



Planning Department

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**City of Ellsworth
Request for Proposals
Comprehensive Plan, Executive Summary, Implementation Plan, and
Land Use Map**

The City of Ellsworth (“the City”) seeks proposals from qualified and experienced professional consultants or consultant firms to work with the City, its staff, Boards and Commissions, and City Council to prepare a Comprehensive Plan, including an Executive Summary, Implementation Plan, and Land Use Map through a public driven process. The City’s current Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2004.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide city-wide growth and development patterns, investments, and initiatives with a horizon date of 2035. It is the foundation for determining effective public policy, master planning, and land use decisions for the future. It will provide an ongoing framework for informed and directed development. It serves as the guiding policy document for many of the City’s most critical decisions. The plan should reflect the needs, values, and priorities of the community while safeguarding the City’s sense of place, history, and natural resources. To this end, the Comprehensive Plan needs to be a realistic document with goals, policies, and guidance that can be holistically and collaboratively implemented.

Direct any questions regarding this request or the plan in general to Matthew Williams, City Planner, by emailing mwilliams@ellsworthmaine.gov.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND LAND
USE MAP
*City of Ellsworth***

RFP Circulation Date:
Proposal Submission Due Date:

Wednesday, January 4, 2023
Wednesday, February 22, 2023

1. Introduction/ Statement of Purpose

The City of Ellsworth (“the City”) seeks proposals from qualified and experienced professional consultants or consulting firms to work with the City, its staff, boards and commissions, and City Council to prepare a Comprehensive Plan through a public driven process. The City’s current Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2004.

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The Ellsworth Comprehensive Plan shall include, at a minimum: a) a snapshot of all aspects of Ellsworth as it is today; b) a vision for the city for the next 10 years; and c) a strategic plan to achieve this vision. Components to be included in the full plan include, but are not limited to: a) a vision statement; b) an inventory and analysis to include maps, graphs, and other imagery tools to assess economic development, housing, infrastructure, transportation, open space, and other improvements; c) goals, policies, and actions; d) an integrated sustainability component, and e) metrics to track implementation success over time.

The selected consultant must be an expert in planning, specifically in long-range planning, research, analysis, project management, facilitation, and public engagement. Substantial opportunities for citizen participation in the planning process shall be provided.

The Comprehensive Plan must meet the requirements for Title 30-A Chapter 187, Section 4326 in the Maine Revised Statutes in order to seek a certificate of consistency with the State of Maine under the requirements of Section 4347-A.

2. Information About Ellsworth/ Background

The City of Ellsworth is a service center community within the Downeast and Acadia regions of Maine with a population of approximately 8,500 and an area of 93.92 square miles (79.29 square miles of land). This makes the Ellsworth the largest city in Maine by square mileage. Ellsworth is the seat of Hancock County which has a population of around 55,690 people. Ellsworth is located along the Union River, a tidal river which flows out to the Union River Bay. Ellsworth contains all or portions of four major lakes (Branch Lake, Leonard Lake, Green Lake, and Graham Lake) and two ponds (Upper Patten Pond and Lower Patten Pond). Bangor, Maine and the I-95 highway corridor are located 40-45 minutes from downtown Ellsworth. Acadia National Park is a 30-minute drive.

Ellsworth has been one of Maine's fastest growing cities over the past two decades, seeing a population growth of about 32% since 2000. The current population of roughly 8,500 people is the peak population in the City's history.

The City has had a City Council- City Manager Charter since 1935. The City Council is composed of seven members, elected at large, for staggered three-year terms.

3. Proposal Content & Submission Instructions

The City of Ellsworth will only consider submissions limited to a maximum of 15 pages (excluding appendices) using a minimum font size of 10-point in a style similar to Arial with one-inch margins.

Submit fifteen printed proposals in sealed, clearly labeled envelopes, and one digital version of the same materials in PDF format. Proposals can be hand delivered, mailed, or delivered via courier. Faxes are not acceptable. The Proposal should also be delivered via electronic mail to mwilliams@ellsworthmaine.gov. Hard copies should be mailed or hand delivered to:

Ellsworth Planning Dept.
c/o Matthew Williams
1 City Hall Plaza
Ellsworth, Maine 04605

Both hard copies and electronic copies shall be received by the Planning Office no later than **5:00 PM on February 22, 2023.**

The proposal package shall include:

- a. **Cover Letter.** The cover letter should express the consultant's/firm's interest in working with the City of Ellsworth including identification of the principal individual(s) that will provide the agreed upon services. The cover letter must state the Proposer's name, address, principal office(s), phone number(s), text and email contact information, and type of entity. Also, state the date of incorporation/organization and the state in which the Proposer is incorporated or organized. In addition, the letter should identify a contact person for questions during the selection process and provide contact information including telephone/text number, e-mail address, and postal address.
- b. **Work Approach and Timeframe.** This section should include a description of the approach and methodology to be used in the completion of the project scope (see Section 10 of this RFP), suggested changes to the proposed scope of work as outlined in this RFP (e.g. changes due to budgetary constraints or staffing limitations) and any insights into the project gained as a result of developing the proposal. Also include a description of a proposed timeline for completion of the project and public engagement methodology and/or programs to be used.
- c. **Project Team.** Please include a list of all key personnel who will work on the project (including sub-contractors), their responsibilities and expected project role. Also, please provide brief resumes, credentials, professional licenses, and relevant experience for each member. This should be included in the appendix and will not count toward the 15-page maximum.
- d. **Qualifications and References.** Describe the experience the key personnel collectively have in drafting comprehensive plans. Provide three references from similar projects completed within the last five years that can verify the consultant's/firm's professional qualifications. This should be included in the appendix and will not count toward the 15-page maximum.
- e. **Project Cost and Fees.** Include a cost proposal consisting of: i) a schedule of direct labor hours with a breakdown of hourly rates for each person who will be assigned to the project; ii) an overall not-to-exceed bid price for completing the project and include a fee schedule describing all charges and hourly rates for additional services not included in the Scope of Services with a description; and iii) itemized schedule of expenses including both labor and direct expenses. If the use of a sub-contractor is proposed, a separate schedule of expenses must be provided for each sub-contract.

In any of the above calculations please include any other fees associated with the project including but not limited to mileage and other fringe benefits. Any potential conflict of interest information must be disclosed within the Proposal.

4. Procedures for Selection of Proposal/ Criteria for Scoring of Proposals

The City will only review complete proposals received by the specified deadline and per the listed requirements. Finalists may be asked to present their proposal to the Steering Committee. Additional interviews may be a part of the selection process.

RFP Schedule:

- a) Release of RFP- January 4, 2023
- b) Deadline to submit letter of interest (only necessary if you have any questions and would like responses)- January 18, 2023 at 5:00 PM
- c) Deadline for questions- January 18, 2023 at 5:00 PM
- d) Proposals due- February 22, 2023 at 5:00 PM
- e) Steering Committee review of proposals- February 23 and February 24, 2023
- f) Interviews of Finalists (in-person or via Zoom)- February 27, 2023 through March 6, 2023
- g) Consultant Recommendation Determined by Steering Committee- By 5:00 PM on March 8, 2023
- h) Bids and Recommendation to City Council- March 20, 2023
- i) Finalize and Execute Contract with Selected Consultant- Tentative March 21, 2023
- j) Comprehensive Planning Process Begins- April 3, 2023

Finalists shall be scored and ranked based on criteria that include but are not limited to:

- Technical approach to the project
- Professional qualifications, expertise, quality and depth of key personnel with similar projects
- Resumes of the key personnel who will be assigned to this project, including relevant experience
- Proposed approach to soliciting meaningful public input and public participation methods
- Timeliness of the proposed schedule and the ability of the consultant team to complete the work as scheduled based on current and projected workload
- A competitive and reasonable fee, estimated costs, and the flexibility to adjust the proposed work program to meet budget constraints
- Experience with and knowledge of the City of Ellsworth
- Other factors deemed relevant by the Steering Committee

After review in accordance with the criteria set forth above, the Steering Committee will rank the Proposals. The committee may then finalize the rankings and select the successful Proposer, or may interview (either in-person and/or by telephone/virtual) the top ranked firm(s) to aid in its determination of the final rankings.

The Steering Committee will then proceed to negotiate with the highest ranked

Proposer. Should the Committee be unable to negotiate an acceptable contract, negotiation will then proceed with the next highest ranked Proposer.

5. Contact Information for Questions

Questions regarding the proposal specifications should be directed to Matthew Williams, City Planner at mwilliams@ellsworthmaine.gov. All questions must be submitted in writing no later than January 18, 2023 by 5:00 PM. All Questions and Answers shall be posted to the City's webpage (<https://www.ellsworthmaine.gov/rfps/>) by 12:00 PM on Thursday, January 19, 2023.

Questions and Answers regarding RFP will be posted to all proposers.

6. Late Proposals Policy

It is the responsibility of the Proposer(s) to see that their Proposals have sufficient time to be received by the Planning Department before the submittal deadline.

Any Proposal, portion of Proposal, or unrequested Proposal revision received by the City of Ellsworth Planning Department after the time and date specified, will be returned to the Proposer unopened. Exceptions can be made with notice to the Planning Department for errors or updates in contact information.

7. Withdrawal of Proposal Policy

No Proposer may withdraw their Proposal for a period of ninety days from the date of opening of the sealed envelope by the City. All Proposals shall be subject to acceptance by the City during this period. To withdraw a Proposal prior to opening, the Proposer shall request the withdrawal in writing. All costs associated with the withdrawal (e.g., mailing fees) will be borne by the Proposer.

8. Rejection Policy

The City reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals, to waive any informalities or defects in Proposals or to accept a higher cost Proposal if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Ellsworth. The City also reserves the right to negotiate with the successful Proposer.

9. Information for Proposers

For the Proposal to be considered, all materials requested in Section 3 of this RFP must be included.

All Federal and States taxes must be excluded from the price. A tax exemption certificate for the City of Ellsworth shall be furnished to the successful Proposer upon request.

10. Scope of Services/ Deliverables

i. Inventory and analysis of existing and proposed conditions including graphs, maps, and other visual tools to assess economic development, housing, utility serviceability, transportation, open space, and other improvements

Research and analyze existing land use and development patterns, environmental constraints, and the Land Use Ordinance to establish existing conditions, as well as identify issues and opportunities. This should include: a.) Estimates, projections, and forecasts; and b.) A development capacity analysis utilizing land mass acreage, utility serviceability (water, sewer, stormwater, roads, and broadband) and zoning to produce growth scenarios, determine deficiencies, and make recommendations for public improvements or policy changes that will accommodate projected growth and development.

The following topics should be addressed: historic and archaeological resources, natural resources (marine, water, agricultural, and forest), population and demographics, economy, housing, recreation, transportation, public facilities and services, fiscal capacity and capital investment, existing land use, future land use, and regional coordination. In addition, as practical and applicable, the information should be presented in three geographic areas: the City as a whole, the Urban Core as shown in the attached map (see Appendix 1), and the remainder of the City outside of the Urban Core.

Analysis of the data collected and reports created shall be shared with the Steering Committee.

ii. Visioning, i.e. goals, policies, and actions

Develop goals, policies, and actions relating to the topics required for plan approval in Title 30-A Chapter 187, Section 4326 in the Maine Revised Statutes and public engagement and metrics to track the plan's successful implementation. The policies and actions should provide general guidance with some specificity although not so much as to hinder future implementation efforts.

iii. Project Management and Public Engagement

Along with City Staff, Proposer will facilitate public meetings to create a broad vision statement with input by various City stakeholders, including, but not limited to, civic and nonprofit institutions, the business sector, residents, employees, and employers. Proposer will then present the vision statement to the Planning Board ("Planning Committee"), Steering Committee, a Technical Review Team comprised of City department heads, and other municipal stakeholders for input. The Proposer is expected to attend all

Steering Committee meetings. Exceptions will be made for health related cancellations or other emergencies.

Public engagement and communication will be an essential component of the planning effort and must include outreach and public participation designed to engage the public and specific stakeholders in visioning the future of the City. This outreach should be conducted through various media, including, but not limited to, public hearings and listening sessions, presentations, social media, workshops, community engagement tools, and the internet. To the greatest practical extent, public engagement should be designed to meet people where they are at, rather than hoping the public comes to the Proposer. Proposers may provide some public engagement options where consultants attend monthly meetings via Zoom or in a hybrid model.

iv. Policy & Strategy Recommendations

Work with pertinent staff and the Steering Committee to develop and prepare draft policies and ordinance amendments which will lay the foundation for structural changes to implement the Final Comprehensive Plan. Draft documents of this nature should receive input from the Planning Committee, Steering Committee, and City Council as appropriate. Within these recommendations, should be a future land use map that corresponds with any policy recommendations.

v. Implementation and metrics to measure such over time

An Implementation Plan shall be drafted with input from City staff and other planning and economic development sources. The Implementation Plan should include a break-down of actionable steps that can be taken by the City and stakeholders to achieve the envisioned goals. This break down should encompass: a) identification of potential funding sources (i.e. grant funding, State and Federal funds, etc.); b) a timeline for implementation; c) identification of responsible party or parties; and d) any necessary associated policy changes. The Implementation Plan will also include established measurable benchmarks for the City to monitor its progress in achieving these goals. These steps and benchmarks can be captured in a matrix or other similar tool in order to track and visualize progress.

vi. Final Plan

A Final Comprehensive Plan with future land use map and executive summary must be submitted in a creative, engaging, and user-friendly format. The Plan should be written in a way that conveys the messaging and themes of the Plan to the average reader. The Final Plan must meet the requirements for Title 30-A Chapter 187, Section 4326 in Maine Revised

Statutes in order to seek a certificate of consistency with the State of Maine under the requirements of Section 4347-A.

11. Summary of Final Deliverables

- a) Ten bound copies of the Final Comprehensive Plan and all appendices.
- b) Ten bound copies of the Executive Summary.
- c) Ten bound copies of Implementation Plan with Land Use Map.
- d) Electronic versions of the Final Comprehensive Plan, Implementation Plan with Land Use Map, and Executive Summary in both Word and PDF formats.
- e) An existing conditions inventory and projected needs analysis.
- f) Vision Statement and associated goals and outcomes.

12. Due Date to Complete Plan

The Plan should be completed and turned in for approval by the City Council within 24 months after Comprehensive Planning Process begins April 3, 2023, per Section 4(j) of this RFP. The contract can be extended if need be and approved by the City.

13. What Ellsworth Will Provide

- a. Existing documents to the consultant as requested and when not overly burdensome (e.g., studies, feasibility studies, plans, other City initiatives).
- b. Minutes for all Comprehensive Plan Meetings, including meetings of the Steering Committee and Planning Committee.
- c. Assistance in scheduling, coordinating, publicizing, and making necessary arrangements for plan-related meetings.
- d. Assistance with other local and community outreach as needed.

14. Disclaimers

- a. The City will review all timely submittals.
- b. All statements of qualifications will be scored and ranked; however, the City is not bound to select the highest ranked submittal. The City reserves the sole right to invite one consulting firm to the contract development stage or reject all candidates.
- c. The City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals.
- d. The City will enter into a contract for professional consulting services based on a not-to-exceed price to be negotiated and finalized once the consultant is chosen.
- e. The City is not liable for any costs incurred by a Proposer in responding to this RFP or for any costs associated with discussions required for clarification of items related to the RFP or the Proposal selection process.
- f. The contract shall not be considered executed unless approved by the City Council and signed by the City Manager.
- g. Opened proposals will not be returned and will become property of the City.
- h. Proposals must contain responses to all requirements outlined in this RFP.

- i. The contents of the selected Proposal from successful Proposer will become part of the contractual obligations to the extent that the proposal does not conflict with the provisions of this RFP.

APPENDIX 1

