

HOWLAND TOWNSHIP, OHIO

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

HOWLAND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Howland Township is soliciting Proposals to undertake the preparation of our Comprehensive Community Plan.

HOWLAND TOWNSHIP

Howland Township (www.twp.howland.oh.us) is located in south-central Trumbull County, bordering the City of Niles and Weathersfield Township to the South, the City of Warren and Warren Township to the West, Bazetta Township to the North, and Vienna Township to the East. Howland has a population of approximately 17,500. The Township is bifurcated by Mosquito Creek running north to south, which is tributary to the Mahoning River. Howland consists primarily of single-family residential homes, but has grown into a regional office and commercial center (bordering the Eastwood Mall Complex in the City of Niles).

Howland Township is governed by an elected three-member Board of Trustees and an elected Fiscal Officer, and is managed by a full-time Administrator. Howland Township has adopted the limited Home-Rule form of government (*ORC § 504*). Services provided by the Township include Public Works (roads and cemetery), Police safety services, Fire rescue service, and Planning & Zoning. Howland Township contracts with URS Corporation for engineering services. Trumbull County provides Health, Building, Water, and Sanitary Sewers (though not exclusively), among other services.

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN PROJECT

Howland Township has an existing Comprehensive Plan that was completed in 1999. An update to that Plan, and the process by which it is developed, should serve as a living, breathing handbook for creating an overriding sense of place within Howland. This commitment to the development of our community identity should extend beyond the built environment to include community amenities, programs, and innovative and cost-effective solutions for sustainability. The intent of this initiative is to provide the tools to become a community of choice, a healthy, active-living community, a center for collaboration, and a standard by which public organizations and the communities they serve are judged.

SCOPE OF WORK

The study area for Howland Township will be the entire community. The Township's Planning & Zoning staff will be the local contact. The following scope of work is provided as a guideline of responsibilities to be carried out by the chosen Planning firm or team. Creativity and ideas on approaches to incorporate into this scope of work are strongly encouraged. Each Proposal should contain a detailed approach to the scope of work, with timelines, deliverable goals, and associated action steps to achieve these goals. The scope of work for this update includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- *Public Participation Plan.* The consultant will develop a public participation plan designed to keep stakeholders – citizens, local officials, and interest groups – involved and informed throughout the planning process. The Township would like to maximize

stakeholder participation in the planning process, and encourages the consultant to employ a variety of public participation techniques. Such techniques may include public opinion surveys, visual preference surveys, a Comprehensive Community Plan website, informational meetings, and focus groups. The Township is open to processes that would be most effective in maximizing effective stakeholder participation.

- *Overarching Identity.* The consultant will create a community brand/image that defines the Township to residents, businesses, and visitors. The Township seeks to identify and develop a sense of place unique to Howland. Howland Township wants to develop innovative tools, strategies, and programs that enable our physical environment to hold distinctive appeal. This overarching identity should be part of a visioning component that illustrates the community's shared picture of Howland's desired future. It should be a theme that is interwoven throughout the entire Plan.
- *Overarching Green Innovation.* The consultant will chart a course for Howland Township to become a sustainable community through economically and environmentally sustainable practices. Issues of interest to the Township include storm water management, natural resource conservation and protection, energy conservation, alternative energy generation (on individual properties, in neighborhoods, and community-wide), waste minimization, local foods and community gardens, native landscaping, and sustainable development through the transformation of existing structures and properties into viable components of the community. Green Innovation should be part of the overarching identity and interwoven throughout the entire Plan.
- *Annexation and Intergovernmental Cooperation Element.* The issue of annexation is central to Howland Township. We seek to reduce, if not eliminate, the threat of annexation in order to maintain our current boundaries. This element will explore ways in which Howland can achieve this task. We aim to work cooperatively with neighboring municipalities in an effort to maintain the Township's remaining land area and to manage growth and development in a sustainable manner. This element should also identify objectives, policies, and programs for joint planning and decision-making with the Howland School District and other local entities.
- *Issues and Opportunities Element.* This element will identify current community issues using Township demographic and economic characteristics, data on historic population trends, age distribution, household size, number of households, educational levels, income levels, and employment levels and trends. This element should also include forecasts for the next five (5) to ten (10) years.
- *Economic Development Element.* This element will summarize the Township's objectives, policies, and programs that promote the stabilization, retention, and/or expansion of the economic base and employment opportunities. The economic development element will utilize market analyses to identify particular types of desirable new businesses and additional sites that should be designated for commercial or industrial uses. This element must also assess the Township's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and identify Township, County, regional, and State economic development programs that apply to Howland Township.
- *Natural Resources Element.* This element will include a descriptive analysis and inventory of environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources. Examples of resources include woodlands, wetlands, natural areas, critical species habitat sites, mineral and soil resources, groundwater resources, streams, floodplains, and steep slopes. Subjects of interest that may be included in this element are conservation design, resource protection strategies, property owner outreach, and education.

- *Land Use Element.* This element will provide existing and future land use plans. It will designate the future distribution, location, and interrelationship of land uses (public and private). This element shall also illustrate past, current, and anticipated population density, areas of land available for new development and potential redevelopment, and ideas for future (re)development through progressive planning techniques. Howland Township seeks to distinguish itself from surrounding communities and be a leader in high quality urban design along with innovative and sustainable land use policies. The Township seeks an analysis of its current land use categories and Zoning Resolution to determine if additional categories, design guidelines, or sustainability provisions could be added. The potential for form-based zoning for re-development at the Township's core, conservation design on the Township's fringes, and ideas for redevelopment of established neighborhoods are highly encouraged.
- *Transportation, Mobility, and Accessibility Element.* This element will address multiple modes of transportation including bicycle paths/trails, sidewalks, railroads, streets and highways, and public transit. This element will identify objectives, policies, and programs intended to guide the future development of said facilities. Particular attention should be paid to the development of a sidewalk/bike path plan, identification of and suggested alternatives to substandard intersections and traffic flow patterns, and opportunities for additional street connectivity in the Township to allow for ideal levels of traffic flow.
- *Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Element.* The local Park Board controls and maintains the Howland park system. Howland has a central Township Park and a few other pocket parks. The Township also has several acres of conservation land located primarily along Mosquito Creek. The land was purchased through the Clean Ohio program. This element will provide solutions on how to connect existing neighborhoods, parks, and green areas, and plans for how much additional parkland and green areas are needed, their locations, and an exploration of programming needs with appropriate partners for delivery.
- *Community and Cultural Facilities Element.* This element will provide an inventory of existing facilities available to the public, including government buildings, libraries, public school buildings, fire protection and emergency services facilities, art centers, community centers, recycling and solid waste facilities, and cultural resources. This element will also assess the need to construct, reconstruct, or expand utilities and community facilities to serve the current and future land use patterns. Green Innovation would be highly encouraged within this element.
- *Implementation Element.* The consultant will design an implementation program element that defines and schedules the specific Township actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the Comprehensive Community Plan. This element shall specify the process by which the Township's regulatory structures shall be amended so as to be consistent with the Comprehensive Community Plan. This element will also include a recommended process and timetable for updating the Plan in the future.

SELECTION PROCESS

The schedule for this project is as follows:

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| • Request for Proposals issued | NOVEMBER 30, 2007 |
| • Deadline for submission | JANUARY 18, 2008 |
| • Contact consultants to be interviewed | week of JANUARY 28, 2008 |

- Consultant interviews and oral presentations FEBRUARY 18 – FEBRUARY 29, 2008
- Selection of consultant and execution of contract MARCH 17, 2008

Howland Township reserves the right to request supplemental information and to modify this schedule. Howland Township further reserves the right to reject any or all proposals (in whole or in part) and to waive any informality or irregularity in received proposals. In the event that this Request for Proposal is withdrawn or the Township determines not to enter into an agreement with any of the respondents, the Township assumes no liability for any costs or expenses incurred in connection with the Request for Proposal, Request for Qualifications, or otherwise.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The award resulting from this Request for Proposal will be made to the consultant that submits the response that, in the Township's opinion, best serves the overall interests of the Township. Factors that will be considered in the evaluation will include, but may not be limited to:

- Experience.* Qualifications of personnel assigned to the project and their proven ability to custom similar products within established guidelines;
- Quality of Work.* The apparent quality of work of the firm or team based on their Proposal, interviews and oral presentations, and on information received from listed references and other previous clients;
- Project Needs.* A demonstrated, clear understanding of the Township's needs, and the compatibility of the firm or team with the needs of the project;
- Innovative Approach.* Progressive ideas and demonstrated ability to "think outside of the box" by providing a process and product that is innovative and dynamic, while offering a vehicle for delivering the highest caliber community service and quality of life.

AWARD OF PROJECT

Howland Township will enter into contract negotiations with the highest ranked firm based primarily on the aforementioned criteria. If the Township is unable to successfully conclude good faith negotiations with the firm selected, the firm will be notified in writing. Negotiations will then proceed with the next highest ranked firm.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The deadline for Proposal submission is **4:00 PM on FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 2008**. Ten (10) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy of the Proposal must be delivered by this deadline to:

Mark Zuppo, Jr.
 Planning & Zoning Director
 Howland Township
 205 Niles-Cortland Road NE
 Warren, OH 44484

For more information, please contact:

Mark Zuppo, Jr.
 Planning & Zoning Director
mark.zuppo@twp.howland.oh.us

Kim Mascarella
 Assistant Planning & Zoning Director
kim.mascarella@twp.howland.oh.us