



City of Hopkins, Minnesota Request for Qualifications Planning & Land Use Regulations Update

INTRODUCTION

The City of Hopkins, Minnesota seeks professional planning services to update Chapter 5 of the City Code: Planning & Land Use Regulations. With assistance from City Staff, the selected consultant will conduct a public process to develop new planning & land use regulations for the City Hopkins. It is anticipated that the new regulations will be a “hybrid” zoning ordinance incorporating form-based standards for established neighborhoods and areas around transit with more conventional zoning standards for largely built out districts along major road. The final product must be an innovative, adaptive, user-friendly and highly illustrative code that will implement the vision of the [2040 comprehensive plan – Cultivate Hopkins](#).

BACKGROUND

Community Profile. The city of Hopkins, Minnesota is both an historic and progressive community located approximately three miles southwest of Minneapolis. Originally incorporated in 1893 as a free standing growth center along the region’s railroad and street car lines, Hopkins is now designated as part of the region’s Urban Center by the Metropolitan Council. The City is about four square miles in size with nearly 20,000 residents, 9,000 households and 18,000 jobs. The City’s population is one of the most diverse in the region at roughly 60% white and 40% non-white.

The percentage of the City’s population that are renters is much higher than average with approximately 65% the housing units rented vs. owner occupied. Many of these units are naturally occurring affordable housing units, but the housing market is strong and values are increasing at a significant rate. As a result, the new zoning regulations should be mindful of both the benefits and challenges associated with gentrification.

Hopkins is essentially a fully developed and land locked community. Nevertheless, Hopkins has experienced steady population growth since 1990 and anticipates more intense development in the future as a result of new Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) line schedule to open for service in 2023. In this context, the new planning & land use regulations should seek to:

- Establish modern development standards and review processes.
- Balance the preservation of Hopkins’ hometown feel with the need for the community to adapt to changing market conditions and expand its tax base.
- Encourage creative and efficient redevelopment of underutilized properties that both blends with the existing urban environment and transitions Hopkins toward a more complete, resilient and sustainable community.

- Integrate the existing Mixed Use, Downtown Overlay and West Mainstreet Overlay districts into new zoning regulations.
- Create and develop zoning standards for mixed use neighborhoods, centers and districts envisioned by the comprehensive plan.
- Incorporate forward-looking parking and complete street standards that recognize the community's pedestrian and bicycle environment, changing markets, generational trends and the influence of Southwest LRT.
- Overhaul and simplify existing sign regulations to create a City identity that balances aesthetics and State and Federal laws.
- Create highly illustrative zoning regulations that reinforce Hopkins' unique identity and sense of community through high quality urban design.

Current Zoning Ordinance. The current zoning ordinance was adopted in the late 1970's and is primarily Euclidean in nature but does include a basic Central Business District that governs Hopkins traditional downtown. The current zoning ordinance has been amended numerous times which has sometimes results in inconsistency with the rest of the code. It also lacks user-friendly elements such as a modern and streamline development review process or illustrative graphics.

More recently, the City adopted overlay districts with design standards for Mainstreet and a Mixed Use (transit-oriented) district for areas around the three planned LRT stations. Standards for the Mixed Use district are specific for each station area and have only been applied to redevelopment projects in the Downtown Hopkins Station area. A section of the Mixed Use district remains unfinished and will require coordination with the City of Minnetonka as it is intended to govern the Shady Oak Station Area shared by both communities.

Comprehensive Plan. The City has completed its process to update the comprehensive plan and is waiting for final approval from the Metropolitan Council. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update – Cultivate Hopkins - will serve as the guiding document to update the City's planning and land use regulations. The vision of this plan is to cultivate the best elements of the Built, Natural, Social, and Economic Environments into a complete and sustainable community that is rooted in tradition, characterized by vibrant and unique places, physically and socially connected, and resilient to changing conditions. The concept for Cultivate Hopkins came out of a desire to continue to cultivate and grow the City of Hopkins as a distinct and meaningful place. Based around principles of sustainability, resilience, equity, and complete and connected communities, it provides a framework for preparing for the future. The plan emphasizes retaining what is valued, while proactively addressing and welcoming change.

Staff. The City's Planning & Development Department consists of four professional staff and an administrative support position. The professional positions include the Director, Community Development Coordinator, Public Housing Manager and City Planner. The City Planner will serve as the project coordinator for the zoning update. In addition to other Planning Department staff, it's anticipated that staff from the Administration, Engineering, Inspections and Public Safety departments will also contribute to the zoning update process.

SCOPE OF WORK

This contract will result in a new hybrid code, meant to supersede (either entirely or in part) Chapter 5 of the City Code: Planning & Land Use Regulations. This includes land development, subdivision and sign regulations. Generally, the scope of work should include the items listed below. However, City staff will work with the selected consultant to establish specific timelines, budget and deliverables for the project.

- Current Zoning Ordinance Diagnosis. The consultant will work closely with City staff to produce a diagnosis of the existing code.
- Review of Comprehensive Plan. The consultant will review and identify plan goals, objectives and recommendations to ensure the new code will be consistent with the City's new 2040 Comprehensive Plan – Cultivate Hopkins.
- Public Outreach. The consultant will develop a public outreach strategy consistent with the City's "take it to them" engagement strategy. This process must include authentic participation that informs community stakeholders and the general public of the benefits of a hybrid code and demonstrate a proven method of soliciting and incorporating public feedback.
- Evaluation of Existing Neighborhoods, Corridors and Districts. Hopkins contains many unique areas that will warrant context-sensitive regulations. Staff will work with the consultant to identify these areas.
- Drafting the Document. The consultant will prepare drafts of the zoning ordinance, including graphics for review by staff, culminating in a final version to be presented to and acted upon by the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council.
- Integration of the New Code into User-Friendly Formats. The consultant will work with City staff and/or its selected consultant to make the new interactive code accessible to the public.
- Staff Training. The consultant shall provide resources to assist City staff with implementation of the new code through a 'start-up' period not to exceed one year.

Timeline and Payment. Funds for the project have been included in the City's budget for both 2019 and 2020. Therefore, the schedule for the project will extend into 2020. Based on current fund allocation, staff anticipates a significant portion of the project will occur in 2019. Payment is anticipated to be based upon monthly invoices documenting time and reimbursable expenses of each team member in accordance with the proposed fee schedule and a total "Not to Exceed" amount, to be determined at a later date.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Responses to the RFQ must include four (4) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy on a USB flash drive. Complete submittals must be received by the City **no later than 4:30 PM August 12, 2019.**

Submittals and questions should be directed to:

City Planner Jason Lindahl, AICP
City of Hopkins
1010 First Street South
Hopkins, MN 55343
jlindahl@Hopkinsmn.com
952-548-9342

Submittals must include following items, along with other relevant materials, to demonstrate consultant's expertise and capability.

- Description of Approach: A brief written description of the consultant's approach to the project. Up to two pages describing the consultant's typical approach to similar projects, including the nature of the public process, intended extent of public involvement and the role of City staff in the process.
- Team Expertise: The expertise of the team assembled by consultant to carry out the work. Brief description of general qualifications, the multi-disciplinary nature of the team assembled for this project, specific evidence of relevant experience creating hybrid codes, and a listing of key personnel that would be available to work on this project.
- Comparable Projects: A list of comparable projects undertaken by consultant and/or team members. Summary of hybrid code projects in progress or completed, with the following information for each code:
 - Reference name and current contact information.
 - Current status of code (drafting in progress; drafting completed; adopted).
 - Nature of public involvement in formulation of code.
 - Client type (clarifying role of private sector client, if any).
 - Was the vision plan created as part of this process, or done separately?
 - Size and scale of geographic area.
 - Type of community (Urban Center, Urban, Suburban, or free standing growth center).
 - Type of code (Traditional Euclidean, form-based, hybrid or overlay).
- Sample Code Document: A copy of at least one municipal hybrid code previously created by the consultant and adopted into law. Please include one or more sample code documents selected from the list of comparable projects above. If this document is the code as originally proposed by consultant, please also include the code as formally adopted by the municipality and a brief explanation of differences between the two. Photos of designed or built results of the code are encouraged but must be accompanied by a description of their specific relationship to the code.

EVALUATION OF SUBMITTAL

Proposals will be reviewed by a Selection Committee that will evaluate each proposal according to the selection criteria detailed below. Interviews may be requested with one or more firms responding to the RFQ. Award of this contract, if any, will be to the firm deemed best qualified, in accordance with the selection criteria, to perform the services outlined in this RFQ and other services as deemed necessary by the City. Pricing, while an important factor, will be only one criterion used to evaluate the responses to the RFQ. Consultants responding to this RFQ must demonstrate the following:

- Experience in preparing municipal hybrid codes that regulate development and redevelopment in other communities.
- Experience in building community consensus to support innovative regulatory structures.
- Strong graphic skills.
- Strong skills in written and oral communication.
- Experience in identifying, evaluating, codifying, and explaining the essential qualities of community design and character.
- Experience in writing or implementing municipal land development regulations.

The City of Hopkins will evaluate all submittals to determine which consultants have the experience and qualifications best suited for this project. The City of Hopkins may also request the highest-ranked consultants to submit a more detailed proposals and/or present their proposal to City staff.

Other Considerations. The City of Hopkins reserves the right to amend, withdraw, and/or cancel this RFQ. The City reserves the right, without qualification, to reject any or all responses to this RFQ at any time prior to entering into an agreement for professional services with the selected team. The City reserves the right to request or obtain additional information about any and all submittals.

LINKS TO RESOURCE MATERIALS

[2040 Comprehensive Plan Update – Cultivate Hopkins](#)

[Chapter 5 of the City Code: Planning & Land Use Regulations](#)

[Southwest LRT Station Area Planning Information](#)

[Shady Oak Station Area Development Strategy](#)