Request for Proposal

Town of Tiverton

Master Price Agreement Request for Quote from Weston and Sampson, LLC. for

North Tiverton Revitalization Strategy and Design

**I. Background and Purpose**

On June 12, 2023, the Town Council of the Town of Tiverton, Rhode Island adopted Council Resolution 2023-0005A to create the Tiverton North End and Industrial/Business Park Advisory Subcommittee (hereinafter referred to as the Subcommittee) of the Tiverton Economic Development Commission (hereinafter referred to as EDC) with the mandate of "developing and recommending to the Tiverton Town Council (hereinafter referred to as Council) an economic revitalization plan for Tiverton's north end and planful build-out of the Tiverton Industrial/Business Park.” The Council additionally recognized “the residents of Tiverton, through the Comprehensive Plan, want business and residential development to be carried out in a thoughtful, planned way that helps keep Tiverton’s character while recognizing the rights of property owners to develop their land in accordance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations.” The resolution notes that the Council "recently allocated $100,000 for a redevelopment/economic development plan for the north end of Tiverton" and mandated the Town Administrator "to seek a qualified individual or firm with expertise in community development to provide professional support to the subcommittee and shall make recommendations for approval of that firm or individual by the Tiverton Town Council.”

The Subcommittee is tasked with completing their report and submitting it to the EDC no later than Sept. 1, 2024. The EDC will review the report and make recommendations to the Council no later than Nov. 1, 2024. Please note that while the resolution mandates the Subcommittee to develop "a revitalization and economic development plan for ... the North End of Tiverton and for the Industrial/Business Park ...", this Request for Proposals is exclusively focused on Tiverton’s North End.

The Council defined the north end study area as that portion of Tiverton north of Route 24 to the Fall River, Massachusetts border and from Mt. Hope Bay east to Fish Road. This study area covers approximately 2.7 square miles ([Calculate Area on Map, Google Maps Area Calculator (calcmaps.com)](https://www.calcmaps.com/map-area/) with an approximate population of 8,000 residents (US Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census for Census Tracts 416.01 and 416.02). The northernmost portion of the study area (Judson Street to State Street and Bay Street to Fish Road) which abuts Fall River, consists of a former textile mill village with small lots & dense tenement housing. The Bourne Cotton Mill has recently been repurposed into rental apartment units with a separate building now under construction which contains an additional 59 rental residential units. Much of the existing built environment north of Judson St. was built in the 19th century or early 20th century to house and service cotton mill operatives and their families.

The rest of the study area largely consists of single-family homes in conventional suburban configuration with a commercial center along Main Road featuring, among other businesses, a bank, post office, two pharmacies, two medical clinics, several restaurants, and an independent food market. This section of Main Road from Ford Farm Road north to Judson Street hosts the largest single concentration of retail and professional services in town.

The study area is largely zoned residential (R-30 to R-60), with general commercial primarily along Main Road. In 2013, the Town adopted a form-based code along Main Road to encourage mixed-use flexibility, pedestrian amenities, and quality design. The portion of Main Road north of Judson Street to the Fall River border is a classic, although somewhat blighted, traditional Main Street with store fronts on the sidewalk and eclectic architecture.

Only a small portion of the study area is sewered, although the Tiverton Wastewater District (TWWD) plans to extend sewers to the Bay Street area, where failed Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) threaten Mt. Hope Bay with pollution. The entire study area has access to piped water provided by the North Tiverton Fire District (NTFD).

There are few public buildings in the study area. Pocasset Elementary School and North Tiverton Fire Station are situated on Main Road. with the Tiverton Senior Citizens Center nearby. There is no public transportation in this area or in Tiverton other than two morning buses that depart from the 'Park & Ride' lot on Fish Road to Providence and two evening buses returning from Providence to the 'Park & Ride' lot. (Note: In February 2024, the RI Public Transportation Authority announced bus service to Tiverton would be terminated.)

The waterfront is an underutilized asset. A strip of former railroad track, now owned by RIDOT, is undeveloped due to environmental contamination and lack of interest by Statewide Planning. Waterfront development includes The Villages at Mt. Hope Bay consisting of 220 high-end condominium units with a 4-star public restaurant overlooking the water and a short publicly accessible dock and walking trail. The Villages overlay zone (called 'Age Restricted Mixed-Use Community') provides for further commercial waterfront development north of the restaurant. The northernmost waterfront near the state line hosts a propane/petroleum product storage and distribution business on Bay St.

Apart from a team sport playing field behind Pocasset Elementary School and a small recreation area near Bay Street, the north end lacks passive and active recreation facilities. There are no parks. Undeveloped land is very limited with the notable exception being the privately-owned 90-acre Hicks Farm stretching from Main Road to Mt. Hope Bay, the Simpson Property located behind the Family Ties Restaurant and a small property at the corner of Shove St. and State Street.

The study area includes the state-designated Osbourn - Bennett Historic District consisting of four buildings and about 20 acres along Main Road just north of Rt. 24.

In recent years, the southern portion of the study area along Souza Road from Fish Road to Main Road, has been the focus of intense development. Four developments (Pocasset Reserve, Bayview Condominiums, Vital at Tiverton Commons and Souza Road Condominiums) that have been approved or are currently under review by the Tiverton Planning Board involve 590 residential units at buildout, as well as commercial buildings.

Constraints to redevelopment/revitalization include the lack of sewers and natural gas service as well as limitations on the aging water distribution infrastructure. In addition, a 'brownfield' strip of polluted soil along Bay Street from Judson Street north to the state line is currently under a soil disturbance ban.

New residential and commercial developments in recent years pose a challenge to existing Town services and the pace of development may accelerate when sweeping changes in state land use ordinances takes effect on January 1, 2024, and when commuter rail service from Fall River to Boston begins in late winter/early Spring of 2024. The Council enacted a six-month moratorium on new residential developments in excess of four units which runs from January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024. The Town Administrator has secured a state infrastructure grant to determine the capacity for water service to new developments based on existing pipe, pump & tank infrastructure. The roadway system and public-school capacity is also a major concern.

Incentives for redevelopment/revitalization include Route 24, with Fish Road and Main Road access and the anticipated opening of commuter rail service from Fall River to Boston's South Station in 2024. The disused Old Colony Railroad land offers recreational opportunities as may the purchase of undeveloped properties identified above. The old mill village located in North Tiverton could potentially be repurposed into a thriving commercial area featuring small, independent businesses. Finally, the current commercial strip along Main Road offers many 'in-fill' opportunities that could replace vacant and under-utilized lots with attractive, pedestrian-friendly development and vibrant businesses.

Further information on the study area is provided in the following publications which the consultant should carefully review, among other pertinent studies, plans and reports:

* *Tiverton Comprehensive Community Plan (2018)* - especially Element 10 Economic Development and Element 11 summarizing action items and responsibilities for implementation
* *Tiverton Commercial Form-Based Code: Proposed Zoning with Design Standards and Guidelines October 23, 2013.* Prepared by the Cecil Group with Union Studio
* *From Main Road to Main Street (2011)* - a slide presentation to Town Council April 25, 2011
* *Rebuilding the Public Realm Utilizing Private Investment Incentives (2011*) - a slide presentation to Town Council Sept. 12, 2011
* *Town of Tiverton, RI Growth Management Needs Assessment for Impact Fee Schedule and Ordinance (2007)* Adopted July 30, 2007

**II. Scope of Services**

The Consultant and Team (hereinafter referred to as Consultant), having expertise in community development, will address the tasks outlined in the Council Resolution (2023-0005A), as it relates to the north end of Tiverton. Principal tasks include "identifying and enticing businesses that fit the characteristics of the Neighborhood Business District, Traditional Main Street District and Pedestrian Friendly Destination District articulated in the form-based zoning code approved in 2014, including the development of much-needed publicly accessible open space ..." The Resolution further charges the Subcommittee, working with the Consultant, with the task of developing a revitalization and economic development plan "that includes streetscapes and building enhancements, accessible public open space, bicycle lanes and paths, and the potential for public transit and which is consistent with the form-based code, the comprehensive plan and respects the rights of property owners under the current zoning regulations."

The Council recognizes that a more vibrant and diverse economic base will preserve and enhance the quality of life, property and resources for the people of north Tiverton.

It should be noted that, early in 2023, the Town Council contracted the consulting firm of Weston & Sampson to update and improve the town's zoning code, form-based code and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations. Town Council also appointed a Zoning Revision Committee to work with the Consultant on this task. Among other items, the Zoning Revision Committee is considering simplifying the form-based code and merging it into the Zoning Code. Tiverton North End and Industrial/Business Park Advisory Subcommittee is coordinating its review activities with the Zoning Revision Committee.

It should further be noted that the Council, responding to concerns that intense development pressure may over-tax town services & infrastructure, enacted a six-month moratorium on new residential developments in excess of four units which runs from January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024. The Town Administrator has arranged grant funding to support a hydraulic engineering study of water service capacity. Related infrastructure issues, such as school capacity and traffic circulation, will also be studied during the moratorium period. However, 'comprehensive permit' applications (which involve 20% or more affordable housing units) are exempt from this moratorium by state law.

The Consultant must work in a collaborative manner with the chairperson of the Subcommittee and other Subcommittee members and attend meetings of the Subcommittee when possible. The Consultant must also work in a proactive manner with the Council, Town Administrator and volunteers on relevant Boards and Commissions.

A major component of the project must be the involvement and input of businesses, residents and other stakeholders. At a minimum this shall be addressed via three (3) public meetings/charettes as described further in this paragraph; an interactive website; online surveys of business owners, property owners and residents to obtain additional input; and the use of social media. In-person meetings/charettes should be as interactive as possible and held at different times for maximum participant convenience. The public meetings/charettes shall include at least one (1) general meeting with the community to present the project in broad outline and seek public input/suggestions/concerns. This introductory charette shall be followed with two (2) additional public meetings/charettes, one of which will be with the general public and one with the business community. Community input must also be sought outside of public meetings/charettes via all appropriate channels. The goals for these activities are to garner the input and the support of the community through a collaborative partnership and open dialogue.

The Consultant should approach all tasks with a sense of what is feasible and reasonably achievable given current business and political realities. The Consultant should focus on what is 'doable', and not spend limited time and budget on plans that might work in highly affluent communities but may be more challenging in Tiverton. Since plan recommendations will include a strategy for implementation, the Consultant must have a working knowledge of potential funding sources such as federal grants (e.g. Community Development Block Grants), Rhode Island grants (e.g. State Transportation Improvement Program, municipal funding sources such as a Development Impact Fee) and private sector sources (e.g. Rhode Island Foundation Community Grants).

The primary foci of the North Tiverton Revitalization Strategy and Design Report must be to:

* Support the desire of residents to ensure overall development is carried out in a thoughtful planned way that helps to enhance North Tiverton’s character while recognizing the rights of property owners to develop their land in accordance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations.
* Encourage robust economic revitalization of businesses and properties on Main Road from the Fall River line to Route 24 and the mill village area north of Judson Street with small, well-designed independent businesses.
* Recognize that the mill village area has very different characteristics and potential than the more suburban commercial district south of Judson Street where parking is plentiful and where there are many in-fill opportunities. With respect to the mill village north of Judson Street, the Consultant should be familiar with strategies utilized in Chepachet, Ashton, Anthony and other successfully revitalized Rhode Island mill villages.

Consistent with the Council's mandate, the Consultant and Subcommittee must develop a North Tiverton Revitalization Strategy and Design Report with recommendations that adequately address the following key tasks.

* Tiverton's existing zoning code, including the form-based zoning code that guides future building development, and the 'Land Development and Subdivision Regulations' must be carefully reviewed to determine if new or amended provisions would better encourage residential development and attractive, thriving businesses, consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan (2018). Conversely, existing provisions that restrict quality development must be identified. Real estate tax policy and any other town ordinances that have an impact on north Tiverton's business climate should also be reviewed.
* Consideration of any modifications to Tiverton’s zoning code that may occur during the period of the study, including but not limited to any modifications related to types of lighting (e.g. Dark Sky compliant), landscaping, on and off-street parking, signage, etc.
* Consideration of whether the various neighborhoods of the study area are properly zoned in a manner that attracts desirable development and discourages inappropriate development, such as the area zoned industrial in the mill village area and to provide connectivity between the Bourne Mill and the main business area of North Tiverton.
* A review of the ‘Design Standards and Guidelines’ (October 23, 2013) to determine if these, or any successor zoning codes that incorporate these standards and guidelines, address streetscapes and building enhancement consistent with recommendations of the Consultant and to determine if these concepts remain feasible for Main Road, if such design standards are enforceable and if any recommendations for modifications should be provided.
* A review of the pedestrian and vehicular circulation of this area must be addressed. Pedestrian and vehicular circulation is an important feature of healthy commercial districts and must be fully addressed. The Town is already committed to more pedestrian-friendly streets with adequate sidewalks, bicycle lanes and other amenities and the Comprehensive Plan encourages a 'complete streets' approach to future circulation plans. This concept is key to a better quality of life in the community. (See Comprehensive Plan, Circulation element, Goal 2, p.108). The State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) for Tiverton during the period 2022 - 2031 (FFY) has only one improvement project in the study area - repaving Souza Road. Apart from bus service to Providence from the Fish Road 'Park & Ride', (likely soon to be terminated), public transportation is limited.
* A review of the public transportation and parking needs of this area and recommendations to address identified challenges. The current lack of adequate public transportation inhibits economic revitalization, as does the lack of parking space north of Judson Street. Additional parking along Main Road from Judson Street north to the Fall River border will bring new business to existing shops and encourage new businesses. The 'Park and Ride' lot on the east side of Fish Road, at the intersection with Souza Road, will need improvements when all of the new housing construction (590 residential units) in the immediate neighborhood is completed.
* A review of the Open Space needs of this area and recommendations to address identified challenges. Open Space for passive recreation or team sports is very limited in North Tiverton. However, there are three sizable and undeveloped parcels in the study area that may pose potential opportunities for purchase for the development as parks, hiking trails and sport playing fields.
* Hicks Farm, 471 Main Road (plat 115, lot 254) 78.5 acres from the west side of Main Road to Mt. Hope Bay, zoned R-30.
* 0 Church St./0 Railroad (plat 114, lot 240) 24 acres owned by Mt. Hope Marina, LLC zoned R- 30.
* 70 Shove Street & 381 State Street (Plat 102, Lots 119,120, 122) 16.5 acres largely undeveloped near the Shove Mill and formerly part of the mill complex, zoned Industrial.

The Consultant should be aware of soil contamination along Bay Street. In 2002, lead, arsenic and other toxins from coal gasification waste were found in a 36-acre, 6-block area of the Bay Street neighborhood, including about 74 properties, the Bay View Playground and the Old Colony Railroad track. The area is currently under RIDEM's Environmental Land Use Restriction (ELUR) regulatory program with a moratorium on soil disturbance. Soil remediation has been limited by the lack of funding to date. (Contact: Thomas Ramotowski, Conservation Commission).

The Consultant’s response to the Scope of Work shall include a preliminary cost estimate and schedule. The deadline for completion of all tasks is to be within no more than 12 months of the signing of all legal agreements with an identified Consultant. The project budget and schedule should be broken down into key tasks with each task having an estimated cost and timeframe.

The Consultant’s response to the Scope of Work shall include guidance and specific strategies for implementing the recommendations in the North Tiverton Revitalization Strategy and Design Report. To the extent possible, this task should conform to the format of the Comprehensive Plan's Plan Implementation element, which describes the task or action, identifies the primary and secondary parties responsible for implementation and sets a three-tier timeframe of short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The Subcommittee has discussed the potential benefit of providing recommendations based on current market analysis for commercial growth of existing businesses and attracting new businesses. Given the existing age, income, size and other population demographics of the study area, what types of businesses can be expected to thrive.

**III. Deliverables**

1. **Staff Qualifications:** When submitting the response to this Response for Proposal, the Consultant will include the submission of brief biographies of key staff assigned to the Project, including their experience in this work and resumes.
2. **North Tiverton Revitalization Strategy and Desing Report:** The completion and submission to the Committee and the Council a North Tiverton Revitalization Strategy & Design Report consistent with the scope of services contained herein, which at minimum shall include:
   1. Maps.
   2. Illustrative graphics/renderings.
   3. A summary of the input from public meetings.
   4. A roadway and streetscape design concept for the study area.
   5. Recommendations for the robust economic revitalization of businesses and properties on Main Road from the Fall River line to Route 24 and the mill village area north of Judson Street with small, well-designed independent businesses.
   6. An implementation plan and strategy with recommendations which shall minimally include:
      1. Defining of the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of the North Tiverton Revitalization Strategy & Design Report.
      2. Identification of the responsible parties for accomplishing actions.
      3. Identification of funding opportunities including specific grants for identified actions.
      4. Outlining timelines for implementation.
3. A presentation of the North Tiverton Revitalization Strategy & Design Report to the Town Council.
4. Fifteen (15) color copies and one unbound version of each deliverable are required.
5. The final version of each deliverable shall be submitted in electronic format on a USB compatible hard drive and contain a Microsoft Word compatible version, and a PDF version. All images, tables, and graphs used in the final version shall be in Microsoft Excel compatible format and shall include all GIS or CAD data created by the Consultant and used in maps in the final version. All materials will become the property of the Town of Tiverton.

**V. Project Schedule**

Work is expected to start in Spring 2024 and the finished product should be completed within the 12-month time frame identified in the Scope of Services, unless otherwise agreed upon by both parties.

The Consultant should demonstrate the ability to complete the project on schedule or explain why a departure from the proposed schedule is recommended. If the Consultant believes that the Project, or specific Project Components, can be accelerated in advance of the schedule above, the accelerated schedule should be outlined in the Response.

**IV. Project Budget**

The Consultant shall submit an estimated cost summary. The cost summary shall at a minimum contain the following:

* The fee for the entirety of all services proposed in Section II Scope of Services and Section III Deliverables of this request;
* A detailed breakdown of the professional service fees by task and sub-task.
* The hourly rates to be charged by the consultant and its sub-consultants for services performed by each member of the Consultant’s team; and
* A separate estimate of the cost of conducting a market analysis.