

Request for Proposal

Update of the Comprehensive Plan and Amendments to the Village Zoning Code Village of Dobbs Ferry, New York

SUBMITTAL DUE DATE: March 16, 2020 5:00pm EST, Monday

SUBMITTAL LOCATION:

Village of Dobbs Ferry
c/o Village Administrator
112 Main Street, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. 10522
cindelicato@dobbsferry.com
Phone: 914 231-8502

Project Description

The objective is to engage the professional services of qualified planning consultants to review the Village's Comprehensive Plan (previously referred to as the Vision Plan) to determine what amendments may be deemed necessary and appropriate at this point in time—approximately ten years after its adoption. The Village seeks a statement of qualifications from a consulting service team that is professionally capable, and has similar experience as requested herein, that will assist in the review and update of the Comprehensive Plan that will guide economic development, while protecting and preserving important elements of the Village's unique character along the Hudson River. The project methodology must include a thorough and collaborative effort that engages a variety of stakeholders. The process will culminate in an integrated document that reflects the needs and desires of the community and helps direct future decision-making as it relates to the orderly growth, revitalization, and sustainable development of the Village and outlines a plan for achieving the goals. The purpose of this RFP is to explore options including the qualifications, experience, recommended methodology, and cost of services.

Background About the Village of Dobbs Ferry

The Village of Dobbs Ferry is located on the east shoreline of the Hudson River in the southwestern corner of Westchester County within viewing distance of Manhattan. The Village has a total land area of 3.2 square miles, with 2.4 square miles net of the 0.8 area that is in the river. The last estimate of population was in 2016, when it was calculated to be approximately 11,093 residents. While Dobbs Ferry is considered a relatively affluent community, with an average household income of \$113,062 when the average in New York State is \$64,894 and the average in Westchester County is \$89,960, it is also sufficiently diverse so that when HUD identified 31 of the municipalities in Westchester County as being insufficiently diverse Dobbs Ferry was not one of them.

Dobbs Ferry is well situated, accessible to the rest of Westchester County, New York City, and the region. It is served for regional vehicular transportation by the New York Thruway (87), the Cross-County Expressway (287), and the Saw Mill River Parkway. Broadway traverses Dobbs Ferry north/south and connects the Village to the southern tip of Manhattan and, as Route 9, to Canada. Ashford Avenue traverses the Village east/west and, as it becomes Ardsley Avenue, connects Dobbs Ferry to Central Avenue just north of Yonkers and to Route 22 in Scarsdale.

Dobbs Ferry also has its own train station for the MTA's Metro North Railroad Hudson line, which connects to Grand Central Station and to Amtrak. The Westchester Bee Line has several bus routes that

serve Dobbs Ferry, connecting it to neighboring villages, White Plains, Yonkers, Tarrytown, and all Westchester cities. More than 10% of households do not own a car.

Considering the gross area of the Village including the area in the River, Dobbs Ferry has a density of 3,466 people per square mile. However, with the River area removed resulting in a net area of 2.4 square miles, Dobbs Ferry has a relatively high density of 4,620 per square mile.

Much of the Village consists of a number of large institutional properties such as the Masters School, Mercy College, St. Christopher's, Cabrini of Westchester, and Children's Village. It also includes dedicated open space, such as the Ardsley County Club, the Juhring Estate and schools, churches and other tax exempt uses resulting in 40% of the Village designated as tax-exempt. While some of this is the result of Dobbs Ferry having a much higher percentage of dedicated park land than most communities in Westchester, the non-Village owned institution properties require and are entitled to some or all Village services. This increases the financial impact of high real estate taxes on the other properties, particularly those of single-family homeowners.

The Village of Dobbs Ferry, 2010-2020

The Village's Comprehensive Plan (previously referred to as the Vision Plan) was adopted nearly a decade ago, on September 28, 2010. Numerous projects can be identified as having been specifically completed as a result of the 2010 Plan. At least seven existing buildings that had been empty, underutilized, or in a deteriorated condition have been completed:

- Rivertowns Square: the redevelopment of Akzo Office Park on Saw Mill River Parkway.
- 145 Palisade Street: the restoration and adaptive reuse of a large factory on the Hudson.
- 66 Main Street: the replacement of a mixed-use building with a new mixed-use building.
- 75 Main Street: the restoration and adaptive reuse and expansion of an existing publishing building to a mixed-use building.
- 78 Main Street: a new mixed-use building on an empty lot in the middle of downtown.
- 2 Ashford Avenue: a mixed-use building at the Gateway of the Village.
- 11 Ashford Ave: redeveloped shopping plaza into a Walgreens and health care center.

A challenge for the Dobbs Ferry Village Board is balancing between competing and diverse interests. There is a desire to be socially responsible, while there is also the struggle with overburdening real estate taxes. There is a desire to have a vibrant downtown, but there is also a concern with traffic congestion and a shortage of convenient parking spaces. There is a commitment to retaining the scale and historic character of the community, but there is also a strong sense of obligation to be a sustainable place that is affordable and diverse. The Comprehensive Plan should be where these interests and concerns are identified and a plan of action as to how to strike that balance is articulated.

About Municipal Governance As It Relates to Planning and Development

Residents of the Village of Dobbs Ferry elect a Mayor and six trustees—this comprises the Village Board. The Village Board hires a Village Administrator to run the day-to-day operations of the Village. The Board appoints a chairperson and four members to the Planning Board; a chairperson and four members to the Architectural and Historic Review Board; a chairperson and four members to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Village Board has retained oversight of the development of key properties in the Village, consisting, in general, of larger parcels and development proposals in the Downtown zones. In those instances, the Planning Board and the Architectural and Historic Review Board retain an advisory

function. For all other development proposals, the Planning Board and Architectural and Historic Review Boards retain independent review authority.

About Community Engagement

Community engagement is an integral part of the functioning of the Village. As a small village, there is great reliance on the Village's residents to provide important services to the Village. In addition to the Boards noted above, the Village Board appoints residents to be members of the following:

- Traffic Committee
- Sustainability Task Force
- Downtown Committee
- Historic District Task Force
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Tree Consortium
- Conservation Advisory Board
- Route 9 Active Transportation Consortium

It is anticipated that each of the identified Boards will be involved and consulted in this initiative. The selected consultant will ensure that residents are informed, that community voices drive decision-making, and that ideas about how to address community concerns come directly from community members.

Specific Areas of Concern Requiring Attention

A. Downtown/Gateway.

This area comprises three separate zones: the DB, DG and DT zones (herein Downtown). The majority of citizen concern expressed at public meetings have dealt with these areas, as the projects listed above were considered and developed over the past decade. There are both complementary and contrasting agendas for the Downtown which need to be addressed: commercial revitalization, redevelopment of underutilized sites, affordable housing, historic preservation, ease of parking, and traffic reduction. The Village Board created the Downtown Improvement Task Force, which recently completed a Report following a year of community workshops and surveys to better understand what they believe needs to be done to make the Downtown more commercially successful.

For at least 40 years, parking in the Downtown and at the train station has been considered a concern. When development in the Downtown consistent with the goals in the 2010 Plan are proposed, this perceived shortage of parking spaces can affect the outcome despite alignment with the Plan. The Village Board recently created a new parking lot close to the Downtown that provides 97 parking spaces. To date, very few cars are utilizing this lot. The issue of parking in the Downtown is clearly more complex than was previously understood.

B. Climate Change.

A greater understanding of climate change has increased the community's awareness of the need to create more sustainable buildings and land use policies. The Village Board created the Sustainability Task Force (STF) composed of Dobbs Ferry residents. The STF has successfully completed a Community Action Plan and the Village has attained a Silver designation by the State of New York, which is the highest rating granted to date.

C. Old Croton Aqueduct.

The majority of concerns regarding the OCA focus on protection of views to the Hudson River and Palisades from the corridor. Attention should be paid to the preservation and enhancement of the

OCA, particularly as it traverses the Downtown—where it is most impacted by adjacent development. While there is strong consensus among residents of the value and importance of the OCA, there are differing views regarding whether to improve and modify, or protect and preserve the adjacent development. The Old Croton Aqueduct is under State control and operated by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (Department of Parks) as a park. The Department of Parks is currently working on Community Design Guidelines for the Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park.

D. Large Institutional Parcel Development.

The 2010 Plan anticipated that one or more of the Village's institutional properties with significant land area would face economic pressures and seek to carve out property which could be sold for redevelopment and generate significant revenue, with Children's Village likely the most immediate case. The floating zones could be considered, with their own set of additional requirements regarding density, clustering and open space preservation, access, sustainability, and design.

E. Affordable Housing.

The HUD lawsuit against Westchester County was settled in 2010, and mandated changes to Village Codes and the creation of more affordable housing, with specific goals of increasing diversity. While Dobbs Ferry was determined by HUD to already be diverse, there is an increasing concern that rising housing costs are making it more difficult for people to afford a place to live in the Village for potential residents and current residents looking to downsize. Recognizing the desire to accommodate all age groups as integral to a diverse community, the Village Board recently created the Affordable Housing Task Force (AHTF) composed of Dobbs Ferry residents.

F. Historic Designations.

Concerns with the potential loss of older homes and older buildings intrinsic to the character of Dobbs Ferry promoted the Village Board to create the Historic Preservation Task Force (HPTF) composed of Dobbs Ferry residents. This Task Force has studied the need to create historic districts within the Village, as is recommended in the Vision Plan. The Village Board has recently made changes to the Village Code to strengthen historic preservation. One neighborhood has already been designated as an historic district and the Task Force has suggested a second historic district for the downtown.

G. Complete Streets.

As a result of the completion of the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, including a biking and pedestrian lane, five Villages (including Dobbs Ferry) that will likely see an increased in the number of people who use Route 9 (Broadway) as they come off the Bridge or head towards the Bridge formed a Consortium to investigate how to make this safe and beneficial for the communities. The Village Board appointed three residents to the Consortium. The Consortium retained a transportation planning consultant to assist in the preparation of the "Route 9 Active Transportation Conceptual Design Plan," dated November 2018 and finalized July 2019. The members of the Consortium agreed that, while the funding for the study came from the Bridge Authority, this was an opportunity to get increased cooperation from the New York State Department of Transportation to transform Broadway from being a "Stroad" (a combination street and road, but succeeding at neither), to become a "complete street."

An early advocate of "Complete Streets," the Village Board also wants to determine whether the Transportation section in the Comprehensive Plan needs to be reinforced to better reduce dependency on automobiles by increasing walkability, bikeability, and the use of mass transit throughout the Village.

H. Study Areas.

Downtown Main and Cedar Streets

Waterfront present and future development

Chauncey Park Area and Children's Village Development

Gateway
Residential Neighborhoods

Scope of Work

- Review the existing Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Board of Trustees on September 28, 2010, particularly in regard to the issues described above.
- Review the adopted Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, which covers the majority of the Village.
- Evaluate the need to update and revise the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance to protect and preserve the quality of life in those neighborhoods adjoining the downtown, educational, and institutional properties.
- Assess the Chapters that evaluate key components of the Village, including Riverfront and Greenway, Downtown and Gateway, Intensification and Transportation, and Zoning, in terms of existing conditions within the Village, as well as in terms of the initiatives that have been advanced by the various Task Forces over the past 10 years, and recommend revisions.
- Assess the socio-economic components of the development projects in the Downtown and at the Rivertowns Square development, documenting increased costs for Village services, increased revenue from real estate taxes, and an evaluation of the collateral economic impact of the project on the community documented, whether adverse or beneficial. For projects that included a socio-economic analysis as part of the approval process, the numbers projected when the project was proposed should be compared to the numbers that actually resulted from the development.
- Review the recently finalized Downtown Improvement Task Force report.
- Evaluate the current land use review administrative procedures and suggest ways to make this process as rational and as predictable as possible.
- Develop and present an outreach and engagement plan. A robust outreach and engagement plan will be required to build as much consensus as possible. Consultant will suggest whatever meetings in various formats are needed. This will include, but not be limited to, meetings with various Boards, Departments, and groups to gather information pertaining to current conflicts and challenges in using the existing Plan, administering existing Village Code, and managing development within the Village.
- At least one public work session regarding the following applicable topics to engage residents in the future of the Village as it pertains to land use, Village resources, and quality of life:
 - Neighborhood preservation in Downtown adjoining zones
 - Use and protection of the OCA via zoning
 - Downtown zone issues and needs
 - Intensification and transportation
 - Development considerations in EI zones
 - Affordable housing, including Village-initiated projects
- Circulate this draft Report to the other Boards, Committees, and Task Forces, as well as make it available to the community for comments and suggestions.
- Hold two public community work sessions convened by the Village Board to review draft Report.
- Revise the draft Report in response to comments and suggestions received in the work sessions and issue a Final Report.
- Review Chapter 300 in the Dobbs Ferry Code and its attachments, including the Village's Official Zoning Map, to identify conflicts with the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Compose a new Comprehensive Plan document with the text and diagram revisions, amendments, and additions to the current Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance and Map as directed by

the Village Board.

- Present the revised text and diagrams, as well as any other proposed amendments and additions to the Village Board. The Village Board is responsible for the final decisions that will be made regarding the changes to the Vision Plan the Zoning Ordinance or the Official map.

Questions to be Answered

Such a consultant should have demonstrated ability through past work to analyze existing community conditions and constraints; utilize public engagement to guide physical development decisions; produce a comprehensive plan for and practical design of land use. Consultant will provide information regarding:

1. Prior experience working with local municipalities, their various local boards, and citizen groups
2. Methods of analyzing and providing information to the community and its residents, especially regarding existing community conditions
3. Communication strategies to support planning and to solicit resident input
4. Your ability to problem-solve and remain flexible in addressing recommendations communicated by the community throughout the planning process
5. Diversity and inclusion plan, including success and percentages
6. Experience forming inclusive redevelopment plans
7. A previous plan of comparable work
8. Typical community engagement structure and data collection
9. An outline of available resources & analytical design
10. An example of a past project estimate vs. actual cost

Deadline

Responses are due via mail and email by March 15, 2020 . Project milestones will be discussed following award of contract.

Period of Performance

Upon award of contract it is anticipated that the project will be completed within 9 months.

Products

- A Downtown parking utilization study with recommendations
- A Downtown residential occupancy study
- A Downtown buildout analysis
- Analysis of Socio-Economic impacts for major 2010-2019 projects
- A final report recommending action regarding the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance
- (as authorized by the Village Board) Draft Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments
- (as authorized by the Village Board) a longform EAF
- An implementation plan that identifies short, medium and long term actions/projects with approximate time frames, costs and identification of key actors

Requests are subject to change and will be finalized with selected consultant following award of contract.

Response Checklist

- Cover page – Company name, address, contact name, telephone number and email
- Experience and expertise – General qualifications
- Experience and expertise – Minimum of two (2) references
- Experience and expertise – Personnel summary (key staff qualifications, experience, resumes)

- Method of performance (written project-specific narrative that describes the manner in which the Respondent proposes to satisfy the Scope of Work requirements and meet the established Goals)
- Description of experience in working with the public sector and elected officials
- Example of similar project(s)
- A narrative of project understanding: A brief discussion to demonstrate an understanding of this project and your design approach and philosophy to the project
- Responses to all the questions to be answered above
- Cost Proposal: (Please note that the Village may decide to select one firm for the Comprehensive Plan update and another firm for the Zoning Amendments.) Proponent shall state all assumptions included in the proposal, including but not limited to the number of meetings anticipated with staff and the Village Board and number of hours and hourly costs of all personnel involved to provide services associated with this project. The Village reserves the right to negotiate fees and payment schedules with the selected proponent.
 - Comprehensive Plan update limited to study areas
 - Zoning Amendments
 - Comprehensive Plan update limited to study area plus Zoning amendments
 - Comprehensive Plan update for entire Village
 - Comprehensive Plan update for entire Village plus Zoning amendments
- Signature and certification

Qualification will be postmarked or hand-delivered by close of business (5:00pm) on March 16, 2020, to Charlene Indelicato, Village Administrator. Ten bound copies must be provided (one must be loose, not stapled). The proposer will also send an electronic copy emailed to cindelicato@mac.com

Selection

This RFP does not commit the Village to select a consultant, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of this request, or to produce or contract for services. The Village reserves the right to accept or reject any or all RFPs received as a result of this request, or to modify or cancel in part or in its entirety the RFP if it is determined the best interest of the organization to do so.

Questions should be directed to Charlene Indelicato, Village Administrator: 914 231-8502 or cindelicato@dobbsferry.com