



Request for Proposals to Develop Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan

Town of Aurora
575 Oakwood Avenue
East Aurora, NY 14052
townofaurora.com

Questions? Please contact *townboard@townofaurora.com*.

The Town Board of the Town of Aurora is soliciting the services of a planning consultant to develop a master or comprehensive plan (the “**Comprehensive Plan**”) for the Town of Aurora.

Note: The deadline to receive proposals is 4:00 pm on April 30, 2024 (please see details below).

1. OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The Town of Aurora (“**Aurora**” or “**Town**”) is located in the County of Erie with a total population (including the Village of East Aurora) of almost 14,000. The heart of Aurora is the Village of East Aurora (the “**Village**”), which is the commercial center for Aurora and the surrounding area¹. The land in Aurora surrounding the Village primarily houses denser residential districts, with some commercial areas that support the Village. Aurora also has several hamlets, including the Hamlet of West Falls, which is a distinct community in the Southwestern part of Aurora. West Falls was recently awarded a NY Forward grant for downtown revitalization and is poised to return as a second commercial area within Aurora². South Wales is another denser residential area with the main street of the hamlet located just outside the Southeastern part of Aurora in the Town of Wales. Although there are other, smaller hamlets (e.g., Jewettville, Griffins Mills), the remaining parts of the town are primarily rural residential.

Aurora includes many beautiful natural areas and parks, such as Knox Farm State Park, Emery Park (Erie County), Major’s Park (Aurora), Owen’s Falls (WNY Land Conservancy) JP Nicely Park (Aurora), Veteran’s Park of West Falls (Aurora), and the Mill Road Overlook (Aurora). Aurora is a Bronze-level Climate Smart Community and maintains an active Climate Smart Community Task Force and Open Space Committee working to preserve and protect Aurora’s environment and open spaces. Aurora is a Right-to-Farm community.

Aurora has never formally enacted a comprehensive plan, although it has used the non-enacted Regional Comprehensive Plan developed in the early 2000s as a guide³.

¹ Note that the Village of East Aurora will NOT be included in this comprehensive plan.

² The grant application is available here:

https://www.townofaurora.com/files/7916/9625/3209/West_Falls_New_York_Forward_2023_Grant_Application.pdf.

³ Available at: <https://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2021/07/RegionalComprehensivePlan.pdf>.



Aurora therefore primarily retains the zoning first implemented several decades ago with major updates introduced in the 2010s. More recently, the Aurora Town Board further updated residential and commercial zones to prevent uncontrolled residential growth and to preserve the nature of its commercial districts (including an overlay for the Hamlet of West Falls).

The Town Board recognizes the importance of a well-crafted framework for guiding Aurora's future growth and development over the next 10 to 20 years and was awarded funding from the County of Erie to develop a comprehensive plan for these purposes.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

The Comprehensive Plan is to provide a blueprint for the development, preservation and enhancement of:

- Residential, commercial and industrial neighborhoods;
- Public facilities, including parks and recreational areas;
- Infrastructure and transportation;
- Natural areas, water, and open spaces;
- Housing, including diversity of housing;
- Energy;
- Disaster preparedness, including a climate vulnerability assessment.

This plan, with a year 2035-2045 horizon, will incorporate visions, ideas, and foresight and provide recommendations and an implementation plan. Note that, although this document does not include the area of the Village of East Aurora, this study must consider certain trends and activities within the Village of East Aurora in order to properly develop the plan. Additionally, the study should consider the external pressures from surrounding areas. The Town Board and the Town's departments will participate in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. The consultant shall confer with the Town Board and departments in developing plans for the out-years.

a. FINAL PRODUCTS TO BE PRODUCED

1. Comprehensive Plan, including topical items, supporting maps and other graphics. Text and maps shall be provided in a digital format compatible with the Town GIS system. The Comprehensive Plan should include an executive summary not to exceed five pages, a vision statement, goals and objectives, findings and recommendations, an implementation matrix, sustainability elements, and a climate vulnerability assessment.
2. SEQR materials necessary to approve the Comprehensive Plan.

b. PROPOSED WORK PLAN

The following is a general outline of the stages required to complete the Comprehensive Plan. The expectation is for the project team to provide periodic updates to the Town Board throughout the entire project. The Town Board will appoint a number of community members, town employees, etc., to form an Advisory Committee to work with the project team.



i. TASK 1: Project Initiation (Month 1)

Kick-off the project and secure information on existing plans, recognized issues and ideas for the future. Map, describe and analyze current existing conditions as a base for looking to the future.

- Review and familiarize the project team with the Town's current zoning, non-enacted Regional Comprehensive Plan, and other pertinent documents.
- Introduce the project team to the Town Board.
- Develop a *project management plan* outlining roles, responsibilities, project schedule with milestones, and reporting mechanisms.
- Establish a project Advisory Committee and identify key stakeholders, together with the Town Board.
- Conduct/facilitate a project kickoff meeting with the Advisory Committee.

ii. TASK 2: Data Collection and Analysis (Months 2-4)

- Gather and analyze existing demographic data and socioeconomic trends, land use data and regulations, and other relevant information to identify key issues and opportunities.
- Gather and analyze an inventory of environmental resources and constraints, public infrastructure, stormwater management, open space inventory, and transportation to identify key issues and opportunities.
- Meet with appropriate Town Departments and Committees/Boards, including the Town Board, Planning Board, Open Space Committee, and Climate Smart Community Task Force.
- Review and assess data from other recent plans and studies (including regional plans) and identify gaps in information.

iii. TASK 3: Public Outreach and Engagement (Months 3-8)

- Develop a *public outreach strategy* that would include elements such as public surveys, and meetings and workshops to engage residents and stakeholders throughout the planning process and gather input on land use and resources and establish a vision and goals and objectives for the future.
- Analyze public input to inform the Comprehensive Plan and establish desired future development and land use management priorities.

iv. TASK 4: Develop Comprehensive Plan (Months 9-12)

- Develop a clear vision statement for the Town of Aurora.
- Update goals and objectives based on public input and current conditions. The goals and recommendations (and other sections of the Comprehensive Plan) should incorporate the following areas:
 - o Land use and development
 - o Housing and neighborhoods
 - o Natural resources and the environment (including preservation of open spaces)
 - o Energy and climate protection
 - o Agriculture



- Parks, trails, and other recreation
- Historical resources
- Transportation
- Municipal services and infrastructure
- Community services
- Economic development
- Prepare findings and identify recommendations to support plan implementation, including potential projects and source of funding.
- Compile a draft Comprehensive Plan document for review and acceptance by the project Advisory Committee.

v. Task 5: Plan Review and Approval (Months 13-14)

- Incorporate feedback from the Advisory Committee to prepare a draft Comprehensive Plan document for review and acceptance by the Town Board and, thereafter, public review.
- Commence the SEQR process and 239m review and hold a public hearing to gather additional input and identify any final concerns.
- Finalize the Comprehensive Plan based on comments gathered during the public review process and submit it to the Town Board for SEQR determination and approval.

3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- a. Periodic meetings will be held with the Advisory Committee, appointed by the Town Board to provide direction, policy decisions, guidance and approval.
- b. Periodic meetings will be held with the Town Board, including upon completion of a draft vision statement and the completion of the goals.
- c. Public participation is a vital ingredient. At least 3 public meetings should be conducted. Creative approaches to public input including meetings and social media should be considered.
- d. The plan shall endeavor to be compatible with plans for adjacent municipalities and overall Erie County regional goals.
- e. Extensive GIS information is available from the Town or Erie County for the consultant's use.
- f. Deliverables shall include electronic documents for all comprehensive plan and SEQR text and graphics (formatted for spiral binding) all in a format compatible with the Town's GIS System.
- g. Respondents are encouraged to recommend modifications to the above scope which will produce a better product.
- h. Monthly billing with narrative progress report shall be required.
- i. The consultant will be required to enter into an agreement with the Town of Aurora
- j. The maximum budget available for this work is \$50,000.

4. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Firms and/or teams are required to submit five paper and an electronic copy (via email to townboard@townofaurora.com) of materials that demonstrate the firm's capabilities and experience by no later than 4:00 pm on April 30, 2024, to the Office of the Supervisor at the address listed above.



The RFP submission shall be limited to no more than 30 double-sided pages. Your submittal should include the following information:

- Section 1. Description of Firm**
- Section 2. Qualifications and Experience**
- Section 3. Project Management Methodology**
- Section 4. Technical Approach**
- Section 5. References**
- Section 6. Cost Proposal**

The Town Board will determine the winner based on a number of factors, including cost, approach, experience, and proposed team. The town reserves the right to reject any and all submittals and to waive any informalities or irregularities in procedure.

Any questions or requests for additional information or documents will be accepted no later than April 19, 2024 to: townboard@townofaurora.com. While we will try our best to respond individually in real time, the answers to all questions will also be sent to all known interested parties on April 22, 2024. Please send a letter of interest if you wish to receive the responses.