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# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

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ZONING / DEVELOPMENT

CODE REWRITE

**Submission Deadline: May 16,  
2023 2:00PM CST**

# **Request for Proposal Notice:**

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## **CITY OF ALTOONA, WISCONSIN**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

The City of Altoona is seeking a qualified and experienced consultant firm to rewrite its Zoning (Title 19) and Subdivision / Land Division (Title 18) ordinances. The last major update was in 1970 and the code has become outdated. Altoona is a rapidly changing community and the version of Altoona the current code was written for in 1970 was a very different community from present-day. The new ordinance must reflect the goals and values of the City as illustrated in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan and supportive planning documents, and improve the form and function of the built environment, while being understandable and enforceable. Proposals will be judged by the scope of work and criteria found in this RFP.

#### **Deadline for submission: 2:00 PM CDT, May 16, 2023**

Submit one signed original submission in a sealed package labeled “Altoona Zoning / Development Code Rewrite” received and stamped by the City no later than **2:00 PM CST on May 16, 2023**.

High-resolution electronic files (pdf), otherwise identical to the hard copy submission, shall also be submitted via direct email or by download to [taylor@ci.altoona.wi.us](mailto:taylor@ci.altoona.wi.us). There will be no public opening on the due date and time specified in this RFP.

All proposals submitted must be received by Altoona by the deadline established in this RFP. It is recommended to submit the required documents in plenty of time before the deadline.

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# **Section 1.0 - Project Description:**

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## **Background**

Altoona was originally platted around the railroad yards as East Eau Claire. Upon incorporation in 1887, Altoona became named after the famous Altoona Pennsylvania railroad yards. The City began to grow quickly, as the presence of the railroad attracted businesses and housing construction. By 1929, the City had its first community well and sewage system. While Altoona remained relatively small for many decades, during the 1970s, the City doubled in size. Since the time, Altoona has continued to grow into a full-service community of over 9,000 residents.

Located in west-central Wisconsin, Altoona is bordered by the City of Eau Claire to the west and south, Lake Altoona, Eau Claire River, and the Town of Seymour to the north, and by the Town of Washington to the east and southeast. Regionally, the City is within the greater Chippewa Valley straddling Eau Claire County and Chippewa County, which includes the City of Eau Claire, City of Chippewa Falls, Village of Lake Hallie, and surrounding towns. As of 2022, the City of Altoona has 9,149 residents and encompasses approximately 3,200 acres or 5 square miles. Since 2010 Altoona has experienced a 164.58% increase in its equalized value and a 36.43% increase in population.

Altoona's location near Interstate 94 provides direct, efficient access between the greater Minneapolis and Madison areas. The community also has relatively direct access to Chippewa Falls and northern Wisconsin via USH 53, Wausau and eastern Wisconsin via STH 29, and greater Eau Claire County via USH 12. Freight rail service continues to this day, connecting the City with Eau Claire, Minneapolis, central Wisconsin, and points beyond. The rail yard remains the primary rail switching facility for the region. These combined transportation corridors provide the City access to regional employment, shopping, cultural, and entertainment destinations.

The City is also surrounded by high-quality natural resources including lakes, rivers, streams, woodlands, wetlands, and agricultural lands. Some of the most notable are Lake Altoona, Otter Creek, Eau Claire River, Chippewa River, and Lake Wissota. The Chippewa Valley exists along the edge of the Driftless region, with its hills, valleys, and river systems, the Northwoods of the upper Midwest with its large forests and thousands of lakes, and the prime agricultural areas of the west-central area of the state. Each of these landscapes influence the history, culture, economic and recreational opportunities of the region's inhabitants.

## **State Laws**

In Wisconsin, broad "Home Rule" authority is given to cities to govern themselves subject to state enabling and preemptive laws. In recent years, the legislature has curtailed some municipal controls. Levy limits are strict and can only be raised by the net new construction percentage from the preceding year, or zero if none. Thus, operating budgets are tight unless residents approve a referendum. While new development is important in this context, it also puts strain on essential services. There is no centralized State planning agency, although there is platting and annexation review, and various agencies such as the DNR or DOT have some review authority.

## **Comprehensive Plan**

Comprehensive planning powers are granted under State Statute 66.1001. Zoning needs to be

consistent with and not contrary to the Comprehensive plan, objectives, goals, and policies. Altoona completed a Comprehensive Plan Update in July 2022. Altoona specifically completed the Comprehensive Plan update prior to launching its comprehensive zoning and development code update to serve as a guide for future zoning and development regulations. Any code update must be filtered through the same lenses used in the Comprehensive Plan including:

**Climate Action:** Proactive and urgent action to mitigate climate change and improve the community’s resiliency to the impacts of an ever-changing climate.

**Social Equity:** Striving to achieve social equity through creating equitable access and quality of services and opportunities, addressing disparities in health, wealth, and safety outcomes, and the engagement and inclusion of all residents.

**Economic Vitality:** Maintaining fiscal sustainability through efficient, responsible, and informed public investments, service improvements, and enhancement of quality-of-life amenities.

There are valid criticisms that the existing code is not achieving outcomes consistent with the Plan’s themes as well as current city values. A few persistent concerns are a lack of mixed-use zoning, design standards, exclusionary provisions (large setbacks, sizable minimum lot sizes, single use zones, etc), and cumbersome entitlements processes in some cases. As part of the plan objectives, we would want a zoning / development ordinance that helps Altoona:

1. Be an attractive city where people want to live and work
2. Thrive as a regional center with good jobs in education, health care and manufacturing
3. Achieve compact growth; include nodes of higher intensity; build mixed / resilient housing; maintain a clear rural edge
4. Bring about redevelopment and infill growth, particularly in the older neighborhoods
5. Improve household economic well-being
6. Emphasize resilient mixed-use spaces
7. Practice environmental stewardship.
8. Streamline entitlement processes.

Altoona has a number of ongoing planning initiatives that are guided by and support the Comprehensive Plan and should inform any RFP proposal including an energy study in concert with Xcel Energy, implementation of its East Neighborhood Plan, and a regional housing study with the City of Eau Claire and Eau Claire County. The energy study and the housing study are expected to be completed in June and May respectively.

It is also worth noting that Altoona has an interest in revitalization of its historical downtown. Altoona has begun reinvesting in its downtown with projects such as its container park and would be including establishment of a Downtown zone and accompanying standards in the RFP proposal.

## Zoning

Zoning powers are granted under State Statute 62.23(7). The last major code overhaul was in 1970. The current code iteration is highly Euclidian in nature with minimal design standards and a primary focus on uses, setbacks, and lot sizes. Altoona staff have made incremental adjustments to the ordinance to attempt compliance with changes to state and federal law as well as Altoona development values. Zoning is [Title 19](#) and Subdivisions & Land Divisions is [Title 18](#).

Beyond Title 19 and Title 18 there are overlapping standards are found in the City's [Code of Ordinance](#) that include Buildings & Construction ([Title 15](#)), Stormwater ([Title 14](#)), Streets & Sidewalks ([Title 12](#)). While the bulk of the work will be focused on the zoning and land divisions titles, changes to these other codes and new cross-referencing will need to be completed.

Planning staff also enforces rules that impact land use zoning in a growing number of specialized plans including River Prairie Design Standards and Guidelines and the Hillcrest Master Plan, Circulation Plan, Park Plan, and Zoning Map. Over time this has made for complexity and a large collection of standards to stay on top both for staff and the development community.

### Desired Outcomes

- The code needs to be more user-friendly to implementers, which can be done by consolidating and simplifying standards. For instance, use regulation can be consolidated to a single matrix rather than being listed individually by district section. Emphasize plain language and use of supportive illustrations.
- Improve zoning consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and better align with its vision of compact and sustainable development. This will require an overhaul of a number of zones which reflect outdated Euclidian standards that promote single use, sprawling development characteristics.
- Improve development process certainties for City officials, staff, the development community, businesses, residents, neighborhood associations, and general public. This may include expedited review process standards or site/building standards. This may be achieved by expanding the capacity of certain applications to be reviewed and approved at the staff level rather than other land use authorities such as site plans and specific implementation plans.
- Undertake a public process that fairly addresses the issues and solutions and includes appropriate stakeholders in an inclusionary manner.
- Educate with evidence-based literature/data on the need for zoning reforms and the associated co-benefits. Leverage pending area housing needs assessment, best practices, visual preference studies/exercises, etc. Use of supportive materials including the Comprehensive Plan, pending Energy Study and Housing Study, Place Plan, and East Neighborhood Plan is expected.
- Produce more housing supply, diversity of choices, and affordability. It is important that our ordinances support / incentivize construction of a range of housing types with various price points. Incentivizing projects that provide ownership opportunities in addition to rentals is a priority.
- Establish clearer landscape requirements and incentivize the use of green infrastructure by new developments.

- Update Altoona’s zoning map to reflect zone changes.
- Lower carbon emissions of development and transportation. Altoona is currently in the process of completing an energy study that will better articulate its energy profile as well as provide the long-term objectives and values Altoona would like to achieve in the following years.
- More actively promote form-based strategies/street-to- building relationships, mixed-use activity centers, and newly master planned areas. Officially map important corridors, streets, trails, parks, schools, density thresholds, etc.
- Produce better site and building design standards/menu options/form-based solutions. Includes commercial and residential and co-location with compatible industrial.
- Collaborate with Altoona Engineering to create pre-designated cross sections to inform developers on new projects in conjunction with the Engineering department.
- Modernize and reduce ambiguity in how our code handles condominiums, Certified Survey Maps, and standard land divisions.
- Produce more complete streets as well as neighborhoods with housing choices, commercial development and jobs within walkable / bikeable distance.
- Reduce exclusionary zoning practices that do harm to public welfare by using performance standards that address real livability issues. Create new use tables that are user-friendly.
- Align related development standards found in the Code of Ordinances to be updated and cross-referenced.
- Consolidate Planned Community Development ordinances and regulations into the general zoning code to increase user friendliness and efficiency in use.
- Refine approach to and reduce reliance on Planned Community Developments (floating zones, master plans, etc.)
- Identify opportunities to encourage and support construction of accessory dwelling units and other affordable housing opportunities within traditional neighborhoods. While accessory dwelling units are permitted, there has been limited to no construction of new units as a result.
- Establish design standards for various building types and emphasize regulation of form rather than uses and lot sizes. Promote the use of development standards to drive form such as parking, frontage, height, appropriate setbacks, etc. Flexibility in design and implementation is desired.
- Add illustrations or images to visually define expectations.
- Establish a Downtown zone with standards to incentivize redevelopment and revitalization.
- Update Altoona’s small cell / telecommunications ordinance.
- Update definitions and define uses / standards.
- Review and update parking standards.

## **Resources**

[City of Altoona Planning / Development Division](#)

[City of Altoona 2022 Comprehensive Plan](#)

[City of Altoona Zoning Ordinance](#)

[City of Altoona Subdivisions & Land Divisions](#)

[Altoona East Neighborhood Plan](#)

[River Prairie Design Standards and Guidelines](#)

[Hillcrest Master Plan](#)

[Altoona Zoning Map](#)

[Altoona Parks & Public Spaces Plan](#)

[Eau Claire County GIS Parcel Map](#)

## **Section 2.0 - Scope of Work:**

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The consultant shall submit a proposed work plan with timeline based on the following scope of work. Provide both a summary and the detail of the proposed services, including any technical/innovative approaches for the project that address desired outcomes.

With work beginning in June, staff estimates the process could take as long as the middle or end of 2024 (12 to 18 months). Based on this, indicate a proposed timeline to complete the tasks and the estimated number of hours per assigned individual or specific service.

The consultant should respond to the process envisioned below, or alternatively, recommend another process or modifications if they have found them to be effective in zoning / development code rewrites.

### **Planning Division & Steering Committee**

The Planning Division is led by the Altoona Planning Director / Zoning Administrator. The Planning Director acts as Altoona's City Planner and oversees the Altoona Building Inspector. The Planning Director coordinates the Altoona development team consisting of Planning, Engineering, and Public Safety.

A small steering committee encompassing the Planning Director, City Administrator, Plan Commissioners, and other key staff, along with a number of expert community stakeholder perspectives is anticipated. Other stakeholders will be included by interviews or by invitation to committee meetings for input on topical areas. Again, an alternative process may be recommended.

### **Public Participation Plan**

The consultant should provide a public participation plan that provides public engagement opportunities such as open houses at least at key junctures (kick-off, mid-way, and near the end). This plan should consider the steering committee above and related tasks below. Best practice engagement techniques, including building more equity into the process, are important to capture input from people often not engaged.

### **Essential Tasks**

- Understand Altoona – Review, familiarize, analyze, and critique existing zoning/related codes, design manuals, other plans that contain standards, and assessment reports that highlight issues with Altoona's codes. Compare these with the Comprehensive Plan for areas of support and inconsistency.



- Provide Recommendations – Provide best practices/example codes as related to low- carbon sustainable development, form-base designs, affordable/attainable housing, missing middle housing, mixed housing integration, parking reductions, multi-modal transportation, performance standards for various uses, etc.
- Staff Relationships – Project management, communications, and meetings with lead planning staff.
- Steering Committee – Meet with and present materials/draft revisions for technical team evaluation and decision making.
- Code Revisions – Draft and format code revisions, including all progressive iterations and final versions with cross-references
- Code Accompaniments – Add relevant tables, illustrations, and images (such as improved use tables, design guidance, etc.).
- External Communications – Provide key communication updates to public.
- Public Meetings – Attend open houses and as necessary other committees, commissions and boards. There may be some opportunity to attend meetings virtually.
- Final Deliverable – Deliver a new zoning code and GIS map with updated zoning districts.
- Present the final zoning code to Plan Commission and City Council.

# Section 3.0 – Timetable of Project:

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|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| RFP available for distribution...  | March 24, 2023             |
| Optional Pre-Submittal Conference.....   | 10:00 a.m., April 27, 2023 |
| Deadline for receipt of questions to: <a href="mailto:taylorg@ci.altoona.wi.us">taylorg@ci.altoona.wi.us</a> ..... | 12:00CDT, April 17, 2023   |
| Deadline for submittal of Proposal.....  | 2:00pm CDT, May 16, 2023   |
| Oral Presentations (if needed).....  | May 24 – May 25, 2023      |
| Complete evaluations, review & prepare recommendations .....   | May 30, 2023               |
| Council Approval of Selected Consultant.....   | Tentatively June 8, 2023   |

# Section 4.0 – Instructions:

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## 4.1 Request for Proposal Information

It is the responsibility of the Consultant to carefully read the entire Request for Proposal, which contains provisions applicable to successful completion, and submission of an RFP. If any ambiguity, inconsistencies or errors are discovered in the RFP, the Altoona Planning Director must be notified in writing. Only interpretations or corrections of the RFP made in writing through addenda by the Planning Director will be considered binding. The Planning Director must receive all requests for interpretations or corrections no later than the date specified in the RFP timetable. The RFP consists of all documents identified in the Scope of Work section of this RFP.

## 4.2 Pre-Submittal Conference

An optional pre-submittal conference has been scheduled for this project at the time and date identified in Section 3.0. Prospective consultants are not required to attend the pre-submittal conference but will be an opportunity to ask questions and meet staff.

## 4.3 Submission of Proposals

Submit one signed original submission in a seal package labeled “Altoona Zoning / Development Code Rewrite” received and stamped by the City no later than **2:00 PM CST on May 16, 2023**.

High-resolution electronic files (pdf), otherwise identical to the hard copy submission, shall also be submitted via direct email or by download to [taylor@ci.altoona.wi.us](mailto:taylor@ci.altoona.wi.us). There will be no public opening on the due date and time specified in this RFP.

All proposals submitted must be received by Altoona by the deadline established in this RFP. It is recommended to submit the required documents in plenty of time before the deadline.

#### **4.4 Modified Submissions of RFP**

Modified qualifications and proposals can be submitted to replace all or any portion of previously submitted information. The Selection Committee will only consider the latest version as part of its deliberations.

#### **4.5 Withdrawal of RFP**

Qualification and proposal information may be withdrawn from consideration prior to the submission deadline by written request, on the Consultant's letterhead, submitted to the Planning Director.

#### **4.6 RFP Postponement or Cancellation**

The City may, at its sole and absolute discretion, reject any and all, or parts of any and all submittals to the RFP, re-advertise this RFP, postpone or cancel at any time this RFP process, or waive any irregularities in this RFP as it deems to be in the best interest of the City of Altoona.

#### **4.7 Contracting Department**

The Community Development / Planning Division will administer the contract resulting from this RFP.

#### **4.8 Incurring Costs**

The City of Altoona is not liable for any cost incurred by proposers in replying to this RFP. The City of Altoona reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and to waive technicalities in any proposal or part thereof deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Altoona.

#### **4.9 Proprietary Information**

Any restrictions on the use of data contained within a proposal must be clearly stated in the proposal itself. Each page must be clearly marked "CONFIDENTIAL". The City shall comply with State and Federal Law(s) as to complying with request for information.

#### **4.10 Fixed Price Period**

All price, cost, and conditions outlined in the RFP/Price Proposal shall remain fixed and valid for acceptance for a 90-day period commencing on the due date of the contractor's proposal. The City reserves the right to negotiate the scope of services and cost with the highest ranked consultant, when only one firm is short-listed.

#### **4.11 Oral Presentation**

The City may require Proposers to give an oral presentation in support of their proposal or to exhibit or otherwise demonstrate the information contained therein.

#### **4.12 Certification of Independent Price Determination**

By signing this proposal, the respondent certifies, and in the case of a joint proposal, each party thereto certifies as to its own organization, that in connection with this procurement:

The process in this proposal has been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement, for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices with any other respondent or with any competitor;

Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in this proposal have not been knowingly disclosed by the respondent and will not knowingly be disclosed by the respondent prior to opening in the case of an advertised procurement or prior to award in the case of a negotiated procurement, directly or indirectly to any other respondent or to any competitor.

#### **4.13 Restricting Competition**

No attempt has been made or will be made by the respondent to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.

#### **4.14 Clarification of the RFP (Request for Proposals)**

If additional information is necessary to assist the vendor in interpreting this RFP, questions will be accepted by email: [taylor@ci.altoona.wi.us](mailto:taylor@ci.altoona.wi.us). See timetable for submittal of formal questions.

## **Section 5.0 – Preparing and Submitting:**

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### **5.1 General Instructions**

Evaluation and selection of the firm for this project will be based on information submitted

in the request for proposal plus references, oral presentations (if requested), other references and supplemental information. Failure to respond to each requirement in the RFP may be the basis for rejecting a response.

Elaborate Proposals; e.g. expensive artwork beyond that which is sufficient to present a complete and effective proposal is not necessary.

## 5.2 Request for Proposal (RFP)

Letter of Introduction/Statement of Interest

- Summarize the firm's interest in this project and any special knowledge or expertise that the firm has to offer.
- Include name of contact person, phone number, e-mail address and web site address

Table of Contents

- Include a Table of Contents that outlines in sequential order, the major areas of the proposal. All pages of the proposal, including enclosures, must be clearly and consecutively numbered as documented in the Table of Contents.

Firm's Information; including the following:

- Office location
- Ownership, affiliation, and years in business
- Past performances on similar contracts in terms of cost control, quality of work and compliance with performance schedules.
- List of the last three (3) assignments of similar projects and budget ranges that were completed by the firm, including the firm's lead person and references for this project.

Information on individuals who will provide the service, including the following:

- Resume of the individual in charge of the service and other employees involved.
- Identify any sub-consultants to be used on the project and the percentage of their level of involvement along with their experience working on like projects.

Proposed services; Include the following:

- Proposed work plan or proposed scope of work and technical/innovative approaches for the project. Provide both a summary and the detail of your proposed services.

- Provide a public participation plan that allows for effective engagement.
- Indicate proposed timeframe to complete the tasks and the estimated number of hours per assigned individual or specific service.

Price Proposal:

- Price Proposal shall include any and all one-time or set-up charges, as well as all other fees that will be charged.
- The price must reflect all costs, which the City would be required to pay the firm in connection with Section 2.0, Scope of Work in this RFP.
- The price proposals shall include a price for each category specified and all other costs, on an annualized basis, for which the City will be expected to

## **Section 6.0 – Evaluation Process & Criteria:**

### **6.1 Evaluation Criteria**

RFPs will be judged by scoring in the following areas.

- Company profile and capability of the firm
- Experiences and references of firm and staff assigned
- Proposed services (work plan, public participation plan and any innovations)
- Expected outcomes (timeline schedule and deliverables)

### **Project Schedule**

The evaluation team will base their decision on the qualifications and experience of the firm and staff along with feedback that may be requested from references. The evaluation process will include a review and ranking by each individual member of the review team of each proposal. The review team may meet and combine their rankings to select the top firms to have their price proposals reviewed.

The price proposal of the highest ranked firms will have their price proposals opened and the cost of the services will be formulated with the firms ranking to arrive at the total ranking of each of the firms. The recommendation to award the contract will be to the firm that has the highest point total of the selected firms.

### **6.2 Appeals Process:**

Protests of this award must be made in writing specifically stating provisions that have been violated and filed with the Planning Director within 14 days after issuance notice of award or after such proposer knows or should have known the facts given rise thereto.

### **6.3 Negotiations with top rated firm**

Upon selection of the top-rated firm, the City may enter into limited negotiations with the selected top-rated firm to clarify the scope of services to be provided. Note, however, that costs for services are part of the evaluation and scoring of points. You are encouraged to submit your best and final offer with the proposal.

### **6.4 Terms of Agreement**

Upon mutually agreeing to the terms of the contract, written agreement will be prepared by the City utilizing the City's contract agreements as amended to the specific terms of this contract. It is important to note that the City will not indemnify the Consultant. The City will own all documents and drawings they pay a Consultant to prepare.

### **6.5 Failure to Reach Agreement**

If an agreement cannot be reached with the top-rated firm, negotiations will be terminated and the City will open negotiations with the second rated firm. The negotiation process will continue until an agreement is reached with one of the short-listed firms. If no agreement is reached with the short-listed firms the negotiation process will be terminated at the City's discretion.