

September 27, 2020

Ms. Marie Sobalvarro
Assistant Town Administrator
Town Administrator's Office
Town of Harvard
13 Ayer Road
Harvard, MA 01451

RE: Statement of Interest for Ayer Road Corridor Vision Plan and Form-Based Code

Dear Ms. Sobalvarro:

McCabe Enterprises and IBI Placemaking are extremely interested in working with the Town of Harvard to develop an Ayer Road Corridor Vision and subsequently develop the Form-Based Code zoning to enable the implementation of the Town's vision for Ayer Road.

McCabe Enterprises has successfully worked with communities to develop and advance their vision for appropriate development with safeguards for retaining rural and small community character while seeking desired services, businesses, and tax revenues. We are good listeners and skilled at developing shared community understanding of issues and challenges that often leads to community consensus. McCabe Enterprises and IBI Placemaking worked with the Town of Medfield developing the Strategic Reuse Master Plan for Medfield State Hospital, a 135-acre district, along with the implementation zoning that incorporated features of form-based zoning and design guidelines. Medfield Town Meeting subsequently adopted the MSH rezoning. The MSH Strategic Reuse Master Plan won national accolades and an award from the Small Town and Rural Planning Division of the American Planning Association.

In the MSH plan, the McCabe Enterprises team balanced the desire to protect rural character and preserve the historic architecture with the need for municipal tax revenues, cost of infrastructure and desire formixed-use development that did not create a costly burden on local schools. In short, the McCabe Enterprises team understands how to listen, work with a wide range of active citizen boards, forge a common understanding, and develop a vision and plan for the future addressing multiple goals that is economically feasible and supported by the Town.

We appreciate the quintessential New England small town rural character that is epitomized by Harvard and has drawn many newer residents and visitors to your community.

CORE TEAM. The McCabe Enterprises core team members includes IBI Placemaking (formerly Carol R Johnson Associates), landscape architects; Paul Lukez Architecture, architects and urban designers; and Pare Corporation, environmental and multi-disciplinary engineering. We also anticipate working closely with TEC, The Engineering Corporation. Brief thumbnail descriptions of each core firm team members follow.

McCabe Enterprises and IBI Placemaking Team brings together a dynamic group of practitioners, that can provide Harvard with the capacity of a large organization combined with the agility of a small firm. As a team we have successfully completed a range of projects over nearly ten years, including the recent national award-winning Medfield State Hospital Strategic Reuse Master Plan, which received the American Planning Association's Small Town And Rural Division's 2019

John Keller Award for Planning Initiative, citing it as a “model reuse plan” and the Massachusetts APA Chapter’s 2018 Project Plan of the Year Award.

Our team has earned accolades from the Mass American Planning Association for other large-scale planning projects including the 2016 Comprehensive Planning Project of the Year Award for the Foxborough Town-wide Master Plan and Economic Development Master Plan. In 2014, the IBI Placemaking-McCabe team earned the Planning Project Award for Land Use/ Redevelopment for the Brownfields Area-wide Plan for New Bedford’s Payne-Cutlery neighborhood. IBI Placemaking’s award-winning work includes the New Hampshire Planners Association Project of the Year for the Concord Main Street Revitalization project.

McCabe Enterprises. A wholly woman-owned firm founded in 1990 by Kathleen “Kathy” McCabe, FAICP, McCabe Enterprises will serve as the Team co-lead and the co-contact person with Harvard on the Ayer Road Vision Plan and Form Base Code Project. McCabe Enterprises provides strategic solutions in economic development and land use planning, placemaking, commercial revitalization, real estate and retail market analysis, fiscal and economic impact analyses, community planning, and public financing. McCabe Enterprises is known for being visionary yet pragmatic. McCabe Enterprises has distinguished itself in community participation using innovative approaches to community engagement, public financing strategies and working with communities to identify and secure resources to fund public infrastructure and desired economic development.

McCabe Enterprises is highly skilled at working with clients and communities to develop effective plans based on core values that enable change and moving from vision to reality. Whether it is a master plan, community vision, or project plan, McCabe Enterprises engages stakeholders, undertakes robust analyses – real estate, market and financial analyses, communicates critical issues to build shared understanding of alternative scenarios, assesses the context, and defines specific actions steps, which when implemented can achieve the desired vision. McCabe Enterprises has worked with communities to successfully craft design guidelines and zoning for plan implementation. We have worked with form-based codes and more traditional Euclidean zoning tools. McCabe Enterprises frequently collaborates with other professionals forming teams that are tailored to meet client needs, as this statement of interest in the Ayer Road Vision Plan indicates.

Kathleen “Kathy” McCabe, FAICP has successfully established small scale public sewer districts. Kathy played a pivotal role securing enactment of Business Improvement District enabling legislation and in District Improvement Financing. Kathy has an intimate understanding of the issues, approaches and tools related to financing water and sewer services and infrastructure for economic development. McCabe Enterprises undertakes market analyses which informs financial modeling and projections so that communities, like Harvard, can make informed decisions about your future. McCabe Enterprises is based in Boston serving communities throughout the Commonwealth.

IBI Placemaking. A national leader in landscape architecture and environmental design with numerous national and regional awards, IBI Placemaking has developed many area master and corridor plans addressing land use, the landscape and preservation of the natural environment and rural character while supporting appropriate and needed redevelopment, campus master plans in both urban and suburban settings, and green infrastructure/open space frameworks to spur new investment and revitalization. John Amodeo, ASLA, LEED AP BD+C, is the principal heading IBI Placemaking’s work with Harvard’s Ayer Road Corridor assignment. John developed the landscape

design guidelines and zoning regulations for Devens and has undertaken design review of proposed projects at Devens. John Amodeo also serves on the Boston Landmarks Commission and has a deep appreciation for historic landscapes. In addition, he has worked extensively with the National Park Service to preserve and maintain the historic character of the built and natural environment working with form-based codes.

IBI Placemaking emerged from a collaboration between CRJA, founded in 1959 by Carol R. Johnson, and IBI Group, a global multidisciplinary design firm. It serves as the US center of excellence in Placemaking. IBI Placemaking is a 35-person landscape architecture practice based in Boston with a reputation for excellence in the design of both natural and urban environments.

IBI Placemaking believes that Landscape Architecture holds a unique responsibility to create a better, more resilient world for us and future generations. As landscape architects, IBI Placemaking creates healthy and beautiful spaces, the success of which is ultimately measured by the people who enjoy it, enliven it, and make it their own, but also by the natural systems that flourish within it. These are Places for Life.

Pare Corporation. Pare Corporation was founded in 1970 with one goal in mind – providing consistently superior service to our clients. Over the years, Pare has expanded its capabilities and staff to address the ever-changing complexities and challenges of projects in both the public and private sectors. Pare's Massachusetts office is in Foxborough. Pare's 110-person staff provides diverse array of services including environmental engineering – water supply, wastewater, storm water management, green infrastructure; geo-technical and dams; transportation – multi-modal transport, roadways, bridge design, parking, traffic, bicycle, pedestrian; infrastructure planning; structural planning and site/civil; permitting and support services – wetlands delineation and restoration, groundwater issues, GIS. Pare will play a key role in assessing how much development can be supported along the Ayer Road project area as to existing parameters as to drinking water and septic/sewer considerations. Pare will be able to provide valuable environmental analyses as to the general feasibility and order of magnitude costs of additional utilities, which may or may not be needed when developing a preferred future vision for Ayer Road.

By combining the resources of our experienced professional staff, and staying at the forefront of emerging technologies, Pare maintains a track record of solid accomplishment and can handle projects of any size with efficient, responsive service. Pare is a multidisciplinary firm of engineers, planners, environmental and wetland scientists, GIS specialists, and regulatory permitting specialists.

Paul Lukez Architecture. Paul Lukez is a LEED AP certified professional, Fellow in the American Institute of Architecture, and thought leader in suburban development, urban design, architecture, and sustainable communities, and is highly skilled in visualizing solutions for the built environment. Paul Lukez Architecture's practice includes context-sensitive design of net zero energy and resilient buildings. Paul Lukez Architecture creates sustainable designs that enrich the environment and elevate the human experience.

Paul Lukez Architecture (PLA) was established in 1992 with offices in Somerville. We believe that by listening carefully to our clients and integrating research into our design process, we can create inspiring, transformative places for people. Paul Lukez Architecture has been awarded more than 25 national and international awards for design excellence. Projects range from small to large

but are always unique in the special challenges they present. PLA aims to understand all we can about the opportunities of a project, the needs of its client, and the integration of the latest ideas and technologies into the fulfillment of that client's particular project requirements.

The Engineering Corporation – TEC. The McCabe Enterprises team and IBI Placemaking have a history of successful working relationships. McCabe Enterprises prepared the Merrimack Street Land Use Plan for the City of Lawrence with final design and construction documents prepared by TEC. IBI Placemaking has a long-standing working relationship with TEC. The McCabe Enterprises – IBI Placemaking team anticipates collaborating with TEC on the Ayer Road Vision Plan and Form-Base Code Project whether as a fellow team member or as a consultant working directly with the Town of Ayer or MassDOT.

PROJECT UNDERSTANDING & APPROACH FRAMEWORK. The McCabe Enterprises – IBI Placemaking team understands that the Town of Harvard has been considering how to best foster additional development along the Ayer Road corridor to provide desired services to local residents, including a grocery store, mixed-use development, including possibly restaurants, and generate desired tax revenues from commercial entities. This Town discussion has spanned the past decade. Town residents desire a stronger tax base with more remunerative commercial taxpayers while maintaining a high level of aesthetics and the rural character of Harvard. As part of the Town's consideration of how to effect appropriate and financially beneficial development, the Planning Board has done extensive investigation into form-based zoning. We understand that there is also interest by some to enhance density along the Ayer Road corridor. Form-based zoning is seen as a strategy and tool to advance appropriate levels of commercial development in Harvard while protecting the rural character and image of the Town.

The Town of Harvard's brand is its quintessential New England small town bucolic character with a classic Town green and apple orchards. This is what attracts people to Harvard, along with its exceptional public schools. Safeguarding Harvard's image while finding the right balance of commercial development and needed tax base is clearly a challenge that the Town is wrestling with.

The components of the Ayer Road Vision Plan as identified in the RFI – real estate market analysis, fiscal impact analysis, corridor vision plan, and zoning and regulatory tools, particularly form-based code zoning are all critical. Each of these components contributes to addressing the challenges and aspirations that Town has described and the potential for the Ayer Road corridor.

The Vision Plan for Ayer Road will need a robust public participation process, with continuing communication and updates. The 2016 Harvard Master Plan found that residents continue to have mixed feelings about the desirability of more commercial development. Harvard has a strong civic culture and active citizenry. It will be imperative for the successful development of the Vision Plan for Ayer Road and resulting draft of form-based or other zoning tools to have a substantive public engagement and consultative process. Issues, apprehensions, concerns, and aspirations for Ayer Road will need to be vetted and discussed with residents, property owners, businesses and the wide range of Town boards and committees.

Another important consideration is the requisite utilities, water and sewer, that denser traditional village-style development will likely need. The Ayer Road Planning Framework suggests that utilities will be addressed after adoption of form-based zoning. However, if the vision plan and the form-based zoning implementing the vision is to effectively prompt the desired commercial

development in Harvard, the analyses regarding utility needs, availability and likely costs must be undertaken during the development of the vision plan and be a component of the fiscal impact analysis. The Town could elect to implement utility infrastructure strategies after adoption of a form base code, but the analyses of various approaches and costs as to utility provision need to occur during the vision plan process.

Based on our experience, there are often fine-tuning, and additional market and fiscal impact related questions raised during visioning and the formation of a vision plan. The process is much more dynamic and interactive, rather than discrete, serial phases. With the Coronavirus pandemic, trends and changes impacting commercial real estate have accelerated, especially with online shopping. The office market is also undergoing change with employers reevaluating office space needs as more people work remotely from home. These trends and others are adding volatility and change to the real estate market.

We appreciate that the Planning Board and others have invested time in exploring form-base zoning as the tool that provides Harvard residents with a comfort level to permit additional commercial development in town. However, the key remains a strong vision plan that is supported and embraced by most Harvard town residents. Zoning, whether it is Euclidean, form-base or a hybrid, implements the plan, and the plan comes first. Your desire to use form-based zoning points to the need to address scale, physical character, building types, civic and public realm spaces, viewsheds, during the development of the vision plan. The landscape and urban design analyses for the Ayer Road Vision Plan will be more detailed during the Vision Plan to enable and set-up the development and use of a form-base code zoning implementation tool.

SCHEDULE. McCabe Enterprises and IBI Placemaking anticipate that it will require approximately eighteen months to complete the real estate market analysis, fiscal impact analysis (with consideration of alternative utility cost scenarios), and vision planning for Ayer Road with a robust community participation and consultation process. The preparation of zoning, whether a form-base code or a hybrid approach, to implement the Ayer Road Vision Plan will take approximately ten months. This would be prior to final consideration by Town Meeting, the public hearing by the Planning Board, and review of the warrant article by the Finance Committee and others prior to Town Meeting.

BUDGET. The \$300,000 range identified in the Planning Framework for Ayer Road in 2019 is appropriate for the time of the estimate. Based on the briefing, it appears that the Town of Harvard will be issuing an RFP for the Vision Plan for Ayer Road in spring 2021 following Town Meeting appropriation. This means the consultancy assignment would span fiscal years 2022 to 2023, thus requiring additional funds attributable to inflation and rising costs. In addition, due to the pandemic the real estate market is more volatile. A robust community engagement process, both online and in-person events along with regular collaboration with a working committee and various town boards and committees will be required. Developing support and a town-wide consensus of the future of commercial development along the Ayer Road corridor will take time. The public discussion and engagement need to be expanded and be much more detailed so that there is public confidence and support amongst Harvard residents. It will likely entail extensive financial modeling to address budget and revenue concerns to garner sufficient support. We are mindful that during the development of the last three master plans (1988, 2002, and 2016) there has been a mix of public opinion about commercial development in Harvard. This suggests a different approach is needed not only as to the type of implementation tools, such as form-based zoning, but also in the

consultation, analysis, and visioning phase. The McCabe Enterprises-IBI Placemaking team suggests the Town consider a phased approach with an aggregate budget ranging in the \$350,000 to \$400,000.

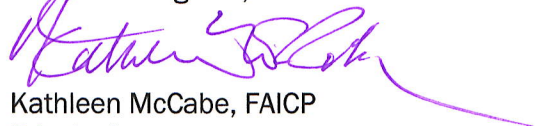
The McCabe Enterprises – IBI Placemaking team is the team for the Ayer Road Corridor Vision Plan and Form-Based Code consulting assignment. We are extremely interested in this assignment.

- Our multi-disciplinary team brings you the skills and experience with context-sensitive design and smart sustainable growth, including expertise in market analysis, economic development, financial modeling, landscape architecture, urban design, sustainable and net zero development, environmental engineering and transport, and zoning.
- Our team has outstanding designers – landscape architects and urban designers – who are familiar with the Harvard area who can help you visualize the desired form and setting – both built and natural – for future growth along the Ayer Road corridor.
- We have experience writing zoning and working with form-based codes and design guidelines.
- Our team produces outstanding visuals – illustrative diagrams as well as scenario visualizations.
- We are highly skilled and committed to authentic community engagement. The McCabe Enterprises-IBI Placemaking team are good communicators, including experience with social media, and multiple platforms for online and in-person meetings.
- We are leaders in the development and use of financial incentive tools to spur desired commercial development.
- We know real estate market analysis and municipal budgeting, so that we can effectively model and project anticipated fiscal impacts, costs, and benefits to the Town, local taxpayers and prospective developers who are needed to make investments in the desired development scenarios.

Moreover, the McCabe Enterprises – IBI Placemaking team will go the extra mile to work with you to help you achieve success. We believe our qualifications highlighted above are well suited to help you achieve the goals established for the Ayer Road Corridor Vision Plan and Form-Based Zoning. Our planning expertise has been shaped over the years by the vast experience of our built work. We are sticklers for details and will strive to create a vision plan that strengthens the Town of Harvard, invites public use and enjoyment, spurs desired economic development and investment, and stands up well over the test of time.

We look forward to the opportunity to meet your team and present our qualifications in greater detail, if desired. Thank you for your consideration. We are extremely interested in this opportunity to work with Harvard.

With warm regards,



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