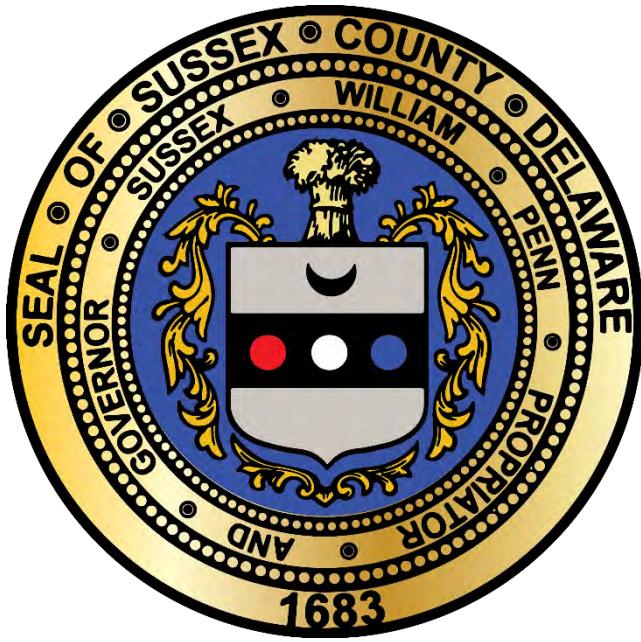


Sussex County, Delaware

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ON- CALL PLANNING SERVICES
(COMPREHENSIVE PLAN)
FOR SUSSEX COUNTY



JANUARY 2026

CONSULTANT INFORMATION PACKAGE

**FOR ON-CALL PLANNING SERVICES (COMPREHENSIVE PLAN) IN
SUSSEX COUNTY**

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JANUARY 27, 2026:

REQUEST FOR ON-CALL PLANNING SERVICES

The Sussex County Council seeks multiple firms to provide on-call planning services for a six-year period to assist with the preparation of the County's Comprehensive Plan update. The anticipated scope of services includes, but is not limited to:

1. A 10-year update to the 2019 Sussex County Comprehensive Plan
2. Public consultation during the Plan's preparation
3. Consultation with other Government Agencies
4. Potential updates to existing Ordinances
5. Miscellaneous planning reports and advice

All services shall be assigned on an as-needed basis only.

Based on the criteria established, an evaluation committee will be selected to read, screen, and rank in writing all proposals. The criteria for evaluation include: experience, expertise, capacity to perform, credentials and certifications, and familiarity with Sussex County. In accordance with 29 Del. C. § 6982, the evaluation committee shall determine that all applicants meet the minimum qualifications to perform the services. It shall then interview, at a minimum, the highest-ranked firm and may request a presentation from the firm(s). Interviews and presentations may result in a change of rank. At any point in the negotiation process, the evaluation committee and the requesting department may, at its discretion, terminate negotiations with any and all firms.

Sealed proposals will be received by the Sussex County Council, c/o Mr. Jamie Whitehouse, Planning & Zoning Director, Sussex County Administrative Office Building, 2 The Circle, P.O. Box 589, Georgetown, DE 19947, until 3:00 p.m., local time, on March 27, 2026. To be considered, proposals must be submitted in writing and respond to the items outlined in this request for proposal (RFP).

Interested parties must submit six (6) copies of written proposals along with an electronic copy of the proposal. Proposals will be publicly opened, read aloud, and recording only the name of the respondent(s). All other information shall be confidential. The award shall be made in writing to the responsible respondent whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the County.

The request for proposals may be obtained by visiting Sussex County's website www.sussexcountyde.gov/legal-notices/bids or by contacting Mr. Jamie Whitehouse, Planning & Zoning Director at the Sussex County Administrative Office Building, 2 The Circle, Georgetown, Delaware, telephone: (302) 855-7878, email: jamie.whitehouse@sussexcountyde.gov. The request for proposals may be obtained during regular business hours, which are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. In its sole discretion, Sussex County, Delaware, may extend the time and place for opening of proposals from that described in the advertisement by providing not less than two (2) calendar days' notice, by posting an Addendum on the Sussex County website and by providing notice thereof by certified delivery, facsimile machine, or other electronic means such as email, to those potential respondents who obtained copies of the RFP and provided notice thereof to Mr. Jamie Whitehouse, the email address provided herein.

Any firms having questions concerning the proposal should submit them in writing via e-mail no later than 12:00 p.m., February 20, 2026, to Mr. Jamie Whitehouse, Planning and Zoning Director, at jamie.whitehouse@sussexcountyde.gov.

II. Instructions for Proposals

Each written proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope, addressed to Mr. Jamie Whitehouse, Planning & Zoning Director, Sussex County Administrative Office Building, 2 The Circle, P.O. Box 589, Georgetown, DE 19947. Each sealed envelope containing a proposal must be plainly marked on the outside as “**On-Call Planning Services (Comprehensive Plan) RFP**” and “**Confidential**”. If sent by mail, the sealed envelope should be sent by certified mail and be indicated as received on the certified receipt prior to the Bid Opening. Late bids will not be accepted. Sussex County may extend the time and place for opening of bids from that described in the advertisement, by providing not less than two (2) calendar days’ notice, by posting an Addendum on the Sussex County website and by providing notice thereof by certified delivery, or other electronic means such as email, to those potential respondents who obtained copies of the Request for Proposals and provided notice thereof to Mr. Jamie Whitehouse at the email address provided herein.

Sussex County reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, to waive any informalities in bids received, except with respect to the date, time, and place where the documents are submitted, to cancel this RFP in whole or in part, to reissue this RFP, and/or to accept or reject items of bids received. In the event this RFP is canceled in whole or in part prior to the opening of proposals, all respondents shall receive a notice of cancellation, and all proposals received shall be returned to the respective respondents unopened.

FAX proposals will not be accepted.

The schedule for procurement is estimated as:

RFP Advertisement	<i>February 2, 4, 9, and 11th, 2026</i>
Deadline for Questions	<i>February 20, 2026, at 12:00 PM</i>
RFP Submittal Deadline	<i>March 27, 2026, at 3:00 PM</i>
Evaluation and Ranking	<i>Approximately 3 Weeks (Including any Presentations)</i>
Council Actions	<i>May 2026</i>

III. General Project Information

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to select one or multiple firms for a six-year period to perform planning work for Sussex County’s Planning & Zoning Department, to include a 10-year update of the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan and potential updates to existing Ordinances. Sussex County intends to retain ownership of the GIS information, data, documents, reports, and maps, both electronic and paper, that are generated through work items assigned under the selection.

A. 10-Year Update to the 2019 Comprehensive Plan

Sussex County adopted the current Comprehensive Plan Update in 2019. The update of the Comprehensive Plan for each County is required by the State of Delaware under Delaware Code Title 9. The Plan for the unincorporated area of Sussex County shall be updated in compliance with State law (see Title 9, § 6956) pertaining to

Comprehensive Plans in the following areas: coordination with the local municipalities, education, capital improvements plan, future land use, transportation, utilities, conservation, recreation and open space, housing, community design, historical preservation, economic development, education, resilience, intergovernmental coordination and recommendations and implementation of the plan. There must also be coordination with the Office of State Planning Coordination, State Agencies, including DelDOT and DNREC, as well as the numerous municipalities concerning their respective Comprehensive Land Use Plans. An amendment to the Comprehensive Plan may, depending on the extent of the amendment, include public outreach and this may require facilitation, scheduling, coordination and/or organization of the following (by way of example and not intended to be all-inclusive): outreach avenues, public meetings (including potential public meetings in each of the five Sussex Councilmanic Districts), workshops, charrettes, committees, hearings, etc.

B. Updates to Current Ordinances

Sussex County is likely to consider potential updates to existing Ordinances during a three-year period following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Planning work could include the provision of advice, research, drafting of Ordinances, facilitating public workshops/workgroups, making presentations, etc., on various planning, land use, and zoning topics. Areas of work may include, but are not limited to: mass rezoning of Sussex County, setbacks, uses within zoning classifications, the creation of new zoning districts, and potential updates to requirements within Chapters 99 and 115 of the Code for Sussex County.

IV. Required Submittals

The following items must be submitted with the consultant's package:

1. A brief letter of interest providing a subjective discussion of your firm's capabilities to provide the proposed services in one page or less.
2. Submit descriptive summary and technical information on similar services that your company has successfully completed within the last five (5) years. Include contact information for references. Keep all information related to the type of projects described in this packet.
3. Provide a subjective discussion of your firm's understanding of the issues facing Sussex County regarding zoning and future land use, and how they should be addressed.
4. Provide a letter detailing the litigation history of your firm. The letter shall list any lawsuits or claims that have been filed or asserted against your firm (or any member of your firm) in the last five (5) years. Please summarize the nature of the claim or suit and specify the outcome.
5. Prepare a detailed description of any current or recent (within the past five years) relationships between your firm and any private developers, contractors, builders, or engineering firms doing work in Sussex County.
6. If used by your firm, submit a current GSA Standard Form (SF) 330 applicable to the nature of the proposal request, based upon the activities of the consultant's physical

office location serving this project. It is recognized that the services of more than one consultant office, for a multi-office business, may be necessary to properly perform the work contemplated.

The consultant shall submit six (6) copies of this comprehensive package for delivery to the Sussex County Council offices prior to the local time and date shown in the public advertisement for this contemplated work. Consultant comprehensive packages or other supplemental information received by Sussex County after the local time and date shown in the public advertisement will not be considered in the Consultant Selection Procedure for this project.

V. Insurance Requirements

The selected Vendor shall not commence services until original certificates of insurance evidencing all required insurance has been submitted to and approved by the County. The selected Vendor shall be required to maintain, at its own expense, and provide satisfactory evidence of the required insurance, throughout the term of the Contract.

All required insurance coverage must be underwritten by insurers allowed to do business in the State of Delaware and acceptable to the County. The insurers must have a Best's Financial Strength Rating of "A -" or better, and a financial size category of "Class VII" or higher, unless the County grants specific written approval for an exception.

- A. Commercial General Liability - \$1,000,000 combined single limit - each occurrence; \$1,000,000 personal and advertising injury; \$2,000,000 combined single limit - general aggregate; \$2,000,000 combined single limit - products/completed operations aggregate.
- B. Business Auto Liability Insurance - combined single limit of \$1,000,000 per accident.
- C. Workers Compensation Insurance - \$100,000 each accident for bodily injury by accident; \$100,000 each employee for bodily injury by disease; and \$500,000 policy limit for bodily injury by disease.
- D. Professional liability (or errors or omissions liability) insurance that insures against claims alleging acts, errors and omissions arising out of or in connection with the services provided to the County, with minimum limits of \$2,000,000 per occurrence; and \$2,000,000 annual aggregate.
- E. Umbrella Excess Liability or Excess Liability Insurance - \$5,000,000 each occurrence; \$5,000,000 aggregate other than products/completed operations and auto liability; \$5,000,000 products/completed operations aggregate; and including coverage for commercial general liability, business auto liability, and employers liability.

VI. Contract and Payment Policies

The following items shall be considered basic requirements for contracts to provide services:

1. County to be billed direct payroll costs actually paid to productive technical employees while performing work on this project. Such costs shall be derived from the hourly rate paid to each productive technical employee multiplied by the number of hours spent in actual productive work on this project. The direct wages and salaries shall include all salaries and wages of productive technical employees assigned to the performance of services under the Agreement, whether such performance is at the consultant's local project office or at the regularly established offices. Payroll costs for clerical employees will not be included here.
2. Any subcontracts are to be billed at actual cost only without markup. No overhead or fixed fee will be charged in addition to the subcontract amount.
4. Negotiated and agreed upon out-of-pocket expenses may include items such as mileage payable at an agreed-upon rate per mile for use of personal motor vehicles operated in accordance with the agreed-upon policy for such expenses, including meal and lodging costs for overnight travel required by the project. All allowable direct expenses must be specifically listed in the final contract documents.
5. The contract with the selected consultant must include an upset limit, or not to exceed amount, for each service being performed. The upset limit will include the cost of professional services for a particular function, as well as a fixed fee to cover profit.
6. Payment for consulting services will be made 30 days after receipt of an approved invoice.

VII. Evaluation and Selection Process

Based on the criteria established, an evaluation committee will be selected to read, screen, and rank all proposals. In accordance with 29 Del. C. § 6982(b), the evaluation committee shall determine that all applicants meet the minimum qualifications to perform the services. It shall then interview, at a minimum, the highest-ranked firm and may request a presentation from the firm(s). Interviews and presentations may result in a change of rank. At any point in the negotiation process, the evaluation committee and the requesting department may, at its discretion, terminate negotiations with any and all firms. The contract shall include a provision stating that the original contract price and any additions thereto shall be adjusted to exclude significant sums where the requesting department determines the contract price was increased due to inaccurate and other factual unit costs. Such adjustments shall be made within one (1) year following the end of the contract.

VIII. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria (maximum of 100 points). The proposals will be evaluated for each of the two audits.

- **EXPERIENCE AND REPUTATION** – Experience performing the tasks required in the request for proposal. **20 points**
- **EXPERTISE** – Including expertise on issues unique to Sussex County **20 points**
- **CAPACITY TO PERFORM** – Complete the work in the necessary time frame, how much work can be completed in-house vs. requiring the use of a sub-consultant. **15 points**

- **CREDENTIALS AND CERTIFICATIONS**– Qualifications of staff, including certifications such as AICP. **15 points**
- **FAMILIARITY WITH SUSSEX COUNTY AND DELAWARE STATE AGENCIES AND PUBLIC WORK GENERALLY**, demonstrated ability working with public sector clients, with an emphasis on Sussex County and Delaware State agencies. **15 points**
- **LOCATION** –proximity to Sussex County, Delaware **15 points**