

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



## VILLAGE OF LAWTON MASTER PLAN

# Introduction

The Village of Lawton is requesting proposals from qualified consultants to assist the community in creating a new Master Plan. The Village is seeking a consultant to develop a visionary master plan, based on comprehensive public engagement. The Village will accept proposals until **4:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 7, 2021.**

## Community Overview

The Village of Lawton is a General Law Village approximately 2.3 square miles in area in Southwest Michigan within Van Buren County. Lawton is home to approximately 1,805 residents, down 5% from the 2010 census. Lawton is located on M-40, a State Highway that runs North/South. It is three miles south of I-94 a federal Highway. These two main transportation arteries give Lawton easy access to more populated urban amenities while maintaining its individual small-town identity.

Historically, Lawton was first identified as a village in 1853, and officially incorporated on November 3, 1858. Its wonderfully rich soils made it perfect for growing grains and fruits, making Lawton renowned for its vineyards and harvests. Today, Lawton is home to the oldest standing winery and remains a premier grape growing area in the Midwest.

Lawton is a desirable place to live with historic small-town charm. The Downtown District is the heart of the community. It is regionally known for its fine dining establishments and a premier microbrewery. In addition to outstanding dining options, downtown is home to several service industries and some shopping. Welch's Foods is a large industrial grape cooperative, producing tens of thousands of gallons of sparkling juices each year in downtown Lawton.

Lawton enjoys a picturesque hilly topography that is characteristic of vineyards. The slopes of the hills are gently rolling and are very inviting for outdoor activities like hiking or snowmobiling. Lawton is one of the few communities in Michigan that allow snowmobiles to drive on local streets. Additionally, Lawton is surrounded by many lakes which are a draw for in and out of state visitors who enjoy these waters for fishing, swimming, and skiing. There are over 3,000 homes held for seasonal or vacation uses. Many out of state residents own summer houses in the lakes area surrounding Lawton.

Lawton is a bedroom community. Most people use their personal vehicle to drive to and from work. People can easily commute to larger metropolitan areas for work and still have a lifestyle that is not available in larger employment centers. The Village of Lawton is comprised of many different types of building and land uses. Housing is primarily single- or two-family homes with a multi-unit apartment complex that is subsidized and provides affordable housing as well as a subsidized senior apartment complex. 33% of households are renter occupied.

## Staff

The Lawton Village Manager will serve as the point of contact for the Village. The Village anticipates that members of the Village's Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority and Village Council will play roles in the process by guiding and supporting the project through a series of public updates, discussions, and public engagement opportunities.

## Plan Objectives

The objective for the Village of Lawton Master Plan is to establish a community vision through public engagement and identify how to implement that vision. The plan will be an essential document that guides future development throughout the community, adding predictability and community support to the development process.

## Plan Expectations

- ✓ The master plan will reflect the community's desired direction for the future.
  - ✓ The master plan will identify strategies for priority redevelopment areas.
  - ✓ The master plan will address land use and infrastructure, including complete streets.
  - ✓ The master plan will include an updated zoning plan.
  - ✓ The master plan will establish goals, implementation actions, timelines and responsible parties.
  - ✓ The master plan will be accessible online.
  - ✓ Progress on master plan implementation will be assessed annually.
1. Conduct in-depth public engagement to gather input from residents, businesses and property owners, Village Council, Planning Commission and administrative staff, such as design charettes, community-wide survey(s), town hall meetings, focus groups, social media engagement, etc.
  2. Incorporate current planning documents where relevant: 2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Downtown Road Map for the Future, and the Capital Improvement Plan.
  3. Create a vision for what Lawton Village will look like in the future, including clear direction of how and where development/re-development should occur over the next 5, 10, 15, and 20 years.
  4. Evaluate existing goals and objectives, explore implications of aging population, consider change in public opinion, review land use designations, and address regional changes.
  5. Determine a specific implementation plan for immediate, short- and long-term goals and responsible parties.

## Scope of Work

With assistance from Village Staff, the selected consultant will develop a Master Plan. The consultant will develop a final deliverable that should include the following:

- **Drafting the Document:** The consultant will prepare the Draft Master Plan, including graphics, for review by staff and the Planning Commission, culminating in a final version to be acted upon by the Village Planning Commission and the Village Council.

- **User-Friendly Format:** The consultant will work with Village staff as well as its information technology vendors to make the Master Plan accessible to the public, simplifying and clarifying as much as possible where necessary. Hyperlinks in electronic version are preferred.
- **Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC):** The Master Plan must be compliant with the Redevelopment Ready Communities Certified Communities format. The Master Plan should incorporate all RRC Best Practices.
- **Important Components:** The Master Plan should specifically address:
  - ✓ **Redevelopment Strategy**
  - ✓ **Housing and Neighborhoods**
  - ✓ **Downtown Plan that incorporates the current Downtown Roadmap to the Future**
  - ✓ **Economic Development and Marketing Strategy**
- **Zoning Ordinance Review and Update:** The Village feels that a zoning ordinance review/amendment could be productive as part of the master plan. Please include an alternate price to incorporate a zoning ordinance review / amendment as part of the overall project.
- **Residential Target Market Analysis:** As an additional section to augment the Master Plan, the Village would also like an alternate price to conduct a Target Market Analysis for housing.
- **Updated Maps:** The consultant will provide updated zoning and land use maps.
- **Project Schedule:** The consultant provides the Village an anticipated schedule and timeline for the above work to be completed within twelve (12) months of contract execution.

## Selection Criteria

The Village shall select finalists from the complete proposals received before the deadline. The Village may ask finalists to present their proposals in person before final selection. Final decisions in awarding a contract will be based on the following criteria.

1. Specialized experience of firm and related experience on projects of similar scope.
2. Qualifications, references, and capability of key staff members.
3. Project approach including team organization, structure, and schedule
4. Understanding of project objectives
5. Quality and completeness of proposal
6. Demonstrated experience and creativity conducting a public engagement strategy to produce positive outcomes.
7. Reasonableness of project cost, as well as proven track record of projects staying within original budget

# Proposal Requirements

Proposals should contain the following information:

1. **Letter of Interest** – Cover letter indicating interest in the project and identifying the firm’s ability to provide services needed.
2. **Introduction** – A brief description of the firm including the number of years the firm has been in existence, range of professional services, office locations, and staff size.
3. **Work Program** – In the project overview, describe the general project approach and process to be employed, describe a process approach that was used in the past to successfully complete similar projects, describe the proposed project schedule including timeline of major milestones, deliverables, and completion.
4. **Experience and Qualifications** – A brief description of the firm’s prior work relevant to this RFP including the name, address, and phone number of client references and the primary contact persons. Please note experience with incorporating RRC practices.
5. **Consultant Personnel** – Identify individuals from the firm’s professionals and others who will work on the project along with a brief summary of the individual and their experience.
6. **List of Clients** – Provide a list of comparable clients for which similar services have been provided in addition to their contact information.
7. **Timeframe Flow Chart** – Submit a flow chart with estimated project timeframe for meeting important project targets. Project timeline should be complete within 12 months of contract approval.
8. **Estimated Costs** – Submit cost estimates for each task associated with preparation of the Master Plan and overall completion, including specific alternates to review and/or amend the current zoning ordinance and conduct a Residential Target Market Analysis.

## Inquiries

All requests for clarifications or interpretations shall be made in writing and emailed to [ImusL@LawtonMI.gov](mailto:ImusL@LawtonMI.gov). Inquiries shall contain the firm’s name, contact person, email address and phone number and be titled "Master Plan – RFP." Deadline for inquiries is September 29th, 2021 @ 4:00 pm EST.

## Submittal and Schedule

1. Applicants shall submit proposals and projected costs in separate documents. Submit all required materials as detailed in the Proposal Requirements section. Include **one (1) unbound original, five (5) bound copies, and one (1) flash-drive containing searchable and editable electronic versions compatible with Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat. All submissions should be submitted to:**

**Village of Lawton**  
**Master Plan Request for Proposals**  
**125 S Main Street**  
**PO Box 367**  
**Lawton, MI 49063**

2. Please take note that two alternates to the bid have been requested, one for a zoning ordinance review / update and a second for a Residential Target Market Analysis
3. Submit proposal no later than **4:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 7, 2021** in a sealed package clearly marked as indicated:

**COMPANY/FIRM NAME**  
**"2021 VILLAGE OF LAWTON MASTER PLAN REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS"**

4. Proposals shall be opened and identified at **4:15 p.m. on Thursday, October 7, 2021** at Village Hall.
5. The following preliminary schedule has been established:
  - **ADVERTISE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) - September 8, 2021**
  - **QUESTION PERIOD DEADLINE September 29, 2021 - 4:00 PM**
  - **RFP SUBMITTAL DEADLINE October 7, 2021 - 4:00 PM**
  - **RFP OPENING October 7, 2021 - 4:15 PM**
  - **INTERVIEWS OF SELECTED FIRMS BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION & VILLAGE COUNCIL will be held on Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM**
  - **AWARD OF CONTRACT BY VILLAGE COUNCIL - October 26, 2021**
6. The Village reserves the right to reject any or all responses to this RFP, to advertise for new RFP responses, or to accept any RFP response deemed to be in the best interest of the Village. The Village reserves the right to use its staff to complete a portion or portions of the described activity and to negotiate rates per activity after bids have been received. A response to this RFP should not be construed as a contract, nor indicate a commitment of any kind.