

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP-2025-03-25)

CITY OF ROCHELLE

ENERGY ACTION PLAN

Issued on March 25, 2025



City of Rochelle
420 N 6th St
Rochelle, IL 61068

Questions?

Please contact us at dbettner@rmu.net and Cc: info@blackhawkhills.com.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP 2025-03-25)
CITY OF ROCHELLE ENERGY ACTION PLAN
Proposals due on or before 5 pm CDT, April 30, 2025

The City of Rochelle (“Rochelle”) invites consultants to submit proposals to complete an energy action plan for Rochelle/Rochelle Municipal Utilities, the Village of Creston, and the Village of Hillcrest, as described in this scope of work. Please read each section carefully for information regarding the proposal and submittal instructions.

SECTION 1. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 About Rochelle

Located in Ogle County, Illinois, about one hour west of Chicago’s western suburbs at the intersection of interstates 39 and 88, Rochelle is a small city of 9,417 people (2018-2022 ACS 5-year). It is relatively diverse: 23.8% of the city’s residents identified as Hispanic or Latino compared to 18.7% in the United States.

Adjacent to Rochelle are the Village of Creston (population 554), about two miles east of Rochelle, and Village of Hillcrest (population 1,224), which shares Rochelle’s northern border. Creston and Hillcrest have close ties to Rochelle through the [Rochelle Municipal Utilities](#) (RMU), the electricity provider for all three communities. They also share job centers and a common school district - Rochelle Township High School District 212.

Rochelle’s industrial sector is rapidly growing compared to the rest of Northwest Illinois, continuing to attract heavy rail-served industry after decades of investment in Rochelle’s municipal rail system that connects industry to both the Union Pacific and BNSF railroads. Electricity is in high demand at Rochelle-based industrial sites, including cold storage, hydroponic lettuce and tomato production, meatpacking, and steel tubing mill facilities. Hillcrest is home to an indoor cannabis growing facility. Local officials anticipate industry’s continued growth due to Rochelle’s proximity to interstate highways, major railroads, and metropolitan areas.

Seeking to stabilize the cost of electricity for its customers, Rochelle partnered with cooperatives and other municipalities to build a new coal-fired power plant called Prairie State Generating Station in 2014. State law now mandates a 45% reduction in carbon emissions from coal by 2035 and a 100% reduction by 2045. Barring new legislation or technology, the anticipated loss of generating capacity as well as the competitive cost of renewables lead to risks for the city and its customers. Now is the time for strategic planning around short-term energy efficiency measures and long-term energy resiliency/environmental sustainability efforts in the form of an energy action plan.

1.2 General Information

Rochelle has been awarded funding through the federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program, administered by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, to develop a multi-community energy action plan. The package includes \$140,000 for contractual services and \$4,000 for public outreach expenses. Rochelle now seeks qualified entities to create a plan that improves energy efficiency, system resiliency, and power affordability as well as increases environmental sustainability.

This RFP invites consultants to submit their credentials, experience, and proposed approach for completing the project within the \$144,000 budget. Based on the proposals received, the City may select a consultant (“Firm”) or request additional information before awarding the contract.

SECTION 2. PROJECT SCOPE

2.1 Project Background

The general objectives of the multi-community energy action plan include:

- Recommend short-term energy efficiency measures (includes auditing public and key stakeholder facilities in all three communities)
- Explore long-term energy resiliency/environmental sustainability efforts
- Collect energy data, engage stakeholders, set goals, and provide actionable steps to improve each community’s energy future

2.2 Project Location

The project impacts three incorporated municipalities in Ogle County, including Rochelle, Creston, and Hillcrest, an area about 45 miles west of Aurora.



Figure 2.2.1 – Rochelle Detail Area, Note Adjacent Creston and Hillcrest

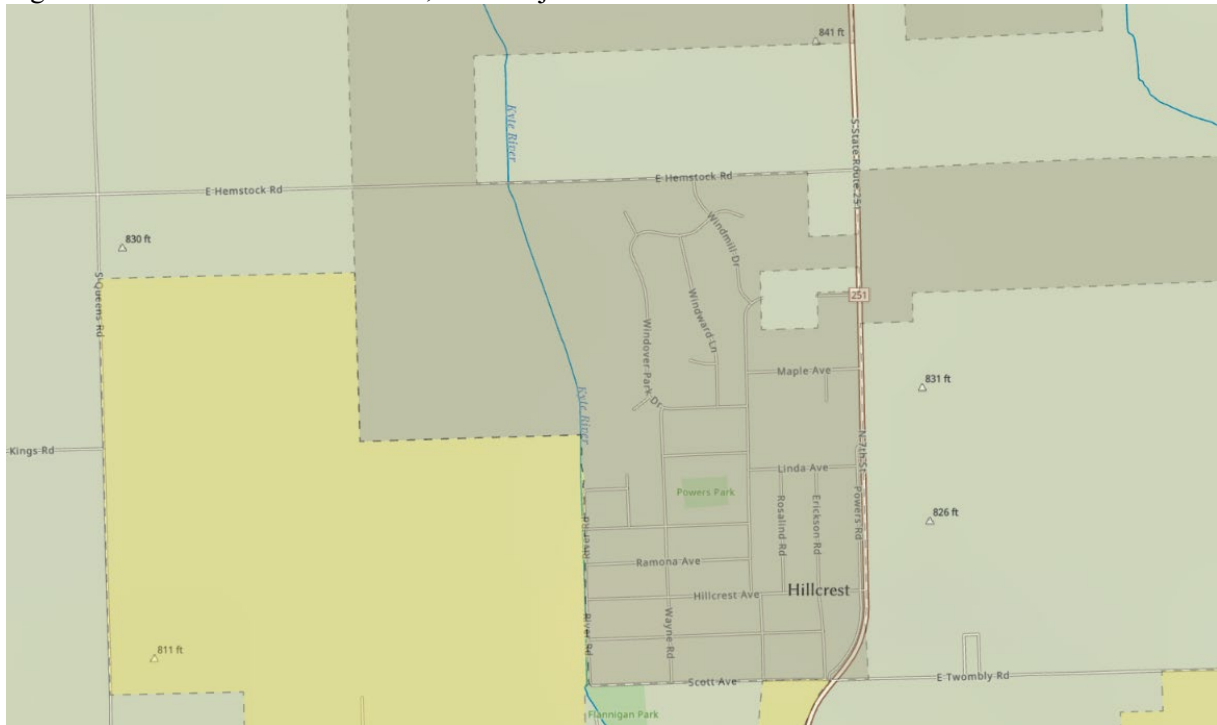


Figure 2.2.2 – Hillcrest Detail Area (North of Rochelle)



Figure 2.2.3 – Creston Detail Area (East of Rochelle)

2.3 Scope of Work

Expected project activities and timelines are described below. Limited flexibility will be allowed regarding specific format and contents of deliverables produced.

2.3.1 Project Components

While staying engaged with stakeholders that are representative of Rochelle, Creston, and Hillcrest, the Firm will create an energy action plan that:

- Follows an education/outreach plan framework
- Engages the process steering committee
- Establishes baseline data for energy demand/supply, costs, and emissions
- Reviews state/national/international trends likely to impact the communities (like changing energy markets, climate change, decarbonization, electrification, and new technologies)
- Anticipates future energy demand/supply, cost, and emissions
- Conducts energy audits and modeling for public and key stakeholder facilities
 - Uses the audits to both articulate actionable steps for improving efficiency and inform the overall energy action plan's development
- Develops comprehensive strategies for addressing energy affordability, efficiency, and resiliency as well as environmental sustainability
 - Describes current conditions in and issues unique to the planning area (including any related to Prairie State Generating Station)
 - Includes best practices for various stakeholder groups (i.e., low-to-moderate income households, industry, public sector, not-for-profits, etc.)

- Identifies actionable projects, programs, and policies, as well as partnerships, for public and private sectors (including those mitigating Prairie State Generating Station reliance)
- Produces an energy action plan that is adoptable by Rochelle, Village of Creston, and Village of Hillcrest and consistent with state and federal standards (including Blueprint 2)

2.3.2 Project Tasks

Project Management

The consultant will be responsible for holding regular project coordination meetings, including producing all meeting materials, notices, attendance lists, minutes/summaries, etc. A project timeline/schedule for each component should be provided in the proposal.

Consultants should be aware that Rochelle was awarded this grant, but BHRC will join in project oversight, including programmatic and financial reporting. BHRC will also review drafts of the plan along with a process steering committee consisting of key stakeholders. The consultant is responsible for engaging BHRC and the steering committee to facilitate these tasks and in general as work proceeds.

Public Outreach

Public outreach is expected throughout the planning process. The consultant must create an engagement framework addressing both the public and key stakeholders. The framework should include an overall summary and identify stakeholders, approaches, and events. It should also anticipate content and materials needed to implement the framework, such as press releases, social media posts, public meeting presentations, display boards, project website, etc.

In support of public outreach, an initial process steering committee has been formed. Along with BHRC and Rochelle, it will be responsible for providing guidance and reviewing the consultant's work. The consultant will be responsible for creating attendance lists and minutes/summaries of public and key stakeholder sessions (including stakeholder interviews, focus groups, stakeholder committee meetings, etc.).

2.4 Project Timeline

- Month 1-2: Education/outreach framework creation and initial steering committee engagement (including scheduling)
- Month 1-5: Data collection and analysis
 - Baseline establishment of energy demand/supply, costs, and emissions
 - Energy demand/supply, cost, and emissions projections
- Month 1-9: Energy audits and modeling
- Month 3-5: Stakeholder engagement sessions including issue identification and vision-setting; up to three meetings including the following groups:
 - Production, distribution, and transmission
 - Large-scale users
 - Low-to-moderate income users
- Month 5-12: Strategy development

- Overarching goals and individual action items
- Project identification (including projects that impact energy efficiency/sustainability practices, energy diversification, energy costs, emission reductions, low-to-moderate income household supports, and current and future industry guidance)
- Benefit-cost analysis and project prioritization
- Funding identification
- Measures of progress
- Month 5-12: Education/outreach; key education/outreach activities will follow baseline establishment and draft plan development/review
- Month 10-11: Draft plan review, including up to two public meetings/open houses
- Month 11-12: Plan finalization and community adoption

2.5 Project Costs

The project will not exceed \$144,000 (\$140,000 to the energy action planning consultant for its services and \$4,000 for public outreach (such as advertising and public notices). Consultants should produce a project scope that involves a level of effort consistent with this cost.

SECTION 3. SELECTION PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

Proposals must be received by Rochelle on or before 5 pm CDT, April 30, 2025.

3.1 Timeline

RFP Issued	March 25, 2025
Last Date to Submit a Question	April 18, 2025
Last Date to Submit a Response	April 30, 2025
Review Committee Evaluation, Ranking, and Recommendation	May 2025
Selection/Contract Authorization	May 2025
Contract Preparation, Amendment, and Approval	June 2025
Contract Work Begins	July 1, 2025
Contract Work Ends	June 30, 2026

3.2 Pre-Proposal Meeting and Interviews

There is no pre-proposal meeting, and interviews are not scheduled. However, if Rochelle finds it necessary to conduct interviews, Rochelle will schedule the interviews between the review/ranking and contract portions of the RFP process and amend the timeline as it sees fit to do so. In general, Rochelle reserves the right to modify the RFP timeline as necessary.

3.3 Proposal Requirements and Evaluation

A review committee will rank proposals using the criteria in the subsequent table. The Rochelle City Council will ultimately select a proposal and authorize work.

Proposal Information

Requirement	Points	Addressing the Requirement
Project Understanding and Work Plan	25 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate project understanding, including scope of work items ● Explain how planned tasks will accomplish the project ● Illustrate previous relevant work and coordination with stakeholders ● Enumerate organizational tools available for use during the project
Project Schedule and Timeline	20 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indicate time required to complete individual tasks ● Note relationships between tasks, including any dependencies ● Describe key events, as well as associated items to deliver ● Set input points from Rochelle and stakeholders
Organization Description	20 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe background and organizational stability (years in business, etc.) ● Describe relevant projects completed ● If applicable, similarly describe subconsultants ● Provide up to three (3) references from individuals or organizations that can attest to your organization's ability to accomplish this project; include name, address, and email addresses
Proposer Experience with Similar Projects	20 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● List staff and hours assigned to each ● Describe extent of principal or project manager involvement ● Describe key staff roles and responsibilities ● Explain experience or qualifications of principals (including technical and managerial), project managers, and key staff with similar projects ● Each portion of the project is assigned to a particular staffer or subcontractor
Desired and Value-Added Capabilities	15 points max.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submit any information believed relevant to proposal ● Submit any innovative approaches to working on the project ● Submit any complimentary approaches not anticipated or known
TOTAL	100 points max.	

Cost Information

Requirement	Points	Subrequirements
Cost Information	Meets/ Does Not Meet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirm availability for each contractor and subcontractor ● Estimate total hours and cost to complete individual work elements and entire project ● List tasks not performed by the consultant or subcontractor that must be performed by Rochelle ● Identify what your organization considers reimbursable expense and detailed costs of each ● Does not exceed \$140,000 for contractual services and \$4,000 for public outreach.

Proposals above the project's not-to-exceed amount will be considered but re-ranked at Rochelle's discretion.

3.4 Proposal Requirements and Evaluation

Rochelle must receive all proposals on or before 5 pm CDT, April 30, 2025. Late proposals will not be considered. Proposals may be emailed to:

To: dbettner@rmu.net (Cc: info@blackhawkhills.com)
Subject: City of Rochelle Energy Action Plan

SECTION 4. PROPOSAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

4.1. RFP Document

Information provided in this RFP is intended solely to assist proposers in the preparation of their proposals. To the best of Rochelle's knowledge, it is accurate. However, Rochelle does not warrant such accuracy and any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this RFP.

4.2. Ownership of Records

Rochelle will retain ownership of all interim and final documents and related materials that are either produced or developed in conjunction with the consultant's contract. The consultant is prohibited from copying or distributing any of these documents or other reports developed in conjunction with Rochelle without written permission from Rochelle.

4.3. Inquiries

Email all inquiries to dbettner@rmu.net (Cc: info@blackhawkhills.com) no later than before 5 pm CDT, April 30, 2025. Rochelle will review all inquiries received prior to, and respond to questions as soon as possible, publishing responses to <https://www.cityofrochelle.net/events/category/bids-proposals/> If a proposer discovers any errors, omissions, or ambiguities within the RFP document, that proposer should identify and email them to Rochelle prior to the RFP submission deadline.

4.4. Acceptance of Proposal Content and Public Information

As much as possible, Rochelle will treat all proposals as proprietary and confidential from the time of receipt and throughout the review process; however, the proposer agrees that all submitted proposals become the property of Rochelle and information included in or attached become available to the public after recommendation for endorsement of contract is made. Any specific portions of the proposals which the submitting firm desires to remain confidential due to legitimate "proprietary information" or "trade secret" must be identified in an attachment to the proposal entitled "Attachment C - Request for Confidentiality." In the event that Rochelle judges the information to be non-confidential, the proposer will be notified and given the opportunity to change the designation or withdraw the proposal prior to evaluation.

4.5. Withholding Content

To the extent permitted by law, it is the intention of Rochelle to withhold the contents of the proposal from public view until such times as competitive or bargaining reasons no longer require non-disclosure in the opinion of Rochelle.

4.6. Subcontractors

It is intended that a single contractor will have total responsibility for all services identified in this RFP. Therefore, any proposer desiring to use a subcontractor(s) must identify each on a document supplied as an attachment to the proposal entitled “Attachment B - Subcontractor(s).” It should include:

- The company’s name and principal owner(s)
- A description of their involvement in the project
- Qualifications for each aspect of the scope of work with which they are involved

The subcontractor(s) cannot be changed after submission of the proposal except with the written permission of Rochelle. The consultant is responsible for all subcontractor actions, workmanship, performance, and payment.

4.7. Proposal Costs

Rochelle is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by any proposer in responding to this RFP. Rochelle is not liable for payment of any amount to the selected proposer until the contract has been awarded and executed by Rochelle and the consultant has performed services pursuant to the contract that entitle the consultant to receive payment under the terms of the contract. Proposed consultant costs for each phase (as described in Section 3.3) of this project must be submitted in XLSX format (please use Attachment A) with a file name as follows: “Attachment A - Project Costs.” The spreadsheet should be password protected with the password “sealed.”

4.8. Rejection of Proposals

Rochelle reserves the right to waive any informality, and/or to reject, at any time and for any reason, proposals received as a result of this RFP. Rochelle’s intent is to enter into a contract following this process. However, if after reviewing the proposals received Rochelle determines that it should not enter into any contract or to enter into a partial or different contract from the contract contemplated by this RFP, Rochelle will act in accordance with what Rochelle determines at that time to be in its best interest. No proposer or any other party has any entitlement, interest, or right in this decision by Rochelle and by submitting a proposal, acknowledges Rochelle’s right to exercise its discretion in this regard without any right of recourse by the proposer.

4.9. Insurance and Hold Harmless

The successful proposer will be required to provide proof of insurance prior to contract execution. In addition, “hold harmless” provisions will be contained in the contract with the successful proposer.

4.10. Contract Negotiations

Rochelle reserves the right to negotiate the award and conditions of the proposal prior to entering into a written agreement.

4.11. Applicability of State and Federal Regulations

The selected consultant will comply with all applicable terms and conditions of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), and other relevant authorities. This includes policies related to nondiscrimination, equal employment opportunity, and lobbying.

4.12. Rights Reserved

Rochelle reserves the following rights if using them will be more advantageous to Rochelle:

- Withdraw this RFP at any time without prior notice
- Accept or reject any and all submissions or any item or part thereof
- Postpone due dates
- Not award a contract to any proposer
- Discuss a proposal or negotiate a contract with any proposer
- Award a contract without discussions or negotiations