

**THE TOWN OF HANCOCK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP 2024-02**

1. Project:

Update of the Comprehensive Plan for The Town of Hancock.

The Town of Hancock is inviting proposals for professional consulting services to update the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The proposals shall include a (by task) itemized "proposed budget", indicating the contracted cost to the Town for a final product meeting all the requirements indicated within each task as outlined in Sections 3 below.

2. Background:

Hancock is a small bedroom community located in Western Washington County. One of the oldest settlements in Western Maryland, Hancock derived its name from Edward Joseph Hancock, Jr., whose family operated the ferry at this northernmost point of the Potomac River. Edward Joseph Hancock, Jr. was considered a hero in the American Revolution who fought alongside General George Washington.

The Town's 2018 population estimate was 1,481. Approximately 60% of the people living in the Town are at or below 80% of the median income for Washington County. Hancock's median age is 42 years old and is 10 percent higher than the rest of the state. Sixty-one percent of the homes in town are owner occupied and seventy-one percent of those homes are single family. There are 641 households in town and the average household size is 2.3 people per home.

The bottle neck in the state of Maryland makes the north-south distance from the Pennsylvania state line to the West Virginia state line is only 1.8 miles (2.9 km) at Hancock. This makes the town the narrowest region in the state and this unique geographic feature as well as a vast ever-changing topographic landscape make planning for the town and its future growth patterns crucial as the next comprehensive plan cycle approaches.

State Law requires a jurisdiction exercising planning and zoning authority to review, and, if necessary, update its Comprehensive Plan every 10-years. The Town has reviewed the current Comprehensive Plan and has determined that a review and possible update of the Hancock 2010 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2010, (as updated in 2009, and adopted in 2010, to include a Municipal Growth Element and Water Resources Element) is warranted. The Comprehensive Plan is a vital component of the planning process as it serves as the official statement of the Town's policies to guide future growth and development. This project will allow the Town to hire a professional planning consultant to work with the Town to update the demographic, socioeconomic, land use, growth area, water resources, transportation, community facilities, sensitive areas, housing, and mapping information of the current Comprehensive Plan.

3. Scope of Work:

Working with the Mayor and Town Council, the Town Planning Commission, the Town Manager, and residents of the Town, the consultant will prepare a new Comprehensive Plan for Hancock.

The final product will be a new Comprehensive Plan which satisfies the requirements of the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and is consistent with the Planning Act of 1992 and Smart Growth principles and policies of the State.

The new Comprehensive Plan shall contain, at a minimum, the elements required under the Land Use Article. These basic required elements of the Comprehensive Plan are to include, but not be limited to, the following outline:

TASK 1: Development Goals and Policies Element

- i. A statement of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards to serve as a guide for the future growth and development of Hancock.
- ii. The goals and policies will be compatible with the twelve (12) State Planning Visions.

TASK 2: Land Use Plan Element

- i. The Land Use Plan element shall show proposals for the most appropriate and desirable development patterns and the general location, character, extent, and interrelationship of various land uses, and designate appropriate growth areas and resource areas. Such land use may include, without being limited to, residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and public land uses.
- ii. Existing and proposed land use patterns will also be developed and mapped.

TASK 3: Transportation Element

- i. A Transportation Element which shall show proposals for the most appropriate and desirable patterns for the general location, character and extent of the routes, for transportation facilities, and for the circulation of persons and goods at specified times as far into the future as is reasonable. Such routes may include, without being limited to, all types of highways or streets, railways, bicycle and pedestrian routes, and waterways.
- ii. The Transportation Element will develop policies that are consistent with the visions of the Planning Act of 1992 and will evaluate all modes of transportation within the corporate limits and surrounding areas of the Town. The element will express:
 1. Long range, short range, and recommendations for facility maintenance; intermediate range construction and maintenance;

2. Transportation and land use objectives, goals, policy recommendations, and measures to adhere to the visions, including consideration for sensitive areas and planned growth areas;
3. The relationship between the transportation system and land use, both existing and planned;
4. Recommendations for specific transportation services and facilities which will support any future areas of development;
5. The relationship between the local plan and system and the statewide transportation system as well as the Highway Needs Inventory and State facilities;
6. State and local responsibilities in providing elements of the overall transportation plan;
7. Economic and environmental implications of planned transportation;
8. Strategies for maximizing transportation safety and efficiency in the movement of people and goods; and,
9. The financial impact of recommendations and the identification of reasonable funding mechanisms, capital programming and an implementable process.

TASK 4: Community Facilities Element

- i. Infrastructure recommendations will address existing deficiencies, if any, and propose expansion or improvement of water and sewer facilities, schools, parks, community buildings, public safety, and any other community facilities to meet projected demand.

TASK 5: Mineral Resource Plan Element

- i. Identifies undeveloped land that should be kept in its undeveloped state until the land can be used to provide or assist in providing a continuous supply of minerals.
- ii. Identifies appropriate post-excavation uses for this land that are consistent with the Town's land planning process; and
- iii. Incorporates land use policies and recommendations for regulation to balance mineral resource extraction with other land uses and, to the extent feasible, to prevent the preemption of mineral resources extraction by other uses.

TASK 6: Sensitive Areas Element

- i. The Sensitive Areas Element will contain goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards designed to protect sensitive areas from the adverse effects of development, including, but not limited to, the following:
 1. Streams, tidal and non-tidal wetlands, and their associated buffers;
 2. 100-year flood plains;
 3. Habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species;
 4. Steep slopes; and
 5. Agricultural and forest lands intended for resource protection or conservation.

- ii. The sensitive areas element should also include other areas of special protection, as determined in this comprehensive planning process.

TASK 7: Municipal Growth Element

- i. A Municipal Growth Element shall be prepared which, at a minimum, addresses the following:
 - 1. Anticipated future municipal growth area outside the existing corporate limits of Hancock;
 - 2. Past growth patterns of the Town;
 - 3. The capacity of land areas available for development within Hancock, including in-fill and redevelopment;
 - 4. The land area needed to satisfy demand for development at densities consistent with the long-term development policy;
 - 5. Public services and infrastructure needed to accommodate growth within the proposed municipal growth area, including those necessary for:
 - a. Public schools, sufficient to accommodate student population consistent with State rated capacity standards established by the Interagency Committee on School Construction;
 - b. Libraries;
 - c. Public safety, including emergency medical response;
 - d. Water and sewerage facilities;
 - e. Stormwater management systems, sufficient to assure water quality both inside and outside the proposed municipal growth area; and
 - f. Recreation.
 - 6. Anticipated financing mechanisms to support necessary public service and infrastructure;
 - 7. Rural buffers and transition areas;
 - 8. Any burden on services and infrastructure for which the Town would be responsible for development in areas proximate to and outside the proposed municipal growth area;
 - 9. Protection of sensitive areas that could be impacted by development planned within the proposed municipal growth area;
 - 10. Population growth projections; and,
 - 11. The relationship of the long-term development policy to a vision of Hancock's future character.

TASK 8: Water Resources Element

- i. A Water Resources Element shall be prepared which, at a minimum, addresses the following:
 - 1. Identifies drinking water and other water resources that will be adequate for the needs of existing and future development proposed in the Land Use Plan Element, considering available data provided by the Maryland Department of Environment; and,

2. Identifies suitable receiving waters and land areas to meet stormwater management and wastewater treatment and disposal and needs of existing and future developments proposed in the Land Use Plan Element, considering available data provided by the Maryland Department of Environment.

TASK 9: Housing Element

- i. A new housing element is now included as a mandatory element for comprehensive plans. HB 1045 (2019) legislation provides specific definitions and requirements for low income and workforce housing, the format and strategies should be generated locally. The organization of this element must cover the following 4 areas;
 - a. **Housing Planning:** This section outlines the requirements and definitions of HB 1045 (2019), discusses the importance of housing planning generally, and provides sample questionnaires with which jurisdictions can carry on a dialogue about affordable housing in their local communities.
 - b. **Housing Data:** This section explores American Community Survey, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and state generated spatial data to help the user gain a better picture of housing supply and need in Maryland's jurisdictions. Planning consolidated this data into a Housing Dashboard.
 - c. **Housing Practices:** This section highlights some common affordable housing planning practices, including a simple model housing element process that can be used as an example for smaller jurisdictions creating their first housing element, and provides a few examples of affordable housing planning and studies recently completed by Maryland jurisdictions. Communities that would like to include their examples in this Housing M&G should contact Planning for inclusion
 - d. **Affordable Housing Resources:** This section directs users to an extensive list of available housing planning resources; including technical assistance, funding, and partnerships.

For more detailed information on this element please visit;

<https://planning.maryland.gov/Pages/OurWork/housing-element-mg/housing-element-home.aspx>

- ii. Technical Assistance

The Maryland Department of Planning and DHCD staff are available to assist any jurisdiction with the information and resources available in this M&G and with the development of their housing element. Planning's Regional Planners work directly with the Town of Hancock and will assist with the plan as needed to make sure all plans comply with state law.

For additional assistance with housing data and DHCD's programs, please contact the Housing Economic Research Office, which supports the mission of DHCD by providing housing, demographic and economic data with analysis/reporting to support the governor's agenda and its partners to finance housing opportunities and revitalize communities for Maryland citizens to live, work and prosper.

More information can be found at the following website;

<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Pages/Research.aspx>

TASK 10: Capital Improvement Plan

- iii. A Capital Improvement Plan shall be prepared which, at a minimum, addresses the implementation of a Capital Improvement Program identifying major infrastructure projects and expenditures for transportation and other public improvement projects to ensure that projects are prioritized consistent with development goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Infrastructure that is included in a Capital Improvement Plan will provide a mechanism for funding of work needed to refurbish existing facilities as well as new construction improvements as may be deemed necessary.

TASK 11: Plan Implementation Element

- i. The Plan Implementation Element will include recommendations for the following:
 1. Regulations affecting plan implementation;
 2. Streamlining review of applications for development, including permit review and subdivision plat review within the areas designated for growth in the plan;
 3. Providing for flexible development regulations to promote innovative and cost-saving design and protect the environment; and
 4. Economic development in areas designated for growth in the plan through use of innovative techniques.

4. Meetings

TASK 12: The consultant will include in the proposal a tentative meeting schedule and a review of milestones schedule for the Comprehensive Plan. Within this schedule, the consultant shall include attendance at a meeting between the Town and the County regarding the Municipal Growth Element, as required by HB 1141. The Consultant should also anticipate at least one meeting each with the Maryland Departments of Planning and Environment to discuss the Municipal Growth Element and Water Resources Element, respectively.

5. Public Hearing/Meeting (s)

TASK 13: The consultant will be required to conduct a public hearing with the Planning Commission to present a draft Comprehensive Plan and respond to questions and comments; and attend one meeting with the Mayor and Town Council to present and discuss the draft Comprehensive Plan.

6. Required Review by other Entities

TASK 14: Prior to submission to the State Clearinghouse for 60-day review of the draft Comprehensive Plan, the consultant shall:

- i. Submit the Water Resources Element to the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) for review and determination whether the proposed element is consistent with the Land Use Article requirements and with the programs and goals of the Department.
- ii. Submit the Municipal Growth Element to Washington County for a 30-day review period. The consultant shall attend the meeting(s) between the Town and the County

(after completion of the 30-day review period), as required by the Land Use Article, and, if necessary, will be required to attend any meeting before the State Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office.

- iii. Upon completion of meetings with MDE and Washington County as noted in i. and ii. above; on behalf of the Town, the consultant will be required to submit one digital copy of the draft plan to the State Clearinghouse for the State agency 60-day review and comment period. A draft copy of the plan shall also be submitted to Washington County.

7. End Products

TASK 15: Reproducible maps (digital format and color paper copy) for such elements of the plan as existing land use, transportation, sensitive areas, community facilities, and recommended land use shall be prepared for, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Transportation Map with Road Classification (existing and, if appropriate, needed improvements);
- ii. Sensitive Areas Map;
- iii. Existing and Proposed Land Use Maps;
- iv. Existing and Recommended Community Facilities Map;
- v. Mineral Resources Map, if applicable; and,
- vi. Municipal Growth Area Map (with suggested land use designations).

TASK 16: Twelve (12) copies of the final approved document and an electronic file copy in the most recent version of Microsoft Word will be provided to the Town.

8. Qualification Statement

The prospective firm is required to provide the following:

- State the number of years your organization has provided this type of service.
- List similar projects your organization has completed. Include project description, completion date, contract amount, owner, and phone number of owner's representative.
- List current projects. Include project description, completion date, contract amount, owner, and phone number of owner's representative.
- Provide a resume for each of your current key professional staff that may be involved in this project.

9. Miscellaneous

This Request is subject to the following miscellaneous terms:

- The Invitation for Proposals as available at the Hancock Town Hall, shall be considered a part of this Request and is incorporated herein.
- Hancock may consider informal any proposal not prepared and submitted in accordance with the provisions herein and may waive any informalities or reject any and all proposals. No proposal will be allowed to be withdrawn, for any reason, after it has been deposited with Hancock. Any proposal received after the time and date specified shall not be considered. Hancock reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or portions thereof,

and to make such award and/or negotiate with any bidder as is most advantageous and in the best interests of The Town of Hancock. Hancock also reserves the right to postpone the award of the proposal and condition the acceptance of the proposal upon Hancock's checking the bidder's references and qualifying the bidder.

- The proposal must contain the full name, business address, and the telephone number of the proposer interested in the same.
- Each proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope bearing on the outside the name of the proposer, his/her address, and the name of the project for which the proposal is submitted. If forwarded by mail, the sealed envelope containing the proposal must be in another envelope addressed as specified in the Invitation for Proposals.
- **Sealed proposals will be received at The Town of Hancock, Town Hall, 126 West High Street, Hancock, Maryland 21750 until 3:00 p.m. on May 31, 2024. Proposals will be opened at a subsequent town meeting; all parties will be notified in advance. Any proposals received after 3:00 p.m. on the stated date will not be considered.**