

## Scope of Work

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### **Background**

This project will comprehensively amend and modernize the City of Cambridge's zoning ordinance to bring about implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Aligned with the *CoastSmart* Communities Initiative, project staff will work to make strides in implementing the City's Comprehensive Plan (Plan) to improve regional water quality and prepare land use pattern and development practices for the potential impacts of storm surge associated with sea level rise. The same Planning Commission that produced the Plan, with broad community support, is ready to act to amend the City's development regulations to help implement this project.

The City of Cambridge embraces a responsibility to ensure that the area's natural resources and sensitive areas, the beauty they contain, and the roles they play in sustaining public well-being including, the protection of life and property, are protected and sustained for future generations. This is especially important to consider in the development of regulations in light of anticipated climate change and projected expansion of flood inundation areas due to sea level rise.

The City's Comprehensive Plan was designed with its unique ecological context in mind. The principal goals and policies flow from a detailed ecological and geo-spatial understanding of area water and water quality, as it relates to the local issues regarding climate changes and rising sea levels. These are important concerns for this region. The City's ecological research culminated in the production of detailed GIS mapping of areas of relative suitability for development and land conservation. Our mapping of ecological resources is therefore up to date, precise, and readily translatable into improved regulation and city planning.

The beginning the process of developing this Comprehensive Plan actually began in 2006, when the City hosted a Rural/Urban Design Assistance (R/DAT) five day long Charrette, sponsored by the American Institute of Architects. The event laid down the fundamental ground work and direction for the plan that is currently up for adoption by the City Council on March 28, 2011. The plan has been three years in preparation with over 30 public meetings involving the Planning Commission, elected local and state officials, non-profit advocacy groups and the community. The City, in the fall of 2010 worked closely with University of Maryland Landscape Architecture students on preliminary concept plans for the greenbelt, which defines the future growth limits of the municipal boundaries.

The Comprehensive Plan report itself features a unique and self-contained Plan for “City Growth and Conservation” and a chapter on Environmental Stewardship. The Plan recommends that the City amend its development regulations to promote low impact development and concentrate development in areas that will have the least impact on the natural environment, thereby protecting those areas that provide filtering of storm water runoff.

Items to be addressed by the Ordinances will include but not be limited to: reducing impervious surfaces, innovative parking and landscaping regulations, use of native plants, buffers and buffer restoration, special low impact development and re-development overlay regulations in areas of sensitive environmental concern, creating a resource conservation district and new zoning procedures for amending and refining district boundaries to protect areas vulnerable to sea level rise inundation and storm surge, and creating an open space district.

The City recently was selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as one of 32 communities in 26 states to participate in their Sustainable Communities Building Blocks Program. Cambridge will receive technical assistance in the form of a one day workshop in developing zoning codes that will promote sustainability. This event was held on June 7, 2011 and is viewed as the “kick-off” of this proposed project, not unlike the R/UDAT was for the Comprehensive Plan.

## **Task Outcomes**

### 1. City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance

A consultant (the contractor) will review the current Zoning Ordinance and detail inconsistencies between it and the new Comprehensive Plan including reviewing the ecological mapping and sea level rise modeling which formed part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The consultant will work at both the detail level (dimensional requirements, impervious surface coverage, parking requirements, and low impact development, for example) and at the process level (procedures and practices in areas such as variances, special exceptions, site plan standards, for example). Regarding the Zoning Map, the consultant will advise on the changes needed to zoning boundary lines and district designations. The consultant will work closely with the Department of Planning and Zoning, in developing a strategy to achieve this, which will include working with the appropriate agencies, elected local and state officials, non-profit advocacy groups and citizens. The consultant will then recommend revised zoning text, including best practices and modern regulatory language, and an updated Official Zoning Map.

The contractor will also identify and recommend specific enhancements to the City's existing Zone Ordinances to address impacts associated with sea level rise inundation and storm surge. Provisions such as increased building setbacks, shore protection practices, increased "freeboard" requirements for new and rebuilt structures, and density/rebuilding restrictions for development in the 50-year sea level rise inundation zones (0 – 2 feet above mean sea level) should be assessed. The consultant will also establish the timeframe for adoption of recommended enhancements and an analysis of any technical and legal barriers that would hinder implementation of provisions listed above. Deliverables will include: Draft Ordinance Language, meeting materials (agenda, handouts, attendees, and minutes for any meetings or hearings conducted during process for adoption).

Outcome end date: September 2012

2. Development of Guidelines for Ecological and Sustainable Site Redevelopment

In addition to the Zoning Ordinance, the consultant will prepare and deliver basic guidelines that the City and developers can use in ecological and sustainable site redevelopment especially in the downtown / waterfront development district. This will involve considerable best-practice research and working meetings with the City's development and building community. This work product should provide the basis for even more detailed guidelines to be prepared in the future. Deliverables will include development guidelines

Outcome end date: September 2012

3. Community Outreach and Work Sessions

Working with city staff, the consultant will conduct multiple work sessions and community stakeholder meetings as needed to elicit input and later, to explain the new draft regulations. The project will include a public hearing and the consultant will be available under contract to present the Planning Commission's recommended draft to the Mayor and City Council for their approval. Following this meeting, the recommended draft will be available for adoption by the Mayor and City Council. Deliverables will include meeting handouts, presentation(s).

Outcome end date: September 2012

4. Conduct Community Self-Assessment as a Pilot for CCP's *CoastSmart* Communities Scorecard

The City of Cambridge will work with CCP to pilot and refine the draft *CoastSmart* Communities scorecard, prior to its launch, for relevance and to improve the usability. The scorecard will be used as a self assessment tool for communities to determine their current ability for addressing sea level rise and to provide guidance on specific adaptation strategies that can be incorporated into local planning frameworks and regulations. The scorecard will also be instrumental in initiating future *CoastSmart* projects.

CCP staff will conduct at least one 4-hour work session with key City of Cambridge staff (to be identified in pre-planning process with project manager) to conduct the self-assessment for Cambridge, to discuss the recommendations/outcomes from the assessment and to provide feedback and recommendations to enhance the tool. Deliverables will include: meeting materials, scorecard recommendations (likely a questionnaire or survey).

Outcome end date: September 2012