REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Gorham Village Master Plan Update 2027

Town of Gorham, Maine

Proposal deadline: January 19, 2027, 4:30pm

Sections 1 through 5 describe the scope of work; Section 6 lists the required deliverables and the nine-month schedule, and Section 7 sets out proposal contents, selection criteria, and procurement provisions. Proposers should read all seven sections before preparing a response.

Purpose

The Town of Gorham seeks proposals from qualified multidisciplinary consultant teams to prepare the Gorham Village Master Plan Update. The plan will establish a coordinated land-use, transportation, public-realm, infrastructure, and public-investment strategy for Gorham Village for the period from 2027 through 2047, supported by a detailed ten-year implementation program.

The plan shall identify how Gorham Village can accommodate appropriate residential, commercial, civic, institutional, and mixed-use development while improving transportation safety, accessibility, economic opportunity, community resilience, and village character. The planning process shall apply smart-growth principles, including compact development, a mix of land uses, housing and transportation choices, walkable neighborhoods, predictable development standards, efficient use of public infrastructure, and collaborative decision-making.

The project shall address Gorham Village as a whole, including Main Street, State Street, South Street, School Street, surrounding residential neighborhoods, the Village approaches, and connections to the University of Southern Maine and other community destinations. The scope is not limited to the Main Street corridor.

Background

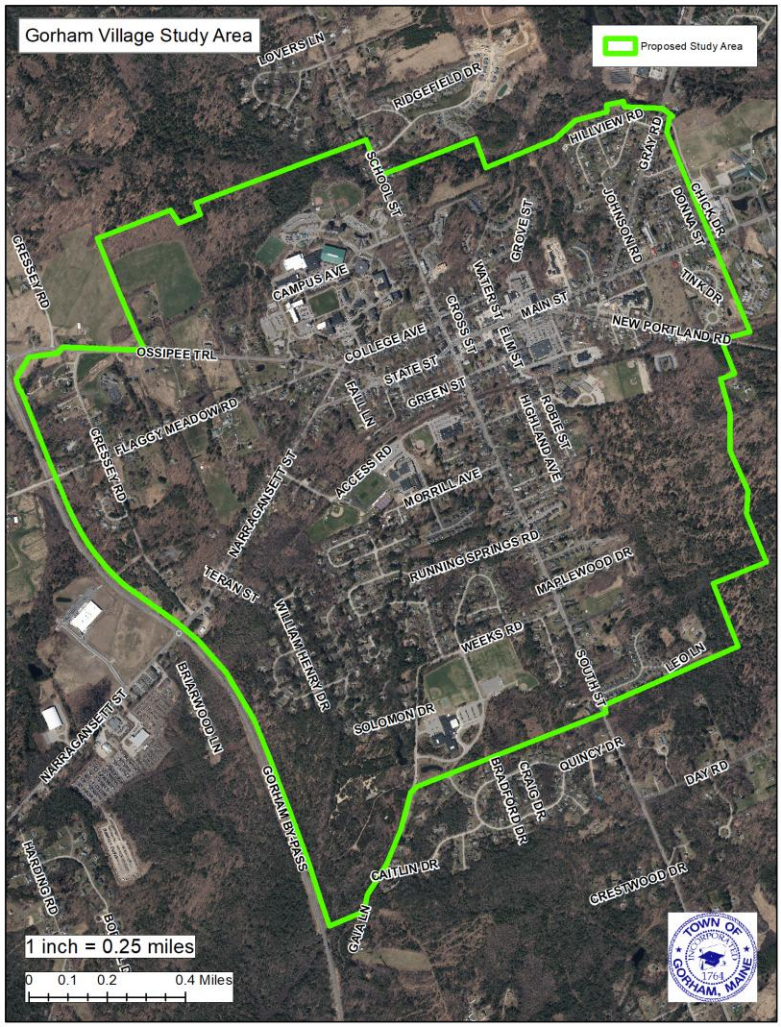
This RFP updates the October 23, 2013, Main Street Master Plan Update RFP supplied by the Town. The consultant shall build upon the 1998 Main Street Master Plan, the 2015 update, subsequent studies, and completed improvements. Early work shall distinguish recommendations that have been completed, remain relevant, require revision, or should be retired. Existing studies shall be reused when reliable and supplemented where conditions or policies have changed.

Study area

The Town's preliminary core study area extends generally from Pine Street to New Portland Road and from Church Street to Lincoln Street. The study area boundary emphasizes Main Street and State Street at School Street and South Street, and the intersection of Route 25 and Route 114. The consultant shall assess whether the study area boundary shown below in green adequately addresses what is considered Gorham's Village Area (mix of commercial, mixed-use, and residential development).

At project initiation, prepare a study area map for Town approval showing the core study area, adjacent residential neighborhoods, village approaches, connections to the University of Southern Maine (USM), schools, civic destinations, parks, trails, and transit access. Define a broader transportation influence area where needed. Changes to the study area boundary shall identify effects on scope, cost, and the direction of growth toward the

Village before approval. Separately, propose a defined Village boundary for Town approval, distinct from the study area boundary and the surrounding areas, to serve as the reference for directing growth toward the Village and for measuring compact development and land consumption.



Project goals

- Apply smart growth by directing development toward the Village to protect open space, farmland, and critical natural areas in the non-growth areas of Gorham.
- Coordinate residential, commercial, and mixed-use zoning with realistic development opportunities, infrastructure, and transitions to established neighborhoods.
- Improve walking, bicycling, driving, and transit access for people of all ages and abilities, with particular attention to safety and year-round use.
- Provide convenient parking and loading that support walkable, mixed-use development, redevelopment, business access, and an attractive public realm rather than competing with them.
- Protect historic resources, support the reuse of existing buildings, and strengthen connections between the Village, USM, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Produce practical projects, draft zoning amendments, credible cost estimates, recommendations for future land use recommendations to consider as part of a Comprehensive Plan amendment, and an implementation program with assigned responsibilities. Better define the limits for the area identified as Gorham Village utilizing the attached boundary as a starting point.

1 Project management and existing conditions

Work plan and coordination

Within 30 days of notice to proceed, submit a detailed work plan, schedule, data request, engagement program, and proposed study area. Attend monthly meetings with the Town's designated committee and Community Development staff. Provide agendas, concise meeting summaries, a decision log, and monthly progress and budget reports.

Coordinate with Planning, Code Enforcement, Economic Development, Public Works, Police, Fire and Rescue, Recreation, schools, USM, utility providers, MaineDOT, Greater Portland Metro, the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), and the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS). Include at least three interagency technical meetings, which may coincide with committee meetings. Identify agency requirements and unresolved issues in writing.

Existing conditions and prior plan assessment

- Review the Comprehensive Plan and amendments effective at project initiation, current zoning and development standards, the 1998 and 2015 village plans, parking and bicycle and pedestrian studies, capital plans, historic resource inventories, and relevant housing and open space plans.
- Review current regional transit and rapid transit planning and the Portland West study. Document their status and assumptions at initiation and update the plan before final delivery. Separate funded projects from proposals and scenarios.
- Map parcel use, zoning, housing types, commercial space, vacancies, approved development, public ownership, development constraints, and potential infill or reuse sites. Use available demographic, housing, employment, and market data with dates and limitations.
- Conduct field visits and map sidewalk and bicycle gaps, intersections, transit stops, parking, accessible routes, public spaces, lighting, and infrastructure constraints. Prepare a status matrix for prior plan recommendations.
- Establish baseline measures of compact development and land consumption for the Village, with dates and limitations, to support comparison of growth alternatives and the performance dashboard.

Public participation

Provide at least three advertised public sessions: an opening vision and issues meeting, a workshop comparing alternatives, and a presentation of the draft final plan. Conduct an additional adoption presentation to the Town Council. Coordinate any formal hearing procedures with the Town.

Include one walking audit, one online and paper survey, at least eight stakeholder interviews, and two focused discussions covering business and property owner needs and neighborhood and mobility concerns. Include renters, older residents, people with disabilities, families, students, and transit users. Offer accessible meeting formats and ways to comment without attending in person.

Prepare an engagement summary identifying participation, major themes, areas of agreement and disagreement, and how comments affected recommendations. Do not represent a voluntary survey as a statistically representative sample. Maintain a response matrix for substantive comments on the draft plan.

2 Zoning, housing, and economic development

Residential zoning and neighborhood compatibility

Evaluate permitted housing types, density, lot area, frontage, setbacks, building height, lot coverage, open space, and parking requirements. Assess opportunities for accessory dwellings, duplexes, small multifamily buildings, cottages, upper-story housing, and conversions of large historic homes. Identify standards that unnecessarily prevent compatible infill or reuse and locations where infrastructure or neighborhood conditions warrant limits. Identify opportunities for compact, walkable housing near services, transit, and existing infrastructure.

Recommend measurable transitions in building height, massing, setbacks, screening, lighting, and access between more intensive development and existing homes. Address housing for different household sizes, incomes, and stages of life, and identify displacement risks and practical mitigation tools.

Commercial and mixed-use zoning

Review the location and capacity of commercial districts, permitted uses, tenant size limits, ground-floor activity, redevelopment potential, and barriers affecting local businesses. Evaluate vertical mixed use and coordinated development with separate residential and commercial buildings, including shared access, parking, open space, and pedestrian connections. Review use definitions and categories for outdated, ambiguous, or overly narrow terms, and recommend updated or consolidated categories, including for uses that have emerged since the current ordinance was written, for incorporation in the permitted-use matrix.

Compare improvements to conventional zoning with a limited form-based approach. Recommend the least complicated standards needed to achieve the preferred plan. Evaluate building placement, frontage, entrances, height, parking location, signs, outdoor dining, service areas, and transitions. Identify where active commercial frontage should be encouraged or required and where residential ground-floor use is appropriate.

Development alternatives and feasibility

Prepare at least three village growth alternatives, including continuation of existing zoning. Compare likely housing and commercial capacity, infrastructure demands, trips, parking, fiscal implications, historic resource effects, and neighborhood compatibility using consistent assumptions. Identify the preferred alternative through Town review and public input. Compare the alternatives for compact development, land consumption, and infrastructure efficiency, including the extent to which each directs growth toward the Village. Show for each alternative how much housing and commercial growth falls inside and outside the proposed Village boundary.

Prepare conceptual development tests for at least four representative sites selected with the Town. Include an infill site, a commercial or mixed-use redevelopment site, adaptive reuse of an existing building, and a Town-owned or USM connection opportunity where feasible. Illustrate building scale, access, parking, open space, and development capacity. Concept plans shall not imply owner agreement or project approval.

Required zoning and economic development products

- A recommended future land use and zoning map; a current and proposed standards comparison; and a stand-alone permitted-use matrix for proposed districts.
- Draft amendment language for the recommended zoning changes, with section references and explanatory diagrams, suitable for Town review and refinement by legal counsel. Identify related Comprehensive Plan amendments and state requirements needing confirmation at the time of drafting.
- A focused market and feasibility assessment addressing business retention, daily services, commercial demand, upper-floor reuse, housing opportunities, and major development constraints. Recommend achievable incentives and public investments with estimated costs and responsible parties.

Future land use recommendations for the next Comprehensive Plan update

Evaluate existing and proposed residential, mixed-use, and commercial land use patterns within Gorham Village and its approaches to develop recommendations for consideration in the Town's next Comprehensive Plan update. Assess whether current future land use designations, growth area boundaries, and zoning districts support the preferred village development pattern. Identify areas appropriate for additional housing, commercial activity, mixed-use development, adaptive reuse, and neighborhood conservation.

Recommend future land use designations and boundaries that distinguish the village commercial core, mixed-use areas, residential neighborhoods, and transitions along village approaches. For each designation, describe its intended character, appropriate uses, range of residential densities and building intensities, infrastructure needs, and relationships to nearby neighborhoods. Evaluate whether commercial uses should be concentrated in the core, expanded to selected locations, or accommodated within mixed-use areas based on market demand, access, infrastructure, and compatibility.

Assess the capacity of recommended areas to accommodate projected housing and business growth through infill, redevelopment, and reuse of existing buildings. Consider walkability, transit access, transportation conditions, water and sewer availability, municipal service costs, historic resources, and environmental constraints. Explain how the recommendations would direct growth toward the Village and reduce pressure for dispersed development elsewhere in Town.

Provide a recommended future land use map, designation descriptions, and supporting goals, policies, and implementation strategies suitable for consideration during the next Comprehensive Plan update. Include a comparison of existing and recommended designations, estimated development capacity, and related zoning changes. Distinguish zoning amendments that may proceed under the current Comprehensive Plan from recommendations requiring further consideration through the comprehensive planning process.

3 Pedestrian bicycle and vehicular mobility

Safety assessment and data collection

Use at least the latest five complete years of available crash data, supplemented by speed observations, field audits, community reports, and crossing and intersection conditions. Evaluate crash severity and contributing conditions; identify safety concerns even where recorded crashes are few. Map priority locations and explain the ranking method.

The base fee shall include new weekday morning and afternoon peak turning-movement counts, with pedestrian and bicycle counts, at a minimum of six intersections; seven-day speed and volume counts at four locations; and pedestrian and bicycle observations at four priority crossings or connections. Establish locations and sampling periods with the Town. Address school, USM, seasonal, weekend, and event effects, using existing data or targeted supplementary counts. Identify additional count costs separately.

Pedestrian access and safety

- Assess sidewalk continuity, width, surface condition, curb ramps, crossing distances, visibility, lighting, signals, and access to businesses, schools, civic facilities, parking, transit, and parks. Inventory accessibility barriers and recommend corrections using standards applicable at project initiation.
- Evaluate missing sidewalk links, midblock crossings, refuge islands, curb extensions, signal timing, traffic calming, and safe routes to school. Explain treatment selection and any additional engineering needed.
- Address snow storage, plowing, drainage, driveway conflicts, and maintenance responsibilities so routes and transit stops remain usable throughout the year.

Bicycle mobility and trail connections

Recommend a connected network suitable for a range of ages and abilities. Compare protected facilities, shared-use paths, lower-speed neighborhood routes, and intersection treatments. Identify gaps between the Village, USM, neighborhoods, schools, and existing or planned trails. Include bicycle parking, wayfinding, easement needs, and conflicts at driveways, loading areas, and transit stops.

Vehicular circulation and street design

Assess intersections, queues, access management, turning movements, truck routing, deliveries, school traffic, emergency response, and neighborhood cut-through traffic. Use current traffic volumes, turning-movement counts, speed observations, and pedestrian and bicycle counts to establish baseline conditions and test existing and preferred-plan conditions over an approximately 20-year horizon. Coordinate assumptions with MaineDOT and regional studies.

Evaluate traffic signal operations individually and as a coordinated village network. Use observed counts and queues to assess cycle lengths, allocation of green time, signal phasing, offsets between signals, detection equipment, and time-of-day plans. Identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary stops, delay, and queue spillback while maintaining safe pedestrian crossing times, bicycle access, transit reliability, and emergency response. Assess whether the number and location of signals remain appropriate under current and future traffic conditions, with supporting engineering analysis for any proposed change in traffic control.

Compare at least two feasible treatments at each of three Town-selected priority intersections or street segments. Provide scaled concept plans and street cross sections showing right-of-way, travel lanes, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit accommodations, parking, trees, and snow storage. Explain tradeoffs, property impacts, approvals, easements, utility conflicts, and future design work. Evaluate each treatment for its effects on walking, bicycling, and transit, as well as queues and delay.

Provide a signal optimization memorandum documenting existing and recommended operations, before-and-after performance, estimated costs, responsible agencies, and a plan for field verification and adjustment following implementation.

Village opportunities following regional congestion relief

Evaluate what improvements could become feasible in Gorham Village if measures identified through the Portland West Study reduce congestion in South Gorham and through the Village. Compare a baseline without those measures with a congestion-relief scenario using MaineDOT-supported traffic forecasts and routing assumptions. If forecasts are unavailable, use clearly identified sensitivity tests agreed upon with the Town and MaineDOT. Distinguish reduced traffic volumes from improved traffic flow at similar volumes.

Assess whether projected conditions would support reallocating street space, narrower or fewer travel lanes where feasible, shorter crossings, wider sidewalks, protected bicycle facilities, transit priority, improved parking and loading, street trees, outdoor dining, and public gathering spaces. Evaluate related opportunities for infill, mixed-use redevelopment, and stronger connections among neighborhoods, businesses, schools, and USM.

Provide an illustrated village concept and comparison matrix identifying benefits, tradeoffs, costs, and the traffic conditions needed for each improvement. Identify projects that can proceed under existing conditions and those dependent on regional improvements. Account for future growth, possible traffic redistribution, and remaining truck and local access needs. Establish measurable thresholds and monitoring requirements before implementing dependent projects; do not assume an unapproved regional project or a particular level of congestion relief will occur.

4 Expanded transit and parking opportunities

Transit service and access

Coordinate with Greater Portland Metro, USM, GPCOG, and PACTS to evaluate existing service, stop use, ridership patterns, reliability, hours, and access gaps. Integrate the latest Gorham–Westbrook–Portland rapid transit work and related regional studies. Confirm project status directly with the responsible agencies rather than treating a proposed service or station as committed.

Compare a baseline with at least two feasible improvement packages. Consider stronger Husky Line connections, service frequency and span, improved village stops or stations, neighborhood connections, shuttle or demand-response options, and connections to regional destinations. Explain which measures the Town can implement and which require an operator or regional commitment.

- Map actual walking routes within approximately one-quarter and one-half mile of candidate stops, showing barriers and missing links. Assess sidewalk conditions, safe crossings, accessible boarding, shelters, lighting, seating, bicycle access, and passenger information.
- Evaluate candidate mobility hub and park-and-ride locations, including shared use of existing lots. Estimate demand and land needs before recommending new parking. Compare locations for access, neighborhood effects, development potential, and transit operations.
- For each service package, provide planning-level ridership estimates or a defensible demand range, service assumptions, capital and annual operating costs, likely Town contribution, potential funding sources, and implementation responsibilities. Clearly identify information supplied by the operator and remaining uncertainty.

Parking supply demand and management

Update prior parking work through a block-by-block inventory of public and available private parking, ownership, restrictions, accessible spaces, loading, bicycle parking, and electric vehicle charging. Distinguish spaces legally available for public use from private spaces that might be shared only through agreement.

Observe occupancy and turnover at least four times per day on two representative weekdays and one Saturday, including an evening period. Address academic-calendar, school, seasonal, and event effects. Publish the count schedule, raw results, effective supply, and limitations. Map demand and walking routes to destinations rather than relying only on total village-wide supply.

Compare current and preferred-growth demand. Evaluate shared parking, time limits, employee parking, wayfinding, accessible routes, parking standards, loading, deliveries, and management or enforcement costs. Identify conditions supporting reduced minimums, district parking, or other regulatory changes. Test management and shared-use options before recommending acquisition or construction.

Prepare a preferred parking strategy identifying project locations, preliminary layouts, agreements or easements, costs, maintenance, responsible parties, and measurable triggers for future expansion. Coordinate parking changes with bicycle facilities, transit stops, street trees, outdoor dining, and winter operations.

5 Village character infrastructure and implementation

Streetscape historic resources and public property

Recommend a coordinated approach to sidewalks, street trees, planting areas, pedestrian lighting, furnishings, signs, gateways, outdoor dining, and public gathering spaces. Address durability, accessibility, maintenance, snow removal, sight lines, and light spill. Provide a concise palette of materials and typical details appropriate to Gorham's village character.

Identify historic buildings and streetscapes needing further assessment. Recommend practical preservation and adaptive reuse tools, including treatment of large historic homes, without assuming every older building has the same significance. Evaluate Town-owned properties for civic use, public space, parking, housing, or mixed-use opportunities, including retention or partnership options and financial implications.

Develop specific projects connecting USM and the Village through walking, bicycling, transit, public space, and shared activities or facilities. Identify needed institutional agreements, maintenance responsibilities, and implementation partners.

Infrastructure and resilience

Screen available water, sewer, drainage, electrical, and communications infrastructure against the preferred growth alternative using utility information. Distinguish physical or local collection constraints from contractual wastewater treatment allocations. Identify provider confirmation, capacity analysis, upgrades, and capital planning needed before growth can occur. Evaluate use of and reinvestment in existing infrastructure capacity before recommending extensions.

Identify drainage and flooding concerns, excessive pavement, heat exposure, and opportunities for green infrastructure. Evaluate street trees, soil volume, permeable surfaces, rain gardens, and other low-impact development measures where suitable. Coordinate recommendations with utilities, road maintenance, groundwater conditions, watershed objectives, and applicable stormwater requirements, including the anticipated 2027 Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit, the Town Low Impact Development Stormwater Ordinance, the update to the state Chapter 500 regulation, and other state and federal requirements. Identify maintenance needs and planning-level costs.

Priorities funding and implementation

Prepare a single implementation matrix linking every recommendation to its location, purpose, responsible lead, partners, dependencies, approvals, capital cost, annual operating or maintenance cost, potential funding, and performance measure. Distinguish public and private costs and identify where estimates need additional design or engineering.

Group actions into immediate steps within two years of adoption, years three through five, years six through ten, and longer-term actions through 2047. Select the five highest-priority capital projects and prepare a concept sheet for each. Rank projects using safety, access, feasibility, cost, economic and housing benefits, public support, compact development, land consumption, and coordination opportunities. Show the basis for the ranking.

Express estimates in 2027 dollars, with quantities or estimating basis, design and permitting allowances, right-of-way assumptions, contingency, and uncertainty range. Identify escalation separately. Verify potential grants, TIF uses, partnerships, and other funding tools for eligibility at the time of the study. Recommend an annual review process and a dashboard with baseline values and proposed targets for safety, access, housing, business activity, parking, transit, compact development, and land consumption.

6 Required deliverables and project schedule

All tasks in Sections 1 through 5 are included in the base proposal unless expressly identified as additional services. The consultant shall provide the following coordinated products. Where the table summarizes quantities (for example, three growth alternatives and four site tests), the minimums stated in Sections 1 through 5 ("at least") apply. Town approval of an interim product authorizes the next planning step and does not constitute adoption of policy or approval of construction.

Milestone	Minimum product	Target timing
Project initiation	Work plan, study area map with proposed Village boundary, engagement program, data and count plan, and schedule.	Month 1
Existing conditions	Map atlas, prior-plan status matrix, field audit, market baseline, compact development and land consumption baseline, count data, and findings memorandum.	Months 2–3
Alternatives	Three growth alternatives; compact development and land consumption comparison; mobility, transit, and parking comparisons; four site tests; and public workshop materials.	Months 4–5
Preferred plan	Preferred land use and mobility plans, draft zoning amendments, priority concepts, cost estimates, implementation matrix, and dashboard indicators with smart growth baselines.	Months 6–7
Draft final plan	Integrated illustrated report, executive summary including how the plan applies smart growth principles, technical appendices, and comment response matrix.	Month 8
Final plan	Revised report and files, adoption presentation, and implementation handoff meeting.	Month 9

Final submission formats

- Provide an accessible, searchable PDF and an editable Word report, including an executive summary of no more than ten pages summarizing how the plan applies smart growth principles, as well as maps, illustrations, recommendations, implementation program, and technical appendices.
- Provide twenty bound color copies of the final report. Separately identify the credit for reducing this quantity to five. Provide electronic copies of all maps and deliverables.
- Provide georeferenced GIS files in a Town-approved format and coordinate system, with metadata; editable concept drawings and graphics in their native formats and PDF; Excel cost and implementation workbooks; raw count and survey data; and presentation files. Identify software requirements and third-party licensing restrictions in the proposal.
- Deliver concept sheets for the five priority capital projects, including the problem, recommended treatment, location plan, estimated cost, approvals, dependencies, implementation lead, and next design step. Include street sections, intersection concepts, and representative development illustrations supporting the preferred plan.

Review and acceptance

Allow at least fifteen business days for each consolidated Town review of alternatives, the preferred plan, and the draft final report. Include two consolidated revision rounds on the draft final report. Identify material unresolved issues and obtain written Town acceptance of final deliverables. The Town shall receive rights to use, reproduce, and modify project work products as provided in the final contract.

Propose a nine-month schedule beginning with the 2027 notice to proceed, including review periods and appropriate field-count seasons. Explain any recommended extension, particularly where academic or seasonal conditions require additional observations.

7 Proposal requirements and procurement provisions

Proposal contents

Submit a project understanding and approach; a task-by-task work plan and schedule; the proposed team and subconsultants; resumes and estimated effort by task; at least three comparable projects and three client references; and a complete fee proposal. Identify experience in village planning, zoning, housing, urban design, transportation engineering, transit, parking, public engagement, and implementation costing. Identify the Maine-licensed professional engineer responsible for transportation engineering analysis. Describe how the proposed approach applies smart growth principles to the update.

Include a fixed total fee for the base scope, a task budget, staff hours and rates, reimbursable expenses, meeting allowances, and the cost of all required products. Identify Town-supplied information and support, data assumptions, exclusions, and additional services. Additional services require prior written Town authorization. Provide separate prices for detailed survey, additional counts, expanded traffic modeling, engineering design, or other work beyond the specified planning scope.

Selection criteria

Criterion	Points
Project understanding and approach, including smart growth	20
Experience and effectiveness with comparable projects	20
Work plan and completion schedule	15
Qualifications of assigned personnel	15
Cost and value of the proposed services	30
Total	100

The Town may interview finalists, check references, and negotiate scope and fee with the selected team, subject to applicable procurement and funding requirements.

Issuance details

RFP issue date: November 17, 2026. Questions due: November 30, 2026, 5:00 pm. Written responses or addendum: December 3, 2026. Proposal deadline: January 19, 2027, 4:30 pm Submission method and required copies: Gorham Municipal Center, Community Development Department, Attn: Thomas Poirier, 75 South Street, Suite 1, Gorham, Maine 04038. Project budget or funding limit: $ 90,000 Procurement contact: Thomas Poirier, Director of Community Development, tpoirier@gorham.me.us

Submission address: Town of Gorham, Community Development Department, 75 South Street, Gorham, Maine 04038, subject to confirmation in the issued RFP.

Town reservations and contract scope

The Town may accept or reject proposals, waive nonmaterial irregularities as permitted, request clarification, and modify the solicitation by written addendum in the Town’s interest. Identify conflicts of interest and material use restrictions. Insurance, payment milestones, record retention, ownership and licensing, public records obligations, and any grant conditions shall be established in the issued RFP and contract.

This is a planning and concept-development assignment. Construction documents, final engineering, boundary surveys, environmental permitting, and property acquisition services shall be separately priced if proposed. State what level of engineering is included so bids can be compared consistently.