



May 27, 2022

# Town of Harpswell, Maine Request for Proposals Comprehensive Planning Assistance

## **I. Introduction**

The Town of Harpswell seeks proposals from firms with experience in municipal community planning to assist the Town of Harpswell's Comprehensive Plan Task Force in preparing an updated comprehensive plan for the community. The Comprehensive Plan Task Force is an eleven person committee appointed by the Select Board to be representative of various community interests. The Task Force is charged with overseeing the planning process and submitting a draft of an updated comprehensive plan to the Select Board and Town Meeting. The Town's part-time Town Planner and other staff and town committees are available to provide assistance to the Task Force and the selected consultant in this task.

Proposals meeting the requirements set forth below must be received by the Town by 3:00 p.m. on Thursday June 23, 2022. Proposals shall be delivered to the Town Administrator prior to this deadline. Proposals shall consist of five paper copies of the proposal, a pdf of the proposal and related submissions, and either one paper reproducible copy of sample documents, an electronic version as part of the submittal or a link to an online version. The electronic submissions may be made on a thumb drive submitted with the paper copies or by email to the Town Administrator at [keiane@town.harpswell.me.us](mailto:keiane@town.harpswell.me.us).

Proposals may be submitted by mail, express delivery or can be dropped off at the Town office. Proposers should be aware that proposals mailed to the Town's post office box must arrive so that they are in the box when the mail is retrieved early in the morning. Proposers should also be aware that packages delivered to the Town office by overnight express delivery services may not be delivered prior to 3:00 p.m. unless early delivery is specified. The outside of the submission should clearly indicate that the contents are a proposal for comprehensive planning services.

Proposals that are submitted by regular mail by the U.S. Postal Service should be addressed to:

Town Administrator  
Town of Harpswell  
P.O. Box 39  
Harpswell, Maine 04079

Proposals that are delivered by express mail services or dropped off at the Town office should be addressed to:

Town Administrator  
Town of Harpswell  
263 Mountain Road  
Harpswell, Maine 04079

The Town of Harpswell reserves the exclusive right to waive any irregularities in the process of submitting or reviewing proposals under this Request for Proposals and to reject any proposal for any cause.

## **II. Background**

The Town's current comprehensive plan was adopted in 2005 and was found to be consistent with the state rules for comprehensive plans. Following adoption of the plan the Town created an implementation committee to develop proposals to implement the recommendations in the plan. The committee developed proposals to revise the Town's land use regulations to reflect the plan's future land use plan. Those proposals were not adopted by the Town. The Town did prepare and adopt an Open Space Plan in response to the plan and developed a Master Plan for Mitchell Field. Other recommendations in the plan have been implemented but there has been no coordinated effort to implement the proposals. Copies of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Open Space Plan, Mitchell Field Master Plans and other reports and studies are available on the Town's website under Departments – Planning – Plans and Studies.

Harpswell is a somewhat unique community. Geographically it consists of a long peninsula (Harpswell Neck) served by State Route 123, three large islands (Great Island, Orr's Island and Bailey Island) connected to Cook's Corner in Brunswick by State Route 24 and a number of off-shore islands. Historically the community consisted of a number of fishing villages connected loosely by water. The neck and the major islands were not connected by a road within Harpswell until 1970. The Town has over two hundred miles of coastline including a number of coves and bays.

The Town has a Town Meeting form of government with a three-person Select Board and an appointed Town Administrator. The Town Meeting is the legislative body and the updated comprehensive plan will be subject to adoption by a future town meeting. The Town has a number of very active committees “staffed” by highly knowledgeable volunteers.

The Town has a substantial marine-based economy including a number of commercial wharves, boat repair facilities and marinas. The Town maintains a number of boat launches and docks to support this industry. This sector includes commercial lobstermen, fishermen, clam and worm diggers, scallop harvesters and oyster aquaculture. Tourism is also an important part of the town’s economy with a number of restaurants, overnight accommodations and seasonal rentals. Short-term rentals are emerging as a community concern.

The Town has a population of just over 5,000 year-round residents based on the 2020 Census and has been growing slowly. There is a perception that the pandemic has created a population increase but this has not yet shown up in available data. The year-round population is decidedly older with Harpswell reportedly having the oldest median age of any community in Maine. The community has evolved into an attractive retirement community. The town’s younger population has been declining. This is reflected in dropping enrollments at the Community Elementary School.

Harpswell has a significant seasonal population with approximately 2000 seasonal units. While the usage of these units is hard to document, the perception is that there has been an increase in the use of some of these units for longer periods as a result of the pandemic. These seasonal residents are an important element in the community and contribute to the local economy. While many seasonal residents are not registered voters including their views in the planning process is important.

### **III. Town’s Objectives**

The Comprehensive Plan Task Force has identified the following primary objectives for the updating of the comprehensive plan:

- The updated plan must create a shared community vision for the future of Harpswell through an inclusive process that actively engages all segments of the community in developing the vision
- The update needs to focus on the key issues facing Harpswell while meeting the state rules for comprehensive plans

- The updated plan must include detailed implementation strategies for addressing the key issues that lay out the specific steps the Town needs to take
- The final products as well as interim materials must be attractive easy to read/understand print and electronic formats with the liberal use of graphics and maps
- The process should aim for consideration of the updated plan at the March 2024 Town Meeting

#### **IV. Potential Key Issues**

While the Comprehensive Plan Task Force recognizes that there is a myriad of issues facing Harpswell as it thinks about and plans for its future, the Task Force feels that it is important that the update focuses on key issues and provides well-reasoned, holistic interrelated policy recommendations and implementation activities to address these issues. The Task Force has identified the following key issues but recognizes that this list needs to be reviewed and revised with input from the larger community:

- Managing growth and development so that the character of Harpswell is maintained
- Maintaining the marine economy including access to the water
- Protecting/managing the town's groundwater resource
- Diversifying the population
- Preserving the viability of the community's natural resources
- Addressing the implications of climate change
- Providing affordable housing (Note: The Town has separate funding for an affordable housing study and will be soliciting proposals for this work shortly. The comprehensive planning process and the housing study need to be coordinated. Consultants are welcome to submit proposals for that project.)

#### **V. Scope of Services**

A prospective consultant is encouraged to develop a creative work plan based on its experience with similar projects and communities. The following sections identify the elements that the Task Force believes need to be addressed in the scope of work. The proposed scope of work should at a minimum address each of the following elements but the approach to how the elements are addressed is up to you the proposer.

- Develop and implement a program to keep the Task Force, Town officials and committee members, and the community at large aware of the ongoing planning process and allow the community to be able to provide informal input as the project progresses.

- Provide ongoing “staff” support to the Task Force including having a regular physical presence at meetings to assure that the members actively participate in the process and that the process moves smoothly.
- Prepare a visual tool such as a drone aerial tour to familiarize the Task Force and the larger community with the existing land forms and development patterns and potential issues.
- Prepare background information to support sound decision-making with a focus on the key issue areas.
- Prepare updated inventories and analyses to address the requirements of the Maine standards for comprehensive plans and other key topical areas.
- Develop and implement an interactive community visioning process that involves the larger Harpswell community in articulating a COMMUNITY VISION for the future of Harpswell for the next 10-15 years
- Prepare a proposed Future Land Use Plan that incorporates the land use related elements of the Community Vision.
- Develop recommended policies for addressing the key issues identified during the planning process
- Prepare a detailed implementation strategies spelling out the actions that need to be taken to move the community in the direction of the Community Vision and to carry out the recommended policies.
- Assist the Task Force in communicating the interim steps and final products of the process to the larger community.
- Prepare a final summary document setting forth the key elements of the Comprehensive Plan together with a technical appendix with the supporting documentation.

## **VI. Proposal Contents**

The proposal shall include at a minimum the following:

- A completed submittal form provided by the Town signed by a person authorized to commit the principal firm to the terms of the proposal
- A qualifications statement for the principal firm or individual and any sub-consultants addressing their experience with municipal community planning projects
- A statement addressing the experience of the firms or individuals with community planning with small coastal communities
- The identification of the staff that will be working directly with Harpswell including their roles in the project and qualifications
- The proposed scope of work broken down by tasks and milestones

- The proposed budget tied to the tasks in the scope of work and proposed fee arrangement
- The proposed timeline for completing the draft
- Two examples of planning documents/reports/presentations for similar projects (this can be in the form of a link to an online site)
- A minimum of three references of clients for municipal community planning projects in small northern New England communities in the last five years including contact information for the client

## **VII. Review and Selection Process**

The Comprehensive Plan Task Force will be responsible for reviewing proposals, evaluating prospective consultants and making a recommendation to the Select Board as to who should be retained. The Select Board will be responsible for the final selection of the consultant and the authorization of an agreement for services. The Task Force envisions the following process:

- The proposals are screened by Town staff to assure compliance with the proposal requirements
- The Task Force's review committee reviews and scores the proposals based on the review criteria
- The review committee selects up to 3 firms or individuals to be interviewed
- The review committee interviews the project staff of each selected firm
- The review committee recommends a firm or individual to the full Task Force
- The Task Force reviews the recommended firm/individual
- Town staff and the chair of the Task Force negotiate the final scope of work and related budget
- The Select Board considers/approves the recommended consultant and agreement

## **VIII. Review Criteria**

The Task Force and its proposal review committee will be guided by the following criteria in the review and evaluation of the proposals.

- The firm's understanding of Harpswell and the Town's objectives (15%)
- The experience of the project staff with planning in similar communities and situations (15%)
- The proposed process for involving the community in the planning process including the development of the community vision (25%)

- The experience of the firm in addressing groundwater issues and the proposed approach for addressing this issue (15%)
- The ability of the project team to present/communicate the plan to the officials and the public (15%)
- The proposed budget and basis for the fee and method of payment (15%)

# Proposal Submittal Form Town of Harpswell, Maine Comprehensive Planning Assistance

This form must be completed, signed and submitted with the proposal

Firm or individual submitting the proposal	
Name of contact	
Mailing address	
Email address	
Phone number	
Other firms or individuals who are members of the project team including subcontractors	

I certify that I am authorized to submit the attached proposal to the Town of Harpswell for comprehensive planning assistance. The attached proposal shall be valid for a minimum of ninety (90) days from the date of the proposal submission. I authorize representatives of the Town to contact any of the firms or individuals listed as references or previous clients in the proposal.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_