



Community Visioning  
and  
Comprehensive Plan Update



City of Grand Marais, Minnesota

**Grand Marais** is searching for a qualified partner to assist with a public visioning project for the community, and to update the comprehensive plan.

The City of Grand Marais intends to select a consultant and enter into a Scope of Services agreement for the facilitation of the visioning project and completion of the comprehensive plan and zoning update.

## **Background**

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The City of Grand Marais is poised for a significant effort in community visioning. The current [comprehensive plan](#) was created in 1992. This document was updated in the late 1990's. Recent visioning and planning efforts include the Downtown Visioning project in 2006, a Park Master Plan in 2009, and City/County [Energy Plan](#) in 2012, and a [Highway 61](#) concept design process in 2014.

The Downtown visioning project included extensive public involvement including surveys, walking tours, focus groups, and open houses. A new comprehensive plan section was created, and zoning regulations were amended.

The Park master plan used similar input strategies, and also included listening sessions where individuals and interest groups were invited to present ideas to the Park board for inclusion in the plan. The plan generated goals for the park property and a concept for the future development of the park property.

The energy plan creation was led by the local non-profit Cook County Local Energy Project (CCLEP) as a joint policy document for the City and Cook County. CCLEP is the organization that maintains the plan and works on development. The plan has led to building efficiency upgrades, public education on energy efficiency, and study of public energy projects including biomass fueled district heat and community solar. The City is currently a Greenstep City.

The Highway 61 project included a new partner in public policy-making—the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic. The clinic, through the Statewide Health Improvement Project, convened an Active Living Steering Committee including partners in the School district, County, City, Grand Portage, and citizens. The Active Living partnership has been working on public policy and improvements to make it possible for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes to be active in the routine of their daily lives. One result is that City is currently recognized as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Cyclists. The partnership was successful in obtaining a significant grant through Blue Cross Blue Shield that led to the creation of [Moving Matters](#). One of the feature efforts of Moving Matters was the Highway 61 redesign project. The concept of Highway 61 redesign was to create a public-driven preferred vision of what Highway 61 and connected spaces should be. With the assistance of Moving Matters, the City was able to greatly increase its public participation through excellent marketing, many smaller interactions with groups and individuals, and effective web presence. The City conducted a Health Impact Assessment for the project, and began to appreciate the importance of health in community planning. Prior to the project, MnDot did not have Grand Marais on their improvement plan. Now there is a project scheduled for 2019.

In January of 2016, a development proposal to construct a Dollar General store along the commercial corridor entering town generated significant public comment. Much of the discussion focused on the inadequacy of the City's official controls to deal with the situation in an effective

manner. The City Council passed an interim ordinance in February that included a moratorium on retail development over 5,000 square feet in the C/I Service Commercial Industrial Zone.

Since the interim ordinance, the City Council has been discussing what level to address the issue: to deal with it in zoning, with comprehensive planning, or with community visioning. There is consensus that the time is right to discuss community vision, and let that be the guide to an update comprehensive plan and any potential changes in policy or controls.

## **Project Description**

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The City of Grand Marais desires to complete a community visioning process and comprehensive plan update. The City is committed to a community driven process, using various innovative methods to engage the public and other community stakeholders. Particular attention should be paid to including underserved and underrepresented groups, and those who do not normally participate in planning efforts. Various local resources are available to assist in providing a fine-grained approach to connect with the public. The expected outcomes are: (1) analyzing forces and trends that shape current and future community issues; (2) articulating core community values; (3) describing a community vision or visions based on the forces, trends, and community values; (4) determining the necessary components of a new Comprehensive Plan; (5) drafting a new comprehensive plan document, and (6) assisting in updating a specific section (C/I Service Commercial Industrial) of our zoning ordinance.

The Consultant should have extensive experience collaborating with local groups in the implementation of an inclusive process. In an effort use the consultant's time in an efficient manner, we anticipate this collaboration to include designing of input and engagement strategies and training local resources to conduct a significant portion of the strategies. The consultant is encouraged to experiment with large numbers of smaller tools rather than limited large methods. The engagement strategy should be fluid, changing as necessary to recognize tools that are working well versus underperforming. The consultant is also encouraged to involve the community in the creation of effective engagement tools. The City has set aside \$5,000 for an initiative where local groups are invited to design and produce engagement strategies. The top strategies will be granted a stipend and implemented. The consultant will assist in the selection of the winning strategies and will provide guidance in their implementation.

The City of Grand Marais is forming a citizen steering committee made up of representatives identified by the community as trusted and selected by the Council. They are not intended as representative of every interest group. This group will provide necessary guidance for the consultant in facilitating creation of the Grand Marais Community Vision and updating the Comprehensive Plan.

Consultants are encouraged to submit a core proposal that addresses the scope of work defined in this RFP. Consultant may also propose additive alternatives to the scope of work they believe will significantly improve the projects outcomes. In addition the consultant is encouraged to submit suggestions for cost savings and highlight any tradeoffs inherent in the cost saving alternatives. Both the core proposal and any additive alternatives should include a clear description of the work, reasoning for consideration, and a fee proposal.

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## Scope of Work

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The consultant team is free to design specific tasks and project management structure to accomplish the following expected outcomes:

**Project Management**—Produce the final products and accomplish the project outcomes. Work in close interaction with the Steering Committee, City Staff, City Officials, and other local resources. Attend meetings as necessary, develop materials, make presentations, and produce reports of key activities and findings. Keep a record of all activities and community engagements to clearly document the source and reasoning behind decisions, findings, and products.

**Engagement Strategy**—Develop a plan to engage, involve, and collaborate with the public and other stakeholders throughout the entire process. Work collaboratively with local resources to design portions of the engagement strategy. Guide, train, and otherwise enable local resources to conduct portions of the engagement strategy to allow for a finer grained approach. Ensure emphasis is placed on involving the underserved, underrepresented, and those who don't normally participate.

**Communication Plan**—Provide a plan to keep the public, key players, and other stakeholders informed regarding the project. Include marketing and other methods of publicity, media relations and key messages to increase recognition, build credibility, and deepen understanding of the project, its objectives, and outcomes within the community.

**Analysis**—Review and understand existing and previous plans. Compile and analyze data provided by the engagement strategy. Identify and analyze trends and forces shaping current and future community issues.

**Statement of Values and Community Vision**—Articulate a statement of core community values based on community involvement and designed to be used as a guide for decision making. Develop a community vision or visions based on the values and responding to the trends and forces analysis. The values and vision should include accompanying narrative explaining its development and other relevant information that can deepen understanding and create lasting value. The values and vision should be identifiably unique to this community.

**Comprehensive Plan Elements**—Identify the elements to be included in a new comprehensive plan for the community. These elements should be in direct response to the community values and vision, and provide a framework for goals and policies to guide the community towards its preferred vision. Elements need not include all chapters typically required in a comprehensive plan, but should rather focus on those areas where the community has identified a particular need, strength, call to action, desire to protect, or willingness to work.

**Comprehensive Plan Document**—Develop a comprehensive plan document consisting of the elements identified. This document should identify the strategies, goals, and policies necessary to move the community towards its identified vision. The document should provide sufficient guidance for the community to evaluate necessary changes in official controls, programs, and budget commitments. The plan should include accompanying narrative, stories, and anecdotes explaining its development and other relevant information that can deepen understanding and create lasting value.

**Zoning Update**—Assist in the preparation of zoning language amendments in response to the values, vision, and plan for a specific section (C/I Service Commercial Industrial) of our zoning ordinance. This update will address recent development ideas in a zone that the community has identified as needing an update. The update will serve as a model for the community to conduct further zoning amendments.

**Stewardship**—Recommend provisions for the community to maintain focus on the values, vision, and plan. Recommend a process for keeping the values, vision, and plan current and relevant as the community changes.

## **Proposal Format**

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### **I. Organization**

Provide the name, address, and contact information of the lead and primary contact for this project. List all of the firms proposed as project partners. List the name, position, qualifications and experience of individuals designated to work on this project.

### **II. Experience**

List and briefly describe at least five projects your team has completed in the past 10 years with requirements similar to those stated in this RFP. List the dates and locations of these projects. Provide references for each of these projects (contact name, organization/municipality, contact information).

### **III. Concept**

Briefly describe your concept for completing the project as described. A specific and detailed plan is not expected, as the City intends to develop a scope of work and budget with the successful consultant group.

### **IV. Timing**

Please indicate the resources you have available for this project, the date you can start, and a desired timetable for completion. The City encourages creative use of consultant time, especially on site, to complete the project in a timely manner.

### **V. Budget**

The City has significant resources designated for the success of this project. Indicate a range of budget your firm would recommend to complete the project as conceptualized. The City will negotiate a budget with the successful consultant group.

### **VI. Terms and Conditions**

- a. The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to negotiate a contract that is in the best interests of the City at the absolute and sole discretion of the City Council.

- b. The applicant must submit ten (10) bound copies and one electronic copy of the proposal to Mike Roth, City Administrator; 15 North Broadway Avenue; PO Box 600; Grand Marais, MN 55604, [cityhall@boreal.org](mailto:cityhall@boreal.org), no later than 4:00 pm Tuesday, May 24, 2016. All proposals must be signed by a duly authorized individual.
- c. All proposals shall become the property of the City. No public bid opening will be held.

## VII. Evaluation and Selection Process

The City Council will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- a. Demonstrated understanding of the requirements of this project.
- b. Experience and availability of the applicant.
- c. References provided by past and current clients of the applicant.
- d. Qualifications and expertise of the applicant.
- e. Resources of the applicant to conduct and complete this project in a satisfactory manner.
- f. Clarity and organization of the proposal.

Finalists will be selected and invited to discuss the project further with the City Council in late May and early June. The City Council will develop a scope of work and budget with the successful finalist.

The City will notify the applicants who have not been selected.

## VIII. Inquiries

Prospective service providers may submit questions by e-mail or telephone to:

**Mike Roth**, City Administrator  
City of Grand Marais  
PO Box 600  
15 North Broadway  
Grand Marais, Minnesota 55604

Email [cityhall@boreal.org](mailto:cityhall@boreal.org) Tel. (218) 387-1848

All responses to substantive questions will be in writing and provided to all parties receiving an RFP.