CITY OF WILLOUGHBY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING CODE UPDATE

RFP Title:	City of Willoughby: Vision 2050
RFP Issue Date:	November 9, 2026
RFP Due Date and Time:	December 4, 2026 at 11 AM
Issuing Department:	Office of the Mayor/City Administration 1 Public Square Willoughby, OH 44094
Requesting Department:	Community/Economic Development Attn: Shana Boyd, City Administrator 1 Public Square Willoughby, OH 44094 sboyd@willoughbyohio.com 440.953.4190

Proposals must be delivered in accordance with the instructions provided in this RFP to the REQUESTING DEPARTMENT by the date and time listed above. Any proposal received after this date may be accepted at the City's sole discretion. The City of Willoughby is seeking qualified professionals to prepare an updated Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update to address the City's changes over the past two decades and to guide future decisions regarding improvements, development, redevelopment, infrastructure, zoning, and growth throughout the community.

BACKGROUND

The City of Willoughby is located in Lake County, Ohio, approximately 20 miles northeast of downtown Cleveland and just south of Lake Erie. The city encompasses approximately 10.6 square miles and is home to a diverse population of approximately 23,000 residents. Willoughby serves as a regional destination known for its historic downtown district, strong neighborhoods, vibrant business community, recreational amenities, and access to major transportation corridors.

Willoughby has experienced substantial change since the adoption of its last Comprehensive Plan, Vision 20/20, in 2008. The city has seen continued reinvestment in Downtown Willoughby, redevelopment of commercial corridors, growth in residential and mixed-use developments, infrastructure improvements, safety facilities upgrades, and expansion of recreation parklands to meet evolving community needs related to housing, lifestyle trends, economic development, and public services.

Willoughby and its Historic Downtown have continued to evolve as a regional destination for dining, entertainment, and small business activity with a focus on walkability, connectivity, and quality-of-life initiatives. In the last decade, over 875 living units have been built within walking distance to Downtown Willoughby. The city has also experienced redevelopment along its Euclid Avenue retail hub, Lost Nation Road corridor, SOM Center Road, and anticipate major development at the long stalled Riverside Commons light industrial park development. Additional changes include multi-million-dollar investments in parks and recreation facilities with the acquisition of 105-acres along the Chagrin River and the redevelopment of the Osborne Park shoreline.

The City currently utilizes multiple planning and development tools and studies that guide implementation efforts which include Willoughby Vision 20/20 (adopted December 2008) and Vision 20/20 – Phase II Focus Areas plan, and the implementation of zoning district changes and overlay districts to meet new business demands. However, a comprehensive and updated vision is necessary to establish updated goals that meet mid-century goals, policies, strategies, and implementation priorities that will guide the City's future growth and development.

PROJECT AREA

The Comprehensive Plan update study area shall encompass the entirety of the City of Willoughby, approximately 10.6 square miles. The city is bordered by Willoughby Hills to the south, Eastlake and Timberlake to the north, Mentor to the east, and Wickliffe and Euclid to the west.

Major transportation corridors include Interstate 90, State Route 2, State Route 91 (SOM Center Road), and U.S. Route 20 (Euclid Avenue). The study area includes a broad range of land uses including residential neighborhoods, multi-family districts, commercial districts, industrial areas, institutional uses, airport district, parks and open space, historic Downtown district, and the Lakeshore district.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Comprehensive Plan update is intended to provide a long-term vision for the future of the community along with implementation strategies necessary to achieve that vision. The updated plan shall address, at a minimum, the following:

- Existing and future land uses
- Community character and design standards
- Demographics and population trends
- Public facilities
- Recreation and open space
- Environmental conditions and sustainability
- Transportation and mobility
- Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity
- Infrastructure needs and investments
- Community engagement and outreach
- Economic development and redevelopment opportunities
- Housing and neighborhood stabilization
- Historic preservation and downtown development
- Lakeshore district development and redevelopment opportunities
- Recommendations for zoning and development code updates

The updated Comprehensive Plan shall provide a goal-driven framework for future decision-making and public investment. The final document should include illustrative plans, maps, graphics, implementation strategies, and supporting data analyses.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Preparation of the updated Comprehensive Plan shall include, at a minimum, the following phases and scope of services. The Consultant will work with a Steering Committee that may include representatives from City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, City Administration, local business owners, community organizations, neighborhood representatives, and other stakeholders identified by the City.

The Consultant shall coordinate closely with City staff and existing consultants throughout the project. The Consultant shall conduct the following:

- Review of the current Comprehensive Plan and related planning studies
- Collect and analyze data regarding demographics, economics, land use, transportation, infrastructure, and environmental conditions
- Incorporate regional planning considerations, opportunities, and constraints
- Facilitate the planning process and stakeholder coordination
- Develop a public outreach and engagement strategy utilizing innovative and inclusive methods
- Provide an interactive online engagement platform
- Conduct surveys, workshops, public meetings, and stakeholder interviews
- Identify key issues, opportunities, and redevelopment priorities
- Establish a community-driven vision for the City’s future

- Develop goals, objectives, and implementation strategies
- Provide materials and graphics to support public engagement efforts
- Recommend updates to the City's zoning and development codes and regulations. The City has developed a list of specific ordinances as a starting point of this effort.
- Present draft and final recommendations to City boards, commissions, and Council
- Provide final plan documents in both hard copy and digital formats

PHASE 1

The Consultant shall prepare a summary evaluation and graphic depictions where appropriate for the research topics identified above. The summary evaluation shall identify issues and opportunities and shall be reviewed with the Steering Committee and presented during a public meeting.

The City recognizes that the Consultant's professional expertise is an important component of the planning process. While the scope identifies the City's desired areas of study and key deliverables, the Consultant is encouraged to recommend modifications, refinements, or additional approaches that, in the Consultant's professional judgment, would better achieve the City's goals and result in a more effective and actionable Comprehensive Plan. Proposers may identify alternative methodologies, engagement strategies, analyses, or deliverables that they believe would provide greater value to the City.

The evaluation and recommendations shall include:

- Existing Conditions Analysis, including:
    - Demographic trends and projections
    - Existing land use analysis
    - Review of current planning documents and studies
    - Preliminary zoning and development code analysis
    - Review of city recommended codes and ordinances revisions

The Consultant shall establish a public outreach strategy that includes:

- Opportunities for residents, businesses, and stakeholders to participate in the planning process through workshops, surveys, and public meetings
- Formal presentations and feedback sessions with elected and appointed officials
- Coordination with local institutions, businesses, and community organizations
- Development of a project website or webpage to provide updates and engagement opportunities
- Preparation of all materials associated with public participation efforts
- Public meetings throughout various areas of the City to ensure broad community representation
- Strategies to ensure participation from all demographic groups within the community

Recommendations from the Steering Committee and public engagement process shall be incorporated into the development of preferred outcomes and planning alternatives.

PHASE 2

The Consultant shall prepare a Preliminary Recommendations Memorandum summarizing the analysis, public engagement findings, and initial recommendations for review by City staff and the Steering Committee.

The memorandum shall provide the basis for development of the draft Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update, and include preliminary policy direction, land use concepts, redevelopment opportunities, transportation recommendations, and implementation priorities.

PHASE 3

The Consultant shall prepare the updated Comprehensive Plan and zoning code update, which shall include:

- Community Profile — including history, demographics, and community characteristics
- Economic Development Analysis — including commercial, industrial, office, tourism, and small business opportunities
- Redevelopment and Revitalization Opportunities
- Transportation, Traffic, and Infrastructure Analysis — including roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity
- Public Services and Utilities
- Housing and Neighborhood Development Strategies
- Quality of Life Initiatives — including parks, recreation, arts, culture, and historic preservation
- Capital Improvement Priorities
- Future Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map
- Recommendations regarding zoning districts, development standards, and code amendments
- Additions, deletions, amendments, and clarification to our current zoning code based on the city's input and recommendations from the comprehensive plan.

The Plan shall serve as a framework for future land use decisions, infrastructure investments, public policy, and private development. The Plan should incorporate smart growth principles and identify implementation strategies, responsible parties, priorities, and potential funding opportunities.

The Consultant shall present the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Steering Committee and public for review and comment. Formal presentations of the final plan shall be made to the Planning Commission and City Council. All presentation materials shall be provided to the City in both digital and printed formats.

CITY RESPONSIBILITY

The City shall:

- Designate a Project Manager to serve as the primary contact for the Consultant
- Provide available background studies, reports, plans, GIS data, and related materials
- Coordinate scheduling, meeting notices, and meeting facilities for workshops and public meetings

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Interested firms shall submit five (5) bound copies and one (1) electronic PDF copy of their proposal. Bound proposal sets shall not exceed 11" x 17" in size.

Submissions shall include the following:

- Project Team — Description of the consultant team, organization chart, qualifications, and relevant experience of key personnel
- Statement of Understanding — Discussion demonstrating understanding of the project objectives and proposed approach and any recommended modifications, refinements, or additional services the Consultant believes would strengthen the planning process or final plan.
- Scope of Work — Detailed methodology, project timeline, staffing plan, deliverables, and estimated budget by task
- Relevant Project Experience — Up to three representative projects of similar size and scope, including references
- Proposed Schedule — Timeline for completion of project phases and deliverables
- Budget — Proposed fee structure and anticipated project costs

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Submissions must be received by the City of Willoughby no later than **December 4, 2026 at 11 am Eastern Time**.

Proposals shall be submitted to:

City of Willoughby
Attn: Shana Boyd, City Administrator
1 Public Square
Willoughby, Ohio 44094

Electronic Submission: An electronic PDF copy must also be submitted to sboyd@willoughbyohio.com by the proposal deadline. The subject line should read: "City of Willoughby Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update RFP."

Questions: All questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted in writing to Shana Boyd (sboyd@willoughbyohio.com no later than November 13, 2026. Responses to questions and any

necessary clarifications will be provided through a written addendum made available to all interested proposers.

Proposals received after the deadline may be rejected. The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, and request additional information or clarification from proposer.

EVALUATION PROCESS

A review panel comprised of City staff and representatives appointed by the Mayor shall evaluate proposals based upon:

- Experience with similar comprehensive planning projects
- Qualifications and expertise of the project team
- Understanding of the City's goals and planning objectives
- Quality, creativity, and innovation of the proposed methodology
- Ability to effectively manage project schedule and resources

The City may invite up to three (3) firms for interviews. The City shall negotiate a contract with the highest-ranked proposer determined to be most qualified to perform the required services.

SCHEDULE FOR AWARD OF CONTRACT

- Request for proposals published: November 9, 2026
- RFP Proposals Due: December 4, 2026 at 11 AM
- Interviews (if any): December 14 – 18, 2026
- Selection/Notification: December 30, 2026
- Award of Contract: January 6, 2026

NOTICE TO PROPOSERS

This Request for Qualifications/Proposals does not constitute a contract or offer of employment. The cost of preparing submissions shall be the sole responsibility of the proposer. All submitted materials shall become the property of the City of Willoughby.

The City encourages questions from proposers. All questions will be answered through an addendum issued to all firms requesting this RFQ.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, and modify the scope of work as deemed necessary. All completed work products, including reports, graphics, presentations, surveys, maps, and electronic files, shall become the property of the City upon completion of the project.

The City is not liable for any costs incurred by the firm in the preparation and presentation of proposals submitted in response to the RFP.