



# TOWN OF AYER

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS MASTER PLAN PROJECT

Issued: March 1, 2016

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# 1. Introduction

The Town of Ayer invites qualified firms to submit proposals to provide professional planning assistance to the Town of Ayer Master Plan Committee for the preparation of an update of the 2005 Town of Ayer Comprehensive Plan, as defined in M.G.L. c.41, §8ID. Firms must have a minimum of five (5) years of planning and urban design experience in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The last Master Plan was completed in 2005, then called the Comprehensive Plan. The consultant selected for this project through this Request for Proposals (RFP) procedure will assist the Town in providing technical assistance and planning services for the duration of the master planning process. The new master plan is intended to promote orderly growth, development, and redevelopment consistent with the goals and values of the community.

Duration of the services is expected over a 12 to 18 month period.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) is available from the Ayer Board of Selectmen's Office, 1 Main Street, Ayer, MA 01432 on or after March 1, 2016, Monday (8:00 AM-4:00 PM); Tuesday (8:00 AM-7:00 PM); Wednesday (8:00 AM-4:00 PM); Thursday (8:00 AM-4:00 PM); Friday (8:00 AM-1:00 PM). Interested firms must be registered in Massachusetts and be able to demonstrate that they meet all requirements as outlined in the project's Scope of Work.

Proposals must be received no later than 12:00 PM (noon) Friday March 25, 2016 at the Ayer Town Hall, Board of Selectmen's Office, 1 Main Street, Ayer, MA 01432 and marked "Ayer Master Plan Project." All proposals will receive consideration without regard to race, creed, color, age, sex, religion, national origin or disability. The Town of Ayer is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Any questions concerning the proposed project should be directed to the Town Administrator by calling (978) 772-8220 or at [ta@ayer.ma.us](mailto:ta@ayer.ma.us).

The Town of Ayer reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive any informalities, and to make the award as may be deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

The Town of Ayer (Town) has determined that the procurement of consulting services to prepare the Master Plan shall be the Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

## 2. Project Background and Objectives

### Objectives

The Town of Ayer is seeking a consultant to assist the Town Master Plan and public in a collaborative effort to develop a plan to guide the future of the community. While the plan must include the statutory requirements, we are looking for a plan that integrates innovative and progressive ideas, such as, but not limited to; sustainability, Smart Growth, Complete Streets, Transit Orient Development and technology. The plan must consider the diversity of the residents and business community.

The Town envisions a planning process that is meaningful, efficient and expedient. The Town anticipates a streamlined Master Plan where the final plan document is short, readable, and user-friendly. Overall, by presenting data in bulleted formats and using tables, figures and other creative formatting, along with references to existing documents for detail when necessary, the number of pages in the Master Plan document will be reduced while maintaining all of the required data of a typical master plan.

### Background

Ayer is a community of 7,600 residents and a land area of 9.5 square miles. While a relatively small community, it has a diverse population and business / industrial base. In addition, the close proximity to MBTA Commuter Rail, Pan Am Rail, Routes 2A, 2 and 495 make the community unique with respect to business and commuter transportation. Ayer has a small but vibrant Main Street, numerous ponds and water resources, the Nashua River Rail Trail and significant open space.

### Directive

Consultant services will include public participation, review of existing data, identifying and prioritizing issues and alternatives, analysis and development of the updated and implementable Master Plan. The firm shall review the Town's existing plans and studies that include: the 2005 Ayer Comprehensive Plan and the 2016 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the 2016 Pond Management Plan and various studies related to traffic and transportation. The 2005 Ayer Comprehensive Plan is available for your reference on the Town webpage at [www.ayer.ma.us](http://www.ayer.ma.us). The updated Master Plan document will consist of a dynamic, easy-to-read, user-friendly document both in hard copy and electronic format.

## 3. Proposal Submission Requirements

The contents of the proposal shall become contractual obligations, if a contract ensues. Proposals shall contain the following information:

- a. The proposals shall be submitted marked on the outside envelope “Proposals for Master Plan Update”. The outside envelope shall also list the name of the consultant and the date of delivery of said proposal.
- b. The consultants shall submit **one (1) original, five (5) copies and one PDF** version of the proposal. Proposals shall be typewritten (single-spaced) with pages numbered and signed in ink by an official authorized to bind the company to its provisions. The RFP shall not exceed 50 pages, excluding resumes.
- c. Proposals submitted in response to this request should be prepared simply and economically, and contain the following information:
  1. Table of Contents
  2. Name, address, telephone number and contact person for each consultant
  3. References submitted pursuant to the minimum evaluation criteria referenced in this document
  4. Documentation that the consultant fulfills the experience requirements referenced in this document
  5. Documentation that the consultant fulfills the professional requirements referenced in this document
  6. List of Consultants and/or Subcontractors including qualifications referenced in this document
  7. Project Approach – include discussion on public participation, committee responsibilities and facilitation and work process
  8. Scope of Work
  9. Schedule/Timeline

The Town of Ayer will accept proposals to provide consulting services to complete the Master Plan Update. Proposals will be accepted until 12:00 PM Friday, March 25, 2016. Proposals received after the deadline will be returned unopened.

## 4. Municipal Contact for Inquiries

All questions and inquiries regarding the RFP should be addressed to either:

Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Administrator  
Town Hall, 1 Main Street, Ayer, MA 01432  
978-772-8220 or [ta@ayer.ma.us](mailto:ta@ayer.ma.us)

Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant to the Town Administrator  
Town Hall, 1 Main Street, Ayer, MA 01432  
978-772-8220 or [cantonellis@ayer.ma.us](mailto:cantonellis@ayer.ma.us)

Prospective consultants are advised that, from the date this RFP is issued until the award of any resultant contract, they are not permitted to contact municipal employees about a matter related to this solicitation unless they have received the permission of the Town Administrator.

The Town will not be responsible for any interpretations or misinterpretations of any oral instructions.

## 5. Project Budget

The Town of Ayer anticipates a total project budget of approximately \$100,000. As of the publication of this RFP, the Master Plan Committee has \$10,000 in initial funding to commence the project. Upon the selection of a consultant, the Committee will work with the consultant to develop a definitive project budget and secure the required funding.

## 6. Project Timetable

- RFP Informational Meeting [If requested]
- March 25, 2016 RFP Deadline by 12:00 PM
- March 25, 2016 RFP Distributed to Ayer Master Plan Committee
- March 29, 2016 Top qualified consultants selected
- April 26, 2016 Consultant Interviews and Selection
- May 2016 Meeting with Consultant and Committee to outline objectives and other matters of interest and importance. Execute a contract.

## 7. Scope of Services

The Town would expect that, at a minimum, the Scope of Work would have the following elements:

1. Review Data and Assess Existing Conditions

Review existing plans and maps, economic strategies, and other existing materials related to land use, development and redevelopment. Meet with key town staff and committee members to discuss various past community planning efforts and existing data collection and analysis. Analyze existing conditions within Ayer, with particular attention to land use and areas with the potential for development / redevelopment, the housing market and housing opportunities, economic development, and infrastructure needs.

2. Meetings with Master Plan Committee and Public

Meet with the Master Plan Committee a minimum of six (6) times: i) an initial meeting; ii) at least four (4) mid-project meetings to present drafts of mapped data and written materials and to assess the project's progress (these meetings may be in conjunction with the Selectmen and/or the Planning Board); and iii) a final meeting to review comments on the final drafts of written material.

Conduct one (2) public forums on the Master Plan project which presents the analysis of existing conditions (including the findings from the resident survey), identification of key issues, and plan goals and objectives. Town staff will develop a mailing list of stakeholders and provide notice of the meeting and outreach to ensure good participation.

3. Preparation of Master Plan / Work Products

Working with the Master Plan Committee and key Town Staff, develop a Master Plan that addresses the current and future goals and issues in the Town and provide a detailed, implementable plan for the next 10 years. Present specific recommendations which appropriately reflect the needs of residents, protect environmental resources, consider efficient energy use, and promote neighborhoods and Ayer's unique character and sense of place.

Draft and finalize a Master Plan for the Town, which at a minimum includes the categories listed in the Master Plan Format.

4. Presentation of Final Draft Plan at Public Meetings

Present the draft Master Plan recommendations at a public meeting (involving the Board of Selectmen) to discuss the project with interested community members. Present the final draft at a public hearing for plan adoption.

## Master Plan Format

### Executive Summary

Summary of the report conclusions, recommendations and implementation plan

### Section 1 - Introduction

General Update including:

- The 2016 Master Plan update process
- Goals and Policies Statement

### Section 2 - Land Use

This component will include updating Section II-Land Use data and revising/updating recommendations and goals of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan required due to recommendations achieved and goals completed since 2005. Specific elements of the land use section include:

- Introduction
- Current Conditions & Trends including updated existing land use, updated land use by Assessors Classification, updated distribution of land among zoning districts, anticipated future trends/buildout analysis
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Goals for the Land Use Element
- Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) - produced maps including Land Use Map, Zoning Map (existing), Conceptual Future Land Use Map and Land Use Change Map
- References

### Section 3 - Population and Housing

This component will update Section III-Population and Housing incorporating year 2010 U.S. Census data and other current data that address housing development trends, choices and needs. Specific elements of the population and housing section include:

- Introduction
- Current Situation including concentrations of housing, population, household income, comparison of median income to housing price, characteristics of housing stock and ownership, housing affordability analysis, and community housing needs
- Future housing trends and choices facing Ayer

- Goals of the housing element
- MRPC - produced Census 2010 Population Map
- References

#### Section 4 - Economic Development

This component will update Section IV-Economic Development, focusing on the land use aspects of Ayer economic development planning and implementation efforts and activities since 2005, as well as existing and proposed economic development activities. Specific elements of the economic development section include:

- Introduction
- Current Situation
- West Main Street & Park Street Corridors Economic Development Constraints & Opportunities
- Goals for The Economic Development Element
- Consideration of evolving relationship with Devens (Devens Regional Enterprise Zone) due to Ayer's member community status
- References

#### Section 5 - Natural and Cultural Resources

This component will update Section V-Natural and Cultural Resources, including text relating to the maps and cross-referencing to the Ayer Open Space & Recreation Plan (2015). Specific elements of the natural and cultural resources section include:

- Introduction
- Current Conditions and Trends
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Goals for the Natural and Cultural Resources Element
- References

#### Section 6 - Open Space and Recreation

This component will update Section VI-Open Space and Recreation, including excerpts and highlights from the updated Ayer Open Space & Recreation Plan (2015), as well as explanatory and analysis narrative pertaining to maps. Specific elements of the open space and recreation section include:

- Introduction
- Current Situation
- Choices



- Goals for the Open Space and Recreation Element
- MRPC - produced Open Space & Trails Map
- References

### Section 7 - Transportation and Circulation

This component will provide an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems. This element will address transportation & circulation with due consideration given to residential areas, the environment and economic development potential. Specific elements of the transportation and circulation section include:

- Introduction
- Analysis of existing transportation roadway network/patterns
- Analysis of future roadway network maintenance needs and network levels of service, revisions/expansions
- Overall Parking as it relates to the MBTA Commuter Rail station and future upgrades of station
- Goals for the Transportation and Circulation Element that incorporate changing modes of transportation (i.e., plug-ins for electric cars, car/ride sharing facilities, bicycles, bus service)
- Inclusion of Complete Streets and Transit Orient Development

### Section 8 - Town Services and Facilities

This component will examine current municipal services and facilities and examine choices and alternatives as necessary to sustain existing services and accommodate new growth. Specific elements of the town services and facilities section include:

- Introduction
- Current Situation
- Need for water/sewer/stormwater infrastructure upgrades
- Review of split tax rate
- Centralization of governmental functions/Town Manager form of Government
- Consolidation of budget process
- Community Enhancements, such as Dog Park, Community Gardens, Public Safety policies to include restorative justice reforms
- Goals for the Town Services and Facilities Element
- Town-produced Water, Sewer and Stormwater System Map
- Sustainability
- Considerations necessary for developing sustainable power
- Placement of wind and solar resources

- Modifications necessary to encourage smaller and more energy efficient houses and neighborhoods
- Technology
- Investigate the integration of technology to facilitate various town/municipal functions
- Investigate town wide internet access for citizens

### Section 9 – Implementation

This component will be updated to incorporate progress since 2005 in implementing action recommendations from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and other Town comprehensive planning reports, studies and programs since 2005, and will follow the format of the 2005 Master Plan in updating/summarizing goal and strategy listings and action recommendations. Specific elements of the Implementation section include:

- Introduction
- Goals/Strategies/Options Listing
- Action Chart and Action Plan map(s)
- Concluding Statement

## 8. Public Participation Component

The consultant will conduct a creative and interactive public participation process to determine community values and goals, and to identify patterns of development that are consistent with these values. These values and goals will be summarized as a statement of general goals and objectives for development and conservation. The consultant shall draw upon existing studies and planning efforts.

Public participation shall be a major component of the entire project. The process will consist of the following:

It will be open to the public; it will be administered by the Ayer Master Plan Committee on a regular basis as a regular agenda item; it will use the APAC (Ayer Public Access Television) as well as the Town of Ayer website and social media sites as a method to publicize the information and other creative means. The public participation program should involve a broad representation of Town interests, and shall include the Master Plan Committee and the Planning Board which will be responsible for oversight and administration of the Master Plan revision process. The program shall be designed to develop consensus on goals, policies and implementation tools. The consultant should explain the nature of the public participation program that it will employ, including the number and types of meetings that will be held. Furthermore, the consultant shall work with the Town to help develop information for the public to access on the Town's website.

## 9. References

Consultants must submit a complete list of all planning performed in the past five (5) years that are similar in size and scope to this project with contact names and telephone numbers.

## 10. Withdrawal of Proposals

Proposals may be withdrawn by written, telephone or facsimile notice received by the Ayer Master Plan Committee prior to the time specified for receipt of proposals.

## 11. Amendment of Proposals

Proposals may be amended by written notice received by the Ayer Master Plan Committee prior to the time specified for receipt of proposals. No consultant will be permitted to amend its proposal on or after that time. All amendments must be delivered to the Ayer Master Plan Committee in an envelope or similar packaging, clearly marked “Ayer Master Plan Update”, and include the consultant’s name and date of delivery of said proposal.

## 12. Incurring Costs

The Town shall not be liable for any cost incurred by consultants in preparing, submitting or presenting proposals, or in satisfying and demonstrating requirements. The Town shall not reimburse any costs incurred by consultants in anticipation of being awarded the contract under the Request For Proposals.

## 13. Proposals Are Public Records

All documents submitted in response to this RFP are deemed public records under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30B, §3 and open to public inspection. However, pursuant to M.G.L., Ch.30B, §3, all proposals shall remain confidential until the completion of all evaluations pursuant to this RFP.

## 14. Rights to Submitted Material

All proposals, responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to this RFP, and all reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by consultants shall become the property of the Town of Ayer when received.

## 15. Post Submittal Presentations

The review committee will select any number of qualified respondents to make a presentation before the Ayer Master Plan Committee further explaining the submitted proposal. The Committee also

reserves the right to contact any submitter in order to clarify any aspect of the submitted proposal. These contacts will be conducted, as permitted by M.G.L.. C.30B. §6.

## 16. Award of Contract

The Review Committee may require the top-ranked consultants to appear at the Town Hall in Ayer for interviews.

Upon receiving the recommendations of the Review Committee, the Ayer Master Plan Committee will determine the selected consultant(s) and will award said contract.

The non-selection of any proposal will mean that another proposal was deemed to be more advantageous to the Town or that no proposal was accepted. Consultants whose proposals were not accepted will be so notified.

## 17. Reservation of Rights

The Town of Ayer may cancel this RFP or may reject in whole or in part any and all proposals when it is determined that said cancellation or rejection serves the best interests of the governmental body. Reason for cancellation or rejection shall be stated in writing. The Ayer Master Plan Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

## 18. Proposal Evaluation

The contract will be awarded to the consultant who can best satisfy the overall requirements of the Request for Proposals. The Ayer Master Plan Committee will use the following process to evaluate the proposal:

1. A review committee consisting of two (2) Ayer Master Plan Committee Members; the Town Administrator; and the DPW Superintendent. The sole purpose of this step is to demonstrate a consultant's overall completeness and responsiveness. The proposals must meet the requirements identified as Minimum Evaluation Criteria to receive further consideration. The review committee reserves the right to disqualify proposals that are determined to be incomplete or nonresponsive.
2. The proposals will be evaluated for each of the criteria listed as Comparative Evaluation Criteria. Any proposal that receives an "unacceptable" rating in any criteria may be rejected. Based on this evaluation, each proposal will receive a composite rating of "unacceptable", "acceptable", "advantageous", or "highly advantageous".
3. The Scope of Services and Project Approach will be evaluated for the criteria stated in this RFP. Any proposal that receives an "unacceptable" rating in any criteria may be rejected. Based on this evaluation, each proposal will receive a composite rating of "unacceptable", "acceptable", "advantageous", or "highly advantageous".

4. After completion of steps 1, 2 and 3, as detailed above, the proposal will be evaluated. The results of each proposal evaluation will be compared by the review committee at this step, and a final ranking shall be made. The overall goal of the evaluation process shall be to recommend to the Planning Board potential interviewees for the Planning Board to interview and award the contract to the firm whose proposal best meets the requirements of the RFP in the opinion of the Board.

### **Minimum Evaluation Criteria**

Minimum evaluation criteria will be applied to all proposals complying with the bid submission requirements listed in this RFP. Minimum evaluation criteria shall include no less than five (5) years business firm experience in community or master planning, and completion of at least one (1) previous community master plan or master plan revision for a community in Massachusetts.

### **Comparative Evaluation Criteria**

Comparative evaluation criteria will be applied to all proposals complying with the bid submission requirements listed in this RFP and fulfilling the minimum evaluation criteria listed in this document. Each consultant must indicate if and how they meet the following comparative Evaluation Criteria list below.

#### **Elements of Master Plans**

Experience in completing Master Plans in a clear, concise and expert fashion

- Highly advantageous — at least three (3) plans are clear and complete, and also excel with respect to graphics, formats, and writing style
- Advantageous — at least two (2) plans by a consultant are written clearly and fully cover the relevant subject matter
- Not Advantageous — only one (1) of the plans by a consultant is written clearly and fully covers the relevant subject matter
- Unacceptable — none of the plans submitted, by a consultant are clear and complete

#### **Consensus Building and Conflict Resolution**

Experience in building consensus amongst governmental agencies and with the general public and resolving issues of conflict to foster plan adoption by Town Meeting

- Highly Advantageous — At least three (3) Master Plans adopted by Planning Board and endorsed by Town Meeting or City Council
- Advantageous — At least two (2) plans adopted by Planning Board and endorsed by Town Meeting or City Council
- Non Advantageous — One (1) adopted by Planning Board and endorsed by Town Meeting or City Council

- Unacceptable — No plans adopted by Planning Board and endorsed by Town Meeting or City Council

#### Number of Years Firm has been in Business

- Highly Advantageous — Twelve (12) or more years
- Advantageous — Greater than eight (8) years but less than twelve (12) years
- Non Advantageous — Greater than five (5) years but less than eight (8) years
- Unacceptable — Less than five (5) years

#### Relevant Expertise Other than Community and Master Planning

Experience with planning issues beyond community or master planning which may include open space planning, transportation design, urban design, fiscal planning, housing and market analysis, landscape design and community facilities planning.

- Highly Advantageous — the proposal included personnel with three or more areas of expertise including the qualifications and experience that are relevant
- Advantageous — the proposal includes personnel with at least two areas of expertise including the qualifications and experience that are relevant
- Not Advantageous — the proposal includes personnel with one area of expertise including the qualifications and experience that are relevant
- Unacceptable — the proposal does not include personnel with at least one area of expertise outside of community or town planning including the qualifications and experience that are relevant

#### Performance History

The number of government (federal, state, regional and local) clients who have prematurely terminated or discontinued contract with your firm for non-performance within the past five (5) years

- Highly Advantageous — Zero (0) government contracts have been terminated or discontinued for non-performance within the past three years
- Unacceptable — One (1) or more government contracts have been terminated or discontinued within the past three years

### Plan of Services Evaluation

The plan of services will be evaluated as specified below.

- Highly Advantageous — The plan shows exceptional knowledge of Ayer and Central Massachusetts and sets forth a plan that will most effectively guide the future growth of the community
- Advantageous — The plan shows general knowledge of Ayer and Central Massachusetts and clearly addresses methods to successfully guide the future growth of the community
- Not Advantageous — The plan is general in nature and provides no specific knowledge of Ayer
- Unacceptable — The plan is unclear and incomplete

### Completeness of Proposal

Completed proposal fully and accurately addresses all proposed content items including proposed format.

- Highly Advantageous — All items addressed
- Advantageous — One (1) or two (2) items not included or unclear
- Non Advantageous — Three (3) to five (5) items not included or unclear
- Unacceptable — More than (5) items not included or unclear

# APPENDIX A

## Certificate of Non-Collusion

The undersigned certifies under the penalties of perjury that this bid or proposal has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word “person” shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club, or other organization, entity, or group of individuals.

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(Signature of person signing bid or proposal)

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(Printed name of person signing bid or proposal)

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(Name of business)

## Certificate of Tax Compliance

Pursuant to Chapter 62C of the Massachusetts General Laws, Section 49A(b), I,

\_\_\_\_\_ authorized signatory for  
(Name of Contractor) do hereby certify under the pains and penalties of perjury that said contractor has complied with all laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts relating to taxes.

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(Name of Contracting Company)

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(Signature of Authorized Representative)

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(Title)

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(Date)