

AI RFP – Questions/Answers:

Does the Town currently use an AI-powered research assistant or chatbot? **No**

~~If yes, who is the current vendor, and what solution is being used?~~

~~What are the primary pain points or limitations with the current solution?~~

Is this project a replacement of an existing solution or a completely new implementation? **New implementation**

~~Are there any lessons learned from previous implementations that bidders should be aware of?~~

Approximately how many documents will be indexed during the initial implementation? **Difficult to estimate – likely less than 50GB of data for initial upload**

What is the approximate total size of the document repository (GB/TB)? **Difficult to estimate – likely less than 50GB of data for initial upload**

What document formats are currently in use (PDF, Word, Excel, HTML, scanned documents, etc.)? **PDF, Word, Excel, HTML, PPT, TXT, JPEG, PNG**

How frequently are documents created or updated? **Weekly**

Will the AI solution be expected to automatically index newly published documents? **Yes**

What are the highest-priority use cases the Town expects the AI assistant to address? **Querying/searching internal documents.**

Besides document search, are there any additional workflows the AI assistant should support? **Email/content draft assistance.**

Should responses always include citations and references to source documents? **Yes**

Should the solution support conversational follow-up questions while maintaining context? **Yes**

Are there any requirements for summarization, report generation, or document comparison? **Not a 'requirement' but would be nice to have.**

Which user groups will use the solution (employees, elected officials, residents, visitors, etc.)? **An internal only system for employees and elected officials and an external system for residents.**

Approximately how many internal users will require access? **50-60**

Is there an estimate of expected public usage or monthly query volume? **No estimate**

Will different user roles require different permissions or document access levels? **Yes**

Should anonymous public users have access to the chatbot? **Yes**

Where are the municipal documents currently stored (SharePoint, network drives, cloud storage, document management system, etc.)? **All of the above.**

Does the Town require integration with Microsoft 365 applications such as SharePoint, Teams, or Outlook? **No**

Are there any additional third-party systems that the AI assistant must integrate with? **Not a requirement to integrate but would be a benefit to integrate with as many of our 3rd party solutions as possible.**

Does the Town currently use Azure Active Directory (Microsoft Entra ID), Active Directory, Okta, or another identity provider? **Active Directory**

Are APIs available for any existing systems that require integration? **Some. Contact the Town RFP contact directly for a list of software APIs available.**

Does the Town prefer a vendor-hosted SaaS solution or a Town-hosted deployment? **Vendor-hosted SaaS solution**

~~If self-hosting is preferred, what cloud platform or on-premises infrastructure is currently available?~~

Are there any data residency or hosting location requirements? **Data must be housed in the US**

Are there any restrictions on the use of public cloud providers (AWS, Azure, Google Cloud)? **No restrictions**

Are there any backup, disaster recovery, or business continuity requirements that vendors should consider? **No**

Are there any required security or compliance standards (CJIS, SOC 2, ISO 27001, NIST, FedRAMP, etc.)? **No requirements, but compliance with industry standards such as the ones listed above would be favorable.**

Are there any requirements regarding encryption, audit logging, or data retention? **No requirements, but compliance with industry standards would be appreciated.**

What authentication methods should be supported (SSO, MFA, Microsoft Entra ID, etc.)? **MFA**

Are there any target performance requirements such as maximum response time or system availability? **No**

Are there any accessibility requirements beyond standard ADA/WCAG compliance? **No**

Does the Town have a preferred AI platform or LLM provider (Azure OpenAI, OpenAI, Anthropic, AWS Bedrock, etc.), or is the vendor free to propose the most suitable technology? **No preference.**

Should the AI be limited to answering questions only from Town-approved documents, or may it leverage publicly available information when appropriate? **Town approved documents only.**

Will the Town require the ability to review, approve, or curate AI knowledge before it becomes available to users? **No**

Does the Town have a preferred project start date or target go-live date? **No**

Are there any implementation milestones that vendors should include in their project plans? **No**

What level of administrator and end-user training is expected? **At least a “train-the-trainer” level of on-boarding.**

What are the Town's expectations for ongoing technical support and maintenance after implementation? **There is an expectation of some form of ongoing support throughout the term of the contract.**

Does the Town expect vendors to provide ongoing document ingestion, AI model updates, or knowledge base maintenance? **Yes**

Is the stated annual budget of \$20,000 expected to include implementation services, or should implementation be quoted separately? **Implementation services can be quoted separately.**

Does the Town anticipate expanding the solution in the future to support additional departments, datasets, or AI capabilities? **Unknown at this time.**

How far back does the historical archive extend for meeting minutes, contracts, and grants - full history, or a defined recent period? **10 years.**

Beyond English, which specific languages does the Town require support for? **Spanish & Portuguese, if possible.**

Which existing Town systems specifically require API integration (e.g., website CMS, permitting/GIS system, agenda management platform, phone/311 system)? **Email the Town contact for specific systems list.**

Does "custom-trained AI on our unique documentation" require literal model fine-tuning, or would a retrieval-augmented approach (grounding a general-purpose model in the Town's documents) satisfy this requirement? **A retrieval-augmented approach would satisfy the requirement.**

Does "24/7 accessibility" refer to the AI system only, or does it include an expectation of human escalation/support during off-hours? **AI System only**

Does "compliance with data privacy and security standards" refer to a specific named standard (e.g., SOC 2, CJIS, or a state-specific requirement), or is the vendor expected to propose an appropriate standard? **Vendor can propose an appropriate standard.**

Are there data residency requirements? Must data remain within a Town-controlled environment, or is a vendor-hosted cloud environment acceptable? **Vendor-hosted cloud environment is acceptable**

What is the intended contract term length and renewal structure? **1 year**

Is the "lowest qualified evaluated bid" standard based on total annual cost, or total contract value inclusive of onboarding and other one-time costs? **total annual cost**

Does a SaaS subscription/services engagement qualify as "services performed in and/or for the Town" for purposes of the \$5,000,000 general liability insurance requirement, or does that requirement apply only to on-site/physical service delivery? **only to on-site/physical service delivery**

Is cyber liability or technology errors & omissions coverage expected in addition to the general liability and automobile coverage stated in the IFB? **No**

Will references from adjacent AI/conversational-technology deployments be considered acceptable, given that purpose-built government document-research assistants are a relatively new vendor category? **Yes**

Does the Town have a target go-live date or fiscal-year budget consideration driving implementation timing, even though the IFB itself does not specify one? **No**

Must a bidder be registered/qualified to transact business in Rhode Island at the time of bid submission, or is this required only upon contract award? **only upon contract award**

The IFB states that an out-of-state corporation shall qualify or register to transact business in Rhode Island. Is Rhode Island business registration required at the time of bid submission, at contract award, or before contract execution? **No**

Will the Town provide documents in organized, searchable, and machine-readable formats, or should vendors include OCR, document cleanup, metadata tagging, classification, and indexing within the implementation scope? **Vendors should include that within the scope.**

For planning site plans, should the AI only extract and understand text, labels, and notes from PDF/image files, or is the Town expecting deeper interpretation of drawings, maps, parcels, measurements, zoning overlays, and visual plan elements? **Deeper interpretation**

Should the public-facing chatbot and private-facing staff chatbot use separate knowledge bases, permission structures, response rules, and approval workflows? **Yes**

What information should be excluded from the public-facing chatbot, and what review or approval process should apply before documents are made available for public AI responses? **Town employees will parse documents for public chatbot.**

Does the Town require role-based access controls by department, user type, document category, or confidentiality level? **Yes**

Does the Town have any preferences, restrictions, or approval requirements regarding the AI model used for the solution, including whether vendors may use commercial large language models, open-source models, privately hosted models, or third-party AI APIs? **No**

What implementation timeline does the Town expect for discovery, document ingestion, chatbot configuration, testing, staff training, public launch, and post-launch support? **No expected timeline**

Does the Town require a Minority Business Enterprise action plan for this procurement, and if so, does the 10% participation goal apply to this software/SaaS engagement? **No**

Are AI model consumption costs expected to remain fixed within the annual per-user pricing, or may vendors identify reasonable usage limits and overage charges? **Vendor may define reasonable limits.**

Please clarify the expected scope of the requirement that the AI solution read and understand Planning site plans. Specifically, is the Town seeking:

- OCR and extraction of text, labels, dimensions, and annotations;
- Retrieval and citation of information appearing on site plans;
- Comparison of site-plan information against zoning or other Town documents; or
- Professional engineering, zoning, or code-compliance interpretation?

All of the above

May bidders that responded to the Town's May 2026 solicitation reuse or incorporate previously submitted references, company information, certifications, technical materials, and contract documents, provided that they are updated and included in the new sealed bid package? **Yes**

May the proposal be submitted electronically via email instead of physical hard copy mail delivery to the Town Clerk's Office? **Bids must be mailed, per Town bid requirements.**

Can the Town clarify the discrepancy on page 1 of the IFB between the submission deadline (noon on August 7, 2026) and the public bid opening time (11:00 A.M. on August 7, 2026)? **Bid opening is 11:00am on August 7th, bids will be accepted until then.**

What specific technical capabilities and file formats (e.g., multi-page PDF, DWG, TIFF) are expected for the AI to 'read and understand Planning site-plans' (e.g., visual layer extraction, spatial analysis, or text/legend parsing)? **PDF**

Will the Town provide sample site-plans and municipal documents during the evaluation period to test vendor parsing accuracy and reference retrieval capabilities? **Yes, if needed**

If subcontracting is not utilized, does the Town require the 10% Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Action Plan form to be submitted with an explicit waiver/exemption request? **No**

What are the Town's specific Service Level Agreements (SLAs) regarding uptime, latency/response time for user queries, and critical incident support response times? **Vendor can make appropriate proposals for SLAs.**

Will the Town consider a multi-year contract option to lock in annual licensing costs at or below the \$20,000 cap for subsequent years? **Yes**