

Request for Proposals

Zoning Administration Services

Purpose

The Eaton Area Joint Planning Commission (EAJPC or Planning Commission) is seeking proposals from qualified firms to serve as zoning administrator for the newly formed zoning authority. The zoning administrator will serve as staff to the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals, administer the zoning ordinance, keep records, and interact with applicants and residents of the jurisdictions that compose the EAJPC. The EAJPC is composed of seven townships (Bellevue, Brookfield, Chester, Kalamo, Sunfield, Vermontville, and Walton) in western Eaton County, Michigan.

Background

Effective June 30, 2026, Eaton County will rescind its zoning authority, leaving townships formerly under the county's authority un-zoned. The EAJPC is an effort of seven rural townships in the western portion of the county to establish a joint planning and zoning authority. The EAJPC was formed in April 2026 and will adopt an interim zoning ordinance and master plan no later than June 30, 2026.

While the member townships of the EAJPC are rural, there is a significant amount of land use and zoning activity. According to Eaton County records, there has been an annual average of sixty-four land use matters (zoning permits, site plan reviews, ZBA cases, special land use permit requests, etc.) in the EAJPC area over the last three years. The total combined population of the EAJPC is over 14,000 and the total zoning authority includes 7,400 parcels.

The EAJPC is composed of one member appointed by each of the participating townships' respective Township Boards. Initial development of the EAJPC has been led by municipal attorneys and professional consulting planners that will not respond to this RFP.

Services Required

The EAJPC is seeking comprehensive zoning administration services based on the interim zoning ordinance and master plan. Future updates to the interim ordinance and master plan may be conducted by the firm providing zoning administration services or may be sought under a separate request for proposal process, at the discretion of the EAJPC.

The primary scope of services sought under this zoning administration RFP includes:

1. **Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals staffing and management:**

The selected firm will attend all Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings. Key tasks will include:

- a. Keeping official records of each meeting, including meeting minutes and materials.
- b. Advising the Planning Commission and ZBA on adoption of bylaws and rules of procedure to govern their operations.
- c. Providing reports to the Planning Commission and ZBA that include application materials, evaluation of applications against ordinance standards, and additional information as required for members to act on a request.
- d. Producing an annual Planning Commission report provided to the legislative body of each participating jurisdiction.

2. **Zoning Administration and Customer Service:** The selected firm will function as the EAJPC's zoning administrator, responding to requests for information and providing residents and applicants with high-quality customer service. Key tasks will include:

- a. Maintaining open lines of communication with the public via phone, email, and in-person office hours.
- b. Developing and maintaining application forms, guides, and other materials that allow applicants to easily respond to ordinance requirements.
- c. Maintaining regular office hours within a location to be determined by the EAJPC.
- d. Establishing a system for and maintaining accurate records of application materials, communications, and associated land use decision information.

3. **Zoning Enforcement:** As zoning administrator, the selected firm will conduct zoning enforcement actions in collaboration with legal counsel for the EAJPC. The system and approach for enforcement will be designed by the zoning administrator in consultation with the EAJPC and legal counsel.

4. **Intergovernmental Coordination:** Eaton County will continue to provide building permitting, land division, and other select functions. Additionally, annual activity reports must be provided to the boards of each participating township either individually, or as part of a joint meeting hosted by the EAJPC. The selected firm will function as the EAJPC point of contact, coordinate communications, and make regular reports back to the EAJPC on the status of various intergovernmental issues and initiatives.

5. **Continuing Education and Best Practices:** With an entirely new Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, regular training for and advisement to

members on best practices, case law, and other relevant issues will be critical. The selected firm will coordinate at least one annual training session for the EAJPC and zoning board of appeals with the Michigan Association of Planning, Michigan State University Extension, or similar entity with established programs and curricula.

6. **Other Services as Requested:** At the request of the chairperson of the EAJPC, the selected firm will provide other services as necessary to support the effective operation of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Proposal Format

Each response should include the following. Please limit responses to no more than twenty pages.

1. A cover letter signed by a member of the firm authorized to commit to a contractual arrangement with the EAJPC. The cover letter shall also identify the person who will be responsible for regular communications with EAJPC and who will serve as zoning administrator.
2. A list and brief description of recent relevant experience with similar communities undertaken within the last five (5) years. Please include at least three (3) references, including name, title, email, and phone number of a representative the EAJPC may contact to discuss your experience.
3. Representative samples of similar work of the firm that demonstrates its expertise in zoning administration.
4. Two sample reports, memoranda, and other related materials that demonstrate the firm's approach to providing zoning administration services. These should be attached to the proposal response as an appendix and do not count towards the 20-page limit.
5. The proposed organizational structure to provide the services required by this RFP, including the names and titles of the individuals performing various tasks.
6. Indicate the proposed fee structure for performing the services required. The fee may be structured as a combination of retainer agreements, time and material costs, development review fee schedules, or other methods.
7. Provide evidence of general liability and professional liability coverage as well as Workers Compensation Insurance with statutory coverage.
8. Disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest in the performance of work requested under this RFP.

Review Schedule

A zoning administrator must be in place no later than June 30, 2026, to begin operation of the EAJPC. The following review schedule is based on this critical deadline.

- Release of RFP: May 4, 2026
- Questions Due: May 18, 2026
- Initial Proposal Responses Due: May 22, 2026
- Extended Proposal Response Due Date: June 9, 2026
- Interviews held with EAJPC (optional): June 11, 2026
- Final selection and award: No later than June 23, 2026

Proposals received after June 9, 2026 will not be considered. All costs incurred for proposal preparation, presentation, or contract negotiation shall be the responsibility of the consultant. Questions about this RFP and the project may be submitted to Jack Owens, at supervisor@vermontvilletownshipmi.gov.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the EAJCP and its consultants. The Planning Commission may choose to conduct interviews with one or more respondents. The final selection of a consultant will be made at the discretion of the EAJPC.

Proposals will be evaluated with the purpose of selecting the firm judged to best serve the interests of the EAJPC. The EAJPC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or any part thereof, and to waive any minor technicalities. A contract will be awarded to the respondent determined to best meet the needs of the EAJPC based on the following:

- Location, experience, and capacity of the firm.
- The qualifications and experience of the project team, including familiarity with Eaton County and the jurisdictions within the EAJPC, experience working with rural townships, and experience serving as zoning administrator.
- The degree of responsiveness of the proposal to the scope of services defined in this RFP.
- Innovative approaches, technology, and systems to provide effective recordkeeping and reporting.
- Fee structure and anticipated cost for services.

Each proposal shall be considered binding and in effect for a period of ninety (90) days after the closing date. Any bidder may withdraw its proposal by email at any time prior to June 9, 2026.

The EAJPC reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to reject any or all proposals, to waive irregularities, informalities and/or non-conformities in any submission, to select the

firm and proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the EAJPC and to negotiate with the selected firm or firms.

Anticipated Annual Budget

The townships participating in the EAJPC are aware of the significant level of effort necessary to address the services required by this RFP. The participating jurisdictions anticipate an initial annual budget for zoning administration of \$100,000 or more, shared between each jurisdiction. The requirements for jurisdictions to contribute to the cost of zoning administration and to support operation of the EAJPC are defined in the attached Joint Planning Commission Ordinance and Agreement.

Submittal Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in PDF format no later than 12pm on Tuesday, June 9, 2026. All proposals must be submitted to Jack Owens, at supervisor@vermontvilletownshipmi.gov. with the subject line “EAJPC Zoning Administrator.”