

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN  
CITY OF NEENAH, WISCONSIN



November 5, 2021

RESPONSES ARE DUE:

**3:00 PM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2021**

CITY OF NEENAH

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

211 WALNUT STREET

NEENAH, WI 54956

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# 1. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) OVERVIEW

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of Neenah “City”, in partnership with the Neenah Central City Business Improvement District “BID”, is soliciting proposals from qualified planning, urban design and economic development consulting firms for the creation of a downtown master plan “Plan”. Downtown Neenah continues its transformation into a vibrant, full-service downtown, accommodating a robust professional office employment center, a strong street-level retail market, a burgeoning tourist destination, and a high-end downtown residential living center.

The Plan will develop a well-defined future vision for Downtown Neenah with an executable strategy ensuring its sustainability and success for future generations. The Plan will also incorporate past planning efforts and studies into the final document. Finally, input from the diverse stakeholders which make-up Downtown Neenah is expected to be included in the Plan. The final plan will be utilized by the City, developers and Downtown stakeholders as a guide towards achieving the future vision.

## 1.2 CITY / DOWNTOWN BACKGROUND

Located in along the shores of the Fox River, Little Lake Butte Des Morts and Lake Winnebago, the City of Neenah is home to over 27,000 people. Neenah is part of the Oshkosh-Neenah MSA in Winnebago County. The City’s incorporation in 1873 coincided with the creation of the multi-national personal care company, Kimberly-Clark Corporation. Along with Kimberly-Clark, Neenah and more specifically the current downtown area, was home to many industrial and manufacturing facilities harvesting the free water power created by the rapids of the Fox River to power their mills. The majority of employment in Downtown Neenah was in the manufacturing sector until 2007. In 2007, the Glatfelter Paper Mill, which was located in the heart of Downtown Neenah, closed and the building and land was purchased by the Neenah Community Development Authority.

Today, the former Glatfelter Paper Mill property is home to the Plexus Corporation Global Headquarters, Ascension Medical Clinic, the Gateway Park and The Plaza at Gateway Park, the Plexus Design Center, Arrowhead Park, and two residential developments currently under construction. The success of the City is and has always been dependent on the health of the Downtown. Over the last 30 years, the transition of Downtown Neenah from a manufacturing hub to a full-service office, retail and residential market was due to the collaboration and the success of a strong public-private partnership between the City and the business community.

Neenah Facts:

Population: 27,319 (2020)	Land Area: 9.3 square miles (2021)
Median Household Income: \$59,820 (2020)	Pop. over 25 with Bachelors Degree of Higher: 33.4%
Number of Parks: 25	Total Housing Units: 12,164
Length of Shoreline: 7,500 feet	Median Age: 38.5 (2020)
Form of Government: Mayor/Council	Median House Value: \$152,481 (2019)

### 1.3 PLANNING AREA DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the downtown planning area are generally defined as the Fox River/Little Lake Butte Des Morts on the north, Oak Street on the east, Winneconne Avenue on the south, and Lake Street on the west. A map of the planning area boundary is attached in **Appendix A**.

### 1.4 COMPLETED PLANS AND RELEVANT STUDIES

All of the plans below are located electronically at <https://www.ci.neenah.wi.us/downtownmasterplan/>

- City of Neenah Comprehensive Plan 2040 (2017)
- Neenah Waterfront Design and Development Master Plan (2001)
- Downtown Neenah Market Analysis and Branding Study (2013)
- Neenah Central City Business Improvement District Operating Plan (2021)
- City of Neenah Capital Improvement Plan (2021-2025)
- Gateway Downtown Redevelopment Plan (2009)
- West Canal/Riverwalk Zone Redevelopment Plan (2004)
- Arrowhead Park Master Plan (2017)
- TID No. 8 Project Plan (2016)
- TID No. 10 Project Plan (2016)
- Glatfelter Mill Redevelopment Plan (2009)
- Downtown Traffic Study (2019/2021)
- Downtown Parking Analysis (2015)
- Neenah Zoning Code
- Neenah Sign Code

### 1.5 STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee of about 10 members will be formed, including representation from the City of Neenah Common Council, City of Neenah Plan Commission, and the Neenah Central City Business Improvement District (BID). The rest will consist of stakeholders in the Downtown area. Steering committee members will be appointed prior to the selection of choosing a consultant.

### 1.6 PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The project management team will consist of City Community Development staff and representatives from Future Neenah, Inc., to assist the consultant with gathering local data and coordinating with the steering committee and stakeholders.

## 2. RFP SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

### 2.1 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE/TIMELINE

Task	2021		2022							
	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
Release of RFP										
Review Proposals/Interviews										
Selection of Consultant										
Contract Review and Approvals										
Project Starts										
Master Planning Process										
Project Completed										

The timeline is flexible. Should the consultant feel more value would be added to adjust the timeline, please describe how in your response.

Release of RFP	November 5, 2021
<b>Deadline for proposal submissions</b>	<b>December 17, 2021</b>
Consultant Selection	January 21, 2022
Project Completion	August 26, 2022

The contract requires approval by the City of Neenah Common Council, which would be about a 30-day process. The Common Council meets the first and third Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM at the City Administration Building.

### 2.2 CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING RFP

All inquiries regarding the RFP may be directed to:

Brad Schmidt, AICP  
 Deputy Director of Community Development and Assessment, City of Neenah  
 211 Walnut Street  
 Neenah, WI 54956  
[BSchmidt@ci.neenah.wi.us](mailto:BSchmidt@ci.neenah.wi.us) / (920) 886-6126

Questions may be emailed to the above listed email address. A list of frequently asked questions will be posted at <https://www.ci.neenah.wi.us/downtownmasterplan/>

## 2.3 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals should be submitted to the City of Neenah Community Development and Assessment Department no later than **Friday, December 17, 2021 at 3:00 PM (Central Standard Time)**. The consultant shall prepare **one (1) digital copy of the project proposal (excluding the project budget)** and email to Brad Schmidt ([BSchmidt@ci.neenah.wi.us](mailto:BSchmidt@ci.neenah.wi.us)) by the submission deadline. In addition, **one (1) hard copy of the proposal** and **one (1) sealed detailed project budget proposal** must be submitted to the following:

City of Neenah  
Department of Community Development and Assessment  
Attn: Brad Schmidt  
211 Walnut Street  
Neenah, WI 54956

All proposal submissions shall become property of the City of Neenah. The City of Neenah is not responsible for any costs incurred by the respondent in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to this RFP. The City reserves the right to approve or deny any and all proposals.

### 3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

#### 3.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of this process is prepare a comprehensive downtown master plan which creates a vision for Downtown Neenah and includes a detailed strategic implementation program with prioritized actions. The plan should include both short-term priorities (0-5 years) and long-term priorities (5-20 years). The selected consultant is expected to work closely with the City of Neenah's Community Development and Assessment Department. **The final plan will be used as a guide by the City and other stakeholders to promote redevelopment, enhance the downtown retail market, increase business opportunities, improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety, monitor the downtown housing market, and ensure consistency in development and design standards to create a distinct downtown identity that is unique to Neenah.**

#### 3.2 PROJECT ASSESSMENT

An initial kick-off meeting between the selected consultant and the Downtown Plan Steering Committee will be conducted for the purpose of creating a shared understanding of the project purpose, process, and schedule. In addition, the consultant and steering committee will tour the planning area to better understand areas of interest, planned development projects, and identify issues or problems in the downtown to better familiarize the consultant with Downtown Neenah. The project management team (City) will be responsible for providing maps, handouts, studies, and other relevant information to help the consultant familiarize themselves with the planning area.

#### 3.3 INFORMATION COLLECTION PHASE

**Literature Review:** The City has embarked on several studies and plans over the last 25 years related to Downtown Neenah. Over that time there has not been one comprehensive plan for the downtown. The intent of the literature review is to examine the relevant studies and plans identified in Section 1.4 and incorporate any pertinent information, strategies, or visions into the downtown plan. This phase shall also include a review of the City's Sign Code and Zoning Code, and more specifically the C-2, Central Business District section.

**Background Data Collection and Analysis:** The background data collection and analysis phase consists of collecting pertinent information related to Downtown Neenah including, but not limited to demographic and economic data within the planning area, identification of existing land use and business mix, a physical conditions assessment, land use development impediments such as floodplain, high ground water, environmental contamination, etc.

**Downtown Market Analysis:** Included in this phase shall be a specific downtown market analysis which includes a retail trade area analysis, surplus/leakage analysis, review and analysis of retail, office and residential rental rates, downtown employment figures, and a comparison of Downtown Neenah to similar-sized communities in Wisconsin. The City and selected consultant shall work together to select comparable communities.

**Downtown Housing Market Analysis:** Downtown Neenah currently has two residential developments under construction (Solaris on Main and 201 W. Wisconsin Avenue). The two projects will create 110 market rate rental units. The purpose of the housing market analysis is to better understand the housing

market in Downtown Neenah. The analysis shall explain the balance between the existing supply of rental housing in the downtown and the future demand for downtown housing including acceptable absorption rates.

**Redevelopment Sites:** This review shall include the investigation of potential downtown redevelopment sites. Included in the review shall be an analysis of any major obstacles with each redevelopment site. In addition, the selected consultant should identify potential uses of each redevelopment site and a concept plan of how the site could be redeveloped. A minimum of five (5) redevelopment sites shall be considered and the selected consultant shall work with City staff to determine the redevelopment sites to study. Careful attention should be made to tie future redevelopment into the fabric of the existing Downtown.

**Placemaking:** This phase shall identify elements within the planning area that promote placemaking such as public parks and plazas, monuments and art installations, patios open to the public, public trails and sidewalks, and water accessibility. The final plan shall identify methods for improving placemaking in Downtown Neenah including, but not limited to the creation of new public spaces, improvements to existing public/private spaces, enhancements to downtown gateways, streetscape improvements, development design standards, sign standards, etc. The City views placemaking as an important element in creating an identity for Downtown Neenah.

### 3.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PHASE

Input from property owners, business owners, employees, visitors, and other stakeholders of Downtown Neenah is an important component of creating a shared vision of the downtown. The selected consultant shall include a public participation plan as part of their submittal. The public involvement phase shall include a minimum of the following public input methods:

**Public Meetings:** A minimum of two (2) public meetings shall be held. The first meeting will be open to the public and serve as an introduction to the project including an overview of the process and projected outcomes and an opportunity for public input. This meeting will be held after the initial kick-off meeting with the City and downtown plan steering committee. The next meeting will be held once a draft of the downtown plan has been completed. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the final plan to the public and get feedback on the findings and overall vision. More public meetings may be scheduled if the selected consultant determines these meetings to be valuable to process. The City will assist in selecting a venue, promoting the meetings to the public including, and assisting in the presentation of material.

**Downtown Plan Steering Committee Meetings:** The downtown plan steering committee is expected to assist in the development of the downtown plan. In order to ensure the committee is engaged through the planning process, it is expected that the selected consultant meet with the committee a minimum of four (4) times. The first meeting shall be the initial kick-off meeting which will consist of introductions, a walk-thru of the downtown, and an opportunity for questions and answers between the selected consultant and members of the steering committee. At least two (2) meetings shall be scheduled during the data collection and public input phases. These meetings may be held in-person or virtually. Finally, a meeting shall be held in-person to provide a review of the draft plan. Throughout the process, the selected consultant shall stay in regular communication with the steering committee and Staff by providing relevant information or findings relating to the downtown plan.

**Business Input:** The input from Downtown Neenah’s business community is vital to the downtown plan. The selected consultant shall include methods in their proposal on how they will obtain input from downtown property and businesses owners, their employees, and customers (if applicable). This information could be collected via surveys, focus groups, and/or interviews. The City of Neenah and Future Neenah, Inc. will assist in providing a list of businesses, business contact information, etc. The input from the business community should assist in understanding the business climate in downtown Neenah, including but not limited to understanding why did they locate in Downtown Neenah, why do they stay in the downtown, and what can be done to improve the downtown.

**Community Input:** The community input phase is intended to be broader and include input from the larger community. This phase can include community surveys, interviews with specific stakeholders including but not limited to City and Future Neenah, Inc. staff, focus groups, or other information to gather relevant information. Again, the purpose of soliciting input from the community is intended to better understand how the people feel about Downtown Neenah and what they see as the vision for the future of Downtown Neenah.

**City Meetings:** The selected consultant will be required to attend a City Plan Commission meeting and a Common Council meeting where the final plan will be introduced and presented to each. The consultant is expected to prepare a PowerPoint presentation and attend in-person at both meetings. The City will assist the consultant in the preparation of the presentation and will be available to answer questions related to the final plan.

### 3.5 PLAN DOCUMENT PREPARATION PHASE/OUTCOMES/IMPLEMENTATION

**Produce a City of Neenah Downtown Master Plan:** The final plan shall include the following items:

- An executive summary of the plan’s findings.
- An overview of the findings of the public involvement phase.
- A summary of the data collection and analysis phase including a comparison of similar communities.
- Findings from the Downtown Market Analysis and Downtown Housing Market Study and strategies to retain and attract new business development to the downtown.
- Review of redevelopment sites including visual concept plans identifying potential development layouts.
- A review of the transportation network (motorized and non-motorized) and recommendations to improve the vehicular, truck, pedestrian, and bicycle options in the planning area based off the findings of past downtown studies and observations from the consultant team.
- A summary of findings including maps, graphics, charts, and photos identifying a unified vision for Downtown Neenah. This section shall also include goals, objectives and strategies for achieving the overall vision.
- A detailed implementation plan and schedule with measurable benchmarks split between short-term implementation strategies (0-5 years) and long-term strategies (5-20 years). The implementation plan should identify specific action items and the party responsible for implementing it.

The items in this list are intended to be the minimum required. The selected consultant may add more information to this list if they find it valuable to the overall success of the downtown plan. The selection committee is looking for creative proposals and a plan that ultimately is user-friendly for all downtown stakeholders.

## 4. RECOMMENDED PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

### 4.1 GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Give name and address of submitting organization; give the state in which incorporated or chiefly located; indicate whether licensed to operate in Wisconsin; identify prime contact in organization and telephone and email address.
- Provide a general narrative of your preliminary Master Plan vision, including how the City's Master Plan guiding principles will be employed. The City understands that this is only preliminary and subject to further market considerations.
- Provide a schematic master planning program, including the proposed process, timeline, scope, and intent.
- Provide the market analysis and evaluation program(s) you intend to employ.

### 4.2 PROJECT PLAN

- Illustrate your understanding of Comprehensive Downtown Master Planning.
- Demonstrate your knowledge and involvement in downtown planning of similar sized communities and project scope.
- Provide your proposed detailed work plan to prepare and implement the plans by stage.
- Address the objectives stated in the Scope of Services
- Indicate the date on which your team would be able to initiate the study and whether the project can be completed by August 26, 2022.

### 4.3 BUDGET (**ATTACH AND SEND SEPARATELY**)

- Proposed consultant fees for this project must be submitted in a spreadsheet format in a sealed envelope marked "**Fee-Structure – Do Not Open.**" The fee structure shall reflect the total estimated fee for this project as described by the consultant in Section 3 – Scope of Services. Proposed resources for each task must be identified, including hours and wage rated for consultants and sub consultants. Work that the consultant would not provide and must be provided separately by the City must also be identified. Elements that will be evaluated include:
  - Availability of resources from the consultant and sub consultant(s) for the project
  - Estimated hours and fees to complete individual work elements
  - Estimated total fee for the project, based on hourly rates including a not-to exceed cap
  - List of tasks not performed by consultant or sub consultant(s) for project, which must be performed by the City
  - List of reimbursable expenses and detailed costs of such

### 4.4 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Provide a narrative describing the project operations and management strategy
- Include an outline of essential functions of the project management role, the expected City role, and examples of prior master plans that the team has successfully implemented

#### 4.5 DEVELOPMENT TEAM INFORMATION

- Provide a list of principals and staff assigned and committed to this project including identification of the project manager.
- Include any conflicting assignments/projects during the projected project timeline.
- Provide testimonials or reference letters from public clients for the teams past projects.

## **5. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The evaluation of each proposal will be reviewed by an evaluation team of City staff. Each proposal will be reviewed based on the evaluation criteria outlined below. The top proposals will then be asked to interview either in-person or virtually with the evaluation team. Interviews will be scheduled beginning the week of December 20, 2021 and ending the week of January 3, 2022. The evaluation team will score each consultant interview and make a selection on the top proposal following the interview phase. Once a proposal is chosen, the remaining consultants will be notified of the decision.

- Qualifications and experience of key team members
- Experience with projects of similar scope and complexity
- Satisfaction of previous clients
- Quality and completeness of the proposals
- Public input plan and approach to facilitating stakeholders through a variety of methods
- Reasonableness of project costs



