

Alta Town Council

Staff Report



To: Town Council

From: Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator

Re: Planning for a New Town of Alta Community Center

Date: January 2, 2020

Attachments: Town of Alta Community Center Feasibility Study RFP (DRAFT)

Background

In the 2019 Town of Alta Capital Projects Plan, the Alta Town Council approved roughly \$75,000 for a “Town of Alta Facilities Programming Project.” The description of the project is as follows:

The Town of Alta has completed Community Center facility planning projects over the course of the last 15 years. The Town has also acquired land from the federal government in the last three years, a portion of which has been deemed an acceptable location for the future community center. The Town wishes to take the first step toward developing a community center, by pursuing a conceptual design and facility programming plan for the community center parcel. It is recommended that the programming element of this project also consider current uses of existing Town of Alta facilities, including the Town Office, Alta Central, and the Community Center/Post Office/Fire Station.

Over the last few months, staff has developed an approach to fulfilling this opportunity by speaking with architects, consultants, and colleagues at other municipalities; researching past community center studies undertaken in Alta; and drafting a request for proposal (RFP) that has changed shape a number of times in order to reach the scope we are presenting to the council in January, 2020.

Prior to introducing the RFP, I will note that the study it lays out is slightly more limited than the scope of work envisioned in the project description captured in the capital projects plan. Specifically, it does not entail a study of “current uses of existing Town of Alta facilities,” although it would certainly involve analysis of the uses of the current community center. While the original intent was to create something like a facilities master plan, which would map out all of the town’s buildings in order to understand

opportunities to repurpose existing square footage as we plan for a new community center facility, we determined the project may yield a stronger result if the scope were more limited to studying a single building, given the budget for the study is fixed to a certain amount—and given the complexities community center development will inevitably entail.

I will also note that the approach set forth in the RFP differs from an approach we recently reported to the council we were considering, which was that we previously considered contracting with consultants on a much smaller project to simply help us draft this RFP. In the meantime, we were able to receive expert input on how to structure the RFP, and what to expect we could produce given our budget, from an architect who are not eligible to bid on a future Town of Alta project, but who know the community and are familiar with previous community center planning efforts, and from other individuals familiar with the community, and experienced in soliciting design and other professional services.

Town of Alta Community Center Feasibility Study RFP

The RFP contains a substantial amount of background information on previous attempts to plan for a new community center facility in Alta. Our goal with including this material is to illustrate to potential bidders, and to the public, that the concept of developing a new community center is not new, so that we avoid duplicating previous efforts, and then either modify and adopt some version of the facility program identified in the past or develop a new facility program entirely. We would go from there to study the structural parameters of a conceptual facility, and then the range of probable costs for facility design and development.

Staff is presenting the draft RFP to the town council to illustrate how we propose to take our first step toward developing a new community center. We are open to comments on our approach and anticipate a discussion of the RFP by the council at the meeting. We propose to finalize and publish the RFP sometime early this year, and to complete the study by early 2021.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - DRAFT
PROJECT: Town of Alta Community Center Feasibility Study

CLIENT: Town of Alta, Utah

RFP RELEASE DATE: _____

RFP CLOSING DATE: _____

PROCUREMENT CONTACT:

John Guldner or Chris Cawley

801-742-3522

Jguldner@townofalta.com; Ccawley@townofalta.com

1. Introduction

The Town of Alta, Utah is in the early stages of planning to build a community center. Developing a large, multi-purpose, public facility has been a long-range goal for the Alta community for many years, during which time the Town and other entities have utilized existing buildings to provide functions that may be relocated to a new facility at various locations throughout Alta. In 2015, the United States Forest Service conveyed parcels of National Forest System land to the Town under the Town's municipal buildings, as well as an undeveloped, 1.3-acre, roadside parcel in central Alta. More recently, the Town has been exploring funding options for facility design and construction, and with the confluence of these two developments, the Town has decided to move forward with the first steps toward designing a community center.

The Town has engaged architects on two other occasions in the past to envision and evaluate the feasibility of creating a new community center. These projects have yielded provisional assumptions about the size of a community center facility, the uses it would satisfy, and rough cost estimates. Constraints and opportunities have shifted recently, as changes in the profile of the Alta community, the proposed site of the project, and other factors obligate the town to test historical assumptions about project feasibility and costs and determine a facility program that will satisfy the community's needs today and in the future.

2. Background

Current Town of Alta Facilities

The Town of Alta owns four buildings, including the Town Office building, which contains administrative offices and one office space rented by a non-profit organization; Alta Central, which is the police department headquarters and housing; a water treatment facility; and a multipurpose facility previously known as the Alta Fire House but currently known as the Alta Community Center. The current community center houses a contract US Post Office, a Salt Lake County Library System Reading Room, office space for two nonprofits, a meeting space

with seating for roughly 50 people where the town holds public meetings including Alta Justice Court hearings, one town employee housing unit, and three large vehicle bays used for storage of town equipment. Portions of the community center are used to host Alta Historical Society and Alta Community Enrichment exhibits, and the town rents the meeting space to various groups for education and community events. The current Alta Community Center contains roughly 3885 gross square feet. A key motivation for developing a new community center is that many of these facilities, including the current community center are aging, small and minimally equipped, and difficult to access for various reasons.

Program Elements Identified in Previous Studies

In 2002 and 2003, the Town of Alta and Alta Community Enrichment (ACE), a local nonprofit organization, partnered to hire architects to study the feasibility of substantially renovating or entirely rebuilding the current Alta Community Center in its current location. The study included analysis of the current facility, analysis of public input leading up to that point, additional public input, and development of preliminary schematic design drawings for a facility totaling 10,904 gross square feet. The drawings represented a facility program including the following uses:

- Library
- Kitchen
- Education Area
- Classrooms (2)
- Education storage and prep. area
- Post Office
- Public restrooms
- Vehicle storage/maintenance area
- Large Group Multi-use area – to accommodate 125 persons
- Art Display area
- Historical Artifact Display/Document area
- A.C.E. Office area
- Alta City Information Office
- Janitor's closet – Building Storage
- One apartment

In 2007 and 2008, the Town and ACE pursued a second study for a new community center. This study was conducted by an architectural student, and it included many of the same program elements, with several key assumptions not included in the first study:

- A new facility would be located on the site of the Town of Alta drinking water treatment facility, which occupies an historic mine tunnel entrance along S.R. 210
- Dedicated space for the Alta School, a one-room, K-8 satellite Canyons School District facility currently housed at the Goldminer's Daughter, a local hotel.

- Recreation amenities such as a basketball court would be built into the large multi-purpose room
- Commercial space for one or two food service or light retail outlets

In 2015, the Town of Alta launched a general planning effort to envision future development in the Town of Alta “Commercial Core,” leading to what is known as the Commercial Core Plan. The process leading to the finalization of this plan included substantial public input regarding potential locations for a new community center, and the plan itself sites the facility on the “community center parcel” described below. One key element of the vision for a community center captured in the commercial core planning process, and commonly described as a component of a future community center in recent years, is that such a facility would provide space and amenities suitable for local hotels to host conference groups. Conferences and events are common components in the summer economy of ski area communities, although most facilities in Alta lack space for larger group meetings. Another common assumption that developed during this planning effort is that a community center in this location would be an ideal location to provide a central Alta trailhead for nearby National Forest System summer trails and to routes used by backcountry skiers and snowshoers in the winter season. Such a trailhead could replace the “Cardiff Pass” and “Twin Lakes Pass” trailheads in a centralized location with trailhead amenities including signage and restrooms accessible 24 hours per day.

While the preferred site and specific functions for a new community center have changed over time, the intent of community center visioning and development remains the same: to build community for Alta residents and locals by providing a dedicated space that resolves limitations and restrictions associated with current facilities. Future community center studies should assume the list of uses described above as a starting point for a conceptual facility program.

Links to these documents, hosted on the Town of Alta website, will be provided under section 11.

The Community Center Parcel

The Town received 1.3 acres of land from the United States Forest Service in 2015. The land is situated north of S.R. 210 and east of the “Photohaus” property in central Alta. A portion of the parcel consists of what is currently a paved area used for public, overnight and day-use parking, and the rest of the parcel is sloped and vegetated or bearing exposed rock. The parcel is either flat or generally facing south.

A key constraint to development on this parcel is the parcel's exposure to avalanche hazard. According to UDOT Highway Avalanche Safety Program and USFS records, the path(s) affecting the project site produce an avalanche that reaches the adjacent roadway, and which could thus affect the project site, roughly once every 10 years, although no avalanches have reached the roadway from these paths since 1998. This will be a primary factor in facility design, project cost, and selection of program elements that must be considered from the outset of the visioning and design process. Many buildings in Alta, and substantial portions of S.R. 210

through Alta, are subject to avalanche hazard, and the Town requires developers and property owners to engage an “avalanche expert” to evaluate site-specific hazard and design proposed facilities or modifications to withstand avalanches of a certain magnitude,

Like everywhere in Alta, the project site is subject to extreme weather, with snow depths at a nearby UDOT snow study plot reaching a maximum height of 125” in an average year, with snowpack height occasionally reaching more than 200”. This condition has implications for both the facility itself and for construction of the facility.

See section 11 for a link to graphics depicting the Community Center Parcel.

Ongoing Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) S.R. 210 Environmental Impact Statement

The proposed project site directly abuts state highway S.R. 210, also known as Little Cottonwood Canyon Road. UDOT is currently conducting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process to evaluate roadway capacity and transit projects on S.R. 210. The EIS may include an effort to identify a location and preliminary design for an Alta transit center, which would potentially function as the primary, or only Alta station for a mass transit system in the canyon. One potential location for the facility is directly across S.R. 210 from the proposed project site. Given the potential for synergy between the two conceptual facilities, coordination between the Town of Alta project and the UDOT S.R. 210 would be wise. The EIS may also provide opportunities to design and implement changes to the roadway in Alta including pedestrian and cycling facilities, traffic calming elements, and wayfinding or aesthetic features, all of which could impact the area surrounding the community center parcel. Visit the UDOT EIS website here: <https://www.udot.utah.gov/littlecottonwoodeis/>

Additional Assumptions About a New Community Center

- Design and construction budget between \$10 million and \$15 million.
- Funding sources may include general obligation or revenue bonding, private donations, Town of Alta general fund appropriation, grants, and other sources.
- It is assumed that the facility will be constructed and operated to the highest feasible standards for energy efficiency and other environmental standards.

3. Project Goals

The Town seeks to answer basic questions about the proposed facility before pursuing later stages in the design process:

- What functions will the facility provide?
- What are the structural parameters of the facility given the functions or uses it provides, as well as the constraints and opportunities posed by the project site, including avalanche hazard?

- What is the project likely to cost, and how can it be completed within the Town's budget?

4. Scope of Project and Services

- Feasibility: in light of previous studies and public input, unique constraints and conditions on the project site including avalanche exposure, the Town's financial resources, and other factors, evaluate the feasibility of developing a new community center on the community center parcel.
- Programming: analyze previous studies and public input, as well as background information provided in section 2 of this document, to study options for uses and functions provided in the proposed facility.
- Preliminary schematic design: develop drawings in order to visualize facility program and understand structural implications. The Town accepts that a comprehensive design process following this study will entail additional schematic design work.
- Opinion of probable costs, construction planning: study and report on the following:
 - Design and permitting fees
 - Construction costs
 - Identification of primary drivers of construction costs
 - Design and construction project schedule
- Public Engagement: It is critical that this project entails engagement with Alta community members and the Alta Town Council. Respondent's proposed scope of work or work plan should include at least one community meeting and at least one presentation to the Alta Town Council. Public engagement should be used to evaluate facility programming options and other elements of the project.

5. Project Budget

The Town has reserved approximately \$75,000 for the project.

6. Time and Place of Submission of Proposals

Via email in .pdf format, to John Guldner at Jhg@townofalta.com and Chris Cawley at Ccawley@townofalta.com, by 5:00 PM on _____.

7. Anticipated Selection Schedule

The Town of Alta intends to notify selected respondent by _____.

8. Elements of Proposal

- a. Letter or memorandum describing respondent's understanding of the project
- b. Proposed work plan or scope of work

- c. Statement of respondent's qualifications to complete the project
- d. Client references
- e. Proposed project timeline
- f. Proposed fee

9. Evaluation Criteria

- a. Respondent's qualifications and portfolio
- b. Respondent's demonstrated understanding of the project
- c. Proposed scope of work
- d. References
- e. Proposed fee

10. Additional Notes

- a. The Town reserves the right to withdraw this RFP at any time and is not obligated to make an award.
- b. Selected respondent will remain eligible to bid on subsequent projects.
- c. Potential respondents may ask questions by emailing procurement contacts listed above by January 17th, 2019.
- d. Potential bidders may not contact Town of Alta officials directly following the publication of this RFP other than via email; noncompliance may result in disqualification. The Town will compile information it provides to individual potential respondents and post such compilations on the Town of Alta Website weekly between the publication and this RFP and _____.

11. Attachments

- a. Map of Community Center Parcel: https://townofalta.com/toa_comm_center_8x11/
- b. 2003 Study: <https://townofalta.com/2003-ema-schematic-booklet/>
- c. 2008 Study: <https://townofalta.com/2008-cc-da-study/>
- d. Commercial Core Plan: https://townofalta.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CommCorePlan_08Dec2016.pdf and https://townofalta.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CommCorePlan_Appendices_08Dec2016.pdf