

Northern Forest Center Request for Proposals Master Planning Services

The Northern Forest Center (“The Center”) is seeking the services of a landscape architecture firm or group with equivalent expertise to provide master planning services at two sites in the Adirondacks. This work is being conducted on behalf of the owners of each property as part of a grant-funded project to advance predevelopment work on potential housing projects.

Issue Date: March 4, 2026

Site Visit: By appointment

RFP Responses due: April 3, 2026

Selection: April 24, 2026

Contact: Isabella Ronson-Amrein, Northern Forest Center – ironson@northernforest.org

Context and Background

The [Northern Forest Center](#) is a regional innovation and investment partner creating bold possibilities for rural communities across the 30-million-acre Northern Forest region of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. The Northern Forest Center received a grant in 2024 from the New York State Department of Conservation to support predevelopment activities at multiple sites with potential for new housing development.

As part of this work, the Center is procuring and paying for select contractual services to advance projects towards being developable. This scope for master planning services will result in master plans that will serve multiple uses:

- They will be incorporated into a Request for Expression of Interest to solicit partnership interest from potential developers.
- They will inform project phasing and implementation – for example, defining the location of public infrastructure with enough information to proceed with infrastructure cost estimating and design.
- They will help guide decisions about scale, size, and layout of potential housing development
- They will contribute to next steps such as submission of grant proposals, subdivision planning, etc.

Site Context: There are two different sites included in this scope:

- A 10.55-acre site in Saranac Lake, NY owned by the Village of Saranac Lake. The site has historically been a site for sand mining and is proposed to be redeveloped as housing.
 - Project Location: 43 Will Rogers Drive, Village of Saranac Lake
 - Parcel: 32.280-1-2.120
- A 7.60-acre site in Indian Lake, NY owned by the Town of Indian Lake. The site is mostly undeveloped, except for a remaining vacant auto garage. There are also some concrete pads remaining from previous buildings that have been removed. Housing is proposed for a portion of this site, and some early concept level plans have already been developed.
 - Project Location: 6298 NYS Route 28, Indian Lake, NY 12842
 - Parcel: 56.019-1-19

Project Approach and Scope

Public engagement and participation are important for the success of these projects. The Northern Forest Center is currently working with representative committees from both communities to synthesize existing information and conduct some preliminary public outreach to identify goals, concerns and questions related to the development of these properties for housing. It is anticipated that the selected consultant will work with Center staff and the committees on additional public outreach to present and vet a preliminary draft of one or more master plan(s) to ensure that the final master plans that result from this process have broad community buy-in, participation and support.

The selected consultant will:

- Participate in meeting(s) to learn about existing public outreach to date related to these properties.
- Work with Center staff to collate existing data available about the sites as well as housing needs in the communities to inform the master planning efforts. Some additional research may be needed, though no new housing studies will be commissioned to support this work.
- Help determine a plan for any additional public outreach needed before the production of one or more draft master plan(s).
- Develop one or more draft master plan(s).
- Present one or more draft master plan(s) at public forums in each community.
- Work with the project committees to distill input from the public forum(s).
- Work with the project committee to finalize the master plan into a single document representing the community vision for the property.

Final deliverables

A single master plan shall be produced for each site that will represent a shared community vision for each property. The plan will utilize and represent all existing information available, including physical information and site parameters, existing zoning limitations (village and APA), the public's goals for the property (which may include other priorities and uses besides just housing) and existing public data on factors such as housing demand.

The master plans should represent sufficient specificity to serve the functions identified in Context and Background above, but it is not anticipated that the plans will prescribe a single, final specific development pattern.

A short narrative should accompany the visual plan to synthesize important elements of the vision, including any important outcomes of the planning process that can best be depicted through text, as well as any elements that may be outside of the geographic bounds of the property.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Please address the following prompts:

Approach

- Describe how the team proposes to approach this project and complete the scope of work, including specific recommendations related to public engagement, data acquisition and project delivery.
- Include an explanation for any additional tasks the survey team believes necessary to complete the scope of work.
- Define the team approach: who will be working on the project and what will their role(s) be?

Experience

Describe experience with similar projects.

Provide three references for similar projects, including project manager or owner's contact information.

Scheduling

- Address approximately when the team will be able to begin meeting with the community team.
- Address the anticipated project delivery timeframe.
- Address approximately when the deliverables will be complete.

Fees and Costs

- Provide proposed price for delivering the complete scope of services, broken out by project (Saranac Lake, Indian Lake).
- Indicate subcontracts on separate budget lines, if any.
- Provide estimate of reimbursable expenses, if any.

New York State Minority and Women Owned Business (MWBE)

- If applicable, please indicate if your firm is a MBE and/or WBE registered in New York State. If a subcontracted firm is a MBE/WBE please indicate which and the share of the firm's subcontract within your total proposal.

Equal Opportunity Employer

- Affirm that your firm is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

You may include additional information as needed and that you feel would be helpful to the owners in selecting a survey team.

Questions

Questions regarding the proposal requirements or the project should be addressed to Leslie Karasin at lkarasin@northernforest.org.

Selection Factors

From the proposals received, Sustainable Forest Futures Inc. will select finalists for an interview. The final selection will be based on:

- Team's qualifications
- Relevant experience and approach
- References
- Schedule and availability
- Costs
- Any other criteria determined by the Center or property owners

The Center reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and negotiate with any or all of the firms that submit a proposal.

Proposal Due Date

Proposals shall be submitted in electronic form no later than 5PM on April 3, 2026, to Isabella Ronson-Amrein at ironson@northernforest.org. A single .pdf is preferred.