



TOWN OF WEST NEWBURY
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Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
for Planning Consultant Services

MBTA Communities(3A) Zoning Compliance Initiative

Contract #2023-WN-002

January 2023

The Town of West Newbury seeks a Planning Consultant to lead the town in an effort to achieve compliance with the MBTA Communities As-Of-Right Multi-Family Zoning District requirements. This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) has been prepared and issued by the Town as a process to select the best consultant for this task.

West Newbury is identified as an MBTA “Adjacent Small Community” as there are no MBTA stations in Town or within ½ mile of its border. It is therefore necessary that the Town undertake a study examining the feasibility of creating a zoning district or districts that allows a minimum of 87 multi-family units as of right. In order to successfully sponsor a zoning amendment for Town Meeting approval, it will be necessary to undertake an iterative public process that involves all town residents and stakeholders.

The Town has received a Rural and Small Town Grant and has pledged matching local funds to support this Initiative and will be selecting a consultant from the State’s PRF76 Approved Consultants List through this targeted solicitation for qualifications. The Town will select the Consultant that in the Town’s opinion outlines a clear and comprehensive approach to a public engagement process that helps build consensus and illustrates a strong understanding of the State’s technical assessment tools developed for this initiative. The Town is interested in a consultant team with strong communication and presentation skills and an ability to translate technical information into easily understood maps and graphics for various engagement opportunities.

Town Planner Sue Brown, working with the Town Manager Angus Jennings, will work directly as Project Manager with the Consultant and will be the primary point of contact for the Project.

DPW Director Wayne Amaral and Board of Water Commissioners will be involved with reviewing public infrastructure capacity and advising regarding infrastructure limitations and/or opportunities for system improvement/expansion.

The Water Department is conducting a comprehensive drinking water distribution system study update to determine adequacy of the system to meet current and estimated future demands through 2042.

Police Chief Michael Dwyer, who also serves as Chief Engineer of the West Newbury Board of Fire Engineers, will be consulted regarding appropriate siting of potential higher-density housing districts as relates to transportation safety, infrastructure and public safety response times.

In addition to Town staff roles, regular updates regarding this initiative will be provided at meetings of the West Newbury Select Board and the Planning Board, among others. All meetings will be posted publicly, and all Select Board meetings are televised on local cable and available for viewing on the Town's YouTube channel.

The Town anticipates engaging the Planning Consultant in February or March 2023.

The Consultant would then undertake the following tasks within the general timeline indicated:

1. Work with Project Manager to develop a robust and iterative Public Engagement Plan. (Feb/Mar 2023)
2. At the Project Kick-off Meeting, train staff, boards and local officials about requirements of the law and outline the scope of the initiative. Prepare information suitable for the general public for the Town's website. (Mar 2023)
3. Gather and analyze information and conduct Public Meetings. (Apr-Sept 2023)
 - a. Determine Town's recent goals and strategies for housing development through focused staff and board member interviews and by reviewing existing Town Planning Reports, maps, infrastructure/capital improvement plans, etc.
 - b. Analyze current Zoning and General Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations and identify barriers to achieving compliance with the Multi-Family Zoning requirements.
 - c. Review existing conditions, and create a map or maps to illustrate land use and transportation patterns, "Developable Land" of a scale as defined in the MBTA Communities Guidelines, existing infrastructure in Town and within proximity to Town boundaries, and areas meeting the State's Smart Growth Principles to the greatest extent practicable.

- d. Coordinate with Water Department's Engineering Consultant to understand Drinking Water Distribution System Infrastructure and its adequacy for meeting estimated future demands.
- e. Facilitate Public Meetings to review information and receive feedback (a-d above). Produce materials as necessary for Public Meetings including outreach materials, and meeting summaries, and for populating the website.
4. Work with staff and local boards and conduct Public Meetings and other engagement strategies to identify up to three potential alternative districts or district combinations. Outline potential regulatory changes required for compliance (height, parking requirements, use restrictions). (May–Nov 2023)
 - a. Identify and create maps of potential zoning district(s) or district combinations.
 - b. Present Density Visualizations, Visual Preference Surveys or similar strategies to gauge community choices.
 - c. Identify options for regulatory approaches.
 - d. Utilize the MBTA Communities Compliance Model to evaluate identified District(s) for compliance with density, size and minimum unit capacity.
 - Export parcel data and import data into the compliance model.
 - Review existing zoning and assist with completion of the model checklist.
 - Review proposed zoning and assist with completion of the model checklist.
 - Determine parcel overrides in the model if changes to constrained land are required.
 - Run the model to test for compliance with district size, unit capacity, density metrics, etc.
 - Test potential modifications and amendments to district boundaries and/or intensity requirements.
 - e. Generate Findings Report with Recommendations for Zoning Amendment(s).
 - f. Facilitate Public Meeting(s) to review materials and receive feedback (a-e above). Produce materials as necessary for Public Meetings including outreach materials, and meeting summaries, and for populating the website.
5. Draft Zoning Bylaw Amendment and Conduct Public Meeting(s) (Nov 2023-Jan 2024)
 - a. Translate proposed district requirements (use, intensity, location, exceptions, etc. into draft zoning amendment.
 - b. Review existing zoning and other applicable state and local regulations for ALL potential conflicts (limitations, restrictions, defined terms).

- c. Develop all necessary amendments to existing Bylaw in a form customary to municipality.
 - d. Facilitate Public Meeting(s) to review materials and receive feedback (a-c above). Produce materials as necessary for Public Meeting(s) including outreach materials, easy-to understand explanatory material (graphic and narrative) and meeting summaries.
6. Pursue Zoning Bylaw Amendment per G.L. Ch 40A, S. 5. (Jan–April 2024)
- a. Support the Town Planner in preparing for and presenting at the 40A Zoning Bylaw Amendment Public Hearing and the Annual Town Meeting including developing outreach materials for distribution and the website.

Selection Process.

If you are interested in providing consulting services to the Town for this initiative, please submit your proposal for Town review with a:

- Brief (no more than three pages) description of your approach to this project, along with a recommended budget and schedule by task.
- Sample of outreach/presentation materials for a similar project.
- Team member qualifications and experience on similar projects.

Send your response via email to townplanner@wnewbury.org. Submissions shall be received no later than **4pm on Thursday, February 9, 2023**. Any questions or inquiries regarding this RFQ should be sent to same e-mail address no later than 4pm on Wednesday, February 1, 2023.

The Town's Consultant Review Team will include the Town Manager, Town Planner, and Chief Procurement Officer. Upon review of submission qualifications the Town anticipates recommending two or more firms for interview, said interviews to be conducted by the Planning Board. The successful Consultant will be selected based on the following criteria:

- 1) Demonstrated successful completion of projects of comparable scope.
- 2) Established competence and experience of proposed project team members.
 - a. Project approach
 - b. Effective public engagement
 - c. Technical expertise
 - d. Graphic excellence.
- 3) Proposed schedule and budget.

The Team will recommend three or more Consultants (if possible) for an interview by the Planning Board. The Planning Board will make a recommendation for contract award to the Chief Procurement Officer, who will prepare a standard town contract. The anticipated date of contract award is late February to early March.

The Town of West Newbury reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, and to negotiate the terms and conditions with any proposer and to accept any proposal, in whole or in part, which the Town deems, in its sole opinion, to be in the best interest of the Town of West Newbury.

