

## Planning & Zoning

*Room 234, Wadena County Courthouse, 415 Jefferson Street South, Wadena, MN 56482  
Phone: (218) 631-7604 Fax: (218) 631-7652*

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September 15, 2025

### **RE: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL – UPDATE OF THE WADENA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Wadena County intends to partner with a qualified consultant, or team of consultants, to join with the County staff, other stakeholders, and the public to accomplish this task, and we believe your firm has the qualifications and expertise to deliver an excellent product for the County.

The Comprehensive Plan was originally adopted in 1971 and has had updates in 2001 and 2013. Through this Plan update, the County is committed to recognizing the interdependence of a healthy environment, economy and community and the sustainability for each as well as recognizing the need and desire for growth without infringing on agriculture, forestry, and rural living, among other things. The County wishes to creatively integrate the goals and objectives of the Plan to include: land use, transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, natural resources, facilities and services, demographics and economic base, and housing trends. The County wishes to have a solid, finished product that will be used to move the County forward on a clear path in the next 10 to 15 years.

The full scope of work, project requirements, and detailed instructions for submission are included in the enclosed RFP document, along with details for point of contact, methods for submitting, deadlines for submitting, and the criteria used in the evaluation and selection process.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. We look forward, with anticipation, to receiving and reviewing your proposal.

Very truly yours,

Deana Malone  
Zoning Administrator

Enclosure



# Request for Proposals

TO UPDATE THE WADENA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

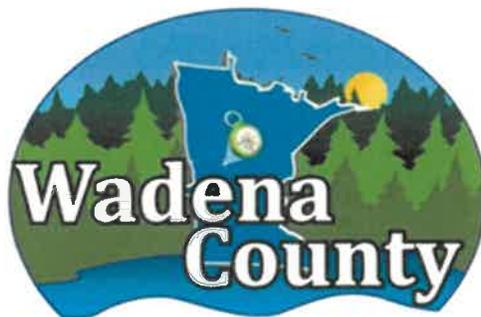
Wadena County Planning & Zoning | 415 Jefferson St. S Wadena MN 56482 | June 2025

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: Close of business July

Questions may be directed to Deana Malone, Planning & Zoning Administrator at one of the following:

Phone: (218) 631-7604

Email: [deana.malone@wcmn.us](mailto:deana.malone@wcmn.us)



## 1. General Information and Submittal Process

- Wadena County is seeking proposals from qualified, multi-disciplinary firms to participate in the planning process for reviewing and updating Wadena County's Comprehensive Plan. The County intends to partner with a qualified consultant, or team of consultants, to join with the County staff, other stakeholders, and the public to accomplish this task.

### A. Contract Administration:

1. All correspondence with regard to the RFP should be addressed to:

Deana Malone  
Wadena County Planning & Zoning  
Rm. 234 Courthouse  
415 Jefferson Street South  
Wadena, MN 56482  
[deana.malone@wcmn.us](mailto:deana.malone@wcmn.us)  
Phone: (218) 631-7604

2. All firms who receive or download this RFP are requested to register their name and email address by sending an email to [deana.malone@wcmn.us](mailto:deana.malone@wcmn.us) . Any revisions or corrections to the RFP after the initial posting/ mailing will be communicated to those registered RFP holders. Failure to register your contact information may result in disqualification of the RFP process. Proposals failing to include all requested information detailed within the RFP, and subsequent updates or modifications, will not be considered. All requests for additional information needed for preparation of the proposal should be sent to the Zoning Administrator using the contact information listed above.

### B. Submission of Proposals:

1. All submittals should be mailed in a sealed envelope to Deana Malone, Wadena County Planning & Zoning Administrator, at the address listed above. Submittals may also be emailed to the email address listed above.
2. All submittals must be received by close of business on September 2, 2025.
3. Costs for developing proposals are the express responsibility of the vendor and shall not be charged to the County.
4. Proposal must be completed and signed by an officer or authorized agent of the vendor submitting the proposal.

5. Multiple submissions will be allowed, but each alternate submission must be separate and apart from one another.
6. Proposals may be modified or withdrawn prior to the time set for the opening of proposals by submitting a written request for its withdraw to Deana Malone at the contact information listed above. Vendor may submit the same, a new, or a modified proposal prior to the closing date & time, but not after.
7. Any deviation from the specifications must be clearly indicated by the vendor along with their explanation for the deviation.
8. Any questions must be submitted in writing to Deana Malone, Planning & Zoning Administrator, using the contact information stated above.
9. For each item in the proposal, a unit price and a total for the quantity must be stated. Price reductions shall be granted to the County whenever they become effective. Vendors should note on the proposal sheet if the proposal is all or nothing.
10. The County may make inquiries and investigate as it deems necessary to determine the ability of the vendor to perform the services proposed and to ensure the vendor is property qualified to carry out the obligations of the agreement.
11. The County may choose to interview project planners prior to making a final determination.
12. All documents and materials submitted to the County as part of a proposal will become the property of Wadena County and will become public record. Any proprietary information must be clearly identified. These records will be available at the County during normal business hours. The County does not accept any responsibility for confidentiality of any information submitted in the proposal. All documents and information received through this process are subject to the provisions of MN Statutes Chapter 13 as it pertains to Government Data Practices.
13. The County reserves the right to reject a proposal which it considers incomplete, or containing false, conflicting, or misleading information, or contains an alteration or erasure of pricing, unless the alteration or erasure is crossed out and the correction thereof printed in ink or typewritten adjacent thereto and is initialed by the authorized person signing the document.
14. By submitting a proposal, the vendor certifies that it is the only party interested in its proposal and that its proposal is made and submitted without fraud or collusion with any other person, firm, or corporation whatsoever.

## 2. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners authorized County staff to move forward with a Request for Proposals to update the County Comprehensive Plan on March 22, 2025. The original Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1971, with updates taking place in 2001 through a regional planning agency, and, most recently in 2013 with County staff leading and completing the process.

A. The County is committed to developing a Plan which:

1. Incorporates the County's Mission & Values;
2. Is driven by input from the public from all walks of life;
3. Recognizes the interdependence of a healthy environment, economy, and community, and sustainability for each;
4. Recognizes the need and desire for growth without infringing on agriculture, forestry, and rural living; and,
5. Integrates the goals and objectives of the County's service areas in order to provide cost-effective delivery.

B. Wadena County wishes to creatively integrate the goals and objectives of a Comprehensive Plan to include:

1. Land Use
2. Transportation
3. Economic Development
4. Parks & Recreation
5. Natural Resources
6. Facilities & Services
7. Demographics and Economic Base
8. Housing Trends

## 3. BACKGROUND

In updating the County Comprehensive Plan, Wadena County is looking for a Plan process designed to engage County residents in shaping future land use policy and coordinate land use planning with services such as: transportation, economic development, and parks and recreation while still incorporating the County's Mission & Values, attached as an appendage.

Wadena County is situated in central Minnesota and is smaller in land mass at 536 square miles. Population growth in the County since 2010 has increased approximately 3 percent with an estimated population in 2023 of 14,241. The County is a mix of agriculture, forest, and rural living, along with 6 incorporated cities, either partially or completely, situated within its boundaries. Industry and business are mostly located within the limits of those municipalities; however, the County does encourage homebased businesses and

occupations as well. US Hwy. 10 runs the width of the County and State Route Hwy 71 runs the entire length giving the County 2 major transportation routes which are heavily used. Some areas of the County are experiencing more growth than others and this is attributed directly to recreation in the northern townships of the County. The County is currently taking some measures to encourage more commercial development along these two major transportation routes.

Although consolidation of farms and loss of young people to more urbanized areas with more employment opportunities have had an effect on agriculture in the County, it is still important to the overall economics of the County. In the same way, even though forestry has changed considerably since the adoption of the first County Comprehensive Plan, it also remains a staple in the overall economics of the County.

Wadena County, like most other counties in Minnesota, has a need for additional housing opportunities within the County and is currently working on some measures to expand some opportunities in this area as well.

#### 4. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The intent of the Scope of Services is to provide a framework for consultants to develop a more detailed Scope of Services based on their experience and expertise. Proposals should present an efficient, effective scope of work to ensure project objectives are met. The final Scope of Services will be developed in collaboration with the selected Consultant and County Staff prior to contract approval. The following must be incorporated into the consultant proposed scope of work; however, the proposed scope of work is not limited to these services.

##### A. Project Management

Consultant will:

1. Manage their time, staff, resources, budget and related activities;
2. Be in regular communication with County staff in-person or by telephone, email, or virtual meeting to provide updates on progress with other participating as requested;
3. Will collaborate with County staff to decide on appropriate plans and procedures

##### B. Participation Process

Consultant will:

1. Facilitate participation and interaction of County staff, elected officials, the general public, business owners, and other stakeholders and leaders who are key to the development of the plan;

2. Be responsible for developing a comprehensive participation program that encompasses the public and stakeholders and incorporates local knowledge and experience;
3. Develop a process that will creatively seek out and involve residents and other stakeholders, who may normally not participate in common community engagement processes, to increase ownership in the project.

### **C. Assumptions**

The Consultant will:

1. Analyze the assumed effects of external forces (physical, social, economic, and political) and trends on the future of the County including issues and forecasts of local and regional growth;
2. Include discussion on such planning elements as demographics, land use, transportation, housing, parks and recreation, community facilities, natural resources, utilities, parks, open space, trails, image and opportunities, among others.

### **D. Vision and Goals Setting**

The Consultant will:

1. Work with the County and project stakeholders in developing a broadly supported and achievable vision for the long-term future of Wadena County;
2. Guide the process for developing related goals to try and accomplish the vision;
3. Work with the County and project stakeholders in developing objectives to help the County achieve the goals established.

## **5. COUNTY STAFF RESOURCE AND SUPPORT**

County Staff will:

1. Lend assistance in completing data analysis, data gathering and other necessary tasks;
2. Assist in facilitating interactions with the appropriate County staff members, County Commissioners, Planning Commission members, members of the public and other stakeholders;
3. Compile background data, information, and photos to update the plan;
4. Provide access to all County GIS and electronic data as needed, distributed to the selected vendor in ESRI file geo database format in the Wadena County Coordinate System;
5. Assist with all public meetings including coordination of legal notices and securing meeting venues;
6. Review all draft and final copy documents; and

7. Conduct communications to the public in written and/or electronic format as needed.

## 6. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

It is anticipated the project will result in the following primary deliverables, although the consultant and/or the County may identify additional intermediate deliverables when the final scope of work is negotiated. Within their proposal, consultants are encouraged to include any additional or alternative deliverables that they feel would be necessary, based on their professional experience, expertise, and knowledge:

- 1) A broadly supported planning document, with eye appeal, which reflects the identity of Wadena County now, what is important to us to preserve, where we see the County in 5 years and 10 years, and how we begin to reshape the County without losing site of, and diminishing, the things we value. It should detail the planning process and outline any anticipated results, conclusions, and recommendations;
  - a) This document will also be used as a promotional tool to showcase the County to potential home buyers, business, and industry who may be looking for a place to start or expand a business in areas designated for those uses.
- 2) A plan implementation strategy that may include, but not be limited to:
  - a) Timelines
  - b) Roles and responsibilities
  - c) Necessary resources
  - d) Anticipated funding mechanisms;
- 3) Presentations to the County's staff, County Board, Planning Commission, other applicable committees, and to the general public.

## 7. PROPOSAL CONTENT

Firms shall submit:

- 1) Cover letter explaining firm's interest in and understanding of the project;
- 2) A detailed work program, and updated timeline based on the activities identified in Section 4: Scope of Services;
- 3) References
- 4) Project plan that includes details of how public meetings will be structured to meet the goals sited 1) conduct effective public meetings, 2) encourage participation, 3) facilitate discussion and 4) provide information;
- 5) Proposed project schedule;
- 6) Summary of key personnel assigned to this project, including resumes, and contact information;
- 7) Pricing page according to Section 1.B.9.;

- a) It is the responsibility of the proposing firm to accurately predict the amount of time and resources they will need to spend on the project and their associated total cost.
- 8) 10 hard copies and 1 electronic copy.

## 8. REVIEW & SELECTION PROCESS

### A. Review of Proposals:

1. Proposals will be reviewed by County staff for completeness and compliance with the minimum content requirements. Proposals considered incomplete or not having the minimum content requirements will not be considered.
2. Although cost will be considered as a factor, it will not be the only determining factor. There will be an emphasis placed on the demonstrated quality of the anticipated services based on experience and expertise as well as the timeliness of the consultant(s) to complete the prescribed services.
3. After a review of the proposals, a recommendation will be made to the County Board of Commissioners for a contract award.

### B. Selection Criteria: Evaluation of proposals will be based on the following:

1. Work Approach, Deliverables, & Organization:
  - a. Firm grasp of the project scope and objectives;
  - b. Quality and organization of proposed work program and proposed deliverables;
  - c. Quality of creative approach to both the deliverables and to public engagement;
  - d. Completeness of proposed deliverables;
  - e. Quality and creativeness of plan to facilitate, encourage, and implement public participation;
  - f. Amount of time budgeted for interaction with key community stakeholders;
2. Communications:
  - a. Organization and completeness of response;
  - b. Written skills, as shown through the submission and any other submitted work examples;
3. Related Experience, References, and Work Examples:
  - a. Demonstration, through references, work examples, and documented experience of:

- i. Leadership skills necessary to be effective in navigating social, political, and personal opinions that inevitably come with the nature of this project;
- ii. Confirmation and descriptions of similar work performed & examples of the same;
- iii. Experience and demonstrated ability of successfully completing other projects of a similar nature on time and within budget;
- iv. Demonstrated experience with community and public planning processes;
- v. Demonstrated ability & experience to conduct productive public meetings;
- vi. Demonstrated ability to work with a variety of staff, public officials, and other individuals objectively and kindly;
- vii. Quality of submitted work examples;
- viii. Past performance on similar projects; and
- ix. Current workload and availability to consultant team members to perform the work.

4. Schedule:

- a. Proposed project schedule and the staffing plan that will facilitate completion of the plan in a timely manner; and
- b. Number of visits and meetings planned.

5. Cost:

- a. Demonstration of successful budget planning/performance and previous experience in meeting project budget;
- b. Description of approach to budgeting; and
- c. Presentation of consultant(s) best offer; not-to-exceed cost.

6. Additional Information:

- a. County reserves the right to request additional information or clarification from Proposers during any phase of the evaluation and selection process. Proposer's or their representative's presence may be requested to answer questions. Clear and timely notification will be given, if necessary.

9. DISQUALIFICATION

- 1. Proposals submitted may be considered disqualified for any of the following:
  - a. Incomplete submittal;
  - b. Conflict of interest with County or its agents

- c. Lack of qualifications or experience;
- d. Unsatisfactory performance record based on references contacted;
- e. Any other reason determined to be in the best interest of the County;
- f. Failure to comply with qualification requirements set forth by the County.

10. CONTRACT AWARD

- 1. Issuance of the RFP does not:
  - a. Commit the County to selecting a consultant;
  - b. Awarding a contract;
  - c. Obligate the County to pay consultants for costs incurred in preparation of proposal;
- 2. County reserves the right to:
  - a. Postpone opening of proposals;
  - b. Accept or reject proposals received;
  - c. Negotiate with other than the selected consultant, if negotiations with selected consultant be terminated;
  - d. Negotiate with more than one consultant simultaneously;
  - e. Cancel all or part of the Request for Proposal.

11. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- 1. Issuance of the RFP does not:
  - a. Commit the County to selecting a consultant;
  - b. Awarding a contract;
  - c. Obligate the County to pay consultants for costs incurred in preparation of proposal;
- 2. County reserves the right to:
  - a. Postpone opening of proposals;
  - b. Accept or reject any and all proposals received;
  - c. Cancel all or part of the Request for Proposal;
  - d. Issue a subsequent Request for Proposal;
  - e. Remedy technical errors in the Request for Proposal;
  - f. Establish a list of finalists eligible for interview after evaluation of the written proposals;
  - g. Negotiate with other than the selected consultant, if negotiations with selected consultant be terminated;
  - h. Negotiate with more than one consultant simultaneously.

TIME LINE TABLE

ACTION	DATE OF ACTION
SHIP RFP – POST TO WEBSITE	September 15, 2025
PROPOSALS DUE	4:30 pm Wednesday, October 15, 2025
PHASE ONE - REVIEW OF THE RFP RESPONSE	October 30, 2025
NOTIFICATION OF VENDORS SELECTED FOR INTERVIEWS	October 30 2025
CONDUCT INTERVIEWS	2 <sup>nd</sup> week in November
CONTRACT AWARDED	Mid November 2025
PROJECTED PLAN UPDATE COMPLETION	JUNE 1 2026