



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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CITY OF LA CROSSE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WRITING

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Project Description

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to select a qualified comprehensive planning consultant for the preparation of a City Comprehensive Plan according to Wisconsin standards and procedures and the best management practices for comprehensive planning. Proposers shall submit a Proposal to the City which will be based on instructions and specifications provided herein.

The existing Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002 and is the long-range planning document that has helped guide the City of La Crosse over the last nineteen years. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that assists decision-making and administrative actions to guide the City of La Crosse towards the community's desired future.

Background of La Crosse

Geographically, the City of La Crosse is prominently located along the Mississippi River in western La Crosse County, Wisconsin, bordered by the City of Onalaska to the north, Vernon County to the south, Towns of Medary, and Shelby to the east, and the Mississippi River to the west. The prominent bluffs and La Crosse River Marsh create geographic barriers that have promoted a compact development pattern in the river valley

La Crosse has a Council-Mayor form of government. The Mayor is elected to implement the policies of the thirteen-member Common Council as well as overseeing the day-to-day operations of the City government. The City Plan Commission has been appointed to take action on site plans, plats, and conditional use petitions, and makes recommendations to the Common Council regarding amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Map.

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In the 21st Century, La Crosse has maintained a fairly consistent population and land area. La Crosse’s population has shrunk slightly since the 2000 Census, from 51,700 citizens to 52,680 in 2020. The city of La Crosse covers roughly 24 square miles and is surrounded by a 3-mile extra-territorial jurisdiction.

Current Plans to Be Utilized as a part of the comprehensive plan development

After the original Comprehensive Plan adoption, the City has also adopted several plans, demonstrating the City’s continued commitment and efforts toward establishing an encompassing guiding policy document.

- La Crosse Strategic Plan for Sustainability (2009)
- Harbor & Waterfront Plan (2011)
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan (2012)
- Gunderson Health Campus & Powell-Poage-Hamilton Neighborhood Plan (2013)
- Riverside North Charrette Master Plan (2014)
- Highway 53 Corridor Master Plan (2019)
- City Vision 2040 (2021)

SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant shall assist the City of La Crosse to develop and adopt an all-new ‘Comprehensive Plan 2040’ that meets or exceeds jurisdictional requirements and common standards for local comprehensive planning. Said Plan shall be transmitted to the City no later than April 2023, unless otherwise indicated by the City of La Crosse. It is anticipated that the primary responsibilities of the consultant will be the following:

- Assisting staff with the planning process
- Work with staff and media consultants to obtain feedback from the public and stakeholders.
- Preparation and development of the planning document including written text, maps, illustrations, any additional background data, appendices, diagrams, illustrations, etc.

The consultant is not expected to be the face of the project, nor take the lead in stakeholder meetings, community meetings, or public presentations related to acquiring feedback from the public for the plan. The consultant will work with planning staff on presentations to the steering committee and City committees.

TASK 1: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN

The following provides a ‘Task by Task’ outline of the key steps in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The City of La Crosse’s Comprehensive Plan 2040 needs to be developed by effectively hearing the City’s population and understanding the community’s desires related to each required element of the plan, and establishing and prioritizing diverse goals and objectives.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

La Crosse planners shall establish a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, made up of City Plan Commissioners. The Steering Committee will meet with the Consultant periodically to review draft materials, guide local preferences, and make recommendations regarding the various components of the Comprehensive Plan. Steering Committee meetings may occasionally occur remotely, via electronic means such as video conferencing, telephone conferencing, and/or internet-based call-in media.

Community input and visioning are core and critical elements of the Comprehensive Plan process. The offeror shall propose additional public engagement that will be effective in communicating the process and gathering input. La Crosse places a premium on multiple, in-person, public engagement activities that elicit raw data points from the community at large from which the policy of the Comprehensive Plan will be written. The consultant will work with the Planning Department staff and the marketing consultant in the preparation of a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan designed to reach out to all citizens of La Crosse for their participation and input in the planning process. This plan will include the utilization of all forms of public outreach including, but not limited to, the following: all forms of social media, radio, TV, static advertising, newspaper, website, text messages, surveys, and mailings.

The plan should take advantage of new and existing technologies to make it easy for the public to access information and promote participation by all segments of the community. The City of La Crosse is particularly interested in the firm's experience in successfully engaging the community through a variety of innovative methods. The consultant team must demonstrate extensive expertise and experience in the public participation and facilitation processes. Regarding public participation, the consultant team must have strong leadership and creativity to provide clear direction in participation techniques that result in inclusive yet timely decisions. Please note your experience in developing and managing visioning and public input.

Timeline & Schedule

A detailed timeline and written schedule will be prepared by the Consultant and approved by the Client to establish the schedule for planning meetings and delivery dates throughout the planning process.

TASK 2: MINIMUM CONTENT FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

La Crosse's municipal code outlines minimum requirements for the content of the City's Comprehensive Plan in Sec. 101-60:

"The City of La Crosse Comprehensive Plan shall consist of the following elements, included within the above-referenced document titled 'Confluence: The La Crosse Comprehensive Plan' attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit 'A,' on file with the City Clerk's office dated December 19, 2002, containing directives, goals, objectives, actions, policies, implementation strategies and required maps, figures, and tables showing future conditions: (1) Introduction and Summary. (2) Summary of Issues and Conditions. (3) Natural Resources Plan. (4) Land Use Plan. (5) Transportation Plan; Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. (6) Urban Design Plan. (7) Parks and Open Space Plan. (8) Neighborhoods and Housing Plan. (9) Public Utilities Plan. (10) Community Facilities Plan. (11) Economic Development Plan. (12) City Vision 2020 Downtown Master Plan. (13) Heritage Preservation Plan. a. 10th & Cass National Register of Historic Places Heritage Preservation Plan excluding the property located at 224 South 9th Street. b. Downtown Commercial Heritage Preservation Plan. (14) Intergovernmental Coordination Plan. (15) Plan Implementation. (16) Airport Land Use Plan."

Similarly, the Comprehensive Plan must meet Wisconsin Statutes Sec 66.1001. This law requires the following elements and describes their content: (1) Issues and opportunities element. (2) Housing element. (3) Transportation element. (4) Utilities and community facilities element. (5) Agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element. (6) Economic development element. (7) Intergovernmental cooperation element. (8) Land-use

element. (9) Implementation element. The final plan will include these elements, whether individually or combined into larger elements.

The final plan will include these elements, whether individually or combined into larger elements. Some aspects of this list can be adopted by reference in the text of specialized strategic and master plans already created and adopted by La Crosse's Common Council. In addition to the above minimum standards, the Consultant will collect and analyze a range of information about existing conditions and the potential for the future of the City of La Crosse. Information will be based on a thorough understanding of existing plans and programs affecting the city, and on input, inventories, and analyses undertaken by the Consultant. Previously compiled data will be used and incorporated where possible. Emphasis will be on the identification of features and conditions that may influence or affect the planning process, rather than extensive documentation of existing conditions other than what is necessary to comply with state standards. All spatial data and analysis shall be produced and delivered to include ESRI GIS layers as appropriate.

Issues and Opportunities Element

The Consultant will review the current Issues and Opportunities list for the community and work with City staff and community stakeholders to make recommendations for additions, revisions, or deletions. The list must be reviewed by the Steering Committee with new or revised items going through the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) or similar analysis of the community and then prioritized as community objectives. Issues and Opportunities that the community identified as high priority must be followed up with corresponding implementation measures in the Implementation Element.

This element shall include background information on the city of La Crosse and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals, and programs of the city to guide the future development and redevelopment of the city over a 20-year planning period. Background information shall include population, household, and employment forecasts that the city uses in developing its comprehensive plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels, and employment characteristics that exist within the city (Much of this data has been collected and is available here: <https://2020-comprehensive-planning-laxgis.hub.arcgis.com/>).

Housing Element

This element shall include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs of the city to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the city of La Crosse. The element shall assess the age, structural, value, and occupancy characteristics of the city's housing stock. The element shall also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the city and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs. It shall identify policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the city's existing housing stock.

Transportation Element

This element shall include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to guide the future development of all modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric scooters, electric personal assistive mobility devices, electric and autonomous vehicles, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking, and water transportation. The element shall compare

the city's objectives, policies, goals, and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element shall also identify highways within the city by function and incorporate state, regional, and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans, and rail plans that apply in the city.

Utilities and Community Facilities Element

This element shall include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the city such as sanitary sewer service, stormwater management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities, such as police, fire, and rescue facilities, libraries, schools, and other governmental facilities. The element shall describe the location, use, and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the city shall include an approximate timetable that forecasts the need in the city to expand or rehabilitate existing utilities and facilities or to create new utilities and facilities and shall assess future needs for government services in the city that are related to such utilities and facilities.

Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element

This element shall include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s. 295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources, and other natural resources.

Economic Development Element

This element shall include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the city, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the city. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the city. The element shall assess the city's strengths and weaknesses concerning attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional, and state economic development programs that apply to the city.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

This element shall include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent cities, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the city to school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent cities, and to the region, the state, and other governmental units. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the city is a party under s. 66.0301, 66.0307, or 66.0309. The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the city and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

Land-use Element

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity, and net density of existing uses of land in the city, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand, and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment, and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in Issues and Opportunities, for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

Existing Land Use Map

The consultant will conduct an existing land use inventory of the city of La Crosse and areas in the immediate fringe around the city, based on standard categories described in the existing Comprehensive Plan for the City, in addition to any new categories developed in the new plan which will be produced in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and produced in color. The maps will be revised based on input from staff, stakeholders, Steering Committee, and the general public as may be received. The method for producing the existing land use maps shall be a combination of field survey, review and interpretation of aerial photographs, analysis of prior city land use maps, and -if necessary- tax assessor records. Consultant shall also produce estimates of acreage within each existing land use category.

Existing Overlays and Character Areas (subject to refinement)

The consultant will evaluate existing Overlays and Character Areas and draft and present in map form, along with text descriptions, recommendations for "Character Areas" that identify unique sub-areas of the City. These recommendations could re-establish the existing character areas, amend them, or delete them in favor of new areas. Possibilities include, but are not limited to, the existing historic districts and small area plans.

Implementation Element

This element shall include a compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans, and programs contained in the above elements. This element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan and shall include a mechanism to measure the city's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan in 10 years or less.

GIS Data Collection and Organization

The Client anticipates the use of spatial data compiled in GIS, including all data layers necessary to develop the Existing Land Use Map. Population and demographic trends, political jurisdictions, natural and cultural resources

areas, and community facilities and services will be located and compiled into spatial data layers to allow the creation of data overlays that will be used to create the Existing Land Use Plan and the Future Development Map and to facilitate discussion in Steering Committee meetings, public meetings, meetings with the staff and other officials, and future use of the plan. Mapping will be coordinated with La Crosse planners to ensure that the plan addresses local priorities, as well as any regional and State-wide concerns. Data layers will be provided in the form of ESRI Shapefiles or Layers, and the Consultant will coordinate with the projection information for the Shapefiles with the City. Existing GIS data will be utilized to take advantage of the knowledge and experience currently embedded in existing database schemas. Other database objects that will be addressed are the transportation network and other components, which will have the opportunity to interact with these databases. The purpose of the database design is to ensure that the design looks at the big picture. Taking this approach will help to identify as many database objects as possible to produce a design that will be thorough while still retaining the ability to scale the design in the future.

Key GIS Maps for Production or Updates

- Location Map
- Existing Land Use Map
- Future Land Use Map
- Character Area Map
- Entitlements Map (i.e. conditional uses and variances, etc.)
- Areas Requiring Special Attention Map
- Natural Features Map(s) — Water Resources: showing rivers and streams, wetlands, 100-year flood plain, groundwater recharge areas, and water supply basins.
- Natural Features Map(s) — Conservation Areas: showing planned Green-space areas, major parks and recreation areas, and scenic views and sites.
- Existing Transportation Facilities Map(s): showing the road network and classifications, bicycle/pedestrian, and other transportation facilities as appropriate.
- Transportation Plan Map(s): showing the proposed improvements to the road network and other transportation facilities as appropriate (including pedestrian and bike facilities).
- Community Service Facilities Map(s): showing existing and proposed public safety facilities, hospitals, and other public health facilities, parks and recreation facilities, general governmental administrative facilities, educational facilities, libraries, and other cultural facilities within the City of La Crosse.

TASK 3: ADOPTION PROCESS

Adoption by the City

The City's elected decision-makers are charged with the responsibility to adopt the Comprehensive Plan. La Crosse planners will draft a resolution for the La Crosse Common Council to adopt the Comprehensive Plan. The Consultant will attend the meeting associated with the adoption process to respond to any questions or comments, and where appropriate, make presentations regarding the Plan.

Documentation

After the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the City, the consultant will provide digital and hardcopy of the originals (including all maps, charts, tables, etc.) for the City in addition to three (3) copies of printed and bound versions of the completed plan.

SUBMISSION & EVALUATION

Response Format

Economy of Presentation

Submittals shall be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise delineation of the consultant's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Elaborate bindings, colored displays, and promotional material are not required. Emphasis on each statement must be on completeness and clarity of content. There is no expectation that submittal materials will be returned to the Offeror during or after the selection process. To expedite the evaluation of proposals, Offerors must follow the format and instructions contained herein.

Organization and Content of Proposals

The response package shall be organized in a manner such that the following requirements in the RFP are cross-referenced in the submittal materials. The locations within the applicant's response where each requirement is met must be identified.

The Offeror MUST provide this information in the submittal which will be evaluated and assigned points as determined by the evaluation committee, by way of preparation of an evaluation worksheet(s) that will follow the RFP stated requirements. Evaluation worksheets are not available during the solicitation process, but are available after award, as are all other solicitation documentation.

Sheet Count

The Technical Proposal shall have a maximum sheet count of 30 sheets, including all required material detailed herein. The Cost Proposal shall have a maximum sheet count of five (5) sheets, including all required material detailed herein. Tabs, covers, and other separators are not counted toward the page maximum.

Technical Proposal Content

Cover Letter

This letter will summarize briefly and concisely the firm's understanding of the Scope of Work. The letter must name all persons authorized to represent the firm and include the titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of such persons.

Technical Experience

Detail no fewer than three (3) example projects (1-page maximum for each example) that best illustrate the team's ability to provide the requested services. Explain how these projects are similar to this request and similar to La Crosse's size and provenance, and what the anticipated differences might be. Provide client reference names and telephone numbers.

- Scope of Services
- Statement of understanding
- Methodology to complete tasks
- Work Schedule/Proposed timeline
- Organization profile and qualifications

- Qualifications of key personnel

Cost Proposal

Fee proposals shall include the following:

- A schedule of fees broken down by work task;
- Hourly rates for project personnel to be used as the basis for payment;
- Total estimated cost for the work; and
- List of deliverables

Proposal Submittal

An electronic copy (PDF) of the Technical & Cost Proposals must be submitted to:

Lewis Kuhlman at kuhlman@cityoflacrosse.org by Monday, November 15, 2021, @ 12 PM Noon (Central)

Evaluation Criteria and Process

Administrative Review of Proposals

All proposals received will be reviewed to ensure that all administrative requirements of the RFP package have been met by the Offerors. Each proposal will be reviewed to ensure that the Offeror submitted a separately packaged cost proposal and technical proposal, that only technical information is included in the technical proposal and only cost information is included in the cost proposal, and that all documents requiring a signature have been signed. Proposals failing to meet these requirements or to include all the required statements and affirmations may be automatically rejected as not being responsive. All technical proposals that meet the administrative requirements will then be forwarded to the technical evaluation team members for further evaluation.

Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee will review all proposals received and determine a ranking. Additionally, the Committee may, in its sole discretion and the course of its evaluation, request additional information in writing, hold additional in-person or teleconference interviews, arrange a site visit, or request presentations/demonstrations with one or more selected Offerors.

Evaluation of Proposals

The criteria for evaluating the proposals and selecting a consultant will include but not be limited to:

- The responsiveness of the offeror, and completeness and compliance with the terms of this RFP
- The firm's specific approach to the project. Although the City has identified the general nature of services required, the consultant is encouraged to provide an innovative approach and methodology to provide the requested services.
- Capabilities and previous experience in comparable projects of this type, and the specialized experience and technical competence of the consultant to adequately engage the public.
- Record of performance on contracts with other governmental agencies, including such factors as quality of work, control of costs, letters of recommendation from past clients, and ability to meet established schedules.
- The capacity of the personnel to perform the work on time.

- Qualifications of individuals who will have direct involvement in tasks on this project.

Consultants may contract with sub-consultants on the Update, but a lead consultant must be identified and must take responsibility for all the deliverables. The City reserves the right to request substitution of firms. A response to this RFP should not be deemed to be construed as a contract or an indication of a commitment of any kind on the part of the City of La Crosse. Upon review of the responses to this RFP, City staff will prepare a shortlist of consultants to interview. A firm will be selected for recommendation to the Common Council to negotiate contract terms, including a fair and reasonable price. If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated with that firm, the City shall formally end negotiations with that firm and select the next most favored provider and attempt to negotiate with that firm.

The City reserves the right to request additional information from individual consultants submitting responses. All responses are considered public records; each page deemed proprietary and confidential must be marked as such, but the final interpretation of public information will rest with the Attorney General. The City reserves the right to reject any or all responses and the right, in its sole discretion, to accept the responses it considers most favorable to the City's interest. The City further reserves the right to reject all responses and seek new responses when such procedure is deemed reasonable and in its best interest.

Award of Task Order(s)

No guarantee is made by the City that any action or task order will be issued as a function of this RFP and its responses if any. Award of task order(s)/contract(s) shall be made to and negotiated with the responsible Offeror(s) whose Proposal is determined to be the most advantageous for the City, taking into account all of the evaluation factors outlined in this RFP. The City of La Crosse reserves the right to reject any Proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

RFP Timeline (subject to change):

- Questions due by: Wednesday, October 27, 2021
- Question & Answer Session (Tentative): Wednesday, November 3, 2021, @ 12 PM Noon (Central)
- Proposals due by: Monday, November 15, 2021
- Proposal review: Monday, November 29, 2021
- Interviews conducted: Week of December 13, 2021
- Contract(s)/task order(s) approval by the Mayor is expected January 14, 2022.

Method of Compensation

Upon selection, the consultant will provide the necessary information for a task order to the City. The task order with the consultant is to be for a not-to-exceed amount for Comprehensive Plan services, as described herein, with reimbursement upon completion of agreed-upon components of work, with a fee schedule for the remainder of requested services. The Director of Planning & Development and/or his designee will review and approve for payment of all invoices submitted by the consultant under the contract.