



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ONE ROOSEVELT SQUARE
MOUNT VERNON, NEW YORK 10550
PHONE: (914) 840-4029
EMAIL: TGRAHAM-OUATTARA@CMVNY.COM

JAMES RAUSSE, FAICP, WEDG
COMMISSIONER

February 19, 2026

VIA EMAIL:

Honorable City Council Members
City of Mount Vernon
1 Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

RE: Request for the City Council to enact legislation to authorize release of a Request For Proposals for consulting services for the preparation of an update to the City of Mount Vernon Zoning Ordinance. For consideration on the agenda for the February 25, 2026, City Council meeting.

Honorable City Council President Thompson and Council Members:

I respectfully submit this letter requesting that the City Council authorize the Department of Planning and Community Development to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional consulting services to prepare a comprehensive update to the City of Mount Vernon Zoning Ordinance.

In November 2025, following a multi-year, two-phase planning process that included extensive public engagement, technical analysis, and intergovernmental coordination, the City adopted its first Comprehensive Plan since 1968. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a long-term vision for land use, housing, economic development, transportation, sustainability, and community character, with a strong emphasis on transit-oriented development, equity, and environmental resilience. Implementation of this vision requires a comprehensive modernization of the City's Zoning Ordinance.

The selected consultant will provide significant technical expertise and planning support necessary to translate the Comprehensive Plan into an updated and legally defensible regulatory framework. This work will include a full diagnostic review of the existing Zoning Ordinance to identify inconsistencies, outdated provisions, and areas requiring clarification or modernization. The consultant will develop updated zoning districts, use tables, dimensional standards, design guidelines, and administrative procedures that support predictable and equitable development. The scope also includes conducting citywide and neighborhood-level analyses such as buildout studies, redevelopment feasibility assessments, infrastructure capacity evaluations, and land use scenario modeling to ensure the zoning framework aligns with growth projections and community goals.

In addition, the consultant will manage and facilitate public and stakeholder engagement process to ensure transparency and meaningful community participation. The firm will be responsible for preparing and coordinating the required environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), which will include preparation of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) addressing potential impacts on transportation, infrastructure, schools, municipal services, historic resources, and environmental sustainability. The consultant will also provide best practice guidance to support equitable development, environmental resilience, multimodal transportation access, economic vitality, and long-term growth management consistent with contemporary planning standards.





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This Request for Proposals is intended to assist the City in selecting a qualified and experienced planning consultant capable of delivering a modern, user-friendly, and legally sound Zoning Ordinance that advances the goals adopted in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Request for Proposals will be released after City Council approval in accordance with the City's established procurement procedures, including publication on Opengov. In addition, appropriate public notice will be placed in The Journal News (LoHud) to ensure broad public awareness and compliance with applicable requirements.

The consultant fees for this work will be paid through the Contracted Outside Services budget line 8020.405 in the adopted 2026 City Budget. A draft of the Zoning Ordinance Request for Proposals is attached for your review and consideration.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Rausse".

JAMES RAUSSE, FAICP, WEDG

cc: Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard
Comptroller Darren M. Morton
Malcolm Clark, Chief of Staff

