

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Bennington Town Plan Update – Phase 1

Bennington, Vermont

Proposals Due on April 25, 2023

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

In an effort to build upon recent diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in Bennington, town staff and citizen boards, in dialogue with community partners, agreed that the town's primary policy document, the Town Plan, should be updated to better integrate values of equity and inclusion across the topics it covers and policies it sets forth. The update will occur in two phases. This two-phase update process aims to dedicate specialized and professional resources to facilitate public dialogue, especially with locally marginalized populations, in a way conventional plan updates often fail to fully implement.

This RFP is for Planning and DEI consultant services for Phase 1 of the Town Plan update process. Phase I will employ a multifaceted public engagement process with the support of Planning and DEI consultants to make the update process accessible and productive. A summary of the DEI-informed public engagement process and its findings will be produced. Those findings will be condensed into an outline of community themes and priorities as a new content structure for the Town Plan, with specific takeaways on DEI concerns and opportunities in the community. A broader and deeper presentation of citizen concerns and needs will hone the town's policies on all topics, but particularly housing, economic development, transportation, community facilities, and land use.

Phase II (**not a part of this RFP**) will integrate current Town Plan language under the new structure developed in Phase 1 and revise sections accordingly and strategically.

This Town Plan update is one of several efforts Bennington intends to pursue to implement the town's vision of becoming *"a welcoming, engaged, inclusive, and resilient community where everyone, regardless of identity, shares in our vitality and benefits from an outstanding quality of life"*.

Funding

A total of \$23,510 is available for consultant services. The majority of the funding is from the Municipal Planning Grant Program administered by the Vermont Agency of

Commerce and Community Development. The Town of Bennington is providing matching funds for the grant.

Work Plan

Tasks

Project Kickoff

The Planning Commission (PC), town staff, and Planning consultant will discuss project goals and timeline and announce commencement of the project at a Planning Commission meeting.

Deliverable – Kickoff Meeting

Assess Current Town Plan

The Planning consultant will meet with the PC and town staff to identify the goals of the public outreach program and to flag sections and topics in the Town Plan they wish to emphasize in public outreach. Areas likely to merit DEI-specific updates will be a focus.

Deliverable – Draft Summary of Goals and Highlighted Sections

DEI Consultant Review of Town Plan

The DEI consultant will review the Town Plan and provide comments/suggestions on the Summary of Goals and Highlighted Sections developed by the PC and Planning consultant.

Deliverable – Review of Summary of Goals and Highlighted Sections – Revised Summary of Goals and Highlighted Sections

Draft Outreach Plan

The PC, town staff, and Planning consultant will outline the structure and format of public outreach to survey citizens generally on town priorities and also dedicate dialogue opportunities with marginalized local groups.

Deliverable – Draft Outreach Plan

Finalize Outreach Plan

The DEI consultant will review the draft outreach plan, provide comment, and meet with the PC, town staff and Planning consultant to finalize the plan.

Deliverable – Revised Outreach Plan

Implement Outreach Plan

The consultants will implement a mix of outreach approaches, potentially including public meetings, surveys, focus groups, interviews, charettes, art, canvassing, and facilitated discussions. The outreach implementation will include preparation of project website content and some graphics.

Deliverable – Project Outreach Efforts

Outreach Facilitation

The DEI consultant will facilitate a number of focus groups/public discussions.

Deliverable – Facilitated Discussions/Meetings

Summarize Outreach Findings

The Planning consultant will draft a summary report of outreach findings to be reviewed and approved by the PC and town staff.

Deliverable – Summary of Outreach Findings

Prepare Thematic Outline of New Town Plan

The Planning consultant will draft an outline for the new Town Plan based on values and themes of the outreach program to be reviewed and approved by the PC and town staff.

Deliverable – Thematic Outline of New Town Plan

Presentation of Findings and Outline

The PC, town staff, and Planning consultant will present the outreach findings summary and resulting new Town Plan outline at a public meeting for comment.

Deliverable – Public Presentation

Finalize Phase 1 Deliverables

Planning consultants will incorporate any public feedback to finalize Phase I deliverables.

Deliverable – Final Summary of Outreach Findings and Final Thematic Outline of New Town Plan

Timeframe

Project must commence no later than June 1, 2023, and must be completed no later than March 1, 2024

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Submission Requirements

All responses to the RFP shall include the following information:

1. **Cover Letter** – A letter of interest and a summary of qualifications, recommended approaches, scope of work, processes, and deliverables for the project.

2. **Scope of Work** – Provide a detailed scope of work based on the work plan provided above, broken down by task. Describe the approach to the project and proposed methodology including:
 - a. a detailed scope of work with associated list of tasks broken down by task and team member.
 - b. description of the proposed deliverables.The consultant may also propose additional supplemental items to the scope of work. While the work plan above conforms with the requirements of the Municipal Planning Grant, feel free to propose new/creative approaches to this project. (If chosen, alternative approaches may require approval from the state.)
3. **Proposed Schedule** – Provide a schedule that includes completion of work tasks and deliverables including key meetings and complies with the timeframe provided above.
4. **Project Budget** – Provide a detailed budget broken down by task and team member. Include your overhead and hourly rates for the individuals involved.
5. **Qualifications and Staffing** – Provide a qualifications profile of the lead consultant and sub-consultants, including indication of the lead consultant, the role of each consultant on the team with organizational staffing chart and percentage of time devoted to the project by each consultant. Also provide detailed information on each consultant, including contact information, the name of the firm, year established, including a description of relevant experience on similar projects for each firm and listing of their individual work experience in this role on similar projects.
6. **References** – A minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last ten (10) years.
7. **Page Limit** – The proposal, encompassing items 1-6 above, shall not exceed 15 double-sided pages (30 total pages) including cover letter, table of contents, project lists and contacts.

All information submitted becomes property of the Town of Bennington upon submission. The Town of Bennington reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFP as well as to make modifications to the RFP or withdraw the RFP. Once submitted, the consultant team (including specific staff assigned to the project) may not be changed without written notice to and consent of the Town of Bennington. The cost of preparing, submitting, and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the consultant. The Town of Bennington reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this solicitation, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities or to cancel the RFP in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the Town of Bennington. This

solicitation of proposals in no way obligates the Town of Bennington to award a contract.

Submission Requirements

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) and six (6) printed copies of the proposal by **4:00 PM on April 25, 2023** to:

Municipality/Local Project Manager Contact Information

Town of Bennington
Daniel W. Monks
Planning Director
205 South Street
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-9708
dmonks@benningtonvt.org

Please expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the proposal by the Town of Bennington.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFP, please address them in writing either via U.S. mail or email to Daniel W, Monks, Planning Director.

RFP Schedule Summary

Proposals due by **4:00 PM on April 25, 2023.**

Consultant selection by **May 19, 2023.**

Project Work to begin **June 1, 2023.**

Complete project on or by **March 1, 2024.**

Proposal Selection Proposals will be reviewed by the Town of Bennington Planning Commission.

Proposal Evaluation

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)
2. Scope of work, fees, methodology and schedule
3. Proposal quality, completeness, and clarity

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 proposal process will be the sole responsibility of the consultant.

Contract Requirements

The consultant contract will be subject to the terms of the Attachment D of the Municipal Planning Grant Agreement (Procurement Procedures and Other Grant Requirements). A sample contract meeting these requirements is available on the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development website.