CITY OF HUDSON

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



Photo by Paul Abitabile

Issue Date: June 16, 2023

Proposal Due Date: July 14, 2023

City of Hudson

520 Warren St, Hudson, NY 12534

June 2023

A. Purpose

The City of Hudson seeks proposals from qualified consultants to facilitate a thorough community planning process and create a thoughtful and innovative Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan will focus on the City's future with a strong emphasis on land use, inclusive development, and carbon neutrality.

B. Background

The City of Hudson is a city of about 6,000 people located along the Hudson River in Columbia County, NY. The City of Hudson has an urban, walkable footprint located in a beautiful rural area. Hudson is geographically small, only 2.2 square miles, which has led to its compact development. Hudson is situated in a rural county, between the Catskill Mountains to the west and the Berkshire Mountains to the east, but New York City can be reached in two hours by train or car, and Albany in less than an hour.

The City of Hudson has experienced significant demographic change in a short period of time. The City has lost about half its population since the 1990s. From about 1990 to the early 2000s, the City faced issues of an aging housing stock and a loss of industrial jobs. However, the City was fairly affordable and home to vibrant communities and families.

The City's last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002. Its first goal was "Protect the Traditional Character of Hudson's Downtown and Neighborhoods," with objectives focused on historic preservation and design. The primacy of this goal reflects the priorities of the groups whose voices were most represented in the last planning process. The intact historic architecture of Hudson is a community asset; however, this has also led to residential and commercial gentrification over the last two decades that have in turn led to increased housing expenses and displacement of residents. Hudson has historically had an Area Median Income roughly 50% lower than that of Columbia County. While the median income has been rising in the area, this has also been at the expense of residents who had to move out. Hudson is a majority renter city, so renters feel the squeeze of increased prices first, as well as the lack of housing units due to conversion to short-term rentals or vacation homes. The pandemic only heightened this trend, especially as Hudson is located on the Amtrak line; in 2021 *The New York Times* cited Hudson as the place that experienced the largest percentage of net incoming residents in the country due to the pandemic. This demographic shift in a short period of time has led to conflicting visions of how the City should develop.

In addition to housing and affordability, accessibility remains a significant challenge to the city and its administration. In October 2019, the City entered into a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice regarding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) noncompliance identified on several municipal properties and programs, which in its terms included a mandate to resolve a large portion of noncompliant sidewalks and curb cuts that serve to connect people to public services. While a significant number of items within the settlement have been addressed, capital improvements focusing on accessibility of public facilities have taken longer to execute than the initial settlement allowed. While negotiating an extension to this settlement with the DOJ, the City agreed to establish a Sidewalk Improvement District program to better facilitate the City's ability to improve pedestrian connectivity.

Hudson's main industries are healthcare and tourism. Columbia Memorial Hospital, the County's largest employer, is located in Hudson. Hudson City School District, located in Hudson but covering several municipalities, is another large employer. While Hudson used to have several large industrial employers, these have largely closed over the years. Warren Street, Hudson's one-mile active commercial corridor, is home to many small businesses, primarily comprising of restaurants and retailers of luxury goods, antiques, and fine art. Hudson has seen an increase in hotels and short-term rentals over the past few years, which has brought business to the City but has also contributed to the increase in housing costs.

The changes in demographics, key industries, and cost of living have affected our residents in different ways- some benefitting, but others facing housing and employment challenges. It is our hope that the act of creating this Comprehensive Plan can provide an opportunity for community members to create a shared vision for the City's future.

Although it has been almost two decades since the City created its last Comprehensive Plan, the City and community have created many other plans in the interim. The new Comprehensive Plan should incorporate these plans recently created by the City and residents rather than replace them. These recent plans include:

- Parking Study, 2022
- Affordable Housing Policies, 2022
- Tree Inventory & Community Forest Management Plan, 2022
- Hudson Waterfront Climate-Adaptive Design, 2022
- Affordable Housing Development Plan, 2021
- Truck Route Traffic Study, 2021
- Bridge District Connectivity Plan, 2021
- Natural Resource and Open Space Inventory, 2019
- Strategic Housing Action Plan, 2018

Other previous plans and studies to consider include:

- ADA Sidewalks Audit, 2021
- Hudson Community Resilience Building Workshop-Findings, 2017
- Climate Summary, 2016
- Hudson Riverfront BOA Pre-Nomination Study, 2015
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, 2011
- Comprehensive Plan, 2002

C. Key Topic Areas

Future Land Use Map and Zoning: The Plan must include a Future Land Use Map with an illustrated land use guide. The City is seeking to use this FLUM as a guide to create new zoning that is more flexible, modern, and regulates form more than use. The FLUM included in this Plan should be easily implementable as a zoning code.

Sustainability and Resiliency: The City of Hudson is committed to ending its reliance on fossil fuels and strives to improve resilience to the effects of climate change by aligning with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The Plan should incorporate the recommendations from previous plans and efforts and the

work of Hudson's very active Conservation Advisory Council and other local environmental organizations and respond to the standards recommended by NYS Climate Smart Communities program and the NY Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. The Plan should provide implementable recommendations to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions, increase community resilience to the effects of climate change, improve air quality, reduce energy support, increase accessibility to renewable energy, and generally support Smart Growth goals. This section of the Plan may effectively be considered a Climate Action Plan scaled to Hudson and should include sections on green infrastructure and best practices for parking lot design and the design and heating and cooling of new development. A key component of this Plan is advancing the City's Brownfields goals.

Utilities, Infrastructure, and Capital Facilities: The state and capacity of the City's infrastructure should be a factor in creating a realistic and implementable Comprehensive Plan. Coordination will be needed with the Public Works Department to ensure the land use and development recommendations can be supported.

Transportation: The Plan should utilize the recommendations from the recent Truck Study, Parking Study, and Hudson Connectivity projects and add recommendations for implementing a cohesive network of Complete Streets. Consideration should also be given to address how development may affect motorized transportation, transit needs, and emerging trends like electric vehicles, ridesharing services, etc.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces: The Plan should consider the recent and ongoing efforts to improve local parks and increase tree cover. The Plan should provide recommendations for how to holistically manage the long-term maintenance of these projects and how to advance goals in protecting, preserving, and resuscitating the City's natural resources. The Plan should identify existing public lands for preservation and any properties where new public open spaces may be added feasibly, especially considering the connectivity of existing park or recreation trails.

Housing: The City has several initiatives in progress to preserve and increase housing affordability. The Plan should provide recommendations for preserving and creating housing affordable to all income bands that build upon the City's current work and recent housing plans, and consider how forecasted demographic change, the redevelopment of the Hudson Housing Authority, and the other Key Topic Areas of the Plan like economic development, infrastructure, transportation, and resiliency interplay with the City's housing goals.

Economic Development: The Plan should provide an Economic Development Plan that: analyzes the City's economic role in the region, including potential targeted industries; provides an equity analysis focused on the economic well-being of the City's residents, especially those in the low-income brackets; assesses displacement and gentrification risks from the perspective of employers and employees; considers changes in consumer and workplace behaviors; evaluates the health and challenges facing small businesses; evaluates best practices for marijuana sales and/or production; and considers the lack of employees for key industries like healthcare, childcare, and tourism and the lack of employment opportunities that provide the wages needed to live in this area.

Community Culture and Urban Design: The Plan should include the consensus reached in the public engagement phase that identifies the overall community vision and how that relates to Hudson's community character. The Plan should explore what makes Hudson unique and incorporate the culture and vision of all the citizens of Hudson.

Accessibility: In all Topic Areas of the Plan and throughout the process of community engagement and development of the Plan, attentiveness to all forms of accessibility must be maintained. The Plan should take into consideration existing facility conditions and plans related to improved accessibility for public services.

Implementation Plan and Fiscal Responsibility: The City desires for this planning document to serve as a regular reference guide for City staff, officials, partner organizations, and community. Plan recommendations should identify short-, mid-, and long-term actions and implementation strategies that consider the size and capacity of City staff and partners and the fiscal capacity and responsibility of the City.

D. Key Events and Dates

Event	Date
Issuance of Request for Proposals (RFP)	June 16, 2023
Deadline for RFP Questions	June 30, 2023
Post Responses for RFP Questions	July 6, 2023
Proposal Due Date	July 13, 2023
Interviews/Presentations (not earlier than)	July 24, 2023
Project Launch	Fall 2023
Public Engagement	Early 2024
First Draft	Late 2024
Final Draft	Early 2025

E. Scope of Work

The selected Consultant Team is expected to provide a wide range of services related to the Plan. The intent of the Scope of Work is to serve as a framework which the Consultant Team can use to develop a more detailed scope of services based on their professional expertise, knowledge, and unique ideas. The final Scope of Work will be developed in collaboration with the selected Consultant Team and City staff prior to contract approval.

1. **Existing Conditions Assessment:** The Consultant Team should propose an approach to analyze existing planning and land use conditions in the City. The existing conditions should include an examination of relevant plans and policies, demographics and market influences, current land use and zoning, transportation, housing, the natural environment, recreation and tourism opportunities, community services, fiscal health, and infrastructure. Historic trends, emerging issues, and impact and resulting externalities of City policies, plans, and regulations should be assessed. The Plan should include complete datasets of demographics, land use patterns, transportation networks, potential population changes, housing market changes and projections, and economic changes. The Consultant Team should work with City staff and officials to identify key stakeholders and a steering committee to reach out during the public and stakeholder engagement process.

2. **Public and Stakeholder Engagement**: The Consultant Team should include a robust plan for public engagement in their proposal that can attract voices not typically heard in the comprehensive planning process. Potential public engagement activities should be multifaceted,

unique, and provide outreach to key stakeholders and the broader community. Below is a list of desired means of engagement:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Focus group meetings
- A statistically-valid survey
- An interactive website
- Social media
- Pop-ups
- Charrettes or workshops
- Open houses
- Project branding

The City is interested in unique ways to present information to the community and obtain feedback such as visual preference surveys, interactive planning sessions and using various forms of media that are graphically based. Public engagement should include outreach in Spanish and Bengali and should balance input from individuals who tend to dominate public input in traditional settings with those who historically do not participate.

3. **Establishment of Vision & Goals**: Based on community input and other factors, the Consultant Team should develop a consensus-based vision for the future of Hudson, as well as an interdepartmental framework of achievable goals, strategies, and policies to support the vision.

4. **Key Recommendations:** The Consultant Team should be prepared to discuss the plan's expected recommendations around the midpoint of the project, prior to the serious preparation of the draft plan. The goal is to gather the City's feedback on key recommendations before significant resources are spent drafting the plan. The key recommendations should utilize the content of the City's recent plans rather than duplicate.

5. **Draft Plan:** Using all input obtained in the data gathering, public engagement, and review of key recommendations, a draft plan should be developed that addresses the Key Topic Areas, including the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Code Principals. The Zoning Code Principals are not intended to be codified verbatim in the new Zoning Code but instead is intended to provide the consultant a foundation from which to use to inform the complete rewrite and map.

The Consultant Team has flexibility in the format and length of the draft plan but is not expected to provide a full plan outline in their proposal. Respondents should give some indication of the types of recommendations that are expected to be made regarding the topics that were identified as priorities in this RFP. The draft plan should also address implementation, including actions which should be taken in the near future to advance its recommendations. Respondents should assume that several meetings would be necessary to review the draft plan, including an initial presentation to City Staff, an informational open house, and presentations to the steering committee, Planning Board, and the City Council.

6. **Final Plan:** The Consultant Team should prepare a final plan based on comments made regarding the draft plan by City staff and officials, stakeholders, and others. The Common Council will review and adopt the final plan. The Plan will include all deliverables listed in Section F. Respondents should assume that a series of meetings would be necessary, including an initial

presentation to City Staff, an informational open house, a formal public hearing, and presentations to the steering committee, Common Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Advisory Council.

F. Deliverables

The Selected Consultant Team must provide, at a minimum, the following deliverables and they must be specified in the proposal:

1. A complete final draft of the Comprehensive Plan ready for adoption by the City, including all exhibits and attachments;
2. Electronic copy of the plan in an interactive PDF; all maps should be provided in PDF form and layers in shapefiles or similar format acceptable to the City;
3. An executive summary (or similar document) useful to the development community; and
4. Data, analysis, and all sources used to create the Comprehensive Plan, including but not limited to, spreadsheets, mapping (ESRI format), etc.

G. Submittal Requirements

The following information is required from the proposer:

1. **Title Page:** Provide the subject of the proposal; applicant's name, address, and telephone number; individual point of contact name, address, telephone number, and email.
2. **Cover Letter** that provides the following:
    a. a brief description of the consultant or firm
    b. identifies the project lead and contact information
    c. areas of specialization that relate to the tasks listed in Scope of Work
    d. availability for when the consultant would be available to begin work
    e. provides any other information that helps the City of Hudson know why your firm stands out and is a good fit for this project
    f. a statement that the firm has read and understands the RFP and agrees to all conditions, requirements, and terms stated in the RFP. The transmittal letter shall be signed by a duly authorized officer or agent empowered with the right to bind the firm submitting a proposal for consideration.
3. **Qualifications**: Provide information on the location, project cost, public engagement experiences, and outcomes of past experiences related to updating and creating Comprehensive Plans. Submitted materials should demonstrate the applicant's, and any sub-consultant's qualifications, and those of the particular staff to be assigned to the Project. Firms should demonstrate experience as the lead firm on at least three (3) similar projects, preferably within the last five (5) years, and other related projects from sub-consultants within the last five (5) years.
4. **Project Team**: Identify the project team (including sub-consultants and associates) and provide a statement of qualifications for each individual, including: education, professional registrations, area(s) of expertise and years of service in their respective fields. The following information should be included:
    a. Identify the project manager who will lead the Project;
    b. Identify any sub-consultants that will be part of the Project team;
    c. Names and proposed roles of other individual members;

   d. Education, experience, and biographies of all team members addressing the qualifications and considerations of the RFP;
   e. Describe the qualifications of the firm and any sub-consultants to perform the work requested including information regarding pertinent prior experience.
5. **Project Understanding**: Include a summary of the firm's understanding of the Project as described in this RFP, the City of Hudson, and the unique issues facing the City. Identify the City's background and issues that may impact the firm's methodology and approach to the project.
6. **Methodology and Approach**: Provide a description of the method and approach your firm intends to utilize in order to complete the project. Discuss and clearly explain the methodology proposed to achieve the required services for the Project. The respondent must document a clear understanding of the RFP's entire scope of work and Project intent including: data requirements, public participation process, all aspects of technical analysis, projections, advanced technology, and software. Firms should suggest innovative approaches the City should consider when implementing the new Comprehensive Plan.
7. **Project Timeline**: Provide a proposed schedule from the start to the completion of the Project. The schedule should include phasing, milestones and approximate completion dates.
8. **Work Samples**: List and provide in electronic format only (web link or PDF) at least three examples of comprehensive plans completed within the last five years in which the consulting firm was the project's lead agency.
9. **References**: Provide a list of at least three municipal clients for which the firm was the lead agency in providing services similar to the ones described in this RFP. Please provide contact information (name, position, address, telephone number, and email) of persons the City may contact to verify work completed and performance.
10. **Cost Breakdown**: Submit a not-to-exceed cost for the project, including travel and material expenses. The costs should be broken out to correspond with the completion of major tasks as described in the project timeline. Provide a comprehensive Project budget as well as a payment schedule.
11. **Verify Firm Capacity**: Provide a statement of the firm's ability to begin and complete the project within the timeframe identified in this RFP and in the manner described in the RFP response. Provide information regarding any other projects that the firm has already committed to that may occur simultaneously with this project.

H. Evaluation and Selection Process

A committee of City staff and elected officials will review and score the RFP responses. The RFP scores will be used to identify a "short list" of firms that will be interviewed. Selection will be based on a comparative evaluation of firm's professional qualifications including:

- Past performance on similar projects
- Understanding of Project scope
- Approach in completing the objectives
- Relevant experience and availability of key personnel
- Knowledge and experience in creating Comprehensive Plans
- Knowledge of the City of Hudson
- Ability to bring unique ideas and perspectives to the Project
- Firm's ability to meet schedules
- Uniqueness and extensiveness of the firm's public engagement process
- Cost reasonableness
- MWBE certification

I. Interview

The City of Hudson reserves the right to determine whether interviews will be necessary. The purpose of the interview is to further document the proposer's ability to provide the required services and to impart to the Selection Committee an understanding of how specific services will be furnished. The proposed lead principal and any other key personnel must be present and participate in the interview. The interview will be evaluated on whether it substantiates the characteristics and attributes claimed by the proposer in its written response to this RFP and any other information requested by the Committee prior to the interview.

J. Term of Contract

The contract period of service will be agreed upon between the Consultant and the City after agreeing upon the specific scope of work and negotiating the price.

K. Submission of Proposals

Consultant Teams responding to this RFP must:

- Provide one (1) electronic PDF and five (5) hard copies of a response to this RFP in accordance with the Response Requirements named herein.
- Electronic copies can be emailed to Common Council President Tom DePietro at councilpres@cityofhudson.org.
- Submittals must be received by the City of Hudson no later than **5pm EST on July 14, 2023**.
- The envelope/package must be marked "RFP: Response: City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan" and mailed to:

  City Hall
  attn: Comprehensive Plan RFP Review Committee
  520 Warren Street
  Hudson, NY 12534

- Communication (other than the process described herein) with the City, the selection team, or the general public relative to this RFP prior to the announcement of a selection is strictly prohibited.

L. Statement of Interest:

All parties intending to submit a proposal under this RFP must contact the City of Hudson and provide an email address no later than June 30, 2023. This address will be used for official communications from the City, including notice of any addendums. All addenda will also be posted on the City's website.

M. Questions and Clarifications

All inquiries regarding this Request for Proposals shall be emailed to Tom DePietro, Common Council President, at councilpres@cityofhudson.org. The subject line of the email should read "Comp Plan RFP

Question." An emailed responding "Received," will be sent in response. If you do not receive this email, please call the Mayor's Office at 518-828-7217 to confirm receipt of your questions.

All questions received will be answered in an Addendum Document on July 6, 2023. That document will be posted on the City of Hudson's website: www.cityofhudson.org.

N. Terms and Conditions

1. *Incurred Costs*: This RFP does not commit the City of Hudson to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request. The City of Hudson will not be liable in any way for any costs incurred by respondents in replying to this RFP.
2. *Right to Cancel*: The City of Hudson reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time and to decide not to consider any or all of the respondents submitting information in response to this request.
3. *Severability*: If terms of provisions of this Request for Proposal are found to be illegal or unenforceable, then such term or provision shall be deemed stricken and the remaining portions of this document shall remain in full force and effect.
4. *Collusion*: By submitting a proposal, a firm implicitly states that its proposal has not been made in connection with any other competing firm submitting a separate response to this RFP; is in all respects fair; and has been submitted without collusion or fraud.
5. *Oral Presentation/Interview*: Oral presentations may or may not be conducted.
6. *Scope of Work*: The final scope of work may be negotiated between the consultant and the City depending upon any optional services proposed.
7. *Non-Discrimination*: In accordance with Federal, State, and local law and all other applicable laws, the City of Hudson does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender, sexuality, height, weight, marital status, military status, or a handicap unrelated to an individual's ability to perform the job.
8. *Disclaimer*: The City of Hudson reserves the right to reject any and all bids for any reason and reserves the right to adjust the scope of work as needed.
9. *Assignment/Transference of Agreement*: The selected firm is prohibited from assigning, transferring, conveying, or otherwise disposing of the resulting agreement or its rights, title, or interest therein or its power to execute such an agreement to any other person, company or corporation without prior express consent and approval in writing from the City of Hudson.
10. *City of Hudson Rights and Prerogatives*: The City of Hudson reserves the right to exercise the following prerogatives:
    - **a.** To accept or reject any or all proposals and amend, modify, or withdraw this RFP
    - **b.** To correct any arithmetic errors in the proposal
    - **c.** To change the final due date and time for the proposals
    - **d.** To request a revised cost proposal from firms selected as finalists
    - **e.** To accept a proposal for the engagement containing other than the lowest cost proposal
    - **f.** To interview proposers prior to selection
    - **g.** To reject any proposal containing false or misleading statements or that provide references that do not support an attribute or condition claimed by the proposer

h. To begin negotiations with the next most responsive proposer to this RFP should the City of Hudson be unsuccessful in negotiating a contract with the selected proposer within a reasonable time frame

i. To contract with more than one firm

11. **Modification of Contract**

Any modification to the original contract signed between the successful proposer and the City of Hudson will require the mutual consent of the successful proposer and the City of Hudson.

12. **Negotiation**

After completion of the selection process the City of Hudson will commence finalization of the project scope and fee negotiations with the selected firm(s).

13. **Notification**

Upon completion of the selection process, the City of Hudson will notify all firms of its decision. Notification will be sent to the primary contact only. Shortly after notification the selected firm will be posted on the City of Hudson website.