



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

DEVELOPMENT & OPERATION OF A DOWNTOWN PUBLIC MARKET

RFP 26-831

Date Issued: October 22, 2025

Due: January 9, 2026, 4:00 pm

www.tulare.ca.gov

INVITATION

The City of Tulare is seeking proposals from qualified and experienced firms to develop property in the core of Downtown Tulare and operate a Public Market (Market). The City's vision for the property is inspired by other similar projects occurring throughout California that promote local produce, specialty shops, and artisan cafes. The development will be a catalyst to stimulate additional development in the downtown area. The City has made several investments to revitalize this historic center.



The selected firm will work closely with the City Manager and Economic Development Department staff to develop and implement a successful project.

Proposals must be received by Jennifer Gomez, Executive Director of Economic Development & Redevelopment, no later than 4:00 pm on January 9, 2026, unless this time is extended by written addendum issued by the City before that date. Proposals should be emailed to jgomez@tulare.ca.gov.

The proposal is to be submitted with the name of the Applicant and RFP title clearly identified in the email. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Any questions with regard to submission, process, or proposal can be emailed to: Jennifer Gomez, Executive Director of Economic Development & Redevelopment at jgomez@tulare.ca.gov.

BACKGROUND OF THE CITY

Center of Agricultural Innovation

Tulare is at the heart of some of the most productive farmland in the world. Our region produces 25% of the nation's food supply and is home to the No. 1 dairy-producing county in the United States generating more than \$2 Billion in 2023. In gross ag production, the county generated over \$7.9 Billion in 2023. The City of Tulare is home to several successful manufacturing companies related to the dairy industry, contributing to its economic growth. Manufacturers include Saputo Cheese, Lactalis/Kraft, Land O'Lakes, Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream, and Rosa Brothers Milk Company. Tulare's zip

code, 93274, expands beyond our city limits where there are 82 dairies which make up 35% of the entire industry in our county.

Our roots in agriculture contribute not only to the economy but it is also the way of life with residents who enjoy farm-to-table fare including local meats, cheeses and wine. Many residents have originated from Portugal and Mexico bringing their authentic cuisines to Tulare offering delightful Portugues baked goods and traditional Mexican fare including handmade tortillas, chili verde, and tacos. It is the City's goal for a Market to reflect the unique and diverse heritage that are all strongly tied to the local agricultural industry.

Tulare is also home to the internationally recognized **World Ag Expo**, further showcasing its agricultural prominence. An average of 100,000 individuals from over 70 countries attend this event each year.

Education

UC Davis Veterinary Medicine Teaching & Research Center

Senior veterinary students, residents seeking expanded dairy production, medicine experience, and high school students contemplating a career in veterinary medicine and related fields, benefit from the hands-on training in a clinical and lab setting to help them be more successful right here in Tulare.

College of the Sequoias

The COS Tulare Campus offers general education classes as well as degrees and certificates in fields such as agriculture, architecture, and technology & trades that allow students to pursue higher education and keep their skills and knowledge local.

Family-Friendly Community

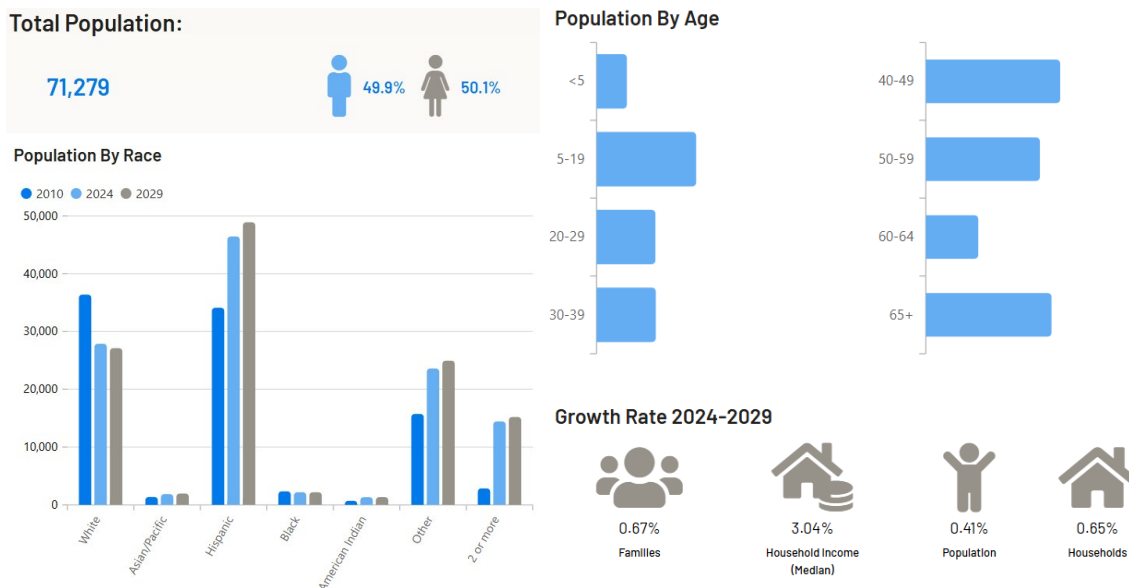
As our population of 72,000 continues to grow, Tulare remains to be known for its family-oriented atmosphere and community spirit. The Tulare community regularly comes together for events that celebrate and support meaningful causes, such as Relay for Life and the Special Olympics. Each year, the Tulare Police Department participates in the Annual Torch Run, an event that strengthens the bond between Special Olympics athletes and law enforcement while raising funds to keep athletes engaged in programs and activities.

The City is home to the annual **Tulare County Fair** every September, offering visitors a chance to enjoy concert events and thrilling rides. In addition to entertainment, the fair highlights local agriculture and the dairy industry through FFA livestock shows, petting zoos, and other educational exhibits. The fair welcomes over 120,000 attendees, making it a major community event and a valuable opportunity to connect with the region's agricultural roots.

Low Cost of Living

Tulare County offers a relatively low cost of living, especially compared to larger metropolitan areas. According to the California Association of Realtors, the statewide median home price was \$888,740, significantly higher than Tulare's median home price of \$334,148. This difference highlights one of Tulare's key advantages for potential homebuyers—affordability. While many areas in California continue to experience skyrocketing housing costs, Tulare offers a more accessible housing market, making it an attractive option for families, first-time homebuyers, young professionals, and those looking to invest in a growing community. In April 2025, Redfin identified the City of Tulare as the second most affordable housing market in California. The affordability of housing in Tulare not only makes it an appealing place to live but also supports the city's broader economic growth, drawing new residents and businesses alike.

Community Snapshot



DOWNTOWN GOALS

“Opportunity Grows Here” is the mindset seen and felt by the community, and the resurgence of this traditional downtown is underway. Tulare is successfully revitalizing the historic Downtown through the City's own projects and through the establishment of new businesses from the private sector. The Downtown Master Plan Update was adopted in 2024, and the City has been actively implementing the Plan to redevelop, strengthen, and transform the downtown. A copy of the Plan can be found on the City's website at [Economic Development Projects | City of Tulare](#). Entering into a public-private partnership for a Market will support this ongoing effort to transform the Downtown.

CITY INVESTMENT

Downtown Tulare is the historic core of the community, therefore the City of Tulare has been making major investments into the area including the following:

Adventist Health Amphitheater

A state-of-the-art facility for live performances has been enjoyed by thousands of attendees at the newly renovated Zumwalt Park this summer. This capital improvement project transformed a passive park space by creating a regional destination serving the entire community with new recreational and entertainment opportunities.



2023 Downtown Building Rehabilitation Grant Program

The Downtown Building Rehabilitation Program was designed to encourage revitalization by means of private investment through renovations and quality improvements in the visual appearance of building facades and to improve accessibility on the interior and exterior of commercial structures within the Downtown District. The City committed \$1,000,000 to property owners who made major renovations to their buildings and attracted new tenants. This has allowed new businesses to open over the last year along K Street and Kern Avenue drawing a growing interest by residents to frequent this area.



Downtown TASTE Program

The City of Tulare has recently developed the Downtown Tulare Assistance for Small Town Eateries (TASTE) Program—a two-year initiative designed to support the renovation, expansion, and establishment of eating establishments. The restaurant and food service industry is vital to a thriving downtown, drawing visitors, creating jobs, and generating revenue. Local eateries often showcase dishes reflecting a community's unique culinary traditions and diversity, preserving heritage while encouraging creativity and innovation in the culinary arts.

Through TASTE, we're making it easier for businesses to invest in our community by offsetting rehabilitation and renovation costs, encouraging infill development, and boosting private investment in downtown.

The City has reserved up to \$1 million in funding and is awarding funds as a mix of forgivable loans and reimbursable grants.

Tulare Business Innovation Zone (TBIZ)

The City of Tulare in collaboration with the Tulare Chamber of Commerce opened the former courthouse building as a center of business innovation. This repurposed facility will support start-up businesses that need a small office or workspace to work, in addition to a makerspace that will provide various equipment for creative entrepreneurs.



Upcoming Downtown Master Plan Projects



Olympian Square



Wayfinding

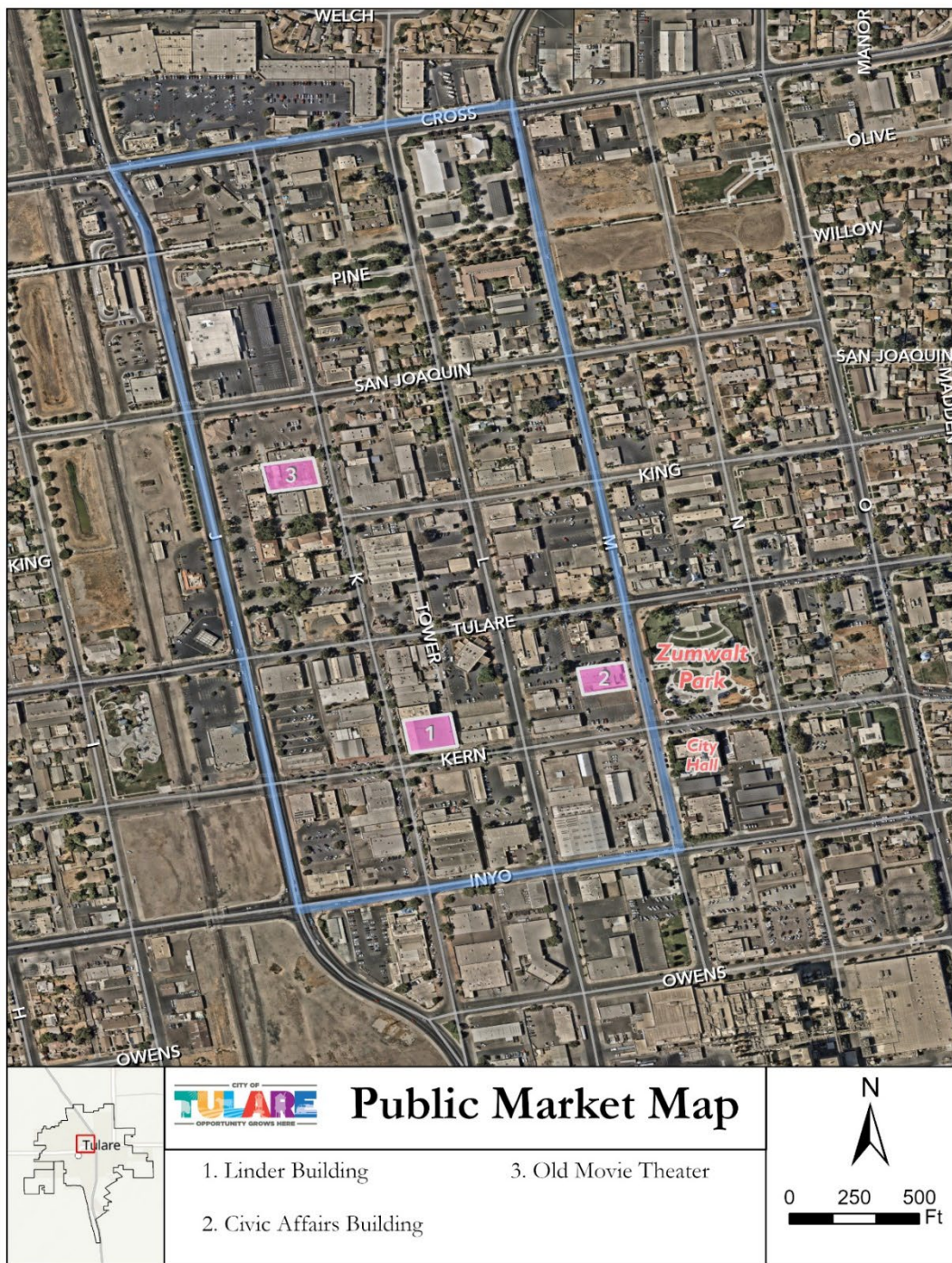
DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

The City offers financial incentives on a case-by-case basis depending on various factors such as capital investment by the developer, jobs created, and projected sales tax and property tax revenues. If the proposed site is owned by the City of Tulare, then that could also be a consideration as part of an incentive package. While the City of Tulare is not interested in owning the building, we can provide these incentives to assist in the overall development of the Public Market.

Some areas of the Downtown are located in Opportunity Zones allowing investors to receive tax benefits. See [Opportunity Zones | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](https://www.hud.gov/opportunity-zones) for more information.

POTENTIAL SITES

Some potential sites have been identified and referenced below with any of them being a viable location for a Market, but the City is open to other locations in the Downtown as well which is marked in the below image.



Site 1: Linder Building

The historic Linder Building located at the northeast corner of K Street and Kern Avenue (160 South K Street, APN 176-082-008) was constructed in 1884 and is the most iconic building in downtown Tulare. With 19,035 sq. ft. available, an indoor public market could thrive at this location. Please contact Adrian Herrera (License #: 01960056) of A. Herrera Real Estate for more information at (559) 684-2728 or Adrian@AherreraRE.com.



Site 2: Civic Affairs Building (City-owned property)

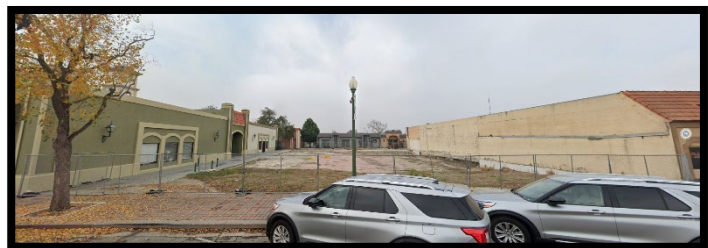
This 0.34-acre mid-block property (131 South M Street, APN 176-076-010) sits across from Zumwalt Park, which just received a multi-million dollar upgrade with the addition



of the Adventist Health Amphitheater, which can accommodate up to 5,000 attendees. The privately-owned 0.43-acre property to the south has already been demolished. Additional properties could be acquired to develop the entire block with the amphitheater as a draw for foot traffic.

Site 3: Vacant Lot

This 0.4-acre mid-block vacant lot (213 North K Street, APN 176-111-020) is on a block that is known as Tower Square in which they have formed their own PBID. The parcel's owner is Diego Espinoza and can be contacted at (559) 741-5330.



PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals are intended to provide an understanding of how each development team can help the City of Tulare achieve its vision of a revitalized downtown. Responses must demonstrate the team's qualifications, competence, and vision for a proposed site or strategy to assist the City in approaching a site. The following information should be provided in each proposal and will be utilized in evaluating each proposal submitted. Proposals should include the following information:

- Cover Letter: Summarize the firm's interests and qualifications, understanding of the project and vision for development, pertinent areas of expertise, and the individual or individuals responsible for the work to be performed.
- Firm's Background: Include information regarding the key person(s) involved, detailing areas of expertise and past experience performing similar work, the firm's office location(s), and staffing, including assignments and sub-consultants (if any).
- Individual Qualifications and Experience: Provide resumes for each key staff member. Provide up to three examples of recent projects completed (or ongoing) by the proposed project team. For each relevant project: 1) indicate the firm's role and the staff members who were responsible for the cited project work; 2) provide a brief description of the contract scope of work; and 3) include the name, title and phone number of a client as a reference.
- Schedule: Proposals should include a high-level development timeframe from acquisition to pre-design through completion, including any phasing.
- Location: The proposal should identify a potential location or strategy to assist the City in approaching a site. City owned property may also be considered and is identified as APN 176-076-010.
- Use of Premises: A comprehensive description of the proposed use of the premises as a Public Market.
- Business Plan: A business plan for the proposed use and strategies, including a financial plan identifying financial resources for the project, future revenues and expenses, costs related to site development, construction, infrastructure, etc. If public participation is anticipated, propose the public investment structure and amount, and provide financial analysis to demonstrate why such participation is necessary.
- Management & Operation Plan: A comprehensive description of the operation plan for the premises, including the expected number of jobs created, general description of the types of commercial tenants targeted for the development, anticipated number of tenants, and hours of operation.

- Design Plan: A conceptual site plan, elevations, and renderings that depict the proposed development and its various features, amenities, and uses. These plans may be informal sketches. Examples from other projects may be included for reference.
- Contract Terminations. If your organization has had a contract terminated in the last five (5) years, describe such incident. Termination for default is defined as notice to stop performance due to the vendor's non-performance or poor performance and the issue of performance was either (a) not litigated due to inaction on the part of the vendor, or (b) litigated and such litigation determined that the vendor was in default. Submit full details of the terms for default including the other party's name, address, and phone number. Present the vendor's position on the matter. The City will evaluate the facts and may, at its sole discretion, reject the proposal on the grounds of the experience. If the organization has not experienced any such termination for default or early termination in the past five (5) years, so indicate.

ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

The anticipated timeline for evaluating proposals and finalizing an agreement is identified below. The City reserves the right to alter the schedule as needed.

Issuance of RFP	October 22, 2025
Deadline for Questions	November 19, 2025
City Responses to Questions	November 26, 2025
Proposals Due	January 9, 2026
City Review of Proposals	Week of January 12-16, 2026
Finalist Interviews (optional)	Week of January 19-23, 2026
Recommendation to City Council	February 3, 2026
Negotiations with Development Team	Beginning the week of February 9, 2026

EVALUATION CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS

A committee will evaluate each proposal using the criteria set forth below. The evaluation committee may recommend a firm without further process or may select firms receiving the highest scores for an oral presentation and interview. The City

reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from one or all of the firms during the selection process.

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS
Expertise, Experience & Training – Expertise and experience of the Firm and the key personnel assigned to the project including past work on similar projects.	30
Project Development – Demonstrates a sound strategy through a Business Plan and a Management & Operation Plan.	30
Financial Feasibility – Ability of Firm to provide sound analysis of the project's potential to become financially viable and successful.	25
Project Understanding – Firm's understanding of the City's project vision and goals in the Downtown and provide a unique and creative approach specific to Tulare.	15
TOTAL POINTS	100

The committee will confer with the City Manager who will then make a recommendation to the City Council for consideration and direction to engage with the developer regarding incentives and developing a term sheet. Once negotiations have concluded, the term sheet and contract will be presented to the City Council for final approval.

If deemed necessary, the City may ask a short list of finalists to present their proposals in an interview before final selection. The City reserves the right to reject any proposal for any reason without cause, terminate negotiations, may choose to suspend this solicitation, issue a new solicitation that would supersede and replace this solicitation, or to abandon the solicitation process in its entirety. In addition, the issuance of this RFP does not obligate the City to pay any costs whatsoever incurred by any applicant in connection with the RFP.

Any questions with regard to submission, process, or proposal can be emailed to: Jennifer Gomez, Executive Director of Economic Development & Redevelopment at jgomez@tulare.ca.gov.