is where the cities of the world will come to see their future. That future is incredibly bright, but also enormously challenging.

For the revision of our General Plan, we seek innovation, creativity, even brilliance. Not just something above average. We want the best of the best, the most forward thinking consultant team we can find. We will be flexible and responsive, and we will reward imagination and commitment. This is who we are. As the government of a small city we need to be judicious, pragmatic, and far-sighted, but we also strive to be nimble, deft and intelligent.

100 years ago our founder Harry Culver remarked, “All roads lead to Culver City.” This is literally true. We are bounded by Cheviot Hills to the north, and Baldwin Hills to the south. The direct route from Downtown LA to the Pacific Ocean goes through Culver City. The old Red Car trolley, the 10 Freeway, Washington and Venice Boulevards, Ballona Creek and previously –the LA River, and now the Metro Expo Line are all hemmed in by these hills on their way to the beach cities. With the 405 Freeway and La Cienega Blvd traversing from north to south, Culver is located in a remarkable site, the crossroads of the west side of Los Angeles. Historically, this location attracted the preeminent film and television studios. Today, we host both media and high-tech giants, including Apple, Amazon, Sony, Symantec and Nantworks, whose owner Patrick Soon-Shiong just bought the LA Times. We are also home to dozens of powerhouse media boutiques, well-funded tech startups, and more great architects and designers per capita than anywhere in the world.

Culver City is a vibrant oasis at the heart of the LA metropolis. The astonishing modern and historic architecture of the Hayden Tract is world-renowned, and kick started the renaissance of our creative economy. Downtown Culver is now a walk-able urban haven. Our diverse culinary scene is exceptional, from Irish pubs and phở to the LA Times’ best and fourth best restaurants in Los Angeles. West LA College is excellent and growing, and both UCLA and USC are at our doorstep. But we are a modest city, not teeming with the wealthy residents and vast resources of some of our neighbors.

Our city remains socially, culturally and economically diverse. Our school district was recently rated the fourth most diverse in the country. We still treasure our roots as the ‘Norman Rockwell’ home of television’s “Mayberry RFD”. Even against the onslaught of 21st century change, we plan to maintain our traditional small-town atmosphere. We are not a *tabula rasa* for this change; we are not Abu-Dhabi or Shenzhen. But perhaps we are something even more interesting. We have the opportunity to truly break new ground, to be a model for other cities, to carve a new path into the future. For these reasons alone (there are many others), we hope that the best of the best consulting firms in the world will respond to this RFP.

Help us envision the place we want to be

- Understand and leverage the transformative power of great places
- Demonstrate experience in transforming communities into models of sustainable mobility and intelligent land use
- Have the urban design and visual communication skills to help us understand what is possible and what we can achieve

Guide us through a conversation about how we get there

- Have a stellar track record of conducting engagement that is inclusive of all voices and that generates community investment in the process
- Be skilled at guiding communities through conversations about change
- Be able to translate highly complex and technical information into digestible and understandable pieces

Have the right tools on your team to get it done.

- Be a technical leader in your field with top-notch analytical expertise
- Have compelling comprehensive and/or general plan experience
- Have sufficient California experience to meet a complex set of state requirements
- Show a strong track record of delivering plans that are ready for implementation
- Be led by a project manager who is a gifted leader, highly skilled in communication and in coordinating a complex project and project team

The City is committed to fostering public ownership of the Plan and a long-term vision for Culver City's future. Among the most essential of our tasks, the City and consultant will begin by crafting an engagement program that generates the broadest possible public and stakeholder participation and gives voice to those often excluded from the community planning processes.

Here are key questions we will ask:

-) What is precious here that we don't want to lose?
-) What is almost good that we need to make right?
-) What is terrible that needs to change?
-) What is missing?

-) Density, growth, congestion, enhanced mobility, workforce and affordable housing, and economic vitality: what are the optimal solutions and approach for Culver City?
-) How can our General Plan best help us maintain and increase our financial stability without triggering destructive social change, increased inequity, homelessness and displacement?
-) How do we instigate and plan the transformation of the Inglewood Oil Field (the largest urban oil field in the country, an aging and toxified brownfield)?
-) How can we accelerate the renaissance and restoration of Ballona Creek, transforming the concrete waterway from gray infrastructure into green?
-) The 2028 Summer Olympics: How can Culver City best ride that wave? What goals can the Olympics help us achieve and how do we make that happen?
-) How do we preserve the character, the traditions, the essence, the heart of Culver City, when confronted by the massive change that is assaulting us from every side and from within?

Perhaps Culver City today is something like our Sister City, Capo d'Orlando was in the 19th century. At that time, Sicily was being nationalized as part of Italy, for the first time in history. It was a time of massive, inexorable, irrevocable change. One of the characters in Sicily's most famous novel of that period remarks, "If we want things to stay the same, everything must change." Here in Culver City, if we want the heart of our city, the soul, the character of our small city to stay the same, how can we manage the change that is happening all around us? If as a community, we want some things to stay the same, maybe we must realize that everything must change.

Who among you can help us guide that change?

Who among you has the wisdom, the experience, the courage and the tenacity... to help us move forward while preserving our heritage and our diversity?

Who will help lead us toward prosperity and justice, away from gridlock and decay, to vitality, resilience, and kindness?