



TOWN OF CONWAY

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Request for Proposal (RFP)

Complete Zoning Ordinance Review & Update

APRIL 2025

Introduction

The Town of Conway, NH is soliciting proposals from qualified firms interested in providing planning consulting services to support a full rewrite of the Town's zoning ordinance. This project will be managed by the Planning Department with coordination and policy direction from the Planning Board. The project will be heavily collaborative and will engage Town administration, other Town boards and committees, local stakeholders, and the public through an iterative engagement process.

Background

In April 2024, the Conway Planning Board adopted a comprehensive update to the Town's Master Plan – the first plan update in 20 years. The Master Plan process highlighted several community development challenges in Conway, including the cost and availability of housing, sprawling development patterns, insufficient water and sewer infrastructure, and high commercial development pressures. Amongst a comprehensive set of recommendations, the Master Plan spotlights two “catalyst projects” to address these longstanding issues, one of which is a comprehensive overhaul of the Town's land use regulations, including the zoning ordinance. The Master Plan also includes a Future Land Use Map detailed desired land uses in different areas of town.

Since the adoption of the Master Plan, the Town has prepared a follow-up *Housing and Community Development Opportunities Report*. This report takes a deeper dive into potential changes for land use regulation strategies and presents a framework for advancing short-term updates and comprehensive, long-term changes to the Town's zoning ordinance. Town staff and the Planning Board are actively working to implement short-term updates, including changes to site plan regulations and drafting warrant article language for proposed zoning changes at Town Meeting 2025. Now, the Town seeks the assistance of an experienced firm to lead the process of preparing comprehensive changes to the zoning ordinance in line with Master Plan goals and strategies from the *Housing & Community Development Opportunities Report*.

Desired Qualifications

The selected firm is expected to have significant experience and expertise in community planning and development, including work in New Hampshire and other New England states. Experience assisting communities with the development of land use regulations, preparing comprehensive planning documents, and leading effective community engagement programs is strongly desired. Firms should demonstrate their understanding of community development needs in municipalities and regions with significant tourism activities and “mountain town” pressures. Familiarity with the Town of Conway and the Mount Washington Valley region is also desired.

Evaluation of Proposals

Firms with relevant experience and qualifications to perform this consulting service are encouraged to submit proposals. The purpose of this RFP is to identify the most qualified respondents to support the Town in this important project. Planning Department staff will review received proposals to determine if they meet all submission and eligibility requirements. A review committee consisting of Town staff and Planning Board representatives will review all eligible and properly submitted proposals. If needed, the review committee may elect to invite one or more firms for interviews. The evaluation committee will recommend a selected firm to be notified of the project award and/or any further negotiation. If a contract is awarded by the Town, the contract will be for the firm to provide the aforementioned services as directed by the Town of Conway.

Responses

The response to this RFP shall be submitted in such form and quantity and at the location as provided in this request. The response shall be submitted no later than April 24th, 2025.

Project & Contract

Description

This is the initial step in a process which will result in a two (2) year (with extension option) contract with one firm to provide planning consulting services for the Town of Conway. The services will require the firm to work with the Planning Department and Planning Board, as well as other town departments, and boards and committees as outlined in Section 1, Introduction, on the process, compilation and crafting of a new zoning ordinance. This project and contract will not be an exclusive or sole sourced effort but will be a team approach with assistance and contributions from Town departments and committees and the selected consulting firm. This planning initiative is anticipated to occur over 18 months, but the contract will be for a two (2) year period with the option for an extension to ensure adequate time for the completion of the project.

Anticipated RFP & Project Schedule

Issuance of RFP: Wednesday April 3rd, 2025

Receipt of Planning Firm Response: On or before April 24th, 2025

Contract Award: On or before May 1st, 2025

Start of Period of Performance: On or before May 8th, 2025

End of Period of Performance: On or before February, 2027

Objectives

Responders must prepare a proposed scope of work and project schedule to achieve the following requirements. The Town and the selected consultant will determine the final scope of work following selection. This is a high-priority project, and as such, an aggressive schedule towards completion is anticipated. The selected consultant will, at a minimum:

- a. Develop and update, as necessary, a detailed project schedule with clear milestones for each phase and major task in the scope of work.
- b. Perform high-level goal setting with Town staff and Planning Board at the beginning of the process to establish alignment on project outcomes. This could include reviewing recommendations from Town Master Plan and *Housing & Community Development Opportunities Report* as well as more administrative matters related to the development approval process and structure of the zoning ordinance.
- c. Develop and implement a community engagement and information strategy to ensure necessary resident, stakeholder, Town staff, and Town board and committee involvement throughout the project. This strategy should include a mix of in-person and digital engagement activities and tools, including a project website. The consultant is expected to work closely with a project “core team” consisting of Town staff and Planning Board representatives.
- d. Draw on the findings, goals, and recommendations of the Town Master Plan and *Housing & Community Development Opportunities Report* to inform project activities.
- e. Identify, analyze, and summarize any pertinent updated data or information since the completion of the aforementioned Master Plan and report, such as relevant changes to State land use laws.
- f. Coordinate with other relevant Town planning and land use initiatives, such as planning for water & sewer infrastructure.
- g. Working closely with Town staff and Planning Board, prepare a new zoning ordinance using an iterative process that incorporates input from residents, stakeholders, Town staff, and Town boards and committees. The following considerations will guide the development of the new zoning ordinance:
 - a. The zoning ordinance will establish a clear purpose and authority with a clear linkage to the Town Master Plan.
 - b. The provisions of the zoning ordinance will be within the capacity of Town staff and boards to interpret and administer.

- h. Prepare and disseminate educational materials about implications of proposed zoning ordinance changes.
- i. Develop a well-formatted final proposed zoning ordinance document in Word and PDF format that can be easily uploaded into the Town's eCode360 online platform.
- j. Develop an implementation strategy for the use of Town staff and Planning Board following the completion of this project.
- k. Develop GIS mapping to represent amended zoning and overlay districts.
- l. Coordinate with other firms or entities regarding recent work relating to Town code, such as; the Town's Master Plan, water & sewer planning, environmental regulations, or other applicable work in development.
- m. Ensure the inclusion of ordinance objectives identified in Appendix A of this document are prioritize throughout this process.

Deliverables

- a. Project summary memorandum documenting process and explaining proposed zoning ordinance changes as well as the key takeaways of public engagement.
- b. Educational materials in PDF and image formats that can be posted on websites and social media throughout the process.
- c. A summary of future amendment priorities for site plan and subdivision regulations based on the proposed zoning ordinance.
- d. A digital file of the complete zoning ordinance containing all final proposed sections in Word and PDF format.

Project Participants

Members of the Planning Department, Engineering Department, the Planning Board and Town Manager's Office will be responsible for developing a short list of firms under consideration. Selected firms may be invited to make a presentation to selected staff and board members. A recommendation to the Town Manager will be made after proposals have been reviewed and interviews of the short-listed firms have been completed, if needed.

Criteria for Selection

The purpose of this RFP process, as previously stated, is to identify a qualified firm that is the most capable of providing the described services. Once identified, this firm will then be invited to take part in a competitive negotiation process with the Town for a contract. If an agreement can be reached with the selected firm, a contract will be awarded thereto. If an agreement cannot be reached, the Town will proceed with negotiations with the next most qualified firm; however, the Town reserves the right to reject all firms.

Proposal Requirements

The purpose of this RFP process, as previously stated, is to identify a qualified firm that is the most capable of providing

Submission

Proposals shall be submitted in electronic PDF format to roconnor@conwaynh.org by April 24th, 2025. The email subject shall read “[FIRM NAME]: Proposal for Planning Consulting Services for the Town of Conway’s Zoning Ordinance Update.” Late proposals will not be accepted.

Proposal Content

Each proposal shall be organized in the following order:

Outside Cover and First Page: Shall contain (i) the title, “Proposal for Planning Consulting Services for the Town of Conway’s Zoning Ordinance,” (ii) the name of the Respondent, and (iii) the Statement date.

Cover Letter: Include a short cover letter. The cover letter shall:

- Summarize why the Respondent believes itself to be the most qualified;
- Contain the statement that to the best of the Respondent's abilities, all information contained in the proposal is complete and accurate;
- Contain a statement granting the Town of Conway and its representative’s authorization to contact any previous client of the Respondent (or a Respondent's Team Member) for purposes of ascertaining an independent evaluation of the Respondent's or a Respondent's Team member's performance; and
- At least one copy of the transmittal letter must have the original signature of an officer of the principal responding firm.

Table of Contents: Include a table of contents.

Section I - Description of the Respondent

I-A Firm Description: Include a complete narrative description of the Respondent's firm (or firms if the Respondent is comprised of a team of firms). Information should include:

The Respondent's areas of specialization related to the Town’s needs;

- Firm history;
- Location of home and branch offices;
- Names of the principal officers of the firm;
- Billable rates for key professionals.

I-B Key Professionals: Identify the key members of your team that would be involved with the contract and describe their area of expertise, what role(s) they will perform, and how their qualifications match the scope of work.

Section II – Approach

Present a detailed scope of work that addresses Objectives 4a-j in this RFP. The scope of work should identify major project phases, individual tasks, and key deliverables. The approach should include a detailed project schedule that identifies phases, tasks, and key milestones.

Section III - Relevant Experience of the Respondent

List relevant projects. A relevant project is one which best exemplifies your qualifications for this Contract and should involve planning clients and detail the services you provided:

- Name of Project
- Specific Master Plan or Planning Project
- Client
- Project Description, including Public Process
- Project Deliverables
- Describe the Services Your Firm Provided and Any Project Partners

Section IV - References

Provide three (3) professional references for each firm involved in the proposal, including name, title, phone number, email address, and the name of the project.

Section V – Cost Proposal

Provide a not-to-exceed cost proposal. The cost proposal should include a breakdown of project costs by phase and task as well as any travel and material expenses. The final project scope of work and costs will be negotiated with the most qualified firm as per Section 7 of this RFP.

Reservation of Rights

- a. The Town of Conway reserves the right to reject all firms, decline to proceed with selection of any candidates, to request additional qualifications, and to make inquiries as may be necessary to verify qualifications.
- b. Nothing in this document shall require the Town of Conway to proceed with planning and/or any of the identified services

Additional Instructions & Information

- a. This RFP, including any attachments, can also be obtained from the Town of Conway's website at: <https://conwaynh.gov/news>.
- b. All materials submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the Town.
- c. The Town reserves the right to conduct discussions with, and to request additional information from, one or more respondents. No respondent shall have any rights against the Town as a result of such discussions.
- d. The Town reserves the right to negotiate separately with any source whatsoever.
- e. The Town reserves the right to waive any irregularity in any proposal received or any other aspect of this solicitation.
- f. Submission of a proposal in response to this RFP shall constitute an offer on the part of the successful respondent to become the Awardee, and to enter into good faith contract negotiations with the Town to undertake the Project.
- g. The Town and its respective officials and employees make no representation or warranty and assume no responsibility for the accuracy of the information set forth in this RFP provided by others. Further, the Town does not warrant nor make any representations as to the quality, content, accuracy or completeness of the information, text, graphics, links or other facet of this RFP once it has been downloaded or printed and hereby disclaims any liability for technical errors or difficulties of any nature that may arise in connection with the Webpage on which this RFP is posted, or in connection with any other electronic medium utilized by respondents or potential respondents in connection with or otherwise related to the RFP.
- h. Statements submitted to the Town in response to this RFP may be disclosed in accordance with RSA 91-A. A respondent submitting a Statements may provide in writing, at the time of its submission, a detailed description of the specific information contained in its Statement which it has determined is a trade secret and which, if disclosed, would substantially harm such respondent's competitive position. This characterization shall not be determinative, but will be considered by the Town when evaluating the applicability of any exemptions in response to a request made per RSA 91-A.
- i. The Town welcomes questions at any time during this process regarding this solicitation. Questions should be emailed to: Ryan O'Connor, Planning Director, at roconnor@conwaynh.org. Official responses will be posted on our Planning Department website for all prospective submitters to review.

Thank you for your consideration of this project, the Town looks forward to reviewing the proposals!

Appendix A

Ordinance Objectives

The following objectives are priorities of the Planning Board for this work and should be considered in response to the RFQ as well as within any future scope-of-work considerations.

Structure

- a. Review possible formats and layouts of the ordinance;
- b. Understand the high-level priorities of the Planning Board and Master Plan;
- c. The goal is to create strong fundamental zoning language which works to address the values of the community rather than being a reaction to current trends.

Functionality

- a. The language should be approachable and understandable to the general public;
- b. Include an introduction for how to use the ordinance and how various factors could impact a property;
- c. Be clear in relation to State Statutes and identifying the purpose of each section.

Master Plan

- a. Clearly align with the Master Plan, priority ordinance purposes should include:
 - i. Housing
 - ii. Commercial Development
 - iii. The Local Economy
 - iv. Natural Resources
 - v. Arts, Culture, and History
 - vi. Transportation
 - vii. Recreation
 - viii. Municipal Services

Amendments

- a. Structure the ordinance to be amendable and specify the process for future Planning Boards.
- b. Leave space for future ordinance language, such as pattern zoning.

Community Building

- a. Ensure the process includes identifying long-term zoning strategies the Planning Board may consider. The Board should understand how the language could be structured to achieve relevant zoning goals.
- b. Focus on the priorities of the Master Plan and identified priorities of the community when creating the zoning goals and be able to propose regulations to achieve those objectives.

Engagement

- a. This process should be used as an opportunity for engagement. The revised ordinance should be seen as a community resource and clearly translate the Master Plan into regulations.