

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Community Infrastructure Development Consultant For Master Plan to Remove Barriers to Economic Development and Housing Construction For the Town of Mount Holly, Vermont

February 18, 2022

Qualifications due by 3 PM March 8, 2022

Project Description

Overview

The Town of Mount Holly aims to identify community concerns and infrastructure barriers to economic development and housing construction.

The Town will contract with a firm that has experience working with the public to obtain input on community concerns and feedback on projected solutions. The first part of the project will include community outreach to all segments of the Town - especially those not usually contacted.

A major effort will be directed to gathering information on the geology, topography, hydrology, and environmental features of the Village of Belmont and the Municipal Center and of current methods used to deal with infrastructure deficiencies. The contractor will gather information from housing and affordable housing providers, organizations, homeowners, business owners, and others with experience of the deficient infrastructure and other problems obstructing growth.

A draft report will be produced that will then be modified as feedback is obtained from the public and other involved individuals.

A final report will include a summary of barriers to economic development and housing, recommendations and designs to address or remove those barriers, and will identify appropriate sources of funding for those solutions.

Context and Background

Historically, Mount Holly had many thriving hamlets. Today, due to land use and economic changes there are only two areas remaining with a development density for which we can plausibly consider public infrastructure: the Municipal Center, and the Village of Belmont.

The Municipal Center is the functional center of our town and hosts government, education, highway, and emergency services. There is no way to avoid continued public investment in these facilities. However, as these facilities age, those costs are likely to rise. Aging or inadequate infrastructure presents a huge financial liability to the community.

Part of this project will identify and remove barriers to development in the Municipal Center through community engagement, creative design, and identifying sources of funding that don't rely on local taxation.

Another part of this project will address the issue of inadequate septic infrastructure in the Village of Belmont. This deficiency was noted in a 1973 report from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. However, the cost of a remedy was widely believed to be prohibitive for the town and no progress has been made.

The inadequate wastewater infrastructure led to a cessation of economic and housing development in the Designated Village of Belmont (where less than 10% of houses were constructed after 1900) and contributed to stagnation of economic development town-wide. The General Store has been unable to add a small sit-down eating area. The Community Library and Community center (both refurbished with significant local fundraising) were unable to provide sufficient water or toilet facilities for their clients - including a pre-school group. Village homeowners have been unable to make additions or entertain commercial enterprise.

This infrastructure problem has had a major cumulative effect on housing and the cost of living. Housing affordable enough to meet the needs of independent adults, young families, and downsizing seniors is scarce. These unserved demographic groups have moved to more affordable towns - leaving Mount Holly without valuable human resources and depriving its high achieving Elementary School of students.

Additional issues can be traced back to the septic infrastructure problem. The waters of Star Lake have become polluted, regularly closing a valued site for family picnics, fishing, and childhood swimming lessons. The pollution and aquatic weed overgrowth have reduced the scenic value of the Lake and the tourist value of Belmont.

An ongoing sensitivity in Mount Holly is skepticism of the value of municipal planning. Some residents may have felt, at times, that planning meant annoying and invasive regulations with little or no benefit to them. Town Plans in themselves may have seemed to be empty promises in the face of these infrastructural issues. It is also fair to say that no amount of regulation would ever be able to remove the barriers to growth that we aim to identify and work to solve here. It is worth noting that Zoning regulations have been voted down twice and there are no plans for them in the future. This is somewhat of an advantage since, if adequate funding can be identified, there are fewer regulatory barriers to meeting our goals. It is our hope that Mount Holly will remain an affordable place to raise our families and that our community will continue to thrive.

Funding

A total of \$20,000 is available for consultant services from the Municipal Planning Grant Program, administered by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and \$2000 matching funds from the Town of Mount Holly.

Project Management

The Select Board will appoint as Municipal/Authorizing Official (M/AO) one of its three members to provide general supervision of the Project.

The Select Board has appointed a Grant Administrator who will be responsible for the administration of the Project and general supervision of the Contractor. The Grant Administrator will serve as the Project Manager.

The Select Board will appoint a Project Steering Committee from a list of candidates provided by the Grant Administrator to advise and assist the M/AO, the Project Manager, and the Contractor. The Project Steering Committee will consist of 5 to 7 members, chosen by the Select Board for their knowledge of the Town, its people, and the areas of concern.

The Project's Steering Committee will appoint a chair who reports to the M/AO and who will convene the Committee for regular meetings with the Contractor, appropriate staff, the Project Manager, and the M/AO. The chair of the Committee will report at each meeting of the Select Board.

At the outset of the project, the Contractor, the M/AO, the Project Manager, and the chair of the Project Steering Committee will discuss project management in order to establish a consulting and joint management style to ensure optimal community involvement and to assure the production of a report and suggested plan, which the Town residents believe is good for the town and possible to implement.

Project Outline and Deliverables

1. Project Plan
 - a. Tasks
 - i. Collaborate with Regional Planning Commission, Steering Committee, and Project Manager to create project plan
 - ii. Hold public meeting – announcement of project and information
 - b. Deliverables
 - i. Operational plan, schedule, contact list, input timeline.
 - ii. Website
 - iii. Social media pages
 - iv. Name press officer
 - v. Announcements of project:
 1. Okemo Public Access TV
 2. Chit Chat monthly newsletter
 3. Vermont Journal weekly
 4. Public meeting
 5. Newsflash email
2. Outreach
 - a. Town-wide
 - i. Tasks
 1. Outreach to general membership organizations:
 - a. Parent-Student Teacher Association
 - b. senior lunch
 - c. IOOF
 - d. Community Guild
 - e. Baptist Church
 - f. Bone Builders
 - g. Community Association
 - h. Snow Flyers
 2. Create description of project

3. Review historical context including past housing efforts and Town Plans.
4. Elicit input regarding Town development needs
- ii. Deliverables
 1. Report of initial findings
- b. Municipal Center
 - i. Tasks
 1. Conduct interviews, perform research, and identify needs and obstacles to growth in the Municipal Center by including:
 - a. Town Office
 - b. Town government officials
 - c. Volunteer Fire Department
 - d. Volunteer Rescue Squad
 - e. Highway Department
 - f. Elementary School staff, students, and parents
 - g. Post Office
 - h. Store
 2. Consider issues related to:
 - a. Former garage site cleanup
 - b. Age and condition of public safety facilities
 - c. Flood prevention and resilience
 - d. Space for emergency shelter
 - e. Aesthetics
 - f. Space for public assembly
 - g. Parking and transportation including bus and train travel
 - h. Pedestrian safety
 3. Write up initial findings
 4. Announce and hold a public meeting to present initial findings and collect feedback
 - ii. Deliverables:
 1. Report of initial findings from research and interviews
 2. Public Meeting announcement and agenda
 3. Report of public meeting
 4. List of Suggested developments
- c. Village of Belmont
 - i. Tasks
 1. Conduct interviews, perform research, and identify needs and obstacles to growth in the Village by including:
 - a. Community Association

- b. Belmont General Store
 - c. VAST
 - d. Post Office
 - e. Church
 - f. Church Green
 - g. Oddfellows Hall
 - h. Historical Museum (and annex)
 - i. Community Library
 - j. Community Center
 - k. Star Lake / Town beach and dam
 - l. Volunteer Fire station
 - m. Historical buildings
 - n. Ideas for National Historic District; Designated Village maps;
 - o. Traffic safety
 - p. Pedestrian travel
 - q. Fire suppression / hydrants
 - r. Cemeteries
 - s. Mechanicsville Aqueduct
 - 2. Obtain infrastructure knowledge from civil engineers and contractors who know the site.
 - 3. Collect information, including maps, studies, and photos.
 - 4. Write up initial findings
 - 5. Announce and hold a public meeting to present initial findings and collect feedback
 - ii. Deliverables
 - 1. Report of initial findings from research and interviews
 - 2. Public Meeting announcement and agenda
 - 3. Report of public meeting
 - 4. List of Suggested developments
3. Initial Report
 - a. Tasks
 - i. Perform civil engineering investigations and research
 - ii. Prepare initial report based on outreach and initial engineering
 - iii. Circulate initial report to members of the public and local organizations
 - b. Deliverables
 - i. Initial report based on outreach and initial engineering
4. Draft Report
 - a. Tasks

- i. Continue civil engineering investigations and research
 - ii. Sketch out future actions and overall plan for Town action
 - iii. Prepare summary and recommendations
 - iv. Identify appropriate funding sources for each recommendation
 - v. Prepare Maps, Diagrams, Models and Handouts, as appropriate
 - vi. Announce and hold a public meeting to present draft report and collect feedback
 - b. Deliverables
 - i. Draft report including summary, recommendations, and funding sources
 - ii. Maps, Diagrams, Models and Handouts
 - iii. Report of public meeting
- 5. Final Report
 - a. Tasks
 - i. Address feedback from Draft Report
 - ii. Prepare Final Report
 - b. Deliverables
 - i. Master Plan documents

Proposed Timeline

Contract awarded, proposed start date	March 16, 2022
Work Plan and public meeting	April 15, 2022
Town wide citizen input and public meeting	June 1, 2022
Municipal Center citizen input and public meetings	July 1, 2022
Belmont Designated Village citizen input and public meeting	August 1, 2022
Mid-project Progress Report	August 15, 2022
Initial Report and public meeting	October 15, 2022
Draft Report and public meeting	March 1, 2023
Master Plan and Project Ending Date	May 1, 2023

Consultant Community Outreach Services

Any community outreach tasks the contractor wishes to subcontract will be awarded to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission unless declined by the RRPC.

Submission Requirements

All responses to the RFQ shall include the following information:

1. **Cover Letter** - A letter of interest for the project.
2. **Statement of Qualifications and Staffing** – Provide a qualifications profile of the lead consultant and sub-consultants, including indication of the lead consultant, the proposed role of each consultant on the team. Also provide detailed information on each consultant, including the name of the firm, year established, and contact information.
3. **Summaries of relevant projects** – Describe relevant experience on similar projects for each firm and list the work experience of the individuals expected to be involved in the project. Include a minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last ten (10) years.
4. **Page Limit** - The proposal, encompassing items 1-3 above, shall not exceed 15 double-sided pages (30 total pages) including cover letter, project lists and contacts.

All information submitted becomes property of the Town of Mount Holly upon submission. The Town of Mount Holly reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFQ as well as make modifications to the RFQ or withdraw the RFQ.

Submission Requirements

Respondents must submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) to the email address planningcomm@mounthollyvt.org and 3 printed copies of the proposal to:

Municipality/Local Project Manager Contact Information

Town of Mount Holly
c/o Jon McCann, Planning Commission Chair
PO Box 248 Mount Holly, VT 05758

planningcomm@mounthollyvt.org

Please expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the qualifications.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFQ, please address them in writing either via U.S. mail or email to planningcomm@mounthollyvt.org. We will respond to all questions in writing within 2 days.

Selection Process

Qualifications will be reviewed by a selection committee chosen by the Project Manager.

RFQ Schedule Summary:

Qualifications due by 3 PM EST March 8, 2022

Consultant selected by March 16, 2022

Complete project on or by May 1, 2023.

Evaluation of Qualifications

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors:

1. Consultant Qualifications (experience with similar projects, ability to work with municipalities to attain desired outcomes, and knowledge of the topic) - 85%
 - a. Experience with complex community infrastructure projects
 - b. Ability to solicit input, build community engagement, and solve problems creatively
 - c. Knowledge of public infrastructure engineering
 - d. Understanding of rural communities
 - e. Proven ability to work with committees and conduct public meetings
 - f. Availability to begin work on project start date
2. Quality, completeness and clarity of submission - 15%

Final Consultant Selection

Following the selection process, one team will be selected to negotiate a final contract for services. The final scope of work with specified deliverables may be modified through negotiation of the final contract. The final project team may also be modified through negotiation of the final contract. Any expenses resulting from the interview and proposal process will be the sole responsibility of the consultant.

Contract Requirements

The consultant contract will be subject to the terms of Attachment D of the Municipal Planning Grant Agreement (Procurement Procedures and Other Grant Requirements). A sample contract meeting these requirements is available at:

<http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/CD/CPR/MPG/CPR-MPG-Sample-Contract.doc>