



WISCONSIN

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

FOR

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING SERVICES

PROCUREMENT NO. PL2021-01

Issued:

December 17, 2020

Submission Deadline:

February 8, 2021 – Noon p.m. CT

Budget:

\$ 90,000

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
FOR
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SERVICES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page No.
1. Introduction & Background	3
2. Project Scope	4
3. Concurrent Projects, Recent Activities, Anticipated Follow-up	6
4. Project Deliverables	8
5. Response Process	9
6. Selection Process.....	11
7. Legal Notices	11
8. Attachments	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit A – Recently Acquired 83-Acre Property by the City	

Section 1: Introduction & Background

The City of Altoona is seeking the services of an experienced and qualified firm, company, or collaboration of firms hereinafter referred to as the “Firm” or “Contractor,” to provide technical expertise, advisement and consultation in support of City Staff to conduct a robust public engagement program and generate a new Comprehensive Plan for the City.

Community Background

The City of Altoona, Wisconsin (population 8,099 – 4.7 sq. miles) is located within Eau Claire County and adjacent to the City of Eau Claire. The Eau Claire – Chippewa Falls MSA is approximately 169,000 residents and is the economic and cultural hub of Western Wisconsin.

The City has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade, a condition generally shared by other incorporated communities in the Chippewa Valley. The 2010 Census estimate of City population was 6,706, which increased to 8,099 in a January 1, 2020 Wisconsin Department of Administration estimate. This 20.8% increase is the second highest rate of growth for a Wisconsin city during this period. Approximately 27 percent of the City’s housing has been permitted since 2010, with hundreds of dwellings currently under construction. Permits for new homes set new records in 2019 and 2020, and with a full pipeline of projects with zoning entitlement, indications are that similar growth is likely for the immediate future. Growth has been mixed between infill as well as edge development.

Community change in the past decade has resulted in a City that has improved balance of housing and employment. In 2010, 28% of the Altoona’s equalized value was commercial and industrial property, a figure that increased to over 40% by 2020. This figure is especially meaningful in the context of Altoona’s boom in housing.

This growth has resulted in ongoing dialogue among elected and appointed officials concerning the character and location of growth and change in the city. These conversations are anticipated to be crystalized and given direction through the comprehensive planning process.

Purpose and Vision

The City’s existing Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2009. Minor text amendments were adopted in 2015, meeting requirements for updates per WI Stats 66.1001 but little changing the parent document. Given the tremendous growth in the City over the past ten years, the City is looking for a completely new plan incorporating contemporary best practices and innovations, with anticipated adoption in early 2022. City officials and staff envision a robust public engagement and thoughtful analysis process that elevates collective capacity of officials and the public for informed decision-making, and captures the ambitious and visionary aspirations of the community and its leaders.

The scope of the Comprehensive Plan should be to look ahead 10-20 years to guide pursuit of the City’s vision. The Plan should also anticipate long-term outcomes of policies and decisions, and not shy away from tough conversations or ambitions that span generations. In addition, the City is seeking a clear and realistic implementation element that lays the groundwork for moving forward the specific actions, recommendations and policies of the plan in strategic and systematic fashion.

In addition to meeting the Wisconsin State Statute requirements, there are additional factors to be addressed as stand-alone plan elements and/or integrated throughout. Housing supply, affordability and access, sustainability, racial equity, economic development and growth management are expected to be areas of focus and attention of the public. Additional elements, values, and concepts are expected to be confirmed and refined through the planning process and be reflected in the plan:

- Complete inclusion, social equity and restorative practices
- Climate resilience and mitigation
- Public health, environmental determinants of health
- Municipal fiscal productivity and resiliency; long-term costs of development
- Mobility; walkability and bikeability for transportation and recreation
- Excellence in the public realm
- Character of development
- Authenticity and community image

Climate action, social equity, and fiscal solvency must be lenses through which the entire planning process, recommended policies, and decision-making process are anchored. The Comprehensive Plan, if faithfully implemented, is intended to reflect the City's vision and ambition as a leader in pursuing and achieving social equity, climate action and environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility, public health and wellbeing.

Section II: Project Scope

The City is seeking a consulting Firm to create and facilitate an effective and inclusive public participation process and assemble a new comprehensive plan for the City that will guide land use, infrastructure, development, housing, and other interrelated decisions over the decades to come. The project must include a strong visioning process to identify key issues, values and goals of the community, as well as thorough analysis of existing conditions and trends upon which sound development policies and new initiatives can be based. The end result should be a plan that not only meets the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes, but also incorporate the latest best practices and innovations in community development, and connect the community's vision and values directly to policies and actions. All aspects of the process and plan must express the highest ambitions of the community and provides clear strategies for achieving them.

The ambitions expressed by City officials and staff is that this planning process will be regarded as catalytic, capacity-building, and inclusive dialogue, and result in new Comprehensive Plan that is regarded as impactful, innovative and best practice. City leaders recognize that achievement of its vision and values require doing what is necessary to navigate hard issues, uncomfortable conversations, and implement strategies to tackle wicked problems, and not only pursue actions regarded as uncontroversial or conventional.

The project will be led by the City Planner with oversight of the City Administrator and Plan Commission. The Administrator and Plan Commission are expected to be heavily involved in generating input and guiding content. Ultimate approval will be required by the City Council.

Additional engagement and contribution with other City staff and committees will be expected throughout the process. The project process is intended to be a collaboration between City Staff and the selected Firm, and solicit meaningful contributions by other community groups and the public. While this solicitation is arranged as a request for qualifications (“response”) instead of a detailed proposal, the following is intended to generate interest and illustrate the beginning context and expectations for the process so that Firms may present their experience and qualifications accordingly. The planning process and deliverable are expected to be determined in consultation and advisement of the selected Firm. The final scope, work plan and budget shall be negotiated between City Staff and the selected Firm.

The City of Altoona has budgeted **\$90,000** for completion of the planning process, activities and deliverables that are the responsibility of the selected Firm.

Public Participation

The City is seeking a robust public participation process that provides many opportunities for meaningful involvement by a broad and representative range of residents, businesses and other stakeholders. The City does not intend to dictate through this RFQ a specific process, tool, or set of activities to achieve this. The City is seeking the expertise and creativity of Firms to recommend the process that they determine will most effectively achieve these goals, and this will factor significantly into the evaluation and scoring process. City staff also anticipates dedicating time to advancing public participation and/or completing complementary activities.

Due to Covid-19, many engagement activities are expected to be conducted virtually, at least in the early phases of the planning process, and in accordance with latest best practices and restriction that may be in effect. The effectiveness of virtual engagement tools is anticipated to be critical to the success of this process and the City will evaluate proposals received with this in mind. The City has been using Zoom as its meeting platform for City Council and other City board meetings, but we are also interested in use of other, more robust, platforms.

The following values are expected to be expressed and operationalized through the public participation process:

- **Capacity Building:** The public engagement process is intended to be constructed as a capacity building exercise to improve the recognition and value of, and readiness to engage in planning activities by key stakeholders and the public.
- **Inclusivity:** Successful efforts to connect with and generate meaningful engagement from a broad and diverse cross section of the community, including racial, cultural, socioeconomic, age and gender expression. Ideas for proven success in gathering input to achieve this should be clearly laid out in the response.
- **Fun:** Opportunities to utilize fun, creative, and enjoyable activities to engage people, especially kids.
- **Variety:** While the City prefers quality over quantity, utilizing a variety of methods to reach and engage various audiences is desired.

Existing Efforts:

- The City maintains a relatively robust social media presence and weekly email newsletter to constituents which may be employed in support of the comprehensive planning effort.

- The City is investigating the use of MindMixer, CitizenLab, and similar tools as a virtual engagement platform. However, the City does not have an existing public engagement tool. Therefore, a consultant should reflect their experience and expertise in those or similar platforms.

Plan Elements

The plan must incorporate all elements required by WI Stats 66.1001:

- *Issues and Opportunities*
- *Housing*
- *Transportation*
- *Utilities and Community Facilities*
- *Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources*
- *Economic Development*
- *Intergovernmental Cooperation*
- *Land Use*
- *Implementation*

Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is regarded as a desired exercise and invaluable tool to assist in visualizing and understanding community change scenarios and relationships between desired future conditions, values, and policies to achieve these ambitions. The selected Firm is desired to reflect their experience in conducting scenario planning exercises and integrated these seamlessly into a Comprehensive Planning process.

GIS

The City has an existing contract for service with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (RPC) for maintaining GIS layers and update existing maps. The Firm will be expected to work seamlessly with the RPC to access data, and conduct additional mapping and analysis activities. RPC staff recently completed an update of the City's layers, and reconstruction of the City's maps from the 2009 Comp Plan.

Project Schedule

The project is expected to be completed in approximately 12-16 months, placing the projected consideration and adoption of the final plan in second quarter, 2022. The duration is intended to balance interests of robust public engagement, technical analysis, application of best practices, and thoughtful deliberation with the desire to achieve completed documents in reasonable timeframe. A project schedule will be constructed with and agreed upon with the selected Firm.

Section III: Concurrent Projects, Recent Activities, Anticipated Follow-up

Concurrent Activities and Anticipated Follow-up Efforts:

- A. Substantial updates in zoning map and ordinance text, with potential for complete replacement, as required to implement newly adopted comprehensive plan, is anticipated. The core of the City's zoning ordinance and administrative procedures remain little changed from 1970. Meaningful but minor amendments have been adopted in the past five years to enable infill

development and improve site design. A large percentage of the city's growth in the past ten years has been within the River Prairie Mixed Use District, a form-based PCD and tax increment district. Aspects of the existing code are regarded as barriers to pursuing the city's vision, values and priorities. The City has determined that substantial modifications to the code should logically follow the Comprehensive Plan.

- B. The City purchased 83 acres east of the City along U.S. Highway 12 to accommodate and guide the character of future growth. The City is in the process of annexation. Design of a utility extension is budgeted in 2021 for 2022 construction. The City will solicit consultant services to complete a land use and concept plan for this property and nearby areas. Coordination between the consultant selected for that project and the comprehensive plan is required. The Firm may submit a response on that project separately.
- C. The City has three highly successful tax increment districts that are anticipated to close between 2024-25. The District plans may be amended to incorporate implementation projects identified in the comprehensive plan, as the City Council may determine. The City expects to utilize the TID closure provision in Wisconsin Statutes to capture funds for affordable housing projects, with potential resources in excess of \$5 million. The City expects a focused plan for use of these resources will be conducted as the closure dates approach. The comprehensive plan should include recognition of and planning ahead for this possibility.
- D. The City anticipates submitting an application to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission [Energy Innovation Grant Program](#) to construct a Renewable Energy Action Plan. The City received a "25x25" energy plan grant in 2008 and completed a plan at that time. The City would seek to complete a new assessment and detailed plan. This is expected to be patterned similarly to the City of Eau Claire [2019 REAP](#) project which received grant support in an earlier cycle. If awarded, the City anticipates the REAP planning process may be partially concurrent with the Comprehensive Plan, be mutually supportive, and inform specific recommendations. Any results from the REAP planning process shall be appropriately incorporated into or referenced in the updated comprehensive plan.

Recent Projects and Activities Critical to the Comprehensive Planning Process

- A. River Prairie, a mixed-use development district master-planned by the City is nearing build-out and the City is actively seeking to guide future development elsewhere in the City. River Prairie has been transformative for the City not only in creating premier parks and public amenities, generating tremendous tax base, attracting business and housing, but also in elevating the City's understanding and capacity for self-determination through intentionally guiding the development process. River Prairie has won multiple awards for engineering and design, and has become one of the focal points of the region. The development is supported by a large tax increment district that is set to retire in 2024.
- B. City Planner Clements initiated and serves as the co-facilitator of the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force, since April 2018. This effort brought together over 100 contributors from the region to elevate common understanding regarding housing affordability, accessibility, and supply challenges and opportunities. The Task Force issued a Statement of Consensus Findings in 2019, which led to many completed and ongoing policy and projects efforts in Eau Claire and Altoona. The City of Altoona adopted a housing action plan by resolution in May 2019. Work of the Task

Force continues. This as a prime opportunity to continue housing efforts within the systems-wide approach of the Comprehensive Plan.

- C. City Staff are working on completion of the Altoona *Place Plan*, a unified parks & open space plan combined with bicycle and pedestrian strategy, incorporating other placemaking, public space and land management strategies. This plan is intended to integrate a wide range of public realm strategies and objectives in an integrated document. The *Place Plan* is expected to be complete and adopted in first quarter 2021.
- D. The City has budgeted to complete a water system study in 2021 to evaluate water service capacity throughout the City. The efforts contained in the process include a review of the existing and projected future water demands, supply and storage capacity, and recommendations on proposed system improvements.
- E. The City adopted an Official Map for the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (1.5 miles) east of the City along the U.S. Highway 12 corridor. This map identifies key local roadways and connections to the highway to guide future growth and development to ensure continuity.
- F. The City contracted the completion of a space needs analysis for city facilities in 2020. Eau Claire County is planning to construct a new Highway Department campus, vacating their existing 10.6-acre site in the City of Altoona in 2022. The site is located at 2000 Spooner Avenue near the center of the City, between the City's Public Safety Building and Cinder City Park. The City anticipates acquiring this site to relocate public works functions and expand the adjacent city public safety facility.

Section IV: Project Deliverables

The selected Firm will be responsible for compiling the new Comprehensive Plan in accordance with WI Stats §66.1001 that functions as the City's official and definitive policy guide and decision-making framework. The City desires a concise, user-friendly and visually appealing final document incorporating graphics, narrative, goals, objectives, recommendations, maps and exhibits. City staff expects to provide editorial guidance and contributions in specific areas to arrive at a collaborative product.

The complete results and artifacts resulting from public engagement are regarded as invaluable documentation of the process and utilization for concurrent and future activities. All files generated through the planning process shall be retained by the City, including GIS files.

Firm staff are expected to present drafts and revisions to the Plan Commission, including public hearings and other touch points. Firm and staff will determine and agree upon the balance of requirements and expectations of the Firm to meet with the Commission, City Council or any subcommittee that may be created to budget the Firms time to make best use of the Firms expertise and contracted services.

Section V: Response Process

Estimated Contracting Timeline

RFQ Published	December 17, 2020
Deadline for Questions	January 15, 2021
Responses to Questions prepared by City	January 22, 2021 (not later than)
Responses Due	February 8, 2021 Noon
Firms Notified of Interview	February 12, 2021
Interviews	February 15 – 19, 2021
Plan Commission Recommendation	February 23, 2021
City Council approval of award	February 25, 2021

The above schedule for review by the City is subject to change. The City anticipates the need to conduct interviews within this RFQ process. The City will not be legally obligated to adhere to the dates and are provided for guidance purposes. Interviews will be conducted by staff and representative(s) of the Plan Commission.

Contract Administration

Address all correspondence regarding this RFQ to:

Project Manager
Joshua Clements, AICP, City Planner
joshuac@ci.altoona.wi.us
715-839-6092

In absence of the project manager, the secondary contact for project administration is:
Mike Golat, City Administrator
michaelg@ci.altoona.wi.us
715-839-6092

All Firms who receive or download this RFQ are requested to register their name and email address by writing joshuac@ci.altoona.wi.us. Any revisions or corrections to this RFQ after posting will be communicated to those registered. Registration is not required for a response to be considered responsive.

Any requests for additional information or clarification regarding the RFQ for the preparation of a response should be directed to the Project Manager in writing at the contact information above. All questions must be received no later than January 15, 2021. Questions received after that time may not be addressed.

The is the responsibility of the Firm to carefully read the entire RFQ which contains provisions applicable to successful completion and submission of a response. If any ambiguity, inconsistencies or errors are discovered in the RFQ, the Project Manager must be notified in writing. Only interpretations or correction of the RFQ made in writing through addenda by the Project Manager will be considered binding on the Firm.

Firms should not rely on any representations, statements or explanations other than those made in this RFQ or addenda issued subsequent to the issuance of this RFQ. Where there appears to be a conflict between the RFQ and any addenda issued, the last addenda issued will prevail. It is the Firm's responsibility to assure receipt of all addenda. The Firm should verify with the City prior to submitting a response that all addenda have been received. Firms are required to acknowledge the number of the addenda received as part of their response.

Submittal of Response

Please provide an electronic copy of the response in .pdf format for the evaluation process as an email attachment or direct link to download to Joshua Clements, joshuac@ci.altoona.wi.us. All responses will be verified and time-stamped by the City.

Responses will be accepted until **February 8, 2021 at Noon** central standard time.

Responses must be clear, concise, comprehensive and professional, but it is not necessary to include expensive displays or excessive promotional materials. All costs incurred in the preparation, presentation of the response, and participating in the interviews shall be borne solely by the prospective Firm and their sub-consultants. The maximum length of a response is **20 pages**. Internet links to comparable work deliverables and artifacts of public engagement may be imbedded in the response.

A Firm may submit a modified response to replace all or any portion of a previously submitted response up until the due date. The Evaluation Committee will only consider the latest version of the response as part of its deliberations.

Response Format

The response must contain, or reflect, the following items:

1. Name, address, phone number, email address, web site, and brief history of your Firm(s) (include local/regional office locations). Include any partnering firms similarly.
2. Key project personnel, their experience and preparation, and roles in the project.
3. Examples of recent projects of similar scope, including links to finished product. Please provide reference to supporting process or public participation tools, if available.
4. List a minimum of three references consisting of government entities on projects of similar scope.
5. Anticipated approach to conducting a robust comprehensive planning process for a community in Altoona's context, responsive to the ideas and guidance provided.
6. A lump sum "not to exceed" fee.
7. The response must be signed by an officer of the company, who is legally authorized to enter into a contractual relationship in the name of the Firm.
8. The submittal of a Firm will be considered by the City as constituting an offer by the Firm to perform the required services at the stated prices. The response and price quotations shall be good for a minimum of 90 days from the enclosed deadline.

Contract Requirements

The RFQ shall be signed by an authorized representative of the lead Firm with contract signature authority. Only one response will be accepted from any one Firm serving as the prime respondent. Sub-consultants to the prime Firm may be included in the response of more than one Firm.

The selected Firm or team will be required to execute a Professional Services Contract with the City of Altoona. The contract shall include a plan of work, schedule, and balance of duties between the Firm(s) and city staff. The contract shall be a not-to-exceed total price. Any modifications to the contract, including total price, must result from mutual written agreement. The contract required for the firm and City to execute will be provided by the City in order to meet all City contractual requirements.

No work covered by the contract shall commence until after the Firm provides the required proof of insurance, the contract is executed, and a Notice to Proceed has been issued by the City.

Section VI: Selection Process

The Firm selection will be made through a qualifications-based selection process upon evaluation of the responses, examples of comparable work, artifacts of success in public engagement, and interview. Provided, however, cost will also be a consideration. The selection process is intended to result in a Firm or team best suited to deliver the best process and product as described herein.

A selection committee of individuals representing the City of Altoona will evaluate the merits of the responses and rank responses that they feel are most qualified with respect to the project stated in the RFQ. The City anticipates inviting finalists for interviews with the committee to be held via Zoom. The committee will recommend a Firm to the Plan Commission to consider for final selection. City staff and Firm will then proceed to determine project plan, timeline and contract.

Section VII: Legal Notices

RFQ Postponement or Cancellation

The City may, at its sole and absolute discretion, reject any and all, or parts of any and all responses, re-advertise this RFQ, postpone or cancel at any time this RFQ process, or waive any irregularities in this RFQ and to award a contract in the best interest of the City of Altoona.

Responses Not Confidential

Any materials submitted as part of a response shall not be considered confidential. No response information or selection process information will be released until a final recommendation has been prepared by the City or the process is terminated. Prior to that time, only a list of the Firms responding to the RFQ may be made public.

Rules, Regulations and Licensing Requirements

All Firms shall comply with all laws, ordinances and regulations applicable to the services contemplated by the RFQ. Firms are presumed to be familiar with all Federal, State, and Local laws, ordinances, codes, and regulations that may affect the services to be offered.

Review of Responses for Responsiveness

Each response will be reviewed to determine if the response is responsive to the submission requirements outlined in the RFQ. A responsive response is one that follows the requirements of the RFQ, includes all documentation, is submitted in the format outlined in the RFQ, is a timely submission, and has the appropriate signatures as required on each document. Failure to comply with these requirements may deem a response as non-responsive.

Litigation

The contract resulting from this RFQ shall be constructed in accordance with the laws of the State of Wisconsin. Any litigation between the parties arising out of, or in connection with the contract shall be initiated either in the court system of the State of Wisconsin or the United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin.

Termination for Cause

If the Firm fails to fulfill any of the obligations under the contract resulting from this RFQ in a timely manner, or otherwise violates any of the covenants, agreements or stipulations material to the contract, the City shall thereupon have the right to immediately terminate the contract by giving written notice to the Firm of such termination.

EXHIBIT A - Recently Acquired 83-Acre Property by the City

