



HOUSTON COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Solid Waste • Recycling • Zoning
304 South Marshall Street – Room 209, Caledonia, MN 55921
Phone: (507) 725-5800 • Fax: (507) 725-5590



NOTICE INVITING REQUESTS FOR PROPOSAL QUOTES TO UPDATE THE COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

February 1, 2022

Houston County is seeking written proposal quotes from qualified consultants to assist in development of an update of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the County.

Qualifications based selection criteria will be used to analyze submittals from responding consultants. Upon completion of evaluations based on qualifications, interviews may be held with the top ranked firms.

Houston County will enter into contract negotiations with the consultants whose proposal most appropriately meets the County's needs and reserves the right to reject any or all submittals.

Interested firms should contact Martin Herrick, Environmental Services Director, at:

Houston County Environmental Services
Attn: Martin Herrick
304 S. Marshall St., Room 209
Caledonia, MN 55921

or by email: comp.plan@co.houston.mn.us.

All proposals received by 4:30 p.m. March 1, 2022 at the Houston County Environmental Services Office will be given equal consideration. Respondents must submit six (6) copies of the proposal, as well as an electronic copy of the materials described in the RFP *Deliverables* section.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Martin Herrick
Environmental Services Department Director

Request for Proposal Quotes

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update

Houston County, MN



Release Date: February 1, 2022

Question and Answer Period Deadline: February 11, 2022

Proposal Submittal Deadline: March 1, 2022

**Martin Herrick
Houston County Environmental Services
304 S. Marshall Street, Room 209
Caledonia, MN 55921
comp.plan@co.houston.mn.us**

HOUSTON COUNTY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Introduction

Houston County is requesting a Proposal from experienced consulting firms that are interested in assisting the Houston County Board of Commissioners and staff with updating the County's long-term Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).

The chosen firm will be expected to provide a full range of professional services to lead the development of the updated CLUP, including planning expertise in rural land use, transportation, environmental protection and public participation. Consultants must also have experience in residential and economic development, growth management, geographic information systems, aggregate resources, agricultural preservation and protection of natural resources and the environment.

Background

Houston County's current land use plan was originally adopted December 8, 1998 and re-approved in December 2008.

Vision Statement

Provide quality, essential and affordable public services to the community.

County Values

County Values to guide plan development:

- Houston County recognizes the cultural and economic importance of agriculture to the community. Local decisions should support maintaining and sustaining the vitality of family farms and locally owned agricultural operations and support practices that balance the conservation of soil, water quality, and economic viability.
- Houston County values the importance of sound environmental practices that promote the efficient use of all natural resources and protection of environmentally sensitive natural resources.
- Houston County acknowledges aggregate materials are important to the economic basis of the community and to use in construction, road maintenance and other uses and strives to balance access to materials with protection of natural resources.
- Houston County affirms the need to promote growth, retention and diversification of business to provide employment opportunities and access to goods and services for the County and regional population.
- Houston County has a significant proportion of land classified as natural resource areas and supports the federal and state regulations requiring careful control of development in sensitive areas to minimize pollution problems and protect the public health and safety.
- Houston County has a road network of Township, County, and State roads that meet or exceeds standards of safety and accessibility and encourages continued priority of maintenance and improvement of road segments to support the economic vitality of the County and region.
- Houston County desires citizen participation in all phases of the preparation and implementation of this Comprehensive Plan including planning and general county operations.

Demographic and Land Use

Houston County sits at Minnesota's southeast corner, bordering Wisconsin across the Mississippi River and Iowa at its southern border. The county's terrain consists of rolling hills on its western end, transitioning to bluffs carved with drainages toward the east. The County rests in the "Driftless Zone", marked by the absence of glacial drift, thus features a mixture of agricultural land and steep bluffs covered with hardwood forests, major river corridors, streams and lowlands cutting through the bluffs. The County boasts natural springs, trout streams, the Root River and wetlands, which provide habitat for wildlife and makes the County a destination for hunting, fishing, camping and other outdoor activities.

Houston County has a total area of 569 square miles, with roughly 60% dedicated to agriculture and related industries. Though Houston County has seen a slight decline, similar to national trends, agriculture remains a very important part of the rural communities located throughout the County. As of the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there are 891 farms in the county, down only 3% from 2012. Of the 1,437 producers, 96% remain family farms and 22% hire additional labor. Of concern, 33% of producers are age 65 or older, with only 5.6% under the age of 35. However, 335 (23%) producers are considered new or beginning farmers so there is still inflow to the agricultural economy. The County has strictly regulated any non-farm development in the agricultural area, maintaining that agriculture is a vital part of the local economy, strict control minimizes urban/rural conflicts, minimizes local service costs and protects woodlands, wetlands, sloughs and streams.

The County is divided into 17 townships and seven (7) cities. The County's land use plan has limited the development in agricultural areas of the County by restricting non-farm dwellings to one per quarter-quarter section with a minimum lot size of one acre. The County has encouraged urban development within the existing cities or adjacent to them provided that adequate sanitary sewer service is either available or can be safely provided. In addition, there are several rural, unincorporated communities located in various parts of the County. Most of these communities have not experienced any growth, nor have County officials actively encouraged growth in these areas due to their lack of urban services.

In comparing the 2010 and 2020 Census data, the County's population was 19,027 and 18,843 respectively, showing close to a 1 % decline. Houston County reflects regional Minnesota trends with a unique statistic – 45% of the County workforce worked outside of Minnesota and an additional 9% worked outside of the County.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to produce a CLUP update that is derived from citizen and stakeholder input and provides a clear direction for future land use decisions and County services for the next 10 years and beyond. The CLUP will be the principal planning document for Houston County and serve as the basis for planning and zoning decisions, regulations, policies and initiatives to be considered and implemented by the County. It should reflect the unique character of the County, consider growth management, agricultural preservation, environmental and natural resource protection, access to aggregate resources, transportation, parks and recreation, economic development and build upon its strengths.

The services provided by the selected consultant may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Evaluating the existing Comprehensive Land Use Plan and goals approved in 2008;
- Assessing the County's current condition including demographics, land use, transportation, design and community character;
- Gathering public input on the goals and concerns of residents, businesses and other stakeholders;
- Incorporating current planning documents into the land use policy analysis including the Zoning Ordinance, Water Management Plan, Solid Waste Management Plan and other adopted plans and ordinances;
- Develop projections for future growth and development in the County;
- Determining a specific implementation plan for short- and long-term goals and action items;
- Proposing policies, initiatives and additional tasks necessary to accomplish the planning goals of the community;
- Evaluating existing park and recreation facilities and identifying potential improvement opportunities.

In addition to the items listed above, the County is open to suggestions the consultant believes will be of value in producing a dynamic CLUP update that will have practical applications.

Public Engagement

Houston County desires a mix of open houses, popup/intercept events, focus group listening sessions and a survey. Houston County would like help in creating an advisory committee and possibly sub-committees in Agriculture, Natural Resources, Economic Development and Transportation. These groups will consist of Advisory Committee members, County Staff, and citizen involvement. The County requests support from the consultant in assisting /attending and developing meeting materials, draft summaries of key meeting findings, and suggestions for engagement exercises.

Deliverables

Interested consulting firms are required to submit six (6) paper copies and one digital copy (in PDF format) of their Proposal.

The proposal is to be sent in a sealed envelope to:

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
Houston County Environmental Services
Attn: Martin Herrick
304 S. Marshall St., Room 209
Caledonia, MN 55921
Email: comp.plan@co.houston.mn.us

The Proposal must be received no later than: March 1, 2022 at 4:30pm and contain the contact information for the consulting firm including e-mail address.

The following information should be submitted by all consultants responding to this Request for Qualifications:

- Letter of interest signed by a duly authorized officer or agent empowered with the right to bind the consultant submitting a proposal for consideration.
- Background information of the consulting firm, including size, location, available resources and areas of expertise and technical capabilities.
- General philosophies and approaches to land use planning.
- Names, qualifications and relevant experience of key personnel that will play the primary role(s) in this project; the name of the project manager must be included.
- Descriptions of relevant projects in which key project staff have played a central role in developing.
- Methodology and approach the firm intends to utilize in order to complete the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update.
- A list of at least three (3) professional references for projects of similar scope that have been completed. These projects should involve the key personnel proposed for the Houston County Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update. References must include current contact name, address and phone number and e-mail address.
- Any additional information that the consultant deems appropriate and will assist the County in evaluating the responses.
- A detailed list of the total cost of the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Most importantly, a detailed work plan identifying the major tasks to be accomplished. The work plan must present the Proposer's approach, task breakdown, and deliverable due dates in a graphical format.

Questions

Questions relating to the Request for Proposal must be submitted in writing or by e-mail to:

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
Houston County Environmental Services
Attn: Martin Herrick
304 S. Marshall St., Room 209
Caledonia, MN 55921
Email: comp.plan@co.houston.mn.us

Questions must be received no later than February 11, 2022.

Selection Process

Houston County will evaluate all qualified submissions based on qualifications, background, experience, past performance and fees.

Consulting firms considered to be the most qualified may be selected and requested to make a presentation to the County. This presentation should detail the consulting firm's qualifications for selection and highlight the uniqueness of their proposed approach.

Based on the evaluation of all materials presented and the interview process, the County will identify the most qualified consulting firm and pursue development of an agreement covering the scope of services, fees, timetable, performance standards, etc. If for any reason the County and selected

consulting firm cannot agree upon the scope of services and fee, the County will enter into negotiations with the next most qualified consulting firm.

Tentative Schedule

Release of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Quotes	Tuesday, February 1, 2022
Deadline for Questions	12:00 pm, Friday, February 11, 2022
Question Responses and/or Addenda to RFP	Friday, February 18, 2022
Submission Deadline for RFP	4:30 pm Tuesday, March 1, 2022
County Evaluations	March 15, 2022
Interviews with Selected Consulting Firms, if necessary	Beginning of April, 2022
Board of Commissioners Final Approval	April 2022
Anticipated Start of Project	May 2022
Anticipated Completion Date	no later than May 2023

Available Resources

The Houston County Zoning Ordinance is available at:

<https://www.co.houston.mn.us/?mdocs-file=2334>

The Houston County (2008) 1998 Land Use Plan:

<https://www.co.houston.mn.us/?mdocs-file=2349>

The Houston Local Water Management Plan is available at:

<https://www.co.houston.mn.us/?mdocs-file=3631>

The Houston County Solid Waste Management Plan is available at:

<https://www.co.houston.mn.us/?mdocs-file=2888>

The Houston County Zoning District Map is available on Beacon as a layer.

<https://beacon.schneidercorp.com/>

Limitations

Houston County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submittals as a result of this Request for Proposals or to cancel, in part or in its entirety, this Request for Proposals if found to be in the best interest of the County. This Request for Proposals does not commit the County to award a contract, pay costs incurred for the preparation of the response documents, or any subsequent costs associated with the provision of additional information or presentation, or to procure or contract for services or goods. By submitting a Proposal, the consultant hereby authorizes the County to contact references and make such further investigations as may be in the interest of the County. All submittals become the property of Houston County and will be open to public inspection.