



Town of Ashland

Comprehensive Plan, Project Management Group

Meeting Minutes: March 2, 2023, at 6:00 PM

Location: Ashland Town Hall Meeting Room B & C / Hybrid Meeting with Zoom

Minutes Approved March 16, 2023

Present: Yolanda Greaves, Member
Michael Herbert, Town Manager
Catherine Jurczyk, Member
Brandi Kinsman, Member
Anna Tesmenitsky, Member

Absent: Peter Matchak, Town Planner

Others: NA

Committee group members in attendance: Brandi Kinsman, Yolanda Greaves, Anna Tesmenitsky, Kate Jurczyk, and Michael Herbert

Yolanda called the meeting to order at 6:15 and reviewed the agenda for tonight.

The first item on the agenda was review and post meeting minutes from 12/23/23 and 2/16/23. The group discussed that the 12/23 minutes had been approved at a previous meeting. The group moved on to the 2/16 minutes. Anna made some minor edits. Brandi made a motion to approve the 2/16 minutes with the minor edits. Anna seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed 5-0.

The group discussed that because the 1/19 minutes were distributed, but not included on the agenda, that these minutes would be reviewed at the next meeting. There was also some discussion about making sure we were compliant with Open Meeting Law, which the group agreed was important.

Yolanda moved on to the next item on the agenda, which was to review and approve the RFP that will be used to solicit bids for a consultant to assist with the Comprehensive Plan. Michael distributed the latest version of the RFP and was making edits to the RFP on his laptop as we went through the review. The group has gone through this document at the last 2 meetings so this meeting serves as a final review and discussion.



Going through the document, page 1 and page 2 had no changes. On page 3 Brandi suggested changes to page 3 on some of the dates (under instructions to proposers) Under the timeline we changed the dates to include that proposals are due on April 14th, distributed to the CP group on April 17th, so the group can discuss on April 20th.

Page 4 under scope of work, Brandi suggested a change under task 2 that the minimum outreach includes 1 per each of 6 voting precincts.

Anna asked to add language asking how the consultant would handle divisive situations. Under Task 3, Anna was concerned about the list of data that we were asking the consultant to get as a baseline. She felt that wasn't as important as the community engagement component and did not want the consultant utilizing funds that weren't necessary to gather data that Anna believed was easily accessible. Michael explained the importance of the baseline data as part of this process and that a quality consultant would want to utilize any existing data that the group had, like the recent Housing Production Plan. The group compromised and agreed to add a sentence at the beginning of Task 3 about utilizing the town's existing data where available.

The group discussed what might be ways that we could emphasize some of the tasks over others (weighing them differently or reordering them). The group agreed that adding language before Task 1 under the Scope of Work that our emphasis was on public engagement, implementation, and tasks 4 & 5. There were no edits to tasks 4 & 5 and minor edit to task 6.

Under Submission Requirements and Minimum Criteria- there was a group discussion about whether we should ask for references from each of the team members. We were comfortable with the fact that we would have information about each team member (along with references from the team as a whole) and individual references were not needed. Anna wanted to make sure we also included community groups as one of the acceptable references, if it was applicable. This was added for #2.

Under Evaluation Criteria- for #1, Brandi suggested that we remove the reference to "provides an inferior alternative approach" here, since section #2 is specifically about project approach. Anna questioned how we structure these criteria and that #1 and #3 are more like table stakes- that the consultant should rate as "highly advantageous" to be considered. Michael said that if we restrict it to only highly advantageous for 1 and 3 and a consultant may not have done 5 CPs to qualify for highly advantageous for #3, but may have a superior approach to public engagement, that may take them out of consideration. The group agreed that we would give double points to #2 and #4 so we can give those more weight. Anna also stated that we should emphasize the



importance of WMBE consultants. The group agreed to create #5 and if the firm is a certified WMBE it would get 2 extra points.

Under Rule of Award- the group agreed to add language about the core project team being interviewed by both the Select and Planning Boards.

The group had previously agreed to add the timeline/flyer that had been distributed at Town Meeting to the RFP. Although the Planning Board had voted on the timeline and the Select Board had received it, the Select Board had not voted on it. Both Yolanda and Brandi felt that they were comfortable with the spirit of the flyer, knowing that there might be tweaks to the process once we onboard a consultant, and were ok adding it to the RFP even though the Select Board hadn't voted on it. Anna agreed with Brandi and Yolanda that the document had some flexibility as far as the exact order of things, dates and details. She stated, however, that some of the elements of it such as public input at each drafted section, a HOLD point, and the overall focus on public participation were not flexible as they were key to the vote of some Planning Board members such as Kate. Kate indicated she voted for the CP process based on the document, which the Planning Board approved. It was important that both boards be on the same page.

Michael had concerns about the flyer because there were things included that were not consistent with the RFP (for instance sustainability and DE&I are woven through all the tasks in the RFP rather than stand-alone items like in the flyer). Anna felt that the Select Board should have the opportunity to discuss and make changes to the timeline/flyer. Brandi and Yolanda felt that it could be done once we discuss with our consultant. And that any changes made to the timeline/flyer (by the Select Board or the consultant) would need to then go back to the Planning Board. Brandi and Yolanda agreed that it would be reviewed by the Select Board and a vote would be taken. And the flyer would still be added to the RFP.

Brandi made a motion to approve the RFP with the changes discussed with the flyer attached. Anna seconded. Motion was approved by vote 5-0.

Yolanda moved on to the next item on the agenda, which is discuss Planning Board and Select Board review of Steering applications/appointments. Susan Robie has a spreadsheet on the talent bank forms that had been received and their precincts. Also included in the spreadsheet is the committee appointees, and there was the request to separate them out from one another. Michael will ask Susan to do that and also email out a link to the google drive with all the talent bank forms. Michael suggested that everyone look through the forms and pick 3 from each precinct.



Anna suggested we email them 5 follow up questions before we each choose the 3 people for interviews.

For the next meeting on March 16 from 6-8, we decided on the following items for the agenda:

- How are we going to utilize the volunteers not picked to be on the Steering Committee?
- Email the 5 follow-up questions to Anna and the group will discuss
- Setting dates for interviews
- Create a "precinct 7" for the students that submitted a talent bank form

Brandi motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:18pm. Anna seconded the motion. Motion was approved by vote 5-0.

Submitted by Brandi Kinsman

Document list: RFP draft

Comprehensive Plan RFP

Revised March 2, 2023

The Town of Ashland invites qualified firms to provide facilitation and planning services to assist with completing a Comprehensive & Strategic Plan for the Town of Ashland.

This Request for Proposals ("RFP") is made pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30B.

By submission of a proposal, the firm submitting a proposal agrees to enter into a contract, a copy of which is attached hereto, with the Town of Ashland (the "Town") that incorporates all the terms and conditions of this RFP if the firm's proposal is accepted by the Town.

Applicants should submit 1 copy of the technical proposal and a sealed price proposal in a separate envelope. Each should be clearly marked.

Town of Ashland

Attention: Jenn Ball, Assistant Town Manager

101 Main Street

Ashland, MA 01721

on or before 11 AM E.S.T. on _____. Proposals submitted after this time will not be accepted. Technical proposals should be marked "Responses to Comprehensive Plan RFP" and must include all required documents, completed and signed per the instructions and attached forms included in this bid package. The Price Proposal must be in a **separate sealed** package and marked "Price Proposal Comprehensive Plan RFP".

The Town of Ashland reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to cancel this Request for Proposals if it is deemed in the best interest of the Town.

The Town of Ashland has determined that the award of this contract is subject to the Uniform Procurement Act. M.G.L. c. 30B. Therefore, the provisions of M.G.L. c. 30B are incorporated here by reference.

All inquiries regarding this RFP should be submitted via e-mail and directed to:

Jenn Ball, Assistant Town Manager

jball@ashlandmass.com

All questions must be received by 4:00 PM by _____. All responses to inquiries will be posted on the bid opportunity webpage (<https://www.ashlandmass.com/Bids.aspx>) no later than 48 hours prior to the time and date for proposal submission.

The Town of Ashland, Massachusetts is seeking a consultant to help update its comprehensive and strategic plan. Ashland has not had a completed comprehensive plan since 2003. Since then, the town has undergone tremendous changes and is looking for to developing a plan to chart a course for the next 15-20 years.

The comprehensive plan will be led by a Steering Committee of over 20 members, as well as a smaller Project Management team. The town is looking for an experienced consultant that brings a robust and creative approach to planning that can help the town develop a vision and goals that it can use to guide decisions in the future.

About Ashland

Ashland is 12.9 square miles and located within MAPC's MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC) subregion along with Framingham, Holliston, Marlborough, Natick, Southborough, Wayland, Wellesley, and Weston. Ashland is near several major Massachusetts highways (I-495, I-90, and I-95) and Massachusetts State Routes 9 and 85. Route 135 runs through Ashland. The town has a MBTA Commuter Rail stop, Ashland Station, on the Framingham/Worcester Line, and numerous bus routes connect Ashland to destinations in the region. Once a manufacturing town, Ashland has since become a popular suburb of Boston with wonderful schools and green spaces. Ashland offers many amenities that make it a desired destination: the Town's school system (recently ranked 33rd best in the state) attracts families, its location near Interstate 90 and the Commuter Rail provides access to regional employment centers and transportation into Boston and Worcester, and its spacious parks and historical/cultural assets provide for enriching recreational activities. But the high cost of housing and a limited variety of available housing types makes it difficult for many to settle and stay in town. The majority of Ashland's housing stock is single-family (79%). Sale prices of these homes have increased 27% since 2015 to a median of \$487,500 in 2019. Condominium prices have increased 45% since 2015 to a median of \$400,000 (The Warren Group, 2019). The gross median rent in Ashland is also high at \$2,100 (Local MLS data, 2018). Although many Ashland households have higher incomes (57% earn more than \$100,000 a year), the remaining population has a variety of housing needs. Renters, seniors, singleperson households, and lower-income households struggle to afford housing in Ashland that meets their needs. This has contributed to a little more than a quarter of households in Ashland being cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. This affects both renters and owners. More than a quarter of Ashland households are also low-income, earning less than 80% of the area median income (AMI) of \$119,000 (HUD, 2020). Based on 2021 DHCD numbers, 6.3% of the town's year-round housing units are on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory. There are 415 units on the SHI for 1,885 eligible local households.

Instructions to Proposers

General

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30B, Section 6, to the Chief Procurement Officer, Jenn Ball, Ashland Town Hall 101 Main Street Ashland MA 01702, no later than 11:00 AM on _____, 2023.

The Town of Ashland reserves the right to reject any and all responses proposals or to cancel this Request for Proposals if it is deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Ashland will not be responsible for any expenses incurred in preparing and submitting responses. All submittals shall become the property of the Town of Ashland. All proposals shall be deemed a public record.

Questions

All questions may be emailed to Jenn Ball at jball@ashlandmass.com by 4:00 PM on _____, 2023. Written response, if any, will be in the form of an addenda and will be posted to the Town website (<https://www.ashlandmass.com/Bids.aspx>) no later than 48 hours before the proposals are due. It is the proposer's sole responsibility to ensure that it has received all the addenda prior to submitting a proposal. Proposers must acknowledge each Addendum.

Timeline

The Comprehensive Plan Project Management Group has set aside 18-24 months for the entirety of the project. The overall timeline is expected to be as follows. The Project Management Team is open to alternative timeline proposals based on the consultant's experience and expertise.

Proposal Due	April 20, 2023
Consultant Selection	May 18, 2023
Contract Award/Start Date	June 1, 2023
Presentation of Vision Statement	Oct 1, 2023
Completion of All Components	October 1, 2024
Review of Draft Final Plan	December 31, 2024

Finalize Plan	March 1, 2025
Presentation at Town Meeting	May 7, 2025

Budget

The Town has established a budget of \$240,000 to secure a consultant for the Comprehensive Plan. This funding has been approved at Town Meeting.

Scope of Work

Task 1 - Outreach & Engagement Plan

The consultant should develop a public engagement plan, maximizing community involvement by providing a variety of methods of engagement (including opportunities for Town department input). Use of a platform such as Bang the Table (or a similar platform that allows for active on-going feedback, polling, data mapping, etc.) is strongly preferred as one component of the engagement plan. The plan should also include conduct public events and other elements in the engagement strategy, including virtual charettes, surveys, and visioning exercises.

The Consultant will be required to provide a quarterly memo to the Steering Committee outlining the progress made during the preceding quarter.

With regards to public meetings, the Project Management Team has determined what the desired (not required) minimum number of in-person/hybrid meetings for each task. The Consultant should propose how they would address public engagement regarding each of the tasks listed below and whether or not they can meet or exceed the minimum desired outreach.

	Minimum Outreach Desired
Task 2: Visioning	9 Public Sessions (1 per each precinct and 3 general); 1 community survey; 1 community survey
Task 3: Existing Conditions/Baseline Analysis	1 Public Forum; 1 Joint Meeting with Select Board and Planning Board
Task 4: Development of Plan Components	1 Public Forum for each stand-alone component; 2 Meetings with the Steering

	Committee for each stand-alone component
Task 5 - Implementation Plan	1 Meeting with the Steering Committee
Task 6 - Drafts & Final Plan	2 Public Forums and 2 Presentations to Planning Board/Select Board

Task 2 - Develop Vision Statement Through Public Outreach/Engagement

Working with the Steering Committee and Project Management Group, the consultant will evaluate and analyze the information gained through the public engagement process to develop a Community Vision reflective of the town . Working with the Project Management Group and Steering Committee the, consultant will be expected to draft a Community Vision document which will include identification of a vision statement for the community as well as an explanation on how the Vision will serve as the basis of the comprehensive plan and other future planning projects. The consultant will support the Project Management Team and Steering Committee in presenting a draft Vision Statement to the community and will distill this vision into a final document. The consultant is expected to provide graphic design services for the document. The Town is seeking a document with a design and structure that will be easily accessible to the Town's website and easily understood by the community.

The consultant's proposal should include how the Steering Committee, Project Management Group, and public will updated and engaged in this task (i.e. meetings, correspondence, etc).

Task 3 - Baseline Analysis & Community Profile: The consultant shall draft a Community Profile consisting of an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, including narrative, maps, and relevant data. The inventory will be used to assist in the identification of local issues and potential opportunities, and the consultant may use existing plans as a tool for information and context. The inventory and analysis of existing conditions (including existing zoning laws) should include the following, at a minimum:

- History of the Town of Ashland and its boundaries.
- Demographic characteristics (population and growth trends, age distribution, average household size, ethnic composition, average household income, social diversity and integration, demographic trends).
- Local and regional economic characteristics (unemployment rates and trends, work force characterization, dominant business sector type, major employers and industries, sales tax information, property tax rates, economic trends, and jobs range).
- Housing characteristics (the age, type, and condition of structures, type of occupancy - renters versus owners, vacancy rates and trends in the community and length of residency, the extent and availability of low-income and workforce housing throughout the community and in

identified neighborhoods, assessment of housing opportunities and choices, housing trends and access to jobs).

- Local and regional economies and development trends (including housing, commercial, industrial, and agricultural development). Particular attention must be given to sites on major thoroughfares, sites along environmentally sensitive areas, and business improvement district concepts.
- Land use and smart growth focus areas.
- Infrastructure and public utilities (i.e., drinking water supply, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, stormwater management and green infrastructure, communications, gas, and electricity) extent, capacity, age, and maintenance.
- Transportation systems, local levels of greenhouse gas emissions, levels of mobility and circulation, walkable/bikeable neighborhood, connectivity with areas outside jurisdictional lines, distance to jobs.
- Natural resources and climate (air quality, watercourses, wetlands, floodplains, aquifers, forests/tree cover, steep slopes, soil types, and rare plant and animal habitats, precipitations, winds, temperatures, etc.).
- Extreme weather events, flooding, erosion hazards, and local resiliency.
- Health and emergency services and facilities.
- Parks and public spaces, recreation facilities, range of passive and active recreation, capacity and maintenance, accessibility etc.
- Other community facilities.
- Educational Data
- Historic, cultural, and scenic resources.
- Water resources and public access.
- Zoning and other relevant local development controls, and the extent to which these are consistent throughout the Town.
- Fiscal resources.

The draft Community Profile shall be submitted to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee for review before being finalized. The consultant will incorporate feedback from the Steering Committee into a final draft.

At the end of this process, the consultant will provide a Community Profile report, including a comprehensive inventory and analysis in the form of relevant data, narrative, maps, and graphics.

The consultant's proposal should include how the Steering Committee, Project Management Group, and public will be updated and engaged in the process.

Task 4 - Development of Plan Components

The Consultant will be responsible for working with the Steering Committee and the Project Management team to address each of the following components of the comprehensive plan. Proposals should reflect how the consultant will accomplish getting input from the Steering

Committee and public regarding each component. Proposals should also discuss how the consultant will approach the drafting process of the components as well as a timeline and presentation of drafts. As part of its proposal, the consultant should factor in two meetings with the Steering Committee for each of the stand-alone components of the plan identified below.

Stand-Alone Components

a) Land Use This component of the Comprehensive Plan will define optimum sustainable development patterns, density, and other standards for each land use classification and location in Ashland. The Land Use section should specify priority development and conservation areas consistent with the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Housing Production Plan and other input and include an existing land use map, relevant population, housing, and growth projections, with build-out analyses for both residential and commercial uses. This will include an evaluation of land use tools such as low impact development standards, current zoning, Design Review guidelines, MGL 61A and 61B, Transfer of Development Rights, sustainable development principles, current statutory rules, and Adaptive Reuse.

Tasks and Deliverables include:

- Prepare a build-out analysis presenting current development, demographic, and socioeconomic trends to the year 2040. An initial build out analysis should assume all existing regulations and bylaws around zoning and land use remain the same, with no town intervention. A second build-out should incorporate any proposed Zoning Bylaw to be created or modified resulting from the implementation of the recommended changes to the Zoning Bylaw and/or Zoning Map.
- Assist the town in developing present and future land maps.
- Assist the town in quantifying the current area per land use and area per zoning district, as well as the area that remains developable in each zoning district.
- Analysis of zoning districts and land use change to be made.

b) Housing This component shall identify current and future housing needs in Town, based on economic and demographic trends, and shall identify programs and policies by which Ashland can meet those needs in a sustainable manner. This component will be consistent with Ashland's Housing Production Plan. Identified housing goals include: promote a wider range of housing types in Ashland that remain harmonious with the Town's character; create housing options that increase the retention of young families and senior citizens; introduce or modify zoning bylaws to encourage quality development patterns that maximize resource protection while optimizing the use of space; implement housing strategies outlined in Ashland's Housing Production Plan to create affordability and housing diversity; inform and educate residents on Ashland's housing challenges and promote strategic community engagement.

Tasks & Deliverables include but are not limited to:

- Conduct a detailed population projection analysis to the year 2040;
- Compile a comprehensive, detailed description of policies to encourage the development of housing to meet current and projected needs. This may include infill development, traditional

neighborhood development, inclusionary zoning, density bonuses and mixed-use and rental development;

- Compile a detailed description of programs to assist residents in attaining affordable housing;
- Identification of locations appropriate for housing development of various densities and types, with appropriate deference to market realities, public opinion and Ashland character;
- Consideration of strategies to aid the Town in achieving and maintaining certification under MGL Chapter 40B;
- Take the information and recommendations contained in the latest Housing Production Plan and translate them into specific actionable items;
- Ensuring consistent strategies that link Ashland housing initiatives with other community goals, including sustainability, land conservation, economic development, and historic preservation.

c) Economic Development This component assesses the current status of economic activity in Ashland and efforts to further develop these activities consistent with economic realities, residents' needs and the character of the town. The consultant shall guide the Town in considering appropriate ways government can support and build upon existing commercial enterprises and market trends while supporting sustainable strategies to improve Ashland business climate and attract additional business and residential investment. The consultant should provide recommendations of how to right-size the existing commercial districts; whether districts need consolidation or if the Town could and should support multiple economic centers.

Tasks & Deliverables include but are not limited to:

- Create an inventory of industrially and commercially zoned land
- Complete a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions, including vacant and underutilized parcels, and projections of likely future conditions. This should include an analysis of existing strengths, opportunities and weaknesses in order to recommend sustainable strategies;
- Compile economic projections based on projected population/ demographics and market realities
- Assessment of the capacity of the Town to either host additional commercial locations or increase density of existing commercial areas and the likelihood of the market responding to that expansion
- Identify programs or policies for expanding Ashland's economic base with sustainability in mind.

d) Cultural & Historic Resources This component of the plan is intended to identify, assess and make recommendations on current and future cultural resource needs, and to identify and assess historical resources, and make recommendations on protecting, preserving, and promoting them in the future as the Town changes.

Tasks & Deliverables include but are not limited to:

- Inventory existing natural, cultural, and historic resources in the town;
- Recommend strategies for preserving and enhancing these resources;

- Analyze impact of any recommended land use and/or zoning changes on natural, cultural, and historic resources;
- Recommend strategies for efficient and effective cultural and historic resource management, including volunteer committees or non-profits;
- Analyze impact of any recommended changes to natural, cultural, and historic resources on population health.

e) Municipal Facilities, Assets & Services This component includes an inventory of existing public facilities, assets and services. Additionally, as consultant should identify what resources are necessary to achieve the goals and vision established by the comprehensive plan.

Tasks & Deliverables include but are not limited toTasks include:

- Analyses of each facility and service, specifically noting any deficiencies that may exist currently or in the future;
- Determine the adequacy of schools for which Ashland is responsible based on population and population demographics projections and anticipated curriculum requirements;
- Given the results of the evaluation and projections above, determine whether the existing facilities are adequate, need significant improvements, additions or new facilities;
- Determine whether there is sufficient Town property to accommodate additions or new facilities, assuming analysis and projections suggest they are required;
- Recommendations to address each deficiency in a sustainable manner;
- Analyze and assess how proposed policies may impact projected school enrollment and staff requirements;
- Project the extent of Town facilities and assets required to accommodate the needs of the Town using population demographics and input from Town government, Ashland schools and residents;
- Investigate the extent and types of facilities in similar towns to benchmark Ashland facilities and help project needs.
- Identify the staffing and operational resources necessary to support all components of the plan.

f) Open Space & Recreation This component of the Comprehensive Plan will address how to support open space and recreation to meet the needs of the community. The Comprehensive Plan must be consistent with the current Open Space & Recreation Plan, understanding that the town has made significant progress recently in the acquisition and protection of open space. The consultant shall help guide the Town in weighing trade-offs between various land uses and competing demands within the Comprehensive planning context. Priority parcels will be identified for future protection and current and projected population demographics will be examined to determine the current adequacy and future needs for open space and recreation including additional passive recreation (hiking, biking, etc.) and playing fields for organized sports. The current and projected need will be benchmarked to corresponding open space and recreational facilities in larger towns in the vicinity.

Tasks & Deliverables include but are not limited to:

- Inventory of recreational resources;
- Identification of policies and programs to enhance and promote recreational resources;
- Review existing open space in Ashland and assess usage by residents;
- Identify future open space opportunities from major land parcels;
- Identify new locations for organized sports fields based on population growth and need by sport.

g) Transportation and Mobility This component of the Comprehensive Plan will analyze the Town's current and proposed transportation system, focusing on major streets and roads, pedestrian circulation, bicycle paths, and parking.

Tasks & Deliverables include but are not limited to:

- Analyze baseline data with projections through 2040 detailing journey-to-work data, commuter data, car ownership data, walk-to-school data, and other relevant statistics;
- Review data and public input from the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan process;
- Identification and assessment of circulation system problems and requirements;
- Assess the current status of sidewalks, pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, and ADA access;
- Provide recommendations for strategies to improve multi-modal mobility within Town and to key regional destinations;
- Considerations of locations for future multi-use paths, with primary consideration given to Ashland's Upper Charles Trail;
- Provide recommendations of how to reduce automobile use and increase regional connectivity, such as review of first mile/ last mile programs, and the use and expansion of the Metrowest Regional Transit Authority.

Themes

In addition to each of the stand-alone components, the Project Management Team has identified three subject-area themes that need to be interwoven through each component of the comprehensive plan. These themes include:

a) Public Health and Wellbeing As opposed to an isolated section, Health and Wellbeing should be interwoven through each of the plan components. A suggested model for the consultant to use is SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness.

b) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The consultant should address how components of the plan reflect the input and needs of ALL Ashland residents, and how all residents will be impacted by any proposed policies.

c) Climate Change & Action: Ashland's Comprehensive Plan will use Climate Change & Action as a guiding principle and practice throughout each of the plan's component. The consultant will need to synthesize data found in the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Net Zero Framework and other relevant documents that the Town has recently produced.

Task 5 - Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is essential to the success of the Comprehensive Plan, closely tied to the Vision and Goals section of the Comprehensive Plan, and expects the visioning process to inform prioritization of implementation steps. The identified goals for each element of the plan shall have a detailed implementation plan. In the Implementation Plan, the Consultant shall:

- Provide details on the municipal regulatory structures that need to be amended to achieve the specified goals;
- Identify which entities are best suited to take responsibility for carrying out the steps needed to achieve the goals of the Master Plan;
- Prepare a clear timeline for implementation that considers how best to prioritize the goals of the Master Plan, based on the community visioning process.
- Recommend zoning and general by-laws, and/or policy changes as well as potential capital improvement details, additional studies, and additional strategies that may be recommended through the process.
- Clearly identify the financial and personnel resources necessary to achieve each of the action items identified in the plan.

Task 6 - Drafting of Full Comprehensive Plan and Presentation of Final Plan

Once the components of the plan are completed, the consultant will be expected to prepare a full draft of the comprehensive plan with guidance and direction from the Steering Committee and Project Management Team. The plan should be in a readable and a format that is easy to comprehend. After the draft is completed, further input will be provided by the full Planning Board and Select Board. The consultant will be asked to incorporate feedback into a final draft that should be completed by March 1, 2025 and presented to the Steering Committee as well as the full Planning and Select Board.

Submission Requirements & Minimum Criteria

A written response must be provided for all requirements of this RFP in the order of the items listed. The respondent should include 7 copies of proposal along with an electronic copy on a USB drive. Each proposal shall be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise delineation of the Proposer's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. The response must include:

1. A Cover Letter signed by a representative who is authorized to contractually bind the Proposer.
2. References & Past Engagements: A list of at least three references familiar with one of the respondent's similar projects listed and the respondent's role in the project (e.g., public officials in the project's community, professional planners, architects, engineers, etc.) including their names, addresses, telephone numbers and involvement (if any) in the project. In addition,

city/town names and contact information should be provided for the last three plans that the consultant was engaged to complete.

3. A Narrative Description of Similar Project Experience and Sample Plans: Provide a detailed narrative of the respondent's experience with the completion of comprehensive plans for similar communities, including those in Massachusetts. This narrative should describe similar projects and the respondent's role in the projects and the number of years in which the respondent has operated in the field of community Comprehensive planning.
4. Project Approach: A overall description of the strategy to be used by the consultant to gather information and feedback, work with committees and focus groups, submit products, and meet the project schedule.
5. Task Approach: A description of how the consultant will approach each task listed in the scope of work.
6. Project Team: A description of the entity submitting the proposal. Must include the names of responsible parties to receive notices to include corporate name(s) and DBA(s) if applicable; address and telephone number(s), names, addresses, and titles of principals with the authority to enter into a contract. Qualifications and experience of the Planning Team, including any potential subcontractors. Only include qualifications for those team members who will be assigned to the project.
7. A Writing Sample (not to exceed 10 pages) prepared solely by the respondent within the last five years which demonstrates the respondent's ability to formulate planning recommendations. Additionally, please provide digital forms of up to two Comprehensive Plans, Zoning bylaws, or similar planning documents prepared by your firm/team, preferably for similarly-sized communities.
8. Information about the respondent's experience and approach to community involvement. If possible, please include at least one example of working with marginalized/historically disconnected or underserved populations.
9. A proposed timetable for the completion of services that meets the schedule required in this request.
10. A price proposal. The proposal should outline price for each task.
11. Signed addenda, if any were issued to change the original RFP as a result of questions or other reason.
12. Required forms or information:
 - a. An Affidavit of Non-Collusion and State Tax Status.
 - b. A disclosure statement, giving the names and addresses of all partners, officers, directors, and owners with an ownership interest in the respondent firm.

Evaluation Criteria

The Project Management Team and CPO will rank each proposal utilizing the following criteria:

1. *Understanding of the Project*

The Project Management Team and CPO will review responses for their understanding of Ashland, the unique needs and priorities of the town, and the identification of any concerns about meeting the proposed timeline with the proposed budget.

Highly Advantageous - The consultant demonstrates a superior understanding of the town and its needs and priorities, and can meet the proposed timeline

Advantageous - The consultant demonstrates an adequate understanding of the town and its needs and priorities, and can meet the proposed timeline

Unacceptable - The consultant does not demonstrate an understanding of the town and its needs and priorities, or cannot meet the proposed timeline and budget

2. Project Approach

This includes both project management and technical approach. The Project Management Team is looking for a proposed work plan that is attainable, within the town's timeline, bold and creative, and addresses all of the plans tasks. A clear description of how the consultants will approach and attain the various aspects of this multifaceted project is key.

Highly Advantageous - The consultant's proposal addresses all the criteria listed above

Advantageous - The consultant's proposal addresses several of the criteria listed

Unacceptable - The consultant's proposal does not provide an adequate approach to the overall project and/or does not demonstrate an adequate approach to each task.

3. Qualifications and Experience

The selection committee will review responses for a demonstrable record of success in completing similar projects, professional experience of key members, and references from previously completed projects of a similar nature. Firms may need to form a team in order to be qualified to address the wide ranging issue topics as well as demonstrate the specific skills needed to meet the scope of work (for example - diversity and inclusion specialists, and public participation specialists).

Highly Advantageous - The consultant has satisfactorily completed more than 5 comprehensive plans for municipalities and clearly demonstrates the ability to form a team that has the skills needed to meet the scope of work.

Advantageous - The consultant has satisfactorily completed 3-5 comprehensive plans for municipalities and clearly demonstrates the ability to form a team that has the skills needed to meet the scope of work.

Unacceptable - The consultant has not satisfactorily completed at least 3 comprehensive plans for municipalities and/or does not clearly demonstrate the ability to form a team that has the skills needed to meet the scope of work.

4. Public Engagement Plan

The engagement plan will be evaluated for creativity, frequency and type of activities, the target audiences served, and functionality/relevance in Ashland.

Highly Advantageous - The consultant's engagement plan is creative and multifaceted. The consultant has demonstrated a superior ability to reach groups that are historically underrepresented.

Advantageous - The consultant's engagement plan is creative and multifaceted. The consultant has demonstrated an adequate ability to reach groups that are historically underrepresented.

Unacceptable - the consultant's engagement plan is not creative and multifaceted, or does not demonstrate an adequate ability to reach groups that are historically underrepresented

If the consultant or part of their team is a certified WMBE, they will be considered highly advantageous.

Rule Of Award

Up to three top ranked proposals will be invited for an interview with the Select Board and Planning Board. After interviews, both Boards will select the proposal that is in the best interest of the town by majority vote.