



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** **City of Amsterdam**

**For the purpose of creating a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan**

**September 2022**  
**RFP #04-2022**

The City of Amsterdam is requesting proposals from qualified consultants to assist in the completion of a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan which guide future sustainable growth within the municipality, enhance the local cultural identity, and protect natural and cultural local resources.

### **BACKGROUND**

The City of Amsterdam received a Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Program Grant from the Department of State to prepare a City of Amsterdam Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan.

### **BUDGET**

The total project budget, including all consultant fees, and other related costs is \$100,000 as the project hinges on grant funding.

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A, the State recognizes its obligation under the law to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of State contracts. These requirements include contracting opportunities for New York State certified Minority-owned Business Enterprises (“MBEs”) and Women-owned Business Enterprises (“WBEs”), collectively MWBEs. For purposes of this project, DOS established the following MWBE participation requirements:

MBE Participation Requirement: 15% in the amount of \$13,500

WBE Participation Requirement: 15% in the amount of \$13,500

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The City of Amsterdam (Contractor) and its Comprehensive Planning Committee will prepare a Comprehensive Plan pursuant to General City Law § 28 / Town Law § 272-a / Village Law 7-722. The Comprehensive Plan will establish the objectives that the community wants to achieve, and will guide future sustainable growth within the municipality, enhance the local cultural identity, and protect natural and cultural local resources.

The Comprehensive Plan must address the following general Smart Growth principles, in addition to the elements suggested by the New York State statutes:

- Promote mixed land uses in focus areas.
- Create an adequate range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Promote development and redevelopment where infrastructure is adequate and sustainable.
- Build on traits that make a distinctive and attractive community with a strong sense of place.
- Promote well-planned and well-placed public spaces

- Promote sustainable compact neighborhoods
- Increase mobility and circulation within jurisdictional lines and improve connectivity with areas outside jurisdictional lines.
- Promote sustainable mass transit that reduces the local levels of greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote walkable/bikeable neighborhood designs
- Promote and integrate clean energy resources and related incentives.
- Improve green infrastructure and resident’s participation to this effort
- Increase resiliency to extreme weather events.
- Encourage social diversity and integration.
- Expand planning and implementation efforts across jurisdictional lines, to increase effectiveness, sustainability, and resiliency.
- Promote community and stakeholder collaboration in planning

The Contractor will use the funding/grant for consultant services necessary for the coordination of the planning process and preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

**PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Preparation of the plan will be undertaken through consultant(s) procured by the City of Amsterdam and overseen by a Project Advisory Committee. At a minimum, the Project Advisory Committee will include the City of Amsterdam Community & Economic Development staff, the City Mayor, and have at least one member from the planning board and shall include representatives from a large range of ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds and a diverse range of stakeholders, such as residents, civic leaders, business owners, elected officials, environmental experts, municipal board members. Input from New York State Department of State; New York State Canal Corporation; New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NYS Department of Transportation; Environmental Protection Agency; and the Montgomery County Planning Department will be sought and considered during the development of the City of Amsterdam Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan.

**SCOPE OF WORK**

**Task 1: Comprehensive Planning Committee Meetings**

The Comprehensive Planning Committee will meet on a regular basis during the planning process to advance the preparation, review, and approval of the Comprehensive Plan, and to organize and conduct community participation events.

During the first meeting, the Comprehensive Plan Committee will review project requirements and roles and responsibilities, transfer necessary information to the team of consultants (if applicable), and identify new information needs and next steps. The Comprehensive Plan Committee or the consultant (if applicable) will prepare and distribute a brief meeting summary clearly indicating the understandings reached at the meeting.

All subsequent meetings will advance the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and assess the evolution of the project, the new information needed, changes in roles and responsibilities, and next steps.

Work on subsequent tasks shall not proceed prior to Department review.

***Products: Meetings held with appropriate parties. Written meeting summaries outlining what has been discussed and understandings reached and identifying the participants to the meeting.***

## **Task 2: Community Participation Plan**

Prepare a Community Participation Plan that describes the public outreach and participation efforts that will be conducted during the development of the Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to the local and State statutes. At a minimum, the Community Participation Plan shall include (in-person or virtual) interviews with local and regional stakeholders, a community survey, a public information meeting, one or more public workshops, one or more public hearings, and a webpage with links to announcements, presentations and documents prepared during the planning process. The Community Participation Plan shall identify key individuals, organizations, and entities to be involved, and shall identify roles and responsibilities in coordinating the entire outreach process, logistics, and the proposed schedule of the proposed public outreach and participation efforts.

All public outreach and participation efforts will be publicized in the community through press releases, announcements, individual mailings, and any other appropriate means. Public access must be provided to each public meeting or workshop. Outreach efforts should encourage participation from populations who are frequently underrepresented in this process, including immigrants, refugees, and minorities. A summary of each public outreach and participation efforts will be made available to the public in written form and through other appropriate means, such as websites.

*Products: Draft and final Community Participation Plan.*

## **Task 3: Community Survey and Stakeholder Interviews**

Develop a relevant and realistic community survey about current local conditions and issues. The survey should be made available to the public as hard copy and online. In addition, identify a set of topics that shall be discussed with stakeholders to obtain additional relevant information and elicit stakeholder reactions and suggestions. Following the completion of the survey, develop a summary of results and analysis.

*Products: Draft and final Community Survey. Draft and final list of topics to be discussed during the stakeholder interviews. Summary of survey and interviews responses and analysis.*

## **Task 4: Review Local and Regional Planning Efforts and Ongoing Initiatives**

Identify and review existing local and regional planning documents and ongoing initiatives. This review process will also include consultation with community leaders and with neighboring communities, if applicable, to identify common issues and assess if Smart Growth principals are the basis for addressing those issues.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee and the consultant(s), if applicable, shall develop a written findings report describing and assessing existing planning documents and the issues and opportunities identified by community leaders.

*Products: Written findings report.*

## **Task 5: Community Profile**

Draft a Community Profile consisting in an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, including narrative, maps, and relevant data. The inventory will be used to assist in the identification of local issues and potential opportunities. The analysis of the local conditions and issues will be conducted from a Smart Growth perspective and identify potential solutions to existing issues and potential opportunities. A chart of smart growth principals will be provided to be included in the comprehensive plan which will summarize

the opportunities and challenges to addressing each principle. The inventory and analysis of existing conditions may include the following, at a minimum:

- History of the municipal jurisdiction and boundaries.
- Description of previous comprehensive plan development and adoption processes.
- Demographic characteristics (population and growth trends, age distribution, average household size, ethnic composition, average household income, social diversity and integration, demographic trends).
- Local and regional economic characteristics (unemployment rates and trends, work force characterization, dominant business sector type, major employers and industries, sales tax information, property tax rates, economic trends and jobs range).
- Housing characteristics (the age, type, and condition of structures, type of occupancy - renters versus owners, vacancy rates and trends in the community and length of residency - percentage of residents five years in home, the extent and availability of low-income housing throughout the community and in identified neighborhoods, assessment of housing opportunities and choices, housing trends and access to jobs).
- Local and regional economies and development trends (including housing, commercial, industrial and agricultural development).
- Land use and smart growth focus areas.
- Agricultural and forest lands, uses, and districts.
- Infrastructure and public utilities (i.e., drinking water supply, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, stormwater management and green infrastructure, communications, gas, and electricity) extent, capacity, age, and maintenance.
- Transportation systems, local levels of greenhouse gas emissions, levels of mobility and circulation, walkable/bikeable neighborhood, connectivity with areas outside jurisdictional lines, distance to jobs.
- Natural resources and climate (air quality, watercourses, wetlands, floodplains, aquifers, forests/tree cover, steep slopes, soil types, and rare plant and animal habitats, precipitations, winds, temperatures, etc.).
- Extreme weather events, flooding, erosion hazards, and local resiliency.
- Health and emergency services and facilities.
- Parks and public spaces, recreation facilities, range of passive and active recreation, capacity and maintenance, accessibility etc.
- Historic, cultural, and scenic resources.
- Waterfront resources and public access.
- Zoning and other relevant local development controls.
- Fiscal resources.

The draft Community Profile shall be submitted to the Department for review before being used to design workshop activities and prepare materials needed to conduct community visioning workshops or to draft the Comprehensive Plan.

***Products: Community Profile report, including a comprehensive inventory and analysis in the form of relevant data, narrative, maps, and graphics.***

## **Task 6: Community Visioning Workshops**

Conduct at least two public workshops that will inform the public about the findings of the planning process conducted up to this point, present a clear assessment of how Smart Growth policies are integrated in the municipality's planning efforts, governmental decisions, and ongoing initiatives, and will solicit public

input on existing resources, community character, and future growth. The workshops are also intended to identify Smart Growth solutions to current issues and future growth.

Each workshop shall be advertised with generous advance notice to garner maximum publicity, awareness, and participation. The site of the workshops must be accessible to the public.

***Products: Published workshops announcements and fliers. Materials prepared for each public workshop. Workshops held.***

### **Task 7: Draft Comprehensive Plan**

Assemble the draft comprehensive plan that addresses each of the Smart Growth policies and establishes a long-term strategy for future growth and protection of resources, and may include the following topics commensurate with the community's needs and vision for future actions:

- Goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long-range enhancement, growth, and development of the community.
- Consideration of regional needs and the official plans of other government units and agencies within the region.
- The existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses.
- Consideration and recommendations for the protection of agricultural and forest lands, historic and cultural resources, natural resources, and sensitive environmental areas.
- Consideration of population, demographic and socio-economic trends and future projections.
- Location and types of transportation facilities that reduce the local levels of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Existing and proposed general location of public and private utilities and infrastructure, including clean energy generation.
- Existing housing resources and future housing needs, including affordable housing.
- The present and potential future general location of educational and cultural facilities, historic sites, health facilities, and facilities for emergency services.
- Existing and proposed recreation facilities and parkland.
- The present and potential future general location of commercial and industrial facilities.
- Specific policies and strategies for improving the local economy in coordination with other plan topics.
- Proposed measures, programs, devices, and instruments to implement the goals and objectives of the various topics within the comprehensive plan.
- All or part of applicable plans of other public agencies.
- Any and all other items which are consistent with the orderly growth and development of the community.

A detailed strategy implementing the community's policies, concepts, projects, and programs shall be identified in the plan. This includes phased implementation approach (short-term, mid, and long-term), as well as anticipated costs, and priorities.

Submit the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Department for review and approval and incorporate the Department's comments in the final plan.

***Products: Draft Comprehensive Plan, including relevant data, narrative, maps, and graphics.***

### **Task 8: Review by the Local Municipal Board**

Submit the draft Comprehensive Plan to the local municipal board, for review, comments, and recommendations. The comments received from the local municipal board shall be addressed before the initiation of the SEQRA compliance process.

The comments and recommendations prepared by the local governing board/local legislature shall be addressed and incorporated into the final plan and prior to making the draft available for public review.

*Products: Comments and recommendations received from the local municipal board submitted to the Department.*

### **Task 9: Environmental Quality Review**

Prepare materials necessary for compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The adoption of a new or amended Comprehensive Plan is classified as a Type I action, pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and 6 NYCRR Part 617. The Comprehensive Planning Committee or the consultant(s) shall prepare the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to provide a review of land use actions proposed in the comprehensive plan. The local municipal board shall declare to be the Lead Agency for the action of adopting the new or amended comprehensive plan.

Copies of all SEQR documents shall be submitted to the Department.

*Products: SEQRA documents*

### **Task 10: County Planning Board Review**

Submit the draft Comprehensive Plan to the County Planning Board for review and recommendations pursuant to Section 239-m of the New York State General Municipal Law. Comments received from the County Planning Board shall be addressed in the final version of the Comprehensive Plan that will be locally adopted.

Comments received from the County Planning Board shall be submitted to Department.

*Products: Comments and recommendations prepared by the County Planning Board.*

### **Task 11: Final Comprehensive Plan**

Address all comments and recommendations received from the public and involved local, regional and State agencies and incorporate into the Final Comprehensive Plan and schedule a public hearing and the local adoption of the plan.

The final Comprehensive Plan and the date of the public hearing and local adoption of the plan shall be submitted to Department.

*Products: Final Comprehensive Plan ready for local adoption.*

### **Task 12: Public Hearing and Local Adoption**

Conduct a public hearing prior to adoption of the comprehensive plan. Notice of the public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the community at least ten calendar days in advance of

the hearing. The proposed comprehensive plan shall be made available for public review during said period at the office of the municipal clerk and public library and shall be posted on the municipal website. The public hearings may also be publicized in the community through press releases, announcements, individual mailings, and any other appropriate means.

Copies of the public hearing minutes and the local adoption resolution shall be submitted to the Department.

***Products: Minutes from the public hearings and record of decision submitted to Department.***

## **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

Interested respondents must submit three (3) paper copies of their proposals and one (1) electronic versions of their proposal no later than 1:00pm on Thursday, October 20, 2022. Proposals should be submitted to:

City of Amsterdam  
Clerk's Office  
61 Church Street  
Amsterdam, NY 12010  
Attention: Amanda Bearcroft

Proposals received after the scheduled time and date will not be accepted. Facsimile and E-mail proposals will not be accepted.

## **PROPOSAL CONTENT AND CONDITIONS**

Each proposer must submit a complete proposal which addresses each component of the RFP.

- A full description of how the Scope of Work will be completed along with a schedule detailing when the items will be completed.
- Writing samples demonstrating the ability to condense and concisely present large amounts of information.
- A description of each staff member or sub-consultant who will be involved with this project and a description of their role in the project.
- A client list for similar projects in the last five years, including contact name and phone number, and a brief description of projects.
- Budget and expense information which details all costs including personnel expenses which state the name and title of each individual assigned to the project, their hourly rate and the number of estimated hours the individual will be working on the project. The same information should be submitted in detail for subcontractors.
- Administrative costs for travel, postage, photocopying, telephone, printing, and other related expenses must be detailed. Also, estimates of expense for each of the tasks with assumptions.

## **CONDITIONS GOVERNING PROPOSALS**

Only those proposals which contain complete information and are responsive to the RFP will be considered. Proprietary or patented information which may be included in the proposal must be clearly identified and brought to the committee's attention.

The City of Amsterdam reserves the following rights:

- To accept or reject any or all proposals;
- To waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received;
- To negotiate with proposers, within the proposal requirements, to best serve the interests of the community and the Department of State;
- To amend specifications after their release, with due notice given to all bidders to modify their proposals to reflect changed specifications;

- To consider every offer as firm and not revocable for a period of sixty (60) days unless withdrawn in writing or unless otherwise specified in the solicitation;
- To award a contract for any and all parts of a proposal including award of specific project components to individual proposer team members and to negotiate with the successful bidder(s)
- By submitting a proposal, the proposer agrees that it will not make any claim for or have any right to damages because of any lack of information or misinterpretation of the information provided in this RFP.
- The City of Amsterdam will not utilize any of the materials submitted in the RFP process included in unsuccessful proposals without permission.

*The New York State Department of State must approve all consultants and subcontractors.*

The Consultant must comply with all provisions in the Contract between the New York State Department of State and the City of Amsterdam, including all appendices. A copy of the contract is available upon request.

## **INQUIRIES**

All inquiries regarding the RFP should be made in writing and sent either regular mail or e-mail, and must cite the RFP section in question. Answers to substantive questions will be provided to all proposers. Inquiries should be directed to:

Amanda Bearcroft, Director of Community & Economic Development  
 (518) 841-4304  
 abearcroft@amsterdamny.gov

## **PRESENTATION BY PROPOSERS**

Presentations will be conducted for the two highest scoring proposals.

The presentations will be made to provide the City and the Project Advisory Committee with an opportunity to obtain an understanding of:

- The extent of the firm's depth of knowledge of the subject matter of the RFP;
- Whether the methods and resources that will be used by the firm in performing services to achieve the project goals and objectives are appropriate, and cost effective;
- The firm's ability to draw together specialists and professionals with the necessary skills and experience to contribute to the overall project;
- To allow proposers to further define the primary features and benefits of their proposal;
- To evaluate the public presentation skills of the proposers

Presentation format is left to the discretion of the proposers. Presentations will be limited to a one-hour period per respondent, which includes questions. All key managerial personnel, as well as key personnel working on the project, must be in attendance at the proposal presentation.

## **LIABILITY**

The City of Amsterdam and the Project Advisory Committee are not liable for any cost incurred by any individual or firm for work performed to prepare its proposal or for any travel and or other expenses incurred in the preparation and or submission of its proposal. Further, the City of Amsterdam is not liable for any costs incurred prior to approval of the contract.

## **EVALUATION PROCESS**

The City and the Project Advisory Committee and the Department of State will review submitted proposals with reference to the qualifications and criteria as detailed in this Request for Proposals. The intent is to select the

consultant having the technical capability and necessary experience to perform the services as outlined in this RFP within the time frame required.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The selection of a consultant for this effort will be based on the following criteria:

1) Technical Proposal: Proposals will be evaluated based on their quality, clarity, and demonstrated understanding of the project objectives. The proposal must include a plan outlining how each item in the Scope of Work will be addressed.

2) Relevant Experience: The Proposer must provide a list of all projects similar in scope and nature completed in the last five years. The Proposer must demonstrate experience with New York State- based land use and watershed planning, local laws, and regulations. The projects listed will be used to determine the proposer's expertise, experience, and knowledge. Submission of sample reports or products from previous projects is encouraged.

3) Implementation schedule: Proposals will be evaluated based on their ability to complete the project within an eighteen-month time frame. The proposal must include an implementation schedule that lists all milestones for the development and implementation of project deliverables.

4) Cost Proposal: A Cost Proposal Outline organized to follow the outline of Scope of Work and assign a detail of cost for the action including personnel costs and reimbursable expenses.

5) Team Composition and Resumes: The Proposer must provide a list of all person(s) who will be assigned work pursuant to this RFP (including subcontractors), as well as their resumes showing qualifications, educational background, training and expertise.

a) Team members will be evaluated based on relevant education, work experience and professional accreditation.

b) The Proposer must designate an individual as the Project Manager who will be directly responsible for all activities of the organization and provide their resume showing qualifications, educational background, training and experience. The project manager must have managed the implementation of at least one other project of similar scope and nature. A description of the project must be submitted with the resume.

6) Presentation Skills: The Proposer will be evaluated based on their knowledge of the subject material, their ability to relay the message in a clear, concise, and timely fashion and their ability to field questions posed to them. The Proposer will also be evaluated on form and format of their presentation, its professional nature, and the ability to captivate the audience and keep their attention. The Proposer may be asked to demonstrate their presentation skills, both written and oral, by providing samples of previous presentations and written material.

7) Location of Office: The Proposer will be evaluated based on their proximity to the community to ensure a physical presence when necessary throughout the process of this project.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

References: The Proposer must submit five references from projects of similar scope and nature. Each reference should include a contact name and phone number along with a statement describing the project. The City of Amsterdam and the Project Advisory Committee reserves the right to obtain information from other sources.

## **NOTIFICATION OF AWARD**

The City of Amsterdam will notify the successful bidder by phone, followed by written confirmation. Each bidder whose proposal is not accepted will be notified in writing.

The City of Amsterdam will authorize the award of a contract to the successful proposer based upon the evaluations and recommendations of the Grant Coordinator and Project Advisory Committee. In the event that a contract cannot be finalized within thirty (30) days of the award, the City Council of the City of Amsterdam reserves the right to enter to enter negotiations with the consultant which received the second highest evaluation.

***The City of Amsterdam and the New York State Department of State must approve all consultants and subcontractors.***