

## **Request for Proposals (RFP)**

### **Planning Consultant Services for Drafting and Adopting a New Master Plan**

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#### **Purpose**

The City of Escanaba is seeking proposals from qualified planning consultants to assist in the development and adoption of a new master plan in compliance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. This master plan will serve as a comprehensive guide for the city's future growth and development over the next twenty years or more.

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#### **Background**

Escanaba, situated in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is a dynamic city renowned for its diverse economy and natural charm. With a population of approximately 12,300 as of 2022, Escanaba has seen many changes, necessitating the replacement of its 2016 master plan.

Since that plan's adoption, Escanaba has fallen on hard budgetary times. Many of the items noted in the current master plan are now unrealistic. Another issue is that the current plan doesn't provide any guidance on cooperative progress, nor does it clearly identify who is responsible for given tasks. The goals are, for the most part, not "SMART" ones, which leaves the city with much ambiguity. A clear and statutorily compliant zoning plan is also lacking.

The community finds itself at a crossroads, stuck between the "old economy" and the "new economy", with little clear direction on how to proceed. While Escanaba still hosts several healthy industries, diversification of its economy must serve as a bulwark for long-term viability.

And just like so many other places in Michigan, a housing crisis has plagued the population. Cooperation in the Central Upper Peninsula Regional Housing Partnership, as part of the Statewide Housing Plan, gives promise that one or more solutions will come. Escanaba must still take agency in this Partnership, however, and a clear path forward must be set accordingly.

Our transportation systems, which are heavily reliant on the personal automobile, and utility networks have approached – or surpassed – their service lives. As a result of this and State legislation, monumental upgrades to our water system have been undertaken. Tens of millions of dollars are being invested in new water service lines and mains. Some streets have been replaced right down through the subgrade, and others are next. New and upgraded electrical substations are complete or in progress, with additional circuits being installed to connect them. But much disorganization remains between the different projects, in spite of excellent work by City officials. Escanaba lacks a strong process to handle these projects interdepartmentally, and residents struggle to understand and keep pace with the work. The new master plan should address these issues in some way.

Our environment is invaluable to us as, for most, our way of life is deeply tied to it. Invasive species, poorly controlled development patterns, and a changing climate are causing great strain on the landscape. Some efforts have been made to utilize our natural resources, such as further development of hiking trails in Escanaba's northwestern areas. Other work to mitigate invasives has been taken in that part of the community, and more has been done to eradicate aquatic invasive species in the Municipal Marina. Escanaba needs a comprehensive approach to both tackle these threats and to share our environment with our neighbors and others.

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#### **Mission Statement**

Enhancing the enjoyment and livability of our community by providing quality municipal services.

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## Scope of Work

The planning consultant will be responsible for the following key tasks:

1. Conducting a comprehensive review of existing city plans, zoning ordinances, and relevant documents.
2. Engaging with stakeholders, including residents, community groups, businesses, and local government officials, through public meetings, surveys, and workshops to gather input and feedback.
3. Analyzing demographic, economic, land use, transportation, and environmental data to inform the master plan.
4. Developing a draft master plan that outlines goals, policies, and strategies for land use, economic development, transportation, housing, environmental conservation, and community facilities.
5. Facilitating public hearings and meetings to present the draft master plan and gather additional input for revisions.
6. Finalizing and presenting the revised master plan to the City Council for adoption.

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## Required Deliverables

Interested consultants are requested to submit proposals that include the following:

1. Cover sheet with the consultant's name, address, telephone, e-mail, and name of the contact person.
2. Letter of transmittal with a statement of understanding for the project and your interest in working with the City of Escanaba. The letter must be signed by a duly authorized officer or agent empowered with the right to bind the consultant submitting a proposal for consideration.
3. Background information on the consultant's size, location, available resources, and brief discussion on past experiences related to updating Master Plans, transportation plans, workforce housing, zoning codes, and other policy documents.
4. Project team (including sub-consultants and associates) with a statement of qualifications for each.
5. Examples of relevant work, including at least three master plans, zoning codes, or other similar products recently completed by the consultant, with web links to each.
6. Approach and methodology description which the consultant intends to use.
7. Timeline for the project, including phasing, task lists, and estimated completion times.
8. References of other municipal officials that we may contact to verify performance on projects recently completed by the consultant.
9. Budget proposal for the project.
10. (Optional) Any other supporting information that the consultant feels may help us evaluate their qualifications and fit for the project.

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## Project Schedule

- RFP Release Date: 5 February 2024
- Deadline for Submission of Questions/Clarifications: 1 March 2024
- Proposal Submission Deadline: 29 March 2024
- Initial Proposal Review Period: 1-11 April 2024
- Selection of Consultants Short List: 12 April 2024
- Interviews of Shortlisted Consultants: 22-26 April 2024

- Final Consultant Selection: 29 April-3 May 2024

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### **Budget Proposals**

Proposed budgets must not exceed a total of \$50,000.

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### **Evaluation Criteria and Selection**

The City of Escanaba will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

1. Experience and qualifications of the consultant and team members.
2. Approach, methodology, and timeline for the project.
3. Demonstrated understanding of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and related regulations.
4. Cost-effectiveness of the proposal.
5. References and past performance on similar projects.

The Planning Commission will appoint a committee to review proposals and ultimately select the final consultant. Once all proposals have been reviewed, a short list of consultants will be chosen on 12 April 2024.

Those shortlisted consultants will then be invited to take part in an interview before the Planning Commission between 22-26 April 2024.

Based on each short-listed consultant's performance in their interview, the final consultant will be chosen and notified between 29 April-3 May 2024.

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### **Contact Information & Procedures**

Proposals must be submitted electronically no later than 29 March 2024 to Tyler Anthony. Submissions must be in PDF format with a size of 10MB or less, with page sizes of either 8.5"x11", 11"x17", or a combination of the two, and must remain legible after b/w photocopying. Late submissions will not be considered. Any questions or requests for clarification regarding this RFP should be directed to Tyler Anthony by 1 March 2024.

Tyler Anthony, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Email: [tanthony@escanaba.org](mailto:tanthony@escanaba.org)

Phone: 906-789-7302

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### **Disclaimer and Stipulations**

The City of Escanaba reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate modifications to the scope of work, and to award a contract based on the evaluation criteria deemed most advantageous to the city.

Any planning consultant that submits a proposal must agree not to hire a former City employee for a period from six months prior to the bid through to the completion of the contract.

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Thank you for your interest in assisting the City of Escanaba with this important initiative. We look forward to receiving your proposals.