

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR Planning Services to Support Redevelopment of Eastern Gateway District

I. Introduction and Advertisement

The Town of Reading ("The Town") is positioned for significant redevelopment opportunities within several of its priority development areas, as detailed within its [Economic Development Action Plan](#). To date, considerable focus has been made towards Reading's "Eastern Gateway District", which comprises an expansive industrial and commercial area with a patchwork of property ownership and uses. The goal of redeveloping this district is to increase connectivity to Reading's Downtown District while promoting growth within Reading's commercial and industrial tax base and for the provision of additional, dense, and affordable housing.

The Town, acting through its Public Services Department, is seeking proposals from consultants and qualified firms to perform design and planning of redevelopment scenarios at the Eastern Gateway District and as specified by the project scope detailed within this proposal. The Town of Reading requests proposals from qualified consultants based on the scope of work outlined within this solicitation.

This work is funded by a grant award under the State of Massachusetts' Office of Economic Development and Housing through the Community One Stop for Growth "Community Planning" grant program.

The successful firm in this RFP process will have a broad range of experiences working with municipal governments and practical experience in the zoning, planning, transportation planning, and associated stakeholder engagement for redevelopment of both public and private land. A committee will evaluate all submissions before the opening of price proposals. The contract will be awarded to the firm that provides the most advantageous proposal based on the technical and price proposals.

The Town of Reading reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive any minor informality in the proposal process, and accept the proposal deemed to be in the Town's best interest.

II. Instructions to Vendors

A. General

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with MGL c.30B to the Town's Procurement Town Procurement Officer:

Jayne Wellman
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867

All bids must be submitted as physical copies, and all submissions are **due by Wednesday, May 29, 2024, at 2:00 PM.**

Proposals must consist of two parts:

1. A technical proposal that shall include all information responsive to this RFP except price,
2. Price Proposal.

Technical and Price Proposals should be submitted in separate sealed envelopes. A Technical Proposal which includes Price Proposal information may be rejected as non-responsive.

EMAIL AND FAXED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

B. Submission of Proposals

Vendors should submit four (4) paper copies of the Technical Proposal and one (1) original copy of the Price Proposal in separate sealed envelopes, plainly marked:

“Technical Proposal” – Planning Services to Support Redevelopment of Eastern Gateway District RFP And

“Price Proposal” – Planning Services to Support Redevelopment of Eastern Gateway District RFP.

Part IV of this solicitation provides a Scope of Services and outlines the Town’s minimum requirements for vendors to address in their proposals.

All proposals should be clear in the specific tasks, hours, costs, schedule, and responsibilities (consultant vs. Town Staff) for each component in the Scope of Work.

C. Technical Proposal

- A work plan describing strategies, roles, responsibilities, and methodologies of how the Scope of Services items will be completed.
- A detailed description of the deliverables and outcomes.
- Timeline for all plans.
- Detailed timeframe for completion of the project that will be part of the contractual agreement.

D. Price Proposal

- Identify the cost for each task in the Scope of Services.
- Include the number of staff needed to complete each task and the total cost.
- Additional costs/charges (i.e., travel expenses) must be defined in the proposal.
- A final summary of costs, broken down by task, staff person, components, optional work, taxes, etc.

E. Questions

Inquires involving procedural and technical matters should be submitted in writing on Wednesday May 15, 2024, by 12:00PM, in writing or via email to:

Jayne Wellman
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867
Email: Purchasing@ci.reading.ma.us

Addenda will be emailed to every vendor on record as having received a copy of the RFP Documents. If you have downloaded the RFP from the internet, you must make your company known to the Town by emailing your company's name, address, phone, and email to purchasing@ci.reading.ma.us

Copies of the addenda will be made available for inspection on the Town's website. It is the vendor's sole responsibility to ensure that it has received all addenda before the RFP submittal date.

F. Proposal and Acceptance

The Town will give notice of the acceptance of the selected proposal and intention to award a contract by emailing the selected vendor within 48 hours of the completion of the evaluation committee's meeting. A contract will be sent to the selected vendor within five (5) business days, which will need to be signed and returned for ratification.

G. Procurement Timeline

RFP Released:	Wednesday, May 1, 2024, at 9:00AM
Questions Due:	Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 12:00PM
Addenda w/Answers:	Wednesday May 22, 2024, at 2:00PM
Proposal Submittal:	Wednesday May 29, 2024, at 2:00PM

III. Background

The Town of Reading requested and received funding from the Community One Stop for Growth program to conduct a redevelopment study of Reading's Eastern Gateway District, including the Reading Municipal Light Department campus and One General Way. The One General Way Shopping Plaza and adjacent parcels, along with the Reading Municipal Light Department campus, comprise a significant portion of the redevelopment opportunity district known as Reading's Eastern Gateway District. The One General Way Shopping Plaza contains a mix of commercial spaces with significant vacancies and a great deal of underutilized surface parking, while the Reading Municipal Light Department campus and surrounding uses are predominately industrial and commercial, with a mix of underutilized properties and active business uses. Through a rigorous review and planning effort to adapt infrastructure and zoning, we believe we can unlock mixed-use redevelopment opportunities within these areas.

Much of the Reading Municipal Light Department campus visioning, as well as the redevelopment opportunities of the Eastern Gateway, are outlined within the [Eastern Gateway Initiative](#) deliverables and Reading's [Economic Development Action Plan](#), respectively.

This Request for Proposals and associated Scope of Services is meant to further extend the study of these redevelopment alternatives, conduct stakeholder engagement, and generate deliverables that will attract developer interest and assist the Reading Municipal Light Department and private property owners in thinking through strategic redevelopment of their properties.

IV. Scope of Services

The Town seeks proposals from qualified firms to conduct a range of services.

The project is estimated to take **12 to 16 months** to complete and should **not exceed \$150,000**.

Project Goals

- Provide the Town of Reading and key stakeholders with planning alternatives for the redevelopment of Reading's Eastern Gateway District, primarily the area within the Town's existing Industrial Zoning District and specifically south/west of Walkers Brook Drive.
- Include zoning, transportation, and development planning concepts and exhibits for a consolidation or relocation of the Reading Municipal Light Department.

- Include zoning, transportation, and development planning concepts for One General Way, in accordance with objectives set forth in the Town of Reading's Economic Development Action Plan, 2015-2022 and Eastern Gateway District initiatives.

Task 1.0 Existing Conditions Analysis

The consultant will:

- Hold initial meetings with the Community Development Director and the Reading Municipal Light Department, as well as associated staff, to discuss the activities and events that led to the creation of this focus area, while refining the scope of work with Town staff.
- Review documents, including plans, and conduct a tour of the public infrastructure and private properties.
- Document sites with photographs and urban design sketches and diagrams.
- Meet with staff and a stakeholder committee to define an appropriate outreach strategy.
- Evaluate the impacts of wetland jurisdictional areas, flood risk, investigate flood mitigation strategies and other climate related challenges to the areas.
- Prepare a draft narrative that summarizes the area's character, development patterns, historic resources, and existing conditions within the Eastern gateway District.
- **Deliverables** may include: a summary of collected materials; compilation and updating of base maps to reflect recently permitting projects and proposals; local and national transit-oriented-development precedent case studies; and materials for an initial meeting with area stakeholders.

Task 2.0 Zoning Analysis

The consultant will:

- Prepare a draft narrative that summarizes and provides a diagnostic of Reading's existing zoning within the Eastern Gateway District and surrounding districts.
- Prepare a draft narrative that discusses ongoing development patterns and historic resources, including how housing Affordability Restrictions may play a role in development patterns.
- Draft recommendations that address site planning, transitions between new development and surrounding neighborhoods, building design, massing and scale, streetscape interface, landscaping, and public spaces.
- Prepare preliminary presentation and aspects of the zoning that warrant updates.
- Coordinate with the Reading Select Board and RMLD leadership to explore conceptual design options for a consolidation of their campus into a vertical, mixed-use building and alternate uses for the RMLD site.
- **Deliverables** may include: a draft memo of Zoning Diagnostic that includes photographs, maps, illustrations, and narratives; demonstration of the impacts of Design Guidelines and potential modifications if the zoning were to be amended; Focus Group Meetings (RMLD, property owners, abutters, businesses, environmental groups).

Task 3.0 Buildout, Open Space, and Connectivity Analysis

The consultant will:

- Prepare an electronic survey to elicit feedback that is not easily obtained through focus groups or larger group meetings.

- Create 3D massing computer model to gauge development potential and site organization, establish corridor and spatial relationships to adjoining areas and develop base maps of new development parcels.
- Prepare initial presentation about development alternatives that address site capacity, transitions between new development and existing neighborhoods, building massing and scale, streetscape interface, landscape, and open space.
- Incorporate zoning diagnostic and potential changes that will better reflect the community vision.

Deliverables may include: buildout scenarios for the focus area within the Eastern Gateway District that introduce new streets, open spaces and development pads based on a range of densities for priority sites; establish planning principles that reflect the stakeholder and Town vision and includes photographs, maps, illustrations, and narrative descriptions; Test Case Scenarios of build out potential under a range of densities.

Task 4.0 Reading Municipal Light Department Campus Consolidation Visioning

The consultant will:

- Perform Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD) alternative massing studies, under two scenarios: (1) RMLD stays within the Eastern Gateway District and (2) RMLD leaves the Eastern Gateway District and frees up additional redevelopment potential.
- Review of RMLD materials related to employee growth projections and spatial needs of a newly constructed RMLD campus.
- Create architectural schematic designs for the consolidation of Reading Municipal Light Department's campus, including logistical and transportation planning with adjacent properties.

Deliverables may include: full architectural schematic designs of a new RMLD campus and building; narratives explaining the redevelopment potential under both scenarios described above; and recommendations to RMLD regarding the marketing of leftover, re-developable land areas to attract developer interest and potential sale of vacant properties and land.

Task 5.0 Preferred Alternatives and Recommendations

The consultant will:

- Prepare final buildout plans for the sites with a matrix of development capacities.
- Hold a forum with stakeholders and property owners with media/content to explain recommendations and build out scenarios.
- Draft zoning language that can be brought before the Community Development Planning Commission and/or the Select Board for feedback on focus area alternatives.
- Provide options for future printing and distribution of marketing materials for the redevelopment area.

Deliverables may include: materials for stakeholder, CPDC, and Selectboard meetings; Summary Memorandum and documentation for updates to the Eastern Gateway District initiative; Final Study Document.

Project Timeline

The Town will solicit bids from consultants/organizations beginning in May 2024. The Assistant Town Manager, Community Development Director, and Senior Planners will review submitted proposals. The winning bid will be referred to the Town Manager's Office/Purchasing Department to finalize the contract. The work of the zoning, civil and schematic analyses is scheduled to begin in June 2024.

V. Performance Timeline

The selected vendor must be ready to commence project work within fourteen (14) calendar days of the final contract being signed. Any deviation from this schedule must be clearly stated in the vendor's response to this proposal. Any delay to start should be mutually agreed upon between the parties.

VI. Evaluation and Selection Process

There will be no public opening of submitted proposals. Following the deadline for receipt of proposals, the Procurement Officer will open the Technical Proposals and prepare a register of those submitted firms, which shall be available for public inspection. All proposal contents shall be confidential until the evaluation is final, and an award has been made.

Technical Proposals shall be evaluated by a Committee, which will follow the criteria contained herein. Proposals that do not demonstrate the Minimum Criteria outlined in Part VII may be rejected as non-responsive. All proposals that meet the Minimum Criteria will be evaluated based on the Comparative Criteria outlined in Part VII.

Upon completion of the evaluation of responsive proposals, the Price Proposals will be opened, after which the Town will determine which proposal is the most advantageous. Taking into consideration cost and evaluated criteria. The Town reserves the right to reject any proposals and award a contract as determined to be in the Town's and community stakeholders' best interest.

VII. Minimum Evaluation Criteria

The RFP Minimum Criteria are as follows:

- A. The proposer must demonstrate experience in the areas outlined in the scope of services.
- B. The proposer must demonstrate that it has worked with public and/or private sector development.
- C. The proposer must demonstrate knowledge and experience with zoning, transportation planning, and redevelopment proposals.
- D. The proposer must possess adequate experience, staff, and any necessary sub-consultants to effectively deal with project goals and objectives.

VIII. Comparative Evaluation Criteria

Proposals from vendors who meet or exceed the Minimum Criteria will be evaluated and rated based on the following Comparative Criteria. The Town reserves the right to ask any proposer to provide additional supporting documentation to verify its response.

Ratings of Highly Advantageous (HA), Advantageous (A), Not Advantageous (NA), or Unacceptable (U) will be given to each of the following criteria for each respondent. A composite rating will then be determined. To the extent that a Comparative Criterion requires the certification of fact, the proposer's certification as to that fact shall be provided in the response, however, upon request from the Town additional evidence will be provided.

The Comparative Criteria are as follows:

- A. Experience
 - Highly Advantageous: Consultant has substantial prior experience in work related to the project scope.
 - Advantageous: Consultant has adequate experience in work related to the project scope.
 - Not Advantageous: Consultant has minimal experience in work related to the project scope.

- Unacceptable: No prior experience.
- B. Staffing/Resources
- Highly Advantageous: Consultant can provide staff support who have demonstrated excellent work related to the project scope.
 - Advantageous: Consultant provides staff who demonstrate competency in work related to the project scope.
 - Not Advantageous: Consultant provides staff support who have not demonstrated excellence or competency in work related to corridor redesigns for Municipalities and/or other entities.
 - Unacceptable: Consultant does not have staff familiar with work related to the project scope.
- C. Prior Completed Planning & Redevelopment Efforts
- Highly Advantageous: Consultant has completed a substantial number of planning and redevelopment scenarios for Municipalities and/or other entities.
 - Advantageous: Consultant has completed an adequate number of planning and redevelopment scenarios for Municipalities and/or other entities.
 - Not Advantageous: Consultant has completed a minimal number of planning and redevelopment scenarios for Municipalities and/or other entities.
 - Unacceptable: Consultant has not completed any prior planning and redevelopment scenarios for Municipalities and/or other entities.
- D. Plan of Services, Staff, and Availability
- Highly Advantageous: Consultant has a well-defined Plan of Service and a clear action strategy, along with specific staff availability and a schedule and timeline of the work.
 - Advantageous: Consultant has a sufficiently defined Plan of Service and an adequate strategy, along with specific staff availability and a schedule and timeline of the work.
 - Not Advantageous: Consultant has an inadequately defined Plan of Service.
 - Unacceptable: Consultant does not submit a plan of service.
- E. References
- Highly Advantageous: Vendor provides multiple references from previous similar projects.
 - Advantageous: Vendor provides limited references from previous similar projects.
 - Not Advantageous: Vendor provides inadequate references from previous similar projects.
 - Unacceptable: Vendor does not provide references.

IX. Rule for Award

This contract will be awarded to the proposer deemed by the evaluation committee and Procurement Officer to have submitted the most advantageous proposal, taking into consideration the price and non-price proposals. The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals as determined to be in the best interest of the Town, the School Department, and their stakeholders.