

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
PLANNING CONSULTING SERVICES
REVIEW AND AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE
FOR HOUSING REDEVELOPMENTS
CITY OF MT. PLEASANT**

The City of Mt. Pleasant is seeking proposals from qualified professional planning firms to review and amend its Zoning Ordinance related to the redevelopment of housing in the City through the codification of existing procedures and standards currently in use by the City's Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

Since 2009, the ZBA and Planning Commission have approved several redevelopments of rooming dwellings (units occupied by more than 2 unrelated people) and Registered Student Organizations (fraternity and sorority dwellings occupied by more than 2 unrelated people) in the M-2, Multiple Family Residential zoned areas of the City. The subject properties were nonconforming to a variety of current Zoning Ordinance regulations prior to redevelopment.

The ZBA has reviewed the redevelopment proposals on a case-by-case basis subject to subsection 154.007(B)(5) of the Zoning Ordinance, which allows a nonconforming use to be changed to a new nonconforming use where the ZBA finds that the new use would markedly decrease the degree of nonconformance and would enhance the desirability of adjacent conforming uses. Following a finding by the ZBA, the proposals are reviewed by the Planning Commission pursuant to the Special Use Permit standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

In 2012, the ZBA and Planning Commission developed the attached Review Procedures and Standards to govern the review of these requests. The City Commission is interested entertaining proposals to codify a procedure in the City's Zoning Ordinance that would permit the redevelopments to continue in a manner that achieves a similar outcome and occurs within a limited area.

Interested firms are invited to submit proposals to assist the City in completing this amendment. The services required are described in the following sections of this Request for Proposals.

Scope of Work

The consultant would be responsible for the following tasks:

- Distinguish the Project Area – The M-2, Multiple Family Residential zoned area is generally located north of Bellows Street, south of High Street, west of Mission Street, and east of West Campus drive in the City. An excerpt of the City's Zoning Map is attached for reference. The City Commission has indicated that the amendment should apply to those properties located on Main and Washington Streets south of High Street and north of Bellows Street. The consultant would be responsible distinguishing the project area from the remainder of the M-2 zoned area.
- Review of Existing Conditions – The City has a rental housing licensing program and maintains information on rental licenses, occupancies, etc. In addition, the City maintains a GIS system with basic data regarding lot size and other typical information. Several of the properties in the area are nonconforming to current Zoning Ordinance standards related to one or more of the following: permitted density, lot size, front yard parking, parking on a surface other than concrete or asphalt, building setbacks, the presence of a rear dwelling unit (typically a converted garage), etc. To date, the City has been addressing the nonconforming conditions in the area on a largely site-by-site basis. As part of the codification process the consultant would be

responsible for gathering data as necessary for the project area that would identify the nature and type of non-conformities that would be addressed by this procedure.

- Review of Redevelopment Projects – Since 2009, several redevelopments have been approved along in the M-2, Multiple Family Residential zoning district utilizing the procedure documented in 2012. There were several previous redevelopments approved in the M-2 district, as well. The consultant would be responsible for reviewing and understanding the redevelopment projects from both field inspection and case file review, as well as meetings with staff, the Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, and City Commission as needed. The consultant would be responsible for understanding the evolution of the review procedures, and the nature of the redevelopments that are currently being accomplished. It is the desire of the City that any new procedure adopted accomplish redevelopments of the same or improved quality, limited to the identified project area.
- Stakeholder Input – The consultant would be responsible for identifying and making outreach to affected stakeholders for input into the amended procedures.
- Zoning Ordinance Amendment – The consultant would be responsible for identifying and recommending the appropriate procedures to codify in a Zoning Ordinance amendment that will accomplish redevelopments of the same or improved quality as those currently approved in the identified project area. The consultant would be responsible to the City Commission and would be expected to develop recommended language to amend the City's Zoning Ordinance and attend all public hearings at the Planning Commission and City Commission necessary to accomplish the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.
- Additional Documentation – The consultant would be responsible for the development of any additional documents necessary to support the ordinance amendment and to accomplish continued redevelopment in the project area. These documents may include, but not necessarily be limited to, background study documents to support the amendment and design guidelines to characterize the preferred style of development.

Additional Services Required

The proposal should indicate the types and nature of any meetings the consultant identifies as necessary for the completion of the project, including public hearings in front of the Planning Commission and City Commission, as part of the ordinance amendment process.

The City also desires to keep interested parties engaged to the process. The proposal should identify recommended means for doing so with the use of web sites, social media, and the like.

Project Schedule

The proposal should include a schedule that identifies the timing of major tasks, beginning with the contract award and ending with adoption by the City Commission.

Qualifications

The proposal shall include a statement of qualifications. The statement should include the name, address, and brief history of the firm. The resumes of key personnel that would be assigned to the project, along with a list of their responsibilities within the project should also be provided. In addition,

related experience during the last ten (10) years should be provided (include the name of the community, contact person, and phone number).

Project Cost and Contract

The proposal should include the following cost information: the lump sum project cost with a breakdown illustrating the costs of various deliverables; an estimate of the amount of staff time required to complete the project, including the approximate time expected to be allocated to each staff member; the number of meetings/site visits included in the project cost; and the firm's fee schedule for additional work.

The City desires a professional services contract with a not-to-exceed fee for the required services. The contract will provide for monthly billing on a time and materials basis for the services provided. In addition, the contract will include language to allow the project to be terminated by joint agreement of the parties with full compensation being made to the consultant for expenses incurred and work completed to termination date.

Proposal Evaluation

Once the proposals are received, they will be reviewed by a committee which will make a recommendation to the City Commission. It is possible that at least one of the firms submitting proposals will be interviewed prior to the final recommendation of the committee to the City Commission.

The proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria listed below. Firms are encouraged to structure the proposals to address the information in the order listed.

1. **Understanding of the Project** – The Committee will review a brief statement of the firm's understanding of the project including an overview of the plan to complete the scope of amendments and additional services described in this RFP.
2. **Public Input and Engagement** – The Committee will give comparative consideration to the quality of public input sessions and the firm's experience with web, social media, and other recommended engagement techniques.
3. **Qualifications of the Personnel** – The Committee will consider the qualifications of the individuals assigned to the project, including the staff time to be devoted to the project.
4. **Qualifications of the Firm** – The Committee will review the firm's experience in similar projects in the last ten (10) years, as described previously.
5. **Project Schedule** – The Committee will evaluate the proposed schedule, as described earlier, for feasibility in meeting the City's time frame.
6. **Project Cost** – The Committee will review the total project cost, as well as the value of services provided by the firm, including the level of the personnel and their time that would be devoted to the project.

Deliverables

At the close of the project, the selected consultant will provide an electronic copy of any study documents, design guidelines, etc. suitable for reproduction and five (5) original copies of the finished documents. The electronic files shall include editable documents in a Microsoft Word format, along with electronic copies of maps and other exhibits.

Submittal Instructions

To be considered, eight (8) copies of the completed proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope, clearly marked: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT and received by 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 14, 2013 by mail or hand delivery to:

City Clerk's Office
City of Mt. Pleasant
320 W. Broadway
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Proposals arriving after the date and time will remain unopened and will be disqualified. Any proposal may be withdrawn by giving written notice to the City Clerk before the stated proposal opening time. Questions regarding the proposal may be directed by email to:

Jeff Gray
Director, Planning and Community Development
City of Mt. Pleasant
jgray@mt-pleasant.org

Questions must be received by Friday, May 3, 2013. Answers will be posted as they are received in the Bids and Quotes section of the City's website at www.mt-pleasant.org for the benefit of all interested firms. It is the responsibility of the interested firms to check the website for new questions and answers prior to submitting proposals. The names of firms and individuals submitting questions will not be disclosed.

Reservations

The City reserves the right to accept any proposal, to reject any or all proposals, to waive defects in proposals submitted in response to this request, and to select the proposal deemed to be in the best interests of the City. Issuance of this proposal does not obligate the City to award a contract. The City accepts no responsibility for reimbursing consultants for expenses incurred in responding to this Request for Proposals.

Attachments

1. Documentation of Current Review Procedures and Standards: Redevelopment of Housing in the M-2 Zoning District
2. Excerpt of City Zoning Map

**Documentation of Current Review Procedures and Standards
Redevelopment of Housing in the M-2 Zoning District
September 24, 2012**

INTRODUCTION:

Since 2009, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and Planning Commission have approved several redevelopments of rooming dwellings (units occupied by more than 2 unrelated people) and Registered Student Organizations (fraternity and sorority dwellings occupied by more than 2 unrelated people). The subject properties were nonconforming to a variety of current Zoning Ordinance regulations prior to redevelopment.

Nonconformities on properties occur when the Zoning Ordinance is amended and an existing property that conformed to the previous ordinance no longer conforms to the new ordinance. State law prohibits the City from requiring the existing property to be brought into conformance with the new ordinance and provides that nonconforming properties may be maintained.

The ZBA has reviewed the redevelopment proposals on a case-by-case basis subject to subsection 154.007(B)(5) of the Zoning Ordinance, which allows a nonconforming use to be changed to a new nonconforming use where the ZBA finds that the new use would markedly decrease the degree of nonconformance and would enhance the desirability of adjacent conforming uses. Following a finding by the ZBA, the proposals are reviewed by the Planning Commission pursuant to the Special Use Permit standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

In a work session on November 14, 2011 staff reviewed the established review standards and procedures that have been implemented by the ZBA and Planning Commission regarding redevelopment proposals. The City Commission requested that these standards and procedures be documented in writing.

The purpose of the documentation is to compile the procedure that has evolved over the course of a number of meetings of the ZBA and Planning Commission into a single document. This will increase the opportunity for board and commission members, the general public, and the development community to be fully aware of the procedure and expectations. Prioritization of an ordinance amendment will then be considered following completion of the Master Plan update.

REVIEW STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES:

The review of the redevelopment projects initially was discussed by the Planning Commission in September of 2009, after a local developer approached staff regarding the possibility of redeveloping a property he owned. Staff was interested in having feedback from the Planning Commission about their willingness to review such a request in coordination with the ZBA.

Both the Planning Commission and ZBA have held a number of work sessions to discuss various aspects of the review, including analysis and discussion following completion of the projects. These sessions, along with the added experience of processing several applications have refined the standards and procedures as follows:

- ❖ Decrease in Nonconforming Conditions – The current Zoning Ordinance permits consideration of these redevelopment requests where nonconformities exist and the new development is found to “markedly decrease the degree of nonconformance.” The applicant is expected to demonstrate how the redevelopment will reduce the nonconforming conditions on the property.

The following are examples of nonconformities that have been reduced or eliminated with previously approved redevelopment projects:

- Increased number of on-site parking spaces
- Replacement of gravel parking areas with paved spaces
- Improved setback between buildings on neighboring properties
- Increased the square footage of living area in the dwelling per resident
- Elimination of rear dwellings
- Reconfiguration of nonconforming lots

- ❖ Improved Building Appearance – Buildings approved by these procedures are expected to be of materials and design that represent an improvement to the buildings that they replace. Consideration is given to assuring that the buildings are consistent with the historic character of the neighborhood. This means that attention must be paid to providing building materials that are durable, with some portion of the building often clad in brick. It is also expected that the redeveloped buildings will exhibit architectural features found elsewhere in the vicinity.

Examples of these features include:

- Window and building trim details
- Divided light windows
- Dormer details
- Accent colors and siding materials
- Covered porches, including decorative columns and railings
- Window symmetry and building massing
- Increased roof pitch, and roof profiles

Applicants are encouraged to review the existing buildings on the street and neighboring street for examples of appropriate architectural detailing. Applicants are also encouraged to not replicate the same design on multiple properties they develop. Staff has photographic examples of existing houses in portions of the Main and Washington neighborhoods.

- ❖ Improved Site Design – In addition to site improvements that may result from the elimination of nonconformities (like providing paved parking), redeveloped sites also exhibit improved site design. Many of these features are uncommon in the existing dwellings in the neighborhood.

Approved projects often include:

- Foundation plantings
- Yard and landscaping irrigation systems
- Decorative fences to screen parking from the street
- Dedicated bike parking
- Reduction in the number of driveways

- Elimination of front yard parking, with parking access often to rear alleys
- Elimination of dumpsters in favor of screened trash carts

- ❖ Improved Lease Agreements – In order to anticipate and reduce any issues that might result from even modest increases in density, applicants have offered improved lease provisions during their ZBA reviews. These agreements often include greater landlord responsibility in policing tenant issues, and increase tenant fines for trash and nuisance party violations. In addition to making an effort to reduce ordinance violations and the City resources associated with enforcement, these provisions help to protect the applicant’s investment in the property.
- ❖ Modest Increase in Building Occupancy – From the time of the first redevelopment request, the ZBA and the Planning Commission have been asked by the applicants to consider allowing additional tenants in the redeveloped projects. The additional rental income allows the applicant to offset some of the costs associated with the building and site improvements, as well as the increased property taxes, that result from the redevelopment.

Consideration will be given to redevelopments that will result in increases in occupancy of one or two people. Projects that can be found to meet all of the previous standards and procedures listed in this document may be considered for an increase of one occupant. Those redevelopment projects that set themselves apart as distinctive from others may be considered for an increase of two occupants.

As it is the goal of these standards and procedures to both substantially reduce the degree of non-conformance of properties in the district (consistent with the standards listed in subsection 154.007(B)(5) of the Zoning Ordinance) and to enhance and improve the general character of the neighborhood through improved building and site design, **distinctive projects will only be considered for two additional occupants if they are characterized by all of the following:**

- Elimination of notable nonconformities – Many properties in the district are characterized by a number of typical nonconformities, such as: a lack of a sufficient number of parking spaces, stacked parking spaces, parking on gravel lots, a lack of appropriate separation between buildings on adjoining properties, and building setbacks less than those required by ordinance.

However, the nature of the nonconformity on some properties is distinct from most others in the area, making them inconsistent with the general character of the neighborhood. Examples of such nonconformities include:

- ✓ Parcels that are narrower in width or smaller in area than others along the same street and block.
- ✓ Properties with former accessory structures that have been converted into dwellings (so-called “rear dwelling units”).
- ✓ Properties with an inordinate number of nonconformities when compared to others on the same street and block

- Durable and distinct building design – Redevelopment projects proposed for two additional tenants should be distinguished from other such projects by the extensive use of durable building materials and distinct building design and architectural details. Consideration will be given to

those buildings that match the notable features of existing and past historically significant homes within the district and in surrounding areas. Applicants should demonstrate examples through photos of the homes and details that they identify as similar to the proposed redevelopment project and take particular note of the following:

- ✓ Historic architectural style, including the use of details customarily expected with that style throughout the building design
 - ✓ Building massing and composition
 - ✓ Roof pitch
 - ✓ Architectural details, including bracketing; moldings; window and door surrounds; column details; the proportion and reveal of shingles, shakes, and clapboards, including decorative shingles; etc.
 - ✓ Window placement and proportion
 - ✓ The extent of the use of durable building materials, including brick and other masonry.
 - ✓ When shingles, shakes, and/or clapboards are used, the extent of the use of hardwood, fiber cement, and other similar products
 - ✓ Utilization of unique architectural elements such as turrets, box or bay windows, etc.
- Demonstrated track record or (for new owners) capacity for long-term maintenance and code compliance – Specific consideration will be given to the property owner’s ability to assure the long-term maintenance of the proposed redevelopment and tenant compliance with City codes and ordinances. Property owners and their agents are expected to identify code violations on their properties and to accomplish timely compliance with ordinance requirements. Attention to these items will assure that properties will continue to enhance neighborhood character over the long run, while reducing demands on City staff and resources.
- ❖ Concurrent Review of Applications – As noted above, requests to redevelop rooming dwellings and Registered Student Organizations require application to both the ZBA and the Planning Commission. If an applicant desires, staff will process the applications to both boards concurrently. This means that if the ZBA takes action on the request at their meeting (on the fourth Wednesday of the month), the request can be before the Planning Commission as soon as the next week (on the first Thursday of the following month). In any case, ZBA action must occur first.

This procedure keeps the review time between the two groups to a minimum. It also affords at least two public hearing opportunities; and it assures that two independent boards have completed a careful review before discretionary approvals will be granted.

The preceding review standards and procedures for the redevelopment of housing in M-2 zoned neighborhoods have been reviewed and endorsed by the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission of the City of Mt. Pleasant on the dates noted below. Copies of these standards and procedures will be made available in the Planning and Community Development Department in City Hall and will be posted on the City’s website where other planning and zoning related documents can be found.

Planning Commission	Date: March 1, 2012	Revised: February 7, 2013
Zoning Board of Appeals	Date: May 23, 2012	Revised: January 23, 2013

Excerpt of City Zoning Map

