

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

***Planning Services for Bennington National Guard Armory Reuse
Plan
Bennington, Vermont
February 17, 2022***

RFQ Due on March 21, 2022

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The Town of Bennington has obtained a State of Vermont Municipal Planning Grant to develop a plan for the reuse of the soon to be vacated National Guard (“Armory”) building in Bennington’s downtown (100 Franklin Lane). The Vermont National Guard currently is completing renovations to the building, including environmental remediation work, in anticipation of relocating to a larger site on Bowen Road. Upon relocation of the Guard operation to this new site, the Town will assume ownership of this strategically located building and the surrounding land/parking. The purpose of this planning project is to fully describe the property and building and to support efforts by the Town and other potential users to evaluate its suitability for various functions that meet identified community needs. The Town will use grant funds to hire a consultant who will work with a project steering committee to complete this investigation, prepare a report, and present the information to the Select Board and the public.

Funding

A total of **\$11,400** is available for consultant services from the Municipal Planning Grant Program administered by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Work Plan

Task One – Kick-off Meeting

The consultant will participate in a kick-off meeting with the project steering committee to develop a strategy for completing the work, including a project schedule.

Task Two – Meet with VT National Guard

The consultant will meet with the VT National Guard to obtain relevant building information.

Task Three – Building and Site Description and Analysis/Report

The consultant will develop a Building and Site Description and Analysis Report. The report will include an inventory and analysis of existing conditions in and adjacent to the study area. The building and grounds will be described based upon both a detailed inspection and incorporation of available information from the Vermont National Guard. The size, location, accessibility, and other features of each separate space within the building will be described and illustrated with photographs, as will the surrounding landscaped area, parking facilities, exterior lighting, and other site attributes.

The report will also include existing and planned, or potential, land uses in the immediate vicinity of the Armory documented with maps and photographs. The relationship of the subject property to existing roadways, lanes, sidewalks and other pedestrian connections, and landscaped areas and parks will be detailed on maps of the area and supported by physical descriptions.

All public infrastructure available at the site (water, sewer, stormwater, electricity, internet) will be documented in the report. In addition, estimated building utility and maintenance costs will be investigated and included in the report.

Environmental remediation work completed by the Vermont National Guard will be documented and any outstanding issues that may affect reuse will be noted in the report.

Task Four – Review Building and Site Description and Analysis/Report with Town Staff and Steering Committee

The consultant will review the report with Town staff and project steering committee.

Task Five – Stakeholder Outreach and Analysis of Municipal/Community Needs – Report on Outreach/Community Need Findings

Review and Analysis of Existing Planning Materials: The Town of Bennington has completed previous planning studies that consider local needs that may be addressed by resources available at the Armory site. Documents to be reviewed will include, but may not be limited to:

- Bennington Town Plan
- Bennington Downtown Area Wide Plan
- Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (SoVT CEDS)

- Bennington Park and Open Space Report
- Bennington County Cultural Plan
- Access to Recreational Resources (regional BCRC study)

Similar Reuse Initiatives: The consultant will document reuse efforts and successes at other similar downtown facilities (including, for example, the Hoosick Falls, NY Armory building). The range of implemented reuse activities will be presented along with notable challenges and ideas gleaned from owners/operators of those facilities.

Stakeholder Input: The Town of Bennington, as the future owner of the Armory property, is the principal stakeholder so the consultant will meet with key staff in each department to assess existing unmet needs and/or opportunities that might be presented by space at the new building. The consultant also will meet separately with groups and organizations, identified with assistance from town staff, who may have an interest in utilizing facilities in the building. Community stakeholders include: The Berkshire Y (recreation), indoor youth sports teams/leagues, arts and entertainment interests, Bennington College, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, the Bennington Redevelopment Group (potential uses supporting future development at the adjacent “Putnam Block”), and others.

The consultant shall prepare a report on its findings regarding community outreach and community needs.

Task Six – Review Community Outreach/Needs Report with Town Staff and Steering Committee

The consultant will review the report with Town staff and project steering committee.

Task Seven – Draft National Guard Armory Reuse Plan

The consultant will develop a draft National Guard Armory Reuse Plan in close consultation and coordination with the project steering committee. The Plan will include all inventory information, reuse ideas and community priorities, suggested physical modifications/additions, and an overview of operation and facility management considerations, etc.

Task Eight - Review Draft Plan with Town Staff and Project Steering Committee – Organize and Hold Public Meeting

The consultant will review the draft plan with Town staff and the project steering committee and organize and hold a public meeting regarding the draft plan.

Task Nine – Complete Final National Guard Armory Reuse Plan

Based upon feedback from the project steering committee and from that received at a public meeting in Task Five, the consultant will revise the draft Plan and produce a final National Guard Armory Reuse Plan.

Task Ten – Present Final Plan to Planning Commission and Select Board

The consultant will present the final plan to the Planning Commission and Select Board.

Timeframe

Project Start Date: No later than May 15, 2022

Submission of Draft Reuse Plan: No later than November 30, 2022

Project Completion Date – Presentation of Final Reuse Plan: No later than February 1, 2023

Deliverables

Building and Site Description and Analysis/Report

Community Outreach/Need Report

Draft National Guard Armory Reuse Plan

Final National Guard Armory Reuse Plan

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 ten (10) total pages including cover letter, project lists and contacts.

All information submitted becomes the property of the Town of Bennington upon submission. The Town of Bennington reserves the right to issue supplemental

information or guidelines relating to the RFQ as well as to make modifications to the RFQ or withdraw the RFQ.

Submission Requirements

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) and five (5) printed copies of the proposal by **March 21, 2022**, to:

Municipality/Local Project Manager Contact Information

Town of Bennington
Daniel Monks, Assistant Town Manager
205 South Street - P.O Box 469
Bennington, VT 05201
802-442-1037
dmonks@benningtonvt.org

Please expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the qualifications by Daniel Monks, Town of Bennington Assistant Town Manager.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFQ, please address them in writing via email to Daniel Monks, Assistant Town Manager, at: dmonks@benningtonvt.org.

Selection Process

Qualifications will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from the Town of Bennington Planning Department, Community Development Department, and Facilities Department. A consultant or short-list of consultants will be selected to submit detailed proposal(s) for the project with a project approach, scope of services, schedule, and budget with details on staffing, hourly costs and overhead. Proposals will be presented by the consultants at interviews if deemed necessary.

RFQ Schedule Summary:

Qualifications due **March 21, 2022**.

Consultant(s) selected for submission of proposal(s) on or before **April 5, 2022**.

Proposals requested from consultant(s) due **April 20, 2022**.

Interviews, if necessary, on or before **April 25, 2022**.

Consultant selection by **May 1, 2022**.

Project work to begin on or before **May 15, 2022**.

Complete project on or before **February 1, 2023**.

Evaluation of Qualifications

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors:

1. Consultant Qualifications - 85%
 - a. Experience with similar projects (reuse studies of historic properties, in particular).

- b. Ability to work with Vermont municipalities.
 - c. Knowledge and understanding of Bennington, including local government, economy, demographics, local organizations and institutions, and regulatory structure.
 - d. Proven ability to work with committees and conduct public meetings.
 - e. Availability to begin work on project start date.
2. Quality, completeness, and clarity of submission - 15%

Interview Framework

The Town of Bennington may, but is not required to, invite consultants for an interview. In this process, the selection committee may ask the respondent(s) to give an oral presentation of their proposal(s). The purpose of this oral presentation is to provide an in-depth analysis of qualifications, experience in performing similar services, and an opportunity for the consultant to clarify or elaborate on their qualifications without restating the proposal.

The interview and presentation are merely to present facts and explanation to the selection committee and allow the selection committee to ask targeted questions of the consultant team. The interview and presentation, if deemed necessary by the selection committee, will be held via Zoom. All costs and expenses incurred for the purpose of interview and presentation shall be the responsibility of the consultant.

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).