



TOWN OF BOLTON Planning Board

Town Hall, 663 Main Street, Bolton, MA 01740
Phone: 978-779-3308 Fax: 978-779-5461

Master Plan Consulting Services Request for Proposals April 19, 2022

Compilation of all questions and responses received to date, including those posed at the Pre-Proposal Conference, follows:

1. We understand that the Town is seeking funding for the project at the May 2022 Annual Town Meeting and that additional funds are being sought through grant opportunities. Do you have a sense of the amount of funding being requested and the timing of grant awards being sought?

The Planning Board's warrant article for the May 2, 2022 Annual Town Meeting includes a request for \$30,000 to support Master Plan consulting services. In addition, staff will seek funding through the Housing Choice Rural and Small Town Development Fund. Housing Choice grant awards are anticipated to be announced in Fall of 2022, therefore staff will provide a request to the Select Board to allocate ARPA funds to allow the chosen consulting firm to begin work on or before June 1, 2022.

2. If municipal funds are not allocated and/or the grant awards are unsuccessful, does the Town have back-up funding sources to support development of the Master Plan? If not, how will this affect the project's scope and schedule?

In this instance, staff would be prepared to make a larger ARPA allocation request to align with the Price Proposal of the chosen consulting firm. ARPA requests may be taken up by the Select Board at regularly scheduled meetings.

3. Pages 8 and 9 of the RFP list activities undertaken by Town staff and the Steering Committee in support of this project. To what extent are these activities expected to be revisited by the selected Consultant?

The activities and work products undertaken by Town staff and the Steering Committee should be reviewed by the consultant to determine if they are adequate based on their professional experience. If gaps are identified, staff and/or the Steering Committee and its task groups will endeavor to fill the identified gaps to the best of their ability.

4. Moving forward will the Steering Committee continue to author components of the Plan, solely provide advisory guidance, or have a role that falls somewhere in the middle?

The consultant will be responsible for authoring Plan chapters and providing an overall outline and approach to the narrative. It is expected that drafts of plan components will be reviewed by the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee is available to assist with:

- *Data collection;*
- *Drafting of internal work products (such as summaries of work done to date or summaries of feedback from public outreach efforts and forums);*
- *Provision of advisory guidance;*
- *Participation at and organization of public forums;*
- *Continuation of ongoing public outreach and engagement efforts.*

5. Will the pre-proposal conference (held on April 13th) be recorded? If so, can a link be provided to interested consultants unable to attend?

Yes, the recording of the non-mandatory pre-proposal conference is available at <https://www.townofbolton.com/home/pages/bids-proposals>

6. Will the Town consider the combined years of experience and similar successfully completed projects between any and all sub-consultants and/or subcontractors intending to work with the Proposer?

Yes. To assist the Evaluation Committee, please clearly indicate in the RFP response the team members that would work on this project and provide their years of experience and similar successfully completed projects. Similarly, any subcontractors or sub-consultants intended to assist with this project should be clearly indicated in the RFP response along with the years of experience and similar successfully completed projects of those firms.

7. What elements of the Master Plan process are most exciting to staff and volunteers?

The Town Planner, Chair and Vice Chair of the Master Plan Steering Committee are most excited for the robust public engagement process anticipated by this process and to have a Master Plan that clearly addresses the intersections of housing, transportation, and climate mitigation. Given intensifying development pressures, the Town is interested in how to maintain the character of the Town while providing reasonable growth in terms of economic development and affordable housing, which is further complicated by Bolton's lack of a public water supply or public sewerage.

8. What current investments, initiatives, or projects are the Town currently undertaking or considering?

- *The planning process for a new Nashoba High School building has begun, and the Building Committee has voted to select the current site (12 Green Road) as the site of a new or renovated high school.*
- *Town Meeting voters will consider whether to proceed with plans to install a solar field on municipally held land.*
- *The Zoning Board of Appeals is reviewing a Comprehensive Permit proposed at 580 Main Street, within Bolton's Business District, which includes 229 rental units, with 58 units set aside for affordable housing. If approved, this project would bring Bolton above the 10% affordable housing threshold.*
- *Through a MassWorks grant, a roundabout to be located at the intersections of Route 117, Green Road, and Forbush Mill Road, is currently in the design phase*

9. How was Bolton impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic?

It is difficult to estimate Covid's impacts in Bolton. Pre-pandemic, vacancy rates within the commercial districts were nearing 24%. Half of an office park is proposed to be demolished to make way for rental housing, in part due to a 50% vacancy rate. Aside from the recent sale of Fotini's, all food establishments in Bolton are still operational. Commuter traffic did not appear to be reduced. There are concerns for the ongoing isolation of senior citizens.

10. Page 9 of the RFP notes the need to adopt a clear method of analyzing the highest and best use of parcels of land. Does the Town anticipate that the consultant would conduct a market analysis to better understand highest and best use?

The Planning Department is currently underway with a Business District Assessment and Market Analysis with funding through the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative. This report is due to be finalized in June 2022. RFP respondents may propose further market assessments if they feel it is desirable.