

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Community Development & Planning Consultant for Bylaw Modernization Project
Town of Hardwick, Vermont

RFP Posted: February 2, 2023

Proposals Due: on or before **4:00 PM, March 1, 2023**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview:

The Town of Hardwick seeks a planning consultant who will work with the Zoning Administrator, the Planning Commission, key stakeholders, and residents to review the Town's unified development bylaws and to draft amendments. Those amendments will reflect "smart growth" principles and will support the creation of additional housing options in Hardwick's Designated Downtown, and in the Designated Village Center of East Hardwick.

Context and Background:

Town officials, housing advocates, and employers have long recognized that the Town of Hardwick has a shortage of housing options, both for renters and for those who seek to own property. Served by three State highways, Hardwick is located within reasonable commuting distance from several other centers of employment. Hardwick is a vibrant and economically diverse community that many would be happy to call home. Over the past year, the Hardwick Planning Commission has worked through the process of amending several of the Town's unified zoning bylaws. One amendment increased the allowable size for accessory dwellings and gave property owners the ability to live in an accessory dwelling on their property, rather than in the primary structure. After taking this preliminary step, Commission members are ready to move forward with a broader review of the Town's zoning bylaws for the purpose of finding additional adjustments that would support housing projects in both our Designated Downtown and Designated Village Center.

Project Scope:

Consultant will develop draft bylaw amendments for the Town of Hardwick that increase housing choice, affordability, and opportunity in smart growth areas.

Additionally, they will:

- Consult Vermont Housing Finance Agency's [community housing profile](#) and [housing-ready toolbox](#).
- Consult the [Enabling Better Places: A Zoning Guide for Vermont Neighborhoods](#).
- Consult the [Neighborhood Development Area](#) designation checklists as a model for pedestrian-oriented smart growth neighborhoods, as appropriate.
- Comply with State & Federal Fair Housing Law, including the fair housing provisions of Vermont's Planning & Development Act.
- Implement the municipal plan's housing chapter unless the chapter itself needs updating.

- Based on the best available information and as appropriate, identify municipal water supply and wastewater disposal capacity and system constraints, and map the service areas.
- Avoid development of and minimize impact to important natural resources.
- Increase allowed lot/building/dwelling unit density by adopting dimensional, use, parking, and other standards that allow compact neighborhood form and support walkable lot and unit density, which may be achieved with a standard allowing at least four per acre or allowing obtention of a State and/or municipal water & wastewater permit to determine allowable density.
- Increase allowed housing types and uses, which may include duplexes to the same extent as single-family homes.
- Reduce nonconformities by making the allowed standards principally conform to the existing settlement (lots, buildings, and uses) within designated centers.
- Include street standards that implement the complete streets principles as described in [19 V.S.A. §309d](#) and that are oriented to pedestrians.
- Include parking waiver provisions.
- Avoid new development in flood hazard areas, undeveloped floodplains, and river corridor areas, unless lawfully allowed for infill development or as acceptable in [§§29-201 of the Vermont Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Rule](#).

Funding:

A total of \$18,270 is available for consultant services from the Bylaw Modernization Program administered by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. An additional \$2,030 is available from the Town.

Proposed Work Plan:

Task Description
1. Kick-off meeting w/consultant & Planning Commission
2. Consultant: Site visits, Hardwick Downtown & East Hardwick Village
3. Consultant: Inventory & review existing planning documents
4. Consultant: Review existing unified development bylaws
5. Consultant: Determine areas of focus for bylaw revisions
6. Consultant & Zoning Administrator: Identify key stakeholders
7. Consultant: Conduct key stakeholder interviews
8. Consultant & Zoning Administrator: Public engagement meetings (2-4)
9. Consultant & Zoning Administrator: Key stakeholder meetings (2)
10. Consultant: Working meetings w/Planning Commission (6)
11. Consultant: Working meetings w/Zoning Administrator (6)
12. Prep. & facilitation by consultant for 4 public hearings
13. Prep. & deliver draft amendments to Planning Commission
14. Prep. for 3 presentations to Select Board & public (2 interim/1 final)

Some adjustments to the work plan may be made with approval from the Agency of Commerce & Community Development, Department of Planning and Community Development, and the Town of Hardwick.

Timeframe:

Project Start Date: April 3, 2023

Draft bylaw amendments submitted to Planning Commission: on or before April 1, 2024

Revised bylaw amendments presented to Select Board: October 1, 2024

Project Completion Date: December 1, 2024

Deliverables:

1. Summary report of information gathered through public engagement efforts.
2. Preliminary bylaw amendments for review by Hardwick Planning Commission.
3. Revised bylaw amendments for consideration by Hardwick Select Board.

Proposal 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.
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 a description of relevant experience 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. All information submitted becomes property of the Town of Hardwick upon submission. The Town of Hardwick reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFP as well as 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 Hardwick. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the consultant.

The Town of Hardwick 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 RPF in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the Town of Hardwick.

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

Submission Requirements:

Respondents should submit digital copies in PDF format to: Hardwick Town Manager David Upson at: david.upson@hardwickvt.gov and Hardwick Zoning Administrator Kristen Leahy at: zoning.administrator@hardwickvt.gov. Respondents may expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the proposal by the Town of Hardwick.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFP, please address them via email to Kristen Leahy. We will respond to all questions in writing within three (3) days. Both the question and response will be shared with the other consultants. **Proposals are due on or before 4:00 PM, March 1, 2023.** Consultant selection will be made by March 17. Project Work to begin on April 3, 2023. Project to be completed on or before December 1, 2024

Proposal Selection:

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of the Town Manager, the Zoning Administrator, the Community Development Coordinator, and representatives (2) from the Town of Hardwick Planning Commission. 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) - 40%
2. Scope of work, fees, methodology and schedule - 40%
3. Proposal quality, completeness and clarity - 20%

Following the selection process, the Town Manager will enter into a final contract for services the selected consultant. Any expenses resulting from the proposal process will be the sole responsibility of the consultant.