

# Request for Qualifications

To Prepare a New Comprehensive Plan for the City of Ashland, Nebraska



William Krejci  
Zoning Administrator  
City of Ashland  
2304 Silver Street  
Ashland, NE 68003  
402-944-3387

[ashlandzoning@ashland-ne.com](mailto:ashlandzoning@ashland-ne.com)

## Introduction

The City of Ashland, Nebraska is soliciting qualifications for a complete rewrite of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The city is seeking a plan that will build upon the unique character of Ashland and is derived from public participation with creative and feasible vision. Firms may drop off Statement of Qualification in the front vestibule area of City Hall at 2304 Silver Street, Ashland, NE 68003, or mail them to 2304 Silver Street, Ashland, NE 68003; in any case, submissions must be received in the city offices by the deadline date and time listed in the Timeline section of the Request for Qualifications to be considered.

Consultants must submit a digital version in PDF format.

All communication on the Statement of Qualifications should be made to the primary contact. The primary contact is:

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## Community Description

The City of Ashland, one of the fastest growing communities in Saunders County and ranked 9th in the State, is approximately 20 miles southwest of Omaha, Nebraska and approximately 20 miles northeast of Lincoln, Nebraska. Ashland is serviced by Highway 6 and Highway 66, as well as Interstate 80 corridor. Currently (2023), an estimated 3,325 persons reside in Ashland.

The city is in a position to determine the community and economic development enhancements most needed and desired to better serve persons and families interested in small town living. The community of Ashland offers a variety of amenities including a public school system, restaurants, governmental services, grocery and convenience stores, etc.

Downtown Ashland is located along Silver Street. Downtown consists mostly of professional offices, specialty stores, a bank, and restaurants.

# Comprehensive Plan Content

The project of completely updating the City's Comprehensive Plan will include assembling and analyzing data regarding the existing conditions within the City of Ashland and utilizing data to develop policies, actions, and an implementation plan to guide future development and decision making within the community with a horizon of the year 2035 and beyond. The city expects the new Comprehensive Plan to comply with all applicable law and to include the following content areas:

- 1) Plan Introduction, including but not limited to:
  - a. Population and demographic trends, including projections to 2035.
  - b. The Comprehensive Plan update must be in accordance with current generally accepted planning principles, state statutes (esp. §19-903) and must be referenced as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.
  - c. Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan addresses and includes the portions addressed by Nebraska State Statute §19-903 requirements, to include, but not be limited to, (a) Land-use element, (b) Transportation, (c) Community/Recreational Facilities, (d) Energy Element, and (e) Annexation Plan.
- 2) Existing Land Uses, Future Land Uses & Growth Management
  - a. Examines public services, including emergency services, utilities, and other infrastructure available within the city, and whether the existing infrastructure and services are adequate to support the current needs and projected future growth of the city.
  - b. Reviews the City's current land use and zoning, and compares the compatibility of the zoning districts with living environments for residents, adequacy of housing, shopping, entertainment, employment, environmental sustainability, smart growth principles, and land use to ensure a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and other uses for present and future residents. The zoning ordinances are undergoing a rewrite, to coordinate with this on-going effort.
  - c. Reviews the City's current overlay zoning districts and suggests modifications or recommendations for future districts.
  - d. Reviews the City's development trends and recommends changes to the City's land use regulations to better accommodate those trends.
  - e. Examines the City's plan for preservation of natural resources, including the protection of sensitive environmental areas, preservation of recreation and open space, encouragement of green building design, and storm water management practices.
  - f. Discusses the City's commercial district in terms of branding and identity, and discusses how current zoning and design standards contribute and could be revised.
  - g. Reviews recent updates to the City Historic Preservation efforts and ensures consistency with planning objectives.
  - h. Prepares goals for the City based upon the need to maintain and/or improve various elements identified during the examination of the previous Comprehensive Plan and current plan update to achieve the desired results expressed by the community.
  - i. Compares and contrasts needs and desires with plans in surrounding municipalities (which shall be selected by the City), addresses the similarities and conflicts in planning philosophy and execution where possible, and provide a statement of the interrelationships and compatibility with plans from these surrounding municipalities.
  - j. Discusses assignment of responsibility for the execution and management of plan recommendations. Proposed time lines for implementation and anticipated outcome.

- 3) Ashland Area Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC), Saunders County Community Development (SCCD) and Cass County Nebraska Economic Development Council (CCNEDC)
- 4) Housing Strategy for meeting future needs
- 5) Parks, Trails & Recreation
- 6) Natural Resources & Stormwater Management
- 7) Transportation & Mobility
- 8) Community Facilities & Infrastructure
- 9) Energy Element
  - a. Identification of future needs for community growth
- 10) Plan implementation
  - a. Provide and include an Implementation Plan that provides a framework and benchmarks to track progress during the execution of the implementation plan.

In addition to the above-noted sections, specific focus will be required on the development of a comprehensive public participation process, employing multiple techniques to ensure an open public dialog through the development of the Comprehensive Plan. This public participation will include project web site, regular meetings, and presentations with the public (public forums), Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, the Planning Commission, and City Council. The consultant must have the ability to adapt for virtual communication and public participation, as the need arises.

## Submission Content

The following information must be included as part of a firm's response to this request:

- **Letter of Interest:** Cover letter indicating interest in the project and identifying the firm's ability to provide services needed. (maximum 2 pages)
- **Overview of Firm:** 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. (maximum 2 pages)
- **Key Personnel:** Identify the key personnel who will be assigned to the project. For these individuals, include their respective titles, experience, and periods of service with the firm, including resumes if desired. (maximum 1 page per person/resource)
- **Work Program:** Describe the general project approach and process to be employed, including a preliminary public participation plan. Work program to include a project schedule, including timeline of major milestones, deliverables, and completion. (maximum 4 pages)
- **Relevant Work Experience and References:** Brief documentation of the firm's prior work relevant to this RFQ, including three client references and their associated contact information. (maximum 1 page per listed experience, maximum 1 page per reference)
- **Fee to be Determined:** Fee will be negotiated upon selection of preferred consultant.

## Submission Deadline

Sealed qualifications will be accepted by mail or by in-person or courier delivery, or email but must be received no later than the date and time indicated in the Timeline section of this Request for Qualifications by one of the following means of submittal:

By Mail:           City of Ashland  
                          Attention: William Krejci, Zoning Administrator  
                          2304 Silver Street  
                          Ashland, NE 68003

In-Person:        City of Ashland, City Hall  
                          2304 Silver Street  
                          Ashland, NE 68003

Proposals will not be accepted after the stated submission deadline.

## Selection Process & Evaluation Criteria

Qualifications received will be evaluated by the Selection Committee in its sole discretion based on the materials submitted. The city may invite any or all firms for qualification interviews. It is the City's desire to select a consultant during the City Council meeting shown in the Timeline section of the RFQ.

All qualifications received will be evaluated based on the following criteria, among other things within the Selection Committee's and the City's sole discretion;

- Capabilities and previous experience in comparable projects, including qualifications of key personnel who will have direct involvement in tasks on this project.
- Firm's general approach to the project. Although the City has identified the general nature of services required, the consultant is given leeway toward the approach to the methodology to provide the proposed services. The city will pay particular attention to public input strategies proposed and responsiveness of the proposal to the City's unique characteristics and future growth potential.
- Proposed timeline to complete the work and demonstrated ability to meet proposed schedule.
- Past record and performance on similar projects, including quality of work, ability to meet deadline and cost control.
- Compatibility with the City's financial obligations.

## Timeline

The following dates are the anticipated milestones for this effort. These dates, durations, and sequence of events may change as needed and directed by the City of Ashland.

- August 16, 2024           Release of Request for Qualifications
- August 23, 2024           Deadline for submission of questions, 2:00 PM
- September 6, 2024        Submittal of Statement of Qualifications, 4:00 PM

- September 13, 2024 Shortlisted Consultant Interviews (dates and times to be determined)
- October 17, 2024 Contract Presented to City Council
- October 16, 2025 Expected Draft of Comprehensive Plan (Adoption by December 2025)

## Deliverables of the Plan

The following are the minimal requirements for the deliverables of the plan.

1. Text and graphics files shall be in PDF formats.
2. Maps and associated data shall be in ArcGIS format and shall be provided to the City.
3. Preparing the Comprehensive Plan – consultant expected to:
  - a. Produce all materials for public presentations.
  - b. Provide digital, web, and social media ready updates and drafts for posting including a separate Plan website.
  - c. Produce final copies for review/recommendation by the Planning & Zoning Commission and approval/adoption by City Council.
    - i. The final Plan shall be 8 ½” by 11”, either vertically or horizontally-oriented.
    - ii. Final number of hard copies to be determined with final scoping.
    - iii. Shall be in format(s) acceptable to the City to enable low-cost reproduction, revision, and direct web and social media posting. High resolution version shall be expected as well.

## Request for Qualifications Terms & Conditions

1. The City of Ashland reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
2. Questions regarding the RFQ shall be submitted in writing to William Krejci, Zoning Administrator [ashlandzoning@ashland-ne.com](mailto:ashlandzoning@ashland-ne.com) by the date and time listed in the Timeline section of the RFQ. Responses to all questions will be posted on the City’s website.
3. All data, documents, and other information provided to the City of Ashland by a respondent to the RFQ shall become property of the City of Ashland,
4. Expenses incurred in the presentation and submittal of the RFQ are solely the responsibility of the respondent and not the City of Ashland. No costs chargeable for work under the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed contract with the City or specific written authorization from the City of Ashland.
5. Responses to this Request for Qualifications in no way creates a valid or binding contract between the respondent and the City of Ashland.