



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO PLANNING BOARD

FROM: Matthew R. Walsh, Deputy City Manager - Development

DATE: November 14, 2025

SUBJECT: 2050 Master Plan Update – Request for Proposals for Consultant Services

Recommendation

Accept this report and provide comments on the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services for preparation of the 2050 Master Plan update.

Background

Municipalities are authorized to prepare master plans in accordance with NH State Law RSA 674:2 and 3. As noted in these statutes, the purpose of the master plan is to *“set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection.”*

Presently, the City operates under the 2030 Master Plan, which was adopted in 2008. During the ensuing 17+ years, the City has accomplished many of the goals, objectives, and recommendations included therein.

On March 4, 2024, the City Council adopted their 2024-2025 priorities for the City. Recognizing that many of the goals of the 2030 Master Plan had been achieved, the City Council’s 2024-2025 priorities included updating the City’s master plan.

As part of the FY2026 Budget, which was adopted on June 5, 2025, appropriated funds as part of Capital Improvement Project #563 for a comprehensive update of the City’s Master Plan. Funds became on July 1, 2025.

In accordance with State Law, the Planning Board is entity responsible for the creation and adoption of the City’s Master Plan.

Discussion

Attached is the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for the proposed master plan update. The project has been assigned the working title “2050 Master Plan”. The RFP is a draft document which is subject to review by the City’s Purchasing Office.

As described in the attached RFP, the 2050 Master Plan will be an ambitious community initiative designed to identify, as well as build consensus around, an updated common vision regarding a wide-range of public policies and topics which will guide the City forward over the next two decades.

Specifically, the 2050 Update will have continuity with, and build upon, past planning efforts including, but not limited to, the 1996 Garvins Falls Plan, 1997 Downtown Master Plan, 2001 Concord 2020 Vision Plan, 2005 Economic Development and Tax Base Plan, 2006 Opportunity Corridor Master Plan, 2006 Airport Master Plan, 2008 “2030” Master Plan, 2013 Parking Strategic Plan, 2015 Penacook Village Plan, 2017 Conservation and Open Space Plan 2021 Trails Master Plan, as well as various utility and transportation planning studies.

Public participation is critical to the success of any master plan. Therefore, the attached RFP includes a robust public participation plan, which includes the following components:

- City-wide Visioning Sessions in partnership with NH Listens. Funding for this was appropriated by the City Council at its October 14, 2025 meeting. (Report and Resolution attached).
- Separate neighborhood / village forums for the following neighborhoods: Penacook, West Concord, Downtown / West End, South End, Heights and East Concord.
- A community survey. In addition to English, the RFP calls for the survey to be translated into Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Nepali, Arabic, and Spanish. The survey will be available in both digital and paper formats.
- Three Subject Matter Focus Groups focused on housing, economic development, and New Americans. The New Americans group is intended to help the City engage with, and integrate, this population into the planning process.
- A project website, as well as multiple social media platforms to promote the project and solicit feedback.

Prior to engaging the public participation process, the selected Consultant will review existing planning documents and studies (partially listed above), as well as develop a comprehensive socio-economic data set for the City, and its individual neighborhoods, pertaining to population and demographics, housing, and employment. Existing conditions mapping will also be completed regarding land use, natural and historic resources, transportation, as well as parks and recreation and other community facilities. These data will be presented at visioning sessions and neighborhood forums to help educate the community as it develops an updated vision for the future.

In accordance with the attached RFP, the 2050 Master Plan will contain 14 Chapters, as follows: Introduction Chapter, Vision Chapter, Historic / Archeological / Cultural Resources Chapter, Natural Resources and Open Space Chapter, Population and Demographics Chapter, Utilities Chapter, Transportation Chapter, Community Facilities Chapter, Economic Development

Chapter, Parks and Recreation Chapter, Housing Chapter, Energy and Sustainability Chapter, Land Use Chapter, and Implementation Chapter.

The RFP envisions that development of the Chapters set forth herein shall occur in phases; however, with some simultaneous overlap across phases as might be appropriate as data becomes available.

Specifically, Phase 1 of chapter development will be focused on those chapters which will provide the foundational data required to guide all other chapters in the Plan. These include the Vision, Population, Housing, Utilities, Community Facilities, and Parks and Recreation.

Phase 2 of chapter development shall include those chapters discussing important community resources, and shall include Historic/ Cultural Resources, Natural Resources / Open Space, as well as Energy & Sustainability.

Building upon the information contained in those chapters completed in Phase 1 and 2, Phase 3 chapters shall include Economic Development, Transportation, and Land Use.

Phase 4 of chapter development shall include the Introduction and Implementation Chapters. Revisions to Chapters shall be undertaken as needed throughout the process to ensure that they are well coordinated and consistent.

The RFP anticipates that at least 19 different City Boards and Commissions (potentially more) will be deeply involved in the crafting of individual chapters included in the master plan update. Many of these boards / commissions / committees serve as subject matter experts that guide City policy on a variety of topics. As such, it is anticipated that they will be involved in their relevant chapters of the master plan update. (For example, it is envisioned that the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee will be deeply involved in the Parks and Recreation Chapter of the 2050 Master Plan). The scope of services for all 14 chapters of the Plan specifically notes which Boards and Committees are envisioned to be involved with preparation of each chapter. Therefore, the Planning Board should dialog with staff about how the Board envisions partnering with these other City committees to make sure the planning process is well coordinated, inclusive, and fully integrated. In some cases where several boards / committees are involved, the Board may want to consider appointing steering committees to guide the development of specific chapters of the plan.

Working with the City's Purchasing Office, staff plans to issue the Request for Proposals on/about December 1, 2025. Subject to the amount of response received, staff envisions the selected Consultant will be under contract on or about March 1, 2026. The entire project is scheduled for completion in January 2028. A comprehensive project schedule is included on page 66 of the RFP.