



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
PLANNING & ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

DATE ISSUED: June 13, 2022

PROPOSAL DEADLINE DATE: July 18, 2022

---

**Proposals must be received no later than 4:00PM on July 18, 2022. Late Proposals will not be accepted.**

**Proposals are to be submitted to:**

**Elyria City Safety Services Department  
Attention: Dawn Calvert  
City of Elyria  
131 Court Street, Suite 301  
Elyria, Ohio 44035**

**Contact Information:**

**Dawn Calvert, Assistant Safety Service Director  
440-326-1410  
[dcalvert@cityofelyria.org](mailto:dcalvert@cityofelyria.org)  
[www.cityofelyria.org](http://www.cityofelyria.org)**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update**

**PURPOSE**

The City of Elyria (City) is soliciting qualified consulting firms to submit a proposal to prepare a new implementable comprehensive plan and planning services necessary to complete a full overhaul and rewrite of the City's zoning ordinance in a phased approach.

**PHASE I: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The comprehensive plan was last updated in 1972. The City seeks to create a new implementable comprehensive plan which will serve as a guide when considering policy changes, land use planning, budget preparation, economic development initiatives, and capital improvement programs.

There are two primary goals for the new Plan. First, the Plan should identify and articulate a community vision for the next 10 years based on input from citizens and various other stakeholders within the City. Second, to provide a series of realistic projects, programs, etc. that can be implemented to achieve the City's vision. Overall, the plan must contain practical strategies to implement the recommended projects, and plans that will promote the sustainable development of the community in a coordinated, consistent manner and which will be embraced by community decision-makers and officially adopted by City Council.

The Plan should incorporate the City's various planning documents, including: the 5 Year Consolidated Plan, Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, and master planning efforts for water, wastewater, and stormwater that are currently or will be in process.

**PHASE II: COMPLETE ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE**

The current zoning code is a typical Euclidean Code with emphasis on land use separation and density control. It has undergone numerous updates to address new issues that arise in the city as well as deficiencies in the existing code, but has not undergone a comprehensive update. As a result, many regulations and permitted uses are outdated and do not encourage the highest and best use for development.

Substantial updates and enhancements clearly are necessary to correct errors, eliminate inconsistencies, incorporate zoning code best practices, and make the City's zoning code easier to navigate. Changes to the zoning ordinance will incorporate the priorities identified in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

A copy of the current Planning and Zoning Code can be found on the city's website at [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/elyria/latest/elyria\\_oh/0-0-0-81633](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/elyria/latest/elyria_oh/0-0-0-81633)

## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Located in Northeast Ohio, about 25 minutes west of Cleveland, the City of Elyria is home to over 55,000 residents. Elyria saw strong residential growth in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s, the explosive population growth began to slow as less and less land was available for new development. During this time the commercial areas in the City developed with minimal regulations that have led to uncoordinated architecture and as a result, the City is experiencing pockets of disinvestment, which is populated with mostly aging commercial and industrial buildings that need renovation and redevelopment. Today, the City is a maturing community that is largely built out, which brings about new challenges and opportunities.

Maintenance of a high quality of life has become a primary focus of both City officials and residents. In addition, because of the limited undeveloped land remaining, the type of development on that land is paramount and proper redevelopment of existing properties is key to the success of the City.

## SCOPE OF WORK PHASE I: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The following scope of work illustrates the City's approach toward the completion of an implementable comprehensive plan that also incorporates the six principles of a sustainable comprehensive plan recognized by the APA and outlined in *The Role of a Comprehensive Plan* (Godschalk and Anderson 2012). Suggestions from the consultant may be included to expand, refine, or improve the conceptual approach while achieving the goals for the final product.

**Community Engagement and Promotion** – Public engagement is required. A strategy shall be provided that outlines how City stakeholders will be involved throughout the project. The strategy shall ensure that the planning process actively involves all segments of the community in analyzing issues, generation visions, developing plans, and monitoring outcomes. Innovative engagement strategies that generate high levels of participation and ownership of the plan must be utilized. Meetings shall be arranged around issues instead of functional chapters. As part of the strategy, promotional opportunities shall be provided, including a variety of methods of communication to inform and involve the community; a consistent branding platform, and an interactive website, and interactive community meetings must be included.

1. **Community Assessment and Issues Identification** – An assessment of community issues, problems to be solved, needs to be addressed, and opportunities to be pursued shall be identified. Current County and City data and plans shall be utilized in assessing the community and identifying issues. Tools for the assessment of community issues include the following:

- Community Analysis – Including Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis, Political, Economic, Social (including demographic and cultural), Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors (PESTEL) Analysis and Market and Pro forma Analysis to support land use and development recommendations and to support fiscal workability of recommendations.
  - Community functions and systems – including land and land use, housing, transportation, utilities, environment, history, safety services, human and health services, etc.
  - Community sectors – neighborhoods, commercial corridors, industrial areas, natural area, etc.
  - Community Assets – infrastructure and services, economy drivers, “place” amenities, housing, cultural activities and entertainment, schools, and other local features or resources that are integral to quality of life and attracting investment.
2. **Community Vision** – Priority issues should be defined. Each issue shall include data that substantiates and validates the issue, objectives, ideas and recommended solutions, and a plan that outlines actions to be taken, needed investments/capital improvements, needed regulations, estimated costs, responsible parties, a financing plan, and a timeline for implementation.
- Please outline how consultant would administer public meetings, steering committees, focus groups, and support the Comprehensive Plan & Codes Steering Committee (CPCSC) with technical expertise, conceptual drawings & renderings, and additional support.
3. **Comprehensive Plan & Codes Steering Committee (CPCSC)** – The City will assemble a Steering Committee to oversee and guide the work of the consultant. The CPCSC will be comprised of individuals representing the following:
- Property and business owners located within the City
  - City of Elyria administration and council
  - City staff members
  - Interested City of Elyria residents
  - Consultant engaged for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance update
4. **Implementation Plan** – The Plan must have specific actions to turn broad goals into a series of tasks that can be easily understood and undertaken. Each goal shall specify the steps that will be taken, in what order, by whom and with what resources. The Plan shall also:
- Provide recommendations that include depth and detail to promote implementation.
  - Include specific recommendations with practical depth and detail instead of more general recommendations.
  - Include visualizations and concept drawings to help convey design recommendations.

- Connect plan implementation to capital improvement planning process and annual budgeting process.
- Address sustainable principles including:
  - i. Livable Built Environment - Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreation, with a high quality of life.
  - ii. Harmony with Nature - Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.
  - iii. Resilient Economy - Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and building reliance on local assets.
  - iv. Interwoven Equality - Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.
  - v. Healthy Community - Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.
  - vi. Responsible Regionalism - Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and surrounding regions.

Final Report and Adoption - The consultant will prepare a final report that is:

- Succinct - efficiently uses words and is short in length.
- Simple - easy to understand by the layperson and avoids jargon.
- Visual - key concepts are illustrated using maps, graphics, and charts.
- Transferable - the plan can be easily downloaded and/or distributed throughout the community.

The final plan will meet all criteria of the Ohio Revised Code. The plan should inspire and create excitement while being easy to use and easy to understand by utilizing maps, photos, and illustrations to tell the story of the City of Elyria. Presentations to the Planning Commission and City Council will be required.

## KEY DELIVERABLES

1. Preliminary reports and project updates prepared at six (6) and twelve (12) month milestones with completion at eighteen (18) months.

2. One digital copy in Microsoft Word format and PDF format, print-ready graphics included in each preliminary report, ten (10) color copies of final plan draft for comment; final plan copies to include ten (10) bound color copies, one unbound color copy, one digital Microsoft Word format and one digital PDF format. Both the Microsoft Word format and the Adobe PDF format shall have a navigable table of contents and be indexed to allow searching capabilities.
3. GIS layers and maps, materials in a software format to be easily updated.
4. Presentation graphics for each of two public meetings to be determined prior to meeting.
5. A Plan presented in a way that not only is accessible across a variety of media platforms, but that allows the plan to be easily edited in the future by City staff. The plan shall include:
  - Specific design guidelines
  - Ideas illustrated by drawings, photos, and simulations
  - Ready-to-use samples of tools and best practices
  - Complete streets guide
  - Recommendations on amending land use ordinances
  - Budgeting for Capital Improvement Planning
6. Consultant shall attend, provide all needed materials, and coordinate all required public input and update meetings.

## SCOPE OF WORK PHASE II: ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

The selected consulting firm will work closely with City Staff, Board of Zoning Appeals, and City Planning Commission throughout the project. The consultant shall be required to participate in public hearings or present progress updates to the City Council from time to time in service of overall project goals.

City staff will finalize the scope of work with the selected consultant prior to contract authorization. The City is open to suggestions other than those items listed which the consultant believes will be of value in producing a viable comprehensive plan and planning and zoning code that will have practical applications for day to day implementation.

The scope of work should include at a minimum, the following:

- Adhere to all requirements of the Municipal Planning Code
- The Consultant shall be responsible for writing the new zoning code, as well as providing guidance on best practices and trends, and checking assumptions.
- Meet/conference call regularly with City staff for project review and status updates.
- Attend City Planning Commission meetings as needed. Planning commission meets the first Tuesday of the month at 11am.

- Determine the level of community resources and administrative capacity of the City in regard to zoning and land use enforcement and develop regulations respective of the same.
- Be familiar with creative solutions to zoning and land use challenges, such as overlay districts and form-based code, and recommend them to the City as appropriate.
- Evaluate the use of sustainable infrastructure options.
- Design performance standards to encourage the desired forms of use and development in each district; avoid requirements that are prohibitive in realistic use of the area.
- Assist City staff in distributing information to the community about the project and/or final product as the need arises (i.e., graphic representations of timelines, permitted use changes, new building size/setback requirements).
- Eliminate contradictions and redundancy; identify areas in the existing ordinance that lack clarity and create new zoning codes that are straight forward and avoid confusion.
- Identify existing uses that may be phased out in the new zoning ordinance and develop appropriate processes for how the City handles the transfer and permitting of these uses for future occupants.
- Design a project completion schedule that balances a detail-oriented process with the City's need to position itself for mixed-use development in the immediate future.
- Review the sign ordinance regarding outdoor advertising and signage for the alignment with current best practices, including temporary signage.
- Update terminology and definitions that are antiquated.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

In order to facilitate understanding of the RFP requirements and submittals, a Question-and-Answer period will be conducted during the submittal process.

Questions regarding RFP requirements or submittals may be directed to Alisa Edwards and emailed to: [aedwards@cityofelyria.org](mailto:aedwards@cityofelyria.org) until 4:00PM, July 13, 2022. All questions and responses will be posted to the City of Elyria website at <https://www.cityofelyria.org/department/community-development/>

## SUBMISSION REQUIRMENTS AND FORMAT

**All proposals must be received before 4:00 PM on July 18, 2022.** Proposals should be clearly marked with the name and address of the respondent and the project title. Late responses will not be accepted.

Ten copies of the Proposals and one (1) PDF file of the proposal shall be submitted to the Safety Service Office at the address on the cover page of this RFP. All proposal submissions shall be delivered in a common envelope or box clearly labeled. The PDF files shall be indexed to simplify City review.

Respondents are requested to be concise and proposals should include, in order, the following:

1. **Letter of Interest:** A brief cover letter summarizing the key points of the applicant's proposal and confirm an understanding of the Scope of Work. The letter shall provide the applicant's full name, mailing address, phone number, primary contact person, and email address.
2. **Work Program:** Overall project approach and process to be employed. Listing of proposed deliverables for each work step. Include any proposed changes/revisions to the scope of services of deliverables in order to meet project objectives.
3. **Timeline and Schedule:** Proposed project schedule including timeline of major milestones, deliverables, and completion. The project timeline should be counted in weeks or months from date of contract award. Work may commence upon contract award and must be completed within eighteen (18) months of award. An expectation is that a written update of status of the project will be provided at the six (6) month milestone to be presented and attended at a scheduled Planning Commission meeting by consultants. At twelve (12) months a written preliminary draft will be presented to the Planning Commission for review and comments.
4. **Experience and Qualifications:** Brief organizational profile, including background and experience of the firm. Project organization chart including key staff to be assigned and their roles in the project. Listing, description, and link to similar projects that have been completed in the past 5 years by the prime consultant and/or proposed subcontractors. Reference list that may be contacted by the City for recently completed similar projects.
5. **Estimated Costs:** The Proposal shall include a lump sum fee as well as a detailed budget. Please submit estimated cost breakdown for both Phase I and Phase II. The budget must include an hourly rate schedule and estimated number of hours to be performed by each staff members assigned to the project. If any work is to be subcontracted, the Proposal should reference the specific areas and costs. Any reimbursable expenses must be clearly indicated, and an estimate provided. For budgeting purposes, please anticipate a start date of October 1, 2022.

Please note: All material submitted is public property and is subject to Ohio Public Record laws. All proposals submitted will become the property of the City of Elyria.

Consultants will not be reimbursed for any cost associated with the preparation of the RFP.

## PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals will be evaluated based on overall approach, team experience and qualifications, budget, organization structure, work plan and fit with the City. Preference will be given to consultant teams that work well together and provide the best services to obtain project objectives. Special consideration will be given to teams that provide examples/case studies where engaging outreach and facilitation led to development of successful solutions, particularly among diverse groups.

Following the evaluation of the proposals, the City may request firms to make presentations and/or be interviewed. If a determination is made that presentations are necessary, the presentations will take place via Zoom, at a mutually acceptable date and time. Tentative dates for possible interviews are in the Anticipated Timeline.

The City would prefer to commence the comprehensive planning project and the subsequent zoning ordinance update as a single project, two phase effort. Therefore, the City is seeking proposals for



entirety of the effort.  
The City reserves rights to award on an individual phase.

## ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Issue RFP                             | June 13, 2022     |
| 2. Proposals due                         | July 18, 2022     |
| 3. Presentations by top qualifying firms | August 1-5, 2022  |
| 4. City Council authorizes contract      | September 6, 2022 |

## RFP DISCLOSURES

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any non-material irregularities or information in any RFP, and to accept or reject any item or combination of items.

The City assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by Proposers in responding to this RFP or in responding to any further request for interviews, additional data, etc.

## RESOURCES AND LINKS

"Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans" - American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Report 578 (January 2015)

"The Role of the Comprehensive Plan" (Godschalk and Anderson 2012)

### **JumpStart Elyria Plan**

The JumpStart Elyria Plan is a tool to help the City determine how to best position Elyria for success in the region. The City of Elyria, in collaboration with Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative Kent State University, Streetsense and Partners for Economic Solutions conducted a market analysis and created redevelopment plans for its commercial business districts, including Downtown, Midway and Cleveland Street. The entire process took roughly 12 months and was completed in 2015. The Plan can be viewed at <http://www.cityofelyria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Elyria%20TLCI%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

### **5 Year Consolidated Plan**

As a recipient of HUD funding, the City prepares a 5 Year Consolidated Plan to serve as the framework for a means to provide decent housing, a suitable living environment and expand economic activities and direct the expenditure of Federal and State funds. The Consolidated Plan has a focus on expanding efforts to revitalize neighborhoods and provide housing opportunity through analysis of community housing market needs, housing stock and socioeconomic trends while also identifying target housing and economic development areas. The Plan is set to expire in February 2024. The Plan is available for

viewing at <https://www.cityofelyria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/HUD-Consolidated-Plan-5-Year-Strategic.pdf>.

### **Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The Elyria Parks and Recreation Master Plan, adopted in late 2016, addresses needs within the community by promoting the vision of “providing a modernized clean, safe, attractive, fun, and user-friendly parks, recreation, and fitness opportunities for residents of all ages and ability levels.” The Parks and Recreation Department has implemented and successfully completed many projects in accordance with the Plan over the course of the past three years. The Plan is available for viewing at <https://www.cityofelyria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Elyria-Parks-Master-Plan-Final-2016.pdf>[www.cityofelyria.org](https://www.cityofelyria.org).

### **Active Transportation Plan**

Lorain County Public Health (LCPH) and the City of Elyria collaborated on the development of the Elyria Active Transportation Plan (ATP) with support from Toole Design. The ATP develops a framework for investment in infrastructure and programs to provide many community benefits beyond personal mobility, such as improving public health by reducing chronic disease and obesity, economic development, greater quality of life, and enhanced environmental quality. The ATP is available for viewing at <https://www.cityofelyria.org/transportation/>.