



WISCONSIN

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

FOR

AREA PLANNING SERVICES – EAST NEIGHBORHOOD

PROCUREMENT NO. PL2021-02

Issued:

January 15, 2021

Submission Deadline:

February 22, 2021 – Noon p.m. CT

Budget:

\$ 20,000

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
FOR
AREA PLANNING SERVICES – EAST NEIGHBORHOOD**

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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 create a land use plan and development concept (“the Project”) for predominately undeveloped property. This area may be referred to as the “East Neighborhood” or “Volkman Property” but does not have an official name.

Community Background

The City of Altoona, Wisconsin (population 8,099 – 4.7 mi²) is located in 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.

Altoona 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 the City population was 6,706, which increased to 8,099 in the 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 and edge development. This growth has resulted in ongoing dialogue among elected and appointed officials and staff concerning the character and location of growth and change in the City.

The City has been proactive in guiding development and community change through the purchase and sale of property. The most notable example is River Prairie, a mixed-use development master planned by the City that is nearing build-out. 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.

Comprehensive Plan

The City of Altoona’s Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2009. The City of Altoona is currently soliciting consultant services to support staff and the community generate a new Comprehensive Plan. That RFQ for Consultant Services is due on February 8th and available on the City’s website and through contacting City Staff. The comprehensive planning process is anticipated to begin in March or April and be completed in 12-16 months.

The Firm selected for this Area Planning Services Project is expected to coordinate work plan and activities to build upon those activities focused on the Comprehensive Plan, to leverage insights into how this future neighborhood relates to the city, and the values and priorities expressed by the public.

Section II: Project Area

City of Altoona owns 83 acres of undeveloped property located east of the City along U.S. Highway 12. This property, known as the Volkman Property, was strategically acquired in 2020 to accommodate and guide the character of future growth. Overall, it is expected that city growth will occur from infill and redevelopment, eastward along Highway 12, and south along Mayer Road (County Highway AA).



Above and below: Location of City-owned property in relation to existing city boundary.



The City is currently working to develop an approach to annex the city-owned property. The approach to annexation may incorporate additional properties to achieve continuity in the city boundary and/or other interested property owners. Annexation proceedings are desired to commence in Q2 of 2021.

The City adopted an amendment to its Official Map in July 2020 illustrating key transportation facilities in the Highway 12 corridor within the City's 1.5-mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (see Exhibit A). That map reflects a future roadway parallel to Highway 12 that will serve as a starting point for the arrangement of other local roadways. For access and circulation purposes, at least one additional roadway should be anticipated from the planning area to Nine Mile Creek Road.

Regional sewer and water mains will be extended easterly to the project area within the Highway 12 corridor. The City will solicit engineering services for the main extension in 2021 for 2022 construction.

A Phase I Environmental Assessment was completed for the City-owned property in 2020 prior to purchase. That assessment reflected no known constraints to development on these parcels. The planning area adjoins the Union Pacific railroad which must be taken into consideration.

The intended spatial scope of the planning area is approximately 240 acres, as shown in the below illustration. The planning process will focus on the city-owned property, but necessary context of infrastructure and uses of adjoining properties within this future neighborhood will be important for desirable continuity and context. In addition to the City, the property in the planning area is held by six separate owners. Two of these properties are single-family homes on rural lots, and a third home on a 40-acre parcel adjacent to County Highway SS. The planning area includes a closed landfill encompassing approximately 28 acres. The City has initiated contact with most of these owners, who reflect interest in participating in this design project.



Purpose and Vision

The City envisions this area as a premier neighborhood in the Chippewa Valley with a mix of housing opportunities, commercial uses, and public amenities for people who desire a walkable and active place to live near employment, schools, and parks. The following are general vision and goal statements anticipated to be reflected in this Project:

- The vision will be ambitious while also pragmatic and take realistic market conditions into consideration.
- This neighborhood will be both contemporary and timeless in urban design.
- Housing types will be a variety of options focusing on diverse and affordable forms and scales within sustainable walkable neighborhoods (“missing middle”), featuring a mix of housing types that encourage both ownership and rental opportunities for people experiencing a regionally representative range of income.
- Commercial uses and building forms will be context sensitive for neighborhood livability as well as highway-frontage functionality .
- Parkland will be strategically and intentionally located to be a focal point for residents.
- The transportation system will be arranged for efficiency, resilience, and convenience, and consideration for long-term maintenance and for future public transportation access.
- The public realm will be planned as an intentional component of the neighborhood as welcoming, enjoyable, walkable and multi-functional, integrating green infrastructure and ease of mobility.
- Environmental stewardship, including zero-net-energy and carbon neutrality, will be integral elements of the vision of the city and this neighborhood.

Due the size and location of the property, the City anticipates that the use and character of the future neighborhood will have a tremendous and permanent impact on the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the City and its peoples for generations, and to the City’s fiscal performance. Similar to River Prairie, this development has the potential to further elevate and define the self-image and prosperity of the community.

The eventual initiation of the development of this neighborhood is expected to be thoughtful and strategic, anticipating long-term outcomes with recognition that decisions impact the entire City and span generations. The City also seeks to capitalize on current development trends and momentum to realize the vision, values and objectives as introduced herein. The vision will be ambitious while also pragmatic and take realistic market conditions into consideration. However, the Project is intended to “influence the market” and favor desired outcomes of the Altoona of the future, rather than be wholly “a product of” and driven by market conditions of today.

As introduced in Section I, the development of a new comprehensive plan for the City is expected to begin in March. That RFQ for Consultant Services included anticipated vision and values to be reflected through that process and plan. A portion of these statements are reproduced below. While the Comprehensive Plan is not expected to be complete until after this Project is completed, this Project is expected to be focused expression of these values and priorities described in that RFQ.

Except from "Purpose and Vision", City of Altoona RFQ for Planning Services, due February 8, 2021.

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 III: Project Scope

The City is seeking a consulting Firm to create and facilitate a process to formulate a land use plan and conceptual design for the project area. Ultimately, the Firm will assist the City translate vision, values and ambition into a concept that will guide future decision-making. The plan is expected to:

- A. Serve as a focused opportunity to engage neighboring, nearby property owners and other interested parties regarding future character of this area;
- B. Provide direction for the development of this area including arrangement of land use and infrastructure, building scale and form, opportunities and challenges; and
- C. Provide specific direction for the city's comprehensive plan and future land use map.

This solicitation is arranged as a request for qualifications ("response") to invite Firms to present their experience and qualifications in reflection of the vision, values and desired Project described by the City. The planning approach 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.

This process is envisioned to be one led by the Firm to consider alternative arrangements of land uses and infrastructure, general scale and characteristics of uses, and similar considerations such that the City may determine how to proceed in guiding and implementing development, and the resources required to do so. The City anticipates the process may include review of desirable comparable neighborhoods and how lessons learned from those successes and other favorably reviewed examples may be combined with values and desires expressed by the City as applied to this area.

The City desires a preliminary fiscal analysis to serve as the basis for a projected proforma based upon land uses and infrastructure costs.

Public Engagement

Participation and engagement in the preparation this Project is expected to be focused on elected and appointed officials, city staff, property owners within or nearby the project area, and any other interested stakeholders. The Firm will be expected to design and direct the engagement process, with support from City staff. Coordination with activities undertaken for the comprehensive plan is required. Balance of duties and responsibilities of public engagement will be determined through negotiation of the contract work plan.

Seamless Coordination

The Firm is expected to coordinate workplan and activities on this Project with city and consultants comprehensive plan activities. The Project deliverables as well as process and engagement artifacts are expected to be utilized into inform the comprehensive planning process to reflect this area. Coordination between the selected Firm, city staff, elected officials, and other planning activities is critical to the success of this project.

Process

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 restrictions that may be in effect. The effectiveness of virtual engagement tools is anticipated to be important to the success of this process and the City will evaluate proposals received with this in mind. The City utilizes Zoom as its meeting platform for City Council and other City board meetings and is comfortable with the platform. However, the City is also interested in use of other tools as needed.

It is our collective hope that in-person engagement activities to contribute to and provide feedback on design concepts will be possible during this Project.

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

Resources

Eau Claire County completed an aerial imaging project in 2020 including LIDAR. There are no known land changes in the project area since that collection.

The City of Eau Claire contracted with paleBLUEdot to create a Net Zero Design Guide¹ that may be utilized as a reference resource. This resource specific to our geography may be valuable when combined with other design resources to inform the spatial arrangement of the neighborhood, site and building elements.

Section IV: Project Deliverables

The selected Firm will be responsible for compiling a plan that functions as the City's guide to development of the subject properties. The City desires a concise, user-friendly and visually appealing final document incorporating maps, illustrations or graphics, narrative descriptions, goals, objectives, recommendations, example places, preliminary fiscal analysis and exhibits. City staff expects to provide editorial guidance and contributions in specific areas to arrive at a collaborative product.

The deliverable should incorporate the latest best practices and innovations in design of new neighborhoods and large sites, and connect the community's vision and values expressed through implementation. All aspects of the process and plan must express the highest ambitions of the community.

The complete results and artifacts resulting from the planning process 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.

The Firm is expected to present drafts and revisions to the Plan Commission and City Council, and engage through workshops or other formats as proposed and agreed-upon in the project plan. The Firm and city staff will determine and agree upon the balance of requirements and expectations of the Firm to meet with the Commission, City Council or any stakeholder to budget the Firms time to make best use of the Firms expertise and contracted services.

Project Schedule

The project is expected to be completed in 2021. A project schedule will be constructed with and agreed upon with the selected Firm. Sufficient time must be budgeted for the City to consider multiple options and iteration cycles (number to be agreed upon). As noted earlier, the schedule should be designed to correspond well with other planning activities in the City, notably the comprehensive plan.

¹ www.eauclairewi.gov/government/our-divisions/renewable-energy-action-plan

Section IV: Response Process

Estimated Contracting Timeline

RFQ Published	January 15, 2021
Responses Due	February 22, 2021 Noon
Firms Notified of Interview	February 25, 2021
Interviews	March 1 – 4, 2021
Plan Commission Recommendation	March 9, 2021
City Council approval of award	March 11, 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.

It 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 22, 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 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.
4. List a minimum of three references consisting of government entities on projects of similar scope.
5. Anticipated approach to conducting the planning process appropriate for the context described in this RFQ and responsive to the ideas and guidance provided.
6. 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.
7. 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. 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.

The contract will be a lump sum “not to exceed” agreement negotiated between the City and Firm. The Project budget is \$20,000. The City shall depend upon the Firm to determine the level of effort and cost required to achieve the desired project. If there are desired elements contemplated by this RFQ that are not feasible within the Project budget, the City will rely upon Firms to describe a feasible scope of work and quality deliverable based upon this budget and identify a preliminary estimate for other activities.

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.

Selection Process

The Firm selection will be made through a qualifications-based selection process upon evaluation of the responses, examples of comparable work, and potential 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, and in turn to the City Council to consider for final selection. City staff and Firm will then proceed to determine project plan, timeline and contract.

Section VI: 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: City of Altoona Ordinance 7A-20 Official Map Amendment

