

Community Comprehensive Plan Charter Township of Elmwood, MI

Request for Proposals

1. Introduction.

The Charter Township of Elmwood hereby requests proposals from qualified planning professionals to assist in the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan (also known as a Master Plan) which was last updated in 2018, with a 2013 survey.

2. Submittal Requirements.

Sealed submittals marked “Elmwood Comprehensive Plan” must be delivered to Elmwood Township, 10090 E Lincoln Road, Traverse City, MI 49684 no later than **2:00 pm, April 18, 2024.**

Any questions concerning this RFP are to be directed to:

Sarah Clarren, Township Planner/Zoning Administrator
10090 E Lincoln Road, Traverse City, MI 49684
P: (231) 946-0921
E: planner@elmwoodmi.gov

Three (3) printed copies (double-sided preferred) with a flash drive of the proposal must be received via mail or hand delivery at the above address no later than 2:00 pm on April 18, 2024. Each proposal must be clearly marked on the outside envelope with “Elmwood Comprehensive Plan.” The Township may choose not to accept any RFP submittal by any method other than stated in the RFP. The Township reserves the right to cancel or modify this solicitation at any time. Faxed or electronic submissions will not be accepted.

The Township anticipates the Comprehensive Plan will take twelve (12) to sixteen (16) months to complete, from contract award to plan adoption, and is anticipated to begin in mid-May 2024. Sarah Clarren, Planner/Zoning Administrator will be the main contact for the project.

3. Community Background and Project Overview

The Charter Township of Elmwood is a proud community in Leelanau County. You’ll find Elmwood nestled along West Grand Traverse Bay, just north of Traverse City. The Township has a deep-rooted agricultural legacy with a strong desire to protect, but bolster farmlands and open space. Over the last decade there has been steady growth—in both the population as well as commercial developments. In recent years, the Township has witnessed a not so slow shift from serving as a bedroom community for Traverse City, to a destination to live, work, and play.

Although the Township has a true rural feel, in 2023 Elmwood Township became part of a newly established Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as relatively large portions of the Township were designated as Urban Areas in the 2020 US Census. More changes are imminent

in the coming years, especially along Elmwood’s growing M22 commercial corridor. In 2024, the Township will begin construction on the final phase of an extensive overhaul to the Township Marina. In 2025, MDOT will begin a long-anticipated construction project to completely rebuild M22 from M72 to Cherry Bend; this project is a massive reinvestment into the area as it includes rebuilding the road, addressing drainage issues, replacing sidewalk, and creating a 10’ trail along the bay. The corridor will continue with its fresh new look in late 2025 when Discovery Center & Pier is anticipated to break ground on the Traverse City Freshwater Research and Innovation Center, in collaboration with local universities and others.

Unsurprisingly, Elmwood Township also has its challenges. The cost and lack of housing stock is a growing issue in Elmwood (and the country at large). Like countless other communities, the population is getting older. Traffic is a constant issue and discussion topic. The Township also faces a constant balancing act between development, valuing traditional farming while promoting value-added opportunities, protection of open space, and population shifts.

With so many known changes and challenges in the works, the Township seeks a new Comprehensive Plan built on extensive public outreach and input to help guide the Township’s planning (and zoning changes) over the coming years as the Township continues to blossom. The existing plan is dated— although it was adopted in 2018, much of the text was the same as the original 1999 plan and the survey within the 2018 plan is from 2013.

The Consultant will assist the Township in developing and adopting a Comprehensive Plan that is consistent with the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act 33 of 2008 (Section 25.3807 Master plan; adoption, amendment, and implementation by local government). This includes, but is not limited to developing the following:

- (a) A land use plan that consists in part of a classification and allocation of land for agriculture, residences, commerce, industry, recreation, ways and grounds, subject to subsection (5), public transportation facilities, public buildings, schools, soil conservation, forests, woodlots, open space, wildlife refuges, and other uses and purposes.
- (b) Recommendations for implementing any of the Plan’s proposals, including specific recommendations on changes to the current Zoning Ordinance to allow for the successful implementation of any recommendations for future land use.
- (c) General location, character and extent of transportation, infrastructure, public utility systems, waterways and waterfront developments, facilities for flood prevention, drainage, pollution prevention, and maintenance of water levels, and other similar facilities within the Township.
- (d) Recommendations for changes to streets, open space, buildings, and utilities.

In addition to meeting general requirements of Comprehensive Plans, the Township desires the following additional key topic areas to be incorporated within its Plan:

- a. Housing. Explore opportunities to create more missing middle housing.
- b. Climate. Incorporate climate data throughout the Plan to ensure sustainable development.
- c. Connectivity and Multi-Modal Transit. Explore opportunities for enhancing public transportation, better road systems, and non-motorized transportation.

- d. Bridging Communities. Broad analysis of abutting communities' regulations and plans (i.e. Recreation Plans, Comprehensive Plans, etc.) and provide recommendations for aligning community needs and goals.
- e. Area Analysis. 1) Review existing commercial corridor along M22 as well as on Cherry Bend Rd and provide recommendations to improve blighted areas, parking and traffic issues, 2) Review data (i.e. soil, elevations, existing land use, etc.) and provide examples of areas that could be utilized as an Agricultural Protection Overlay District, coupled with recommendations on regulations within said District.

4. Scope of Services and Deliverables

The following professional planning services and general scope of work is anticipated. However, consultants are encouraged to expand on this description and to suggest alternative approaches they believe will better achieve the Township's objectives.

- a. **Public Participation.** The consultant shall specify how and when the public will be engaged throughout the planning process to address components listed in the project overview. At minimum, the Township seeks an extensive survey to be sent to all residents and business owners.
- b. **Project Orientation.** At the beginning of the project, the Consultant shall meet with Township Staff and the Planning Commission for a project orientation meeting. The meeting shall provide an understanding of project process, goals, and schedule.
- c. **Goals and Issue Identification.** The Consultant shall gather broad-based input to develop a vision for Elmwood, identify and orient toward the community's values and principles, and to address the key topic areas as well as requirements within MPEA. Data analysis shall be done on input that is obtained from the Township Board, Township Commissions, Committees, and Boards, Township Staff, nearby municipalities, the public, associated stakeholders, and others. This shall be done through outreach, including a minimum of two community visioning sessions to identify community assets, weaknesses, barriers, connections, and goals. Action items to reach identified goals shall be developed. Visual aids, including charts, tables, maps, etc. shall be created by the Consultant.
- d. **Draft Plan Document.** In consideration of the Township's vision, the consultant shall address the key topic areas in a draft Comprehensive Plan document. A minimum of one listening session or charette will be held on the draft document.
- e. **Revised Draft Plan Document.** Based on input on the draft plan document, the consultant shall create a revise the draft plan for public input.
- f. **Final Plan Document.** Following input from the second draft, the consultant shall prepare a final plan for adoption by the Planning Commission and the Township Board. Once approved, the consultant shall provide:
 - A minimum of 3 hard copies of final Comprehensive Plan documents including all color maps, graphs, charts, tables, pictures, or other graphic imagery.

- Electronic submission consisting of all plan elements in formats accessible to the Township (MS Office, mxd, shp, dwg, pdf, etc).
- All other data and information that has been collected through the process in digital format.
- All public participation materials including any survey results or other information in digital form (paper copies if applicable).

Timeline

The Township envisions the completion of the Plan in the following phases:

- Planning process introduction, gathering of existing data, preparation for outreach – late spring 2024 (3mos)
- Public visioning and outreach (i.e. survey, charettes, direct stakeholder outreach, etc) – Summer 2024 – December 2024 (3mos)
- Analysis and reporting – (i.e. demographics, mobility, land use/zoning) – winter 2025 (2mos)
- 1st Draft – spring 2025 (2 mos)
- Public meeting and listening session on draft plan – early summer 2025 (1mos)
- 2nd Draft, with 1-2 meetings and required notice – fall 2025 (3mos)
- Adoption & Recommended Implementation – December 2025

The Township is open to additional phases or other modifications to the anticipated phases.

5. Proposal Requirements

- a. Brief introduction to the firm.
- b. A work plan describing the precise scope of work to be undertaken, including an outlined approach for public engagement and how the consultant will interact with Township staff and the Planning Commission.
- c. A detailed project schedule/timeline, with projected milestones (see sample timeline above).
- d. A proposed table of contents, including above referenced elements the Township desires to be included in the Plan.
- e. Resumes of company personnel, including any subcontractors. Resumes should highlight work completed in comprehensive planning projects.
- f. Three (3) references from other municipalities that the firm has prepared comprehensive plans for, with links to said plans.
- g. Disclosure of any competing interest or potential conflicts of interest in the Township including consultant’s work for persons who own land or have development interest in the Township.
- h. Proposed fees for performing the services in the proposal. Describe any modifications you would recommend to the general work scope described in this request for proposal and the impact of those modifications on your fee proposal. Fees shall be stated as a total not-to-exceed fee for the services outlined, based on the hourly billing rates of the staff that would serve the Township, together with any added reimbursable costs for such expenses as printing, mileage, data or sub-consultant. Also include an hourly rate for any items beyond the project scope that may be added by mutual agreement.

Elmwood Charter Township shall not be liable for any costs incurred by consultant in responding to this request for proposal/request for qualification.

6. Evaluation and Consultant Selection

- A. A selection committee consisting of Township Staff, a member of the Planning Commission and a member of the Township Board will review the submitted proposals. The proposals will be evaluated on the overall qualifications, experience, and competence of the consultant and staff, prior experience in similar projects, experience in handling public relations and public participation, a check of references, understanding of the project, proposed project approach, proposed budget, and interview.
- B. A short list of consultants will be selected for interviews and virtual interviews will be entertained.
- C. After the interviews, the committee will present a recommendation to the Township Board for final approval.
- D. Once a consultant has been selected contract negotiations will commence.
- E. The Township has the right to reject any and all submittals, waive any irregularities, re-issue all or part of this RFP and not award any contract, all at its discretion and without penalty.

7. Conditions and Limitations

- A. Proposals that do not include all the submittal requirements outlined herein may not be considered.
- B. At the Township's sole discretion, the Township may choose to republish this RFP.
- C. Until such time the professional services agreement is executed, there are no express or implied obligations or commitments on the part of either the Township or the Consultant concerning either this RFP or any proposal associated with it.
- D. At the Township's sole discretion and with notice being provided to the Consultants, the Township may amend the Selection Process and/or Tentative Project Schedule at any time.
- E. If warranted, any updates, revisions or modifications to this RFP shall be posted on the Township of Elmwood's website during the advertising period, and it shall be the responsibility of the Consultant to review the website during the advertising period to verify if any such updates, revisions or modifications have been made to this RFP.
- F. The selection of a Consultant and the execution of a contract, while anticipated, is not guaranteed by the Township and the Township reserves the right to determine which proposal represents the Township's best interest and to award the contract on that basis.
- G. The Township Board will consider the final contract for award to the selected Consultant.
- H. Proposals submitted to the Township are a matter of public record and may become public in the future through the review and selection process or through data requests made by the public. By submitting materials for the Township's consideration pursuant to this RFP, the Consultant is waiving any claim of confidentiality, trade secrets or privilege with respect to materials submitted.