



**Request for Proposals for
Comprehensive Plan, Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance Update
Wapello County Iowa**

Date Issued: September 3, 2024

Proposal Deadline Date: October 4, 2024

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 P.M. on October 4th, 2024. Late Proposals will not be accepted.

Submit proposals to:

Wapello County Zoning
Attention: Miranda Bailey
536 Mill Street
Ottumwa, IA 52501

Contact Information:

Miranda Bailey, Zoning Administrator
641-684-5425
mbailey@wapellocounty.org
www.wapellocounty.org

Wapello County invites you to submit a Proposal no later than Friday, October, 4, 2024 at 4:00 P.M. Consultants should submit ten hardcopies and a digital version by email. The primary contact for the proposal is: Miranda Bailey (mbailey@wapellocounty.org) Zoning Administrator, 536 Mill Street, Ottumwa, Iowa 52501. All communication on the proposal and formal submission should be made to the primary contact.

PURPOSE

Wapello County is soliciting a multidisciplinary consult team (which may be a single firm or a consult team consisting of individuals and/or firms with specialized expertise) to submit a proposal to update the existing comprehensive plan and to complete a full overhaul and rewrite of the County's zoning & subdivision ordinance and map design in a phased approach.

PHASE I: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The comprehensive plan was last updated in 1991. The County seeks to update an 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 20 years based on input from citizens and various other stakeholders within the County. Second, to provide a series of realistic projects, programs, etc. that can be implemented to achieve the County'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 the Wapello County Board of Supervisors.

The plan should incorporate the County's various planning documents, including input from various citizen representatives from the County and cities in Wapello County such as Agency, Blakesburg, Chillicothe, Eddyville, Eldon, Kirkville, Ottumwa and other smaller communities around.

PHASE II: COMPLETE ZONING & SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE UPDATE

Wapello County's last significant update was done in 1999. It has undergone numerous updates to address new issues that arise in the County as well as deficiencies in the existing code but, has not undergone a comprehensive update. Changes to the zoning ordinance will incorporate the priorities identified in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The goal is to keep the momentum going by being proactive about pursuing a modern zoning ordinance that preserves everything good about "old" Wapello County and ensuring the County will have a bright future.

A copy of the current Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance can be found on the County's website at [Wapello, Iowa \(www.wapellocounty.org\)](http://www.wapellocounty.org)

COUNTY DESCRIPTION

Wapello County is located in the southeastern quadrant of Iowa in the second tier of counties and is the home of more than 35,437 residents with the county seat being located in Ottumwa. The Des Moines River, the county's most prominent physical feature, bisects the county from northwest to southeast. Wapello County encompasses 696 miles of land. The Wapello County secondary road system includes approximately 147 miles of paved roads, 515 miles of granular surfaced roads, and 32 miles of dirt roads.

Maintenance of a high quality of life has become a primary focus of both County officials and residents. In addition, because of the 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 County.

SCOPE OF WORK PHASE I: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The following scope of work illustrates the County's approach toward the completion of an implementable comprehensive plan that also incorporates the four Core Priorities (Agriculture Preservation, Historic Preservation, Conservation of Natural Resources and Growth and Development) 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 County 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 County 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 County.
 - Wapello County Administration and Board of Supervisors.
 - County staff members.
 - Interested Wapello County 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 Wapello County 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 Wapello County. Presentations to the Board of Adjustment, Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will be required.

KEY DELIVERABLES

1. Preliminary reports and project updates prepared at six (6), nine (9) and twelve (12) month milestones with completion at sixteen (16) 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. The County expects final GIS data deliveries in ESRI ArcGIS Geodatabase format, matching all content and spatial parameters of the existing Wapello County parcel data layer.
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 County 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 & SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE UPDATE

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

County staff will finalize the scope of work with the selected consultant prior to contract authorization. The County 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:

- 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 County staff for project review and status updates.
- Attend County Zoning Commission meetings as needed.
- Determine the level of community resources and administrative capacity of the County 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 County 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 County 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 County handles the transfer and permitting of these uses for future occupants.
- Design a project completion schedule that balances a detail-oriented process with the County'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.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND FORMAT

All proposals must be received before 4:00 PM on October 4, 2024. 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 Zoning 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 County 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 sixteen (16) months of award. An expectation is that a written update of status of the project will be provided at the six (6) and nine (9) 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 County 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.

Please note: All material submitted is public property and is subject to Iowa Public Record laws. All proposals submitted will become the property of Wapello County.

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 County. 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.

Proposals will be reviewed by the RFP Review Committee. The Committee will be made up of a County Supervisor, Zoning Administrator, Assistant County Attorney and County Engineer.

The following criteria will be considered in the evaluation of the proposals:

1. Qualifications and previous related work of key personnel and firm, particularly with regard to working with municipalities of similar size, government structure, and issues.
2. Project Manager providing direct oversight and contact with County Staff.
3. Understanding of project goals and general approach to the project. Although the County has identified the general nature of services required, the consultant has flexibility toward the approach to the methodology of the project and final product

format. The County will pay particular attention to public input strategies as this will be a key point in obtaining consensus and buy-in to the Plan.

4. Proposed timeline to complete work and demonstrate ability to meet proposed schedule and budgets on past projects.
5. Quality of sample materials and proposal package submitted.

The County would prefer to commence the comprehensive planning project and the subsequent zoning & subdivision ordinance update as a single project, two phase effort. Therefore, the County is seeking proposals for entirety of the effort. The County reserves rights to award on an individual phase.

The Committee reserves the right to request additional information from consultants submitting proposals. Following the review of the proposals, by the RFP Review Committee, the Committee will request all firms to make presentations and be interviewed. Key personnel to be assigned to the project shall be present at interviews. The presentation/interviews will be held at the Wapello County Courthouse, Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, 101 W 4th Street, 3rd Floor, Ottumwa, Iowa 52501, at a mutually acceptable date and time. Tentative dates for possible interviews are in the Anticipated Timeline. The RFP Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors will make the final selection. It is the County's desire to select a consultant and get final County approval at the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 29, 2024.

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

1. Issue RFP September 3, 2024
2. Proposals due October 4, 2024
3. Presentations by top qualifying firms to Supervisors and Committee October 14-18, 2024
4. Board of Supervisors authorizes contract October 29, 2024

RFP DISCLOSURES

The County 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 County 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.