

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The Town of Hardwick seeks a Consulting Firm which specializes in
Community Flood Resilience for the
“Granite Street Historic District Flood Resiliency Plan”
Along the Cooper Brook and the Lamoille River
In the Granite Street Historic District, Hardwick, Vermont



Issued: May 27, 2025

Submission Deadline: June 20, 2025 at 3 pm.

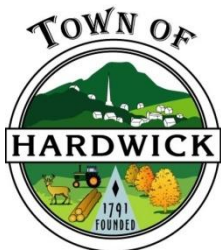
Prepared by:

Town of Hardwick

PO Box 523

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In collaboration with community partners
Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) and the neighborhood
of the Granite Street Historic District
with a Municipal Planning Grant Program administered
by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The Town of Hardwick, in cooperation with the Center for an Agricultural Economy (hereinafter “CAE”) and the residents and owners of the Granite Street Historic District, invite qualified firms to submit qualifications for the development of a flood resilience plan along the Cooper Brook and its intersection with the Upper Lamoille River as it flows through the impacted area.

Context and Background

Over the past two years, Hardwick has faced five major flooding events, three of which – July 2023, December 2023, and July 2024 – led to federal disaster declarations. The Granite Street Historic District has been particularly vulnerable, with repeated flood damage to homes and businesses. The town’s aging stormwater infrastructure has struggled to manage increasing precipitation, highlighting the need for a comprehensive and proactive flood resilience strategy.

There have been several past studies and assessments to evaluate flood resilience and recommend mitigation strategies, including:

- (1) Lamoille River Stream Geomorphic Assessment (2009)
- (2) Basin 10 Tactical Basin Plan (2023)
- (3) Hardwick Stormwater Master Plan (2017)
- (4) Hardwick Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)

The central goal of this project is to both update and expand upon those past plans and assessments to develop a comprehensive flood resilience plan for the Flood Hazard Area Overlay section of the Granite Street Historic District. The Town seeks the following types of mitigation strategies to improve their flood resilience:

1. Floodplain restoration;
2. Floodwater storage;
3. Bridge/culvert upsizing;
4. River corridor easements;
5. Storm water management and drainage improvements;
6. Structural elevation or flood proofing.

Funding

A total of \$33,000 is available for consultant services from the Municipal Planning Grant Program administered by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Additional funds may become available to generate engineering, cost-benefit analysis, and cost estimates of the chosen priority mitigation measures.

Work Plan

This project will involve the development of a flood resilience plan for the Granite Street Historic District in the Town of Hardwick, Vermont. This area of Hardwick experienced significant flood damages during the July 2023 and July 2024 events. The purpose of this project is to develop a conceptual plan that identifies potential areas where floodwaters can be spread out and slowed down, and where public infrastructure and/or private investments can be reinforced, protected, elevated, or relocated.

Task 1 – Kick-off Meeting and Initial Assessment: The Selected Consultant shall attend and facilitate a project kick-off meeting with the Project Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall be composed of The Town of Hardwick, CAE and representatives of the Granite Street Historic District. The meeting may be held in-person or remotely depending upon the preference of the Selected Consultant and the Project Steering Committee. Review local flood risk data, FEMA maps, and climate projections. Analyze historical flood data and trends in Hardwick. Identify key vulnerabilities (infrastructure, housing, and environment). Provide feedback on initial community outreach (to be done by community volunteers).

Task 2 – Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping – The Selected Consultant shall use GIS tools to map high-risk flood zones and assess infrastructure vulnerabilities (roads, utilities, critical buildings).

Task 3 – Flood proofing needs Assessment and Inventory – The Town of Hardwick will work with the residents of the Granite Street Historic District and Hardwick Neighbor to Neighbor to collect an inventory of flood proofing needs for all properties in the Flood Hazard Area Overlay in this district. The Selected Consultant will provide general support and feedback.

Task 3 – Community Engagement/Initial Planning Workshop: The Selected Consultant shall organize, attend, and facilitate an initial planning workshop. The planning workshop shall include stakeholders from the Town of Hardwick, CAE and the Granite Street Historic District. During the initial planning workshop, the Selected Consultant shall gather input to help identify additional risks.

Task 4 – Strategy Development & Preliminary Solutions: The Selected Consultant shall identify short-term and long-term flood mitigation strategies. The Selected Consultant will also develop preliminary engineering and feasibility assessments.

Task 5 – Community Engagement with Strategy Development: The Selected Consultant shall host focused discussions with community representatives about strategy development.

Task 6 – Public Engagement and Feedback: The Selected Consultant shall host community meetings and town hall discussions. Online engagement tools will be utilized (social media posts, etc.). The Selected Consultant will revise strategies based on community and expert input.

Task 7 – Emergency Communication Creation and Assessment: The Town of Hardwick and Hardwick Neighbor to Neighbor are nearly done with Emergency Communication plans. Aspects that are particular to this area will be incorporated into the final plans. The Selected Consultant will provide general support and feedback.

Task 8 – Plan Drafting: The Selected Consultant shall draft the full flood resilience plan, including implementation steps, and conduct internal and external expert reviews. The Selected Consultant shall work with the Zoning and Floodplain Administrator to ensure compliance with town floodplain regulations and state policies.

Task 9 – Plan Review: The Selected Consultant shall reviews the full flood resilience plan based on feedback from planners, engineers, and the public.

Task 10 – Final Plan Documentation: The Select Consultant shall develop a clear implementation roadmap with possible funding strategies and create a concise executive summary with key takeaways. The preliminary report shall summarize the project and its findings, and shall include the prioritized project list and all associated information, and 10% conceptual plans for 2-3 high priority sites, map(s) indicating project locations, etc.

Task 11 – Final Report: The Selected Consultant shall present the plan to the Hardwick Planning Commission and the Hardwick Select Board. The plan shall be finalized by no later than March 30, 2027.

Timeframe

The proposed planning time frame will be from July 21, 2025 to March 30, 2027.

Deliverables

To strengthen flood resilience, Hardwick has committed to provide the Granite Street Historic District with the following:

- Comprehensive Flood Resilience Plan outlining short- and long-term mitigation strategies
- Neighborhood Flood proofing Needs Assessment to identify property-specific improvements (to be performed by Hardwick and Hardwick Neighbor to Neighbor)
- Emergency Preparedness Network to enhance early warning systems and resource coordination (in process with Hardwick Neighbor to Neighbor and Hardwick)
- Engineering Assessments to evaluate structural and nature-based flood mitigation options
- Public Engagement and Education efforts to empower Granite Street Historic District residents with knowledge and resources
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Additional Information

Hardwick shifted from a reactive flood response to a proactive, community-driven resilience effort. This included:

- Immediate recovery efforts by volunteers and town employees such as debris removal, structural drying, and infrastructure repairs.
- Engaging residents in flood mitigation planning and securing external funding.
- Implementing property buyouts, elevation projects, and flood proofing solutions.
- Encouraging resident-led initiatives, including neighborhood collaboration
- Conducting engineering assessments and exploring nature-based solutions to mitigate future flooding.

Hardwick's efforts represent a shift toward adaptation and long-term resilience, ensuring the town remains a thriving, historic community despite climate challenges.

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 which 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 Hardwick upon submission. Hardwick 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 should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) and two (2) printed copies of the proposal by June 27, 2025 to:

Local Project Manager Contact Information

Town of Hardwick
Attn: Kristen Leahy, Resilience & Adaptation Coordinator
PO Box 523
Hardwick, Vermont 05843
Zoning.administrator@hardwickvt.gov

Please expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the qualifications by the Town of Hardwick, Vermont.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFQ, please address them in writing either via U.S. mail or email to Kristen Leahy at zoning.administrator@hardwickvt.gov. We will respond to all questions in writing within 2-3 days. Both the question and response will be shared with the other consultants.

Selection Process Qualifications will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from Hardwick, Center for An Agricultural Economy (CAE) and the Granite Street Historic District neighborhood. A

short-list of consultants will be selected to submit detailed proposals for the project with a project approach, scope of services, schedule and budget with details on staffing, hourly costs and overhead.

RFQ Schedule Summary:

Qualifications due June 20, 2025.

Consultants selected for short-list by June 27, 2025

Proposals due by July 7, 2025

Consultant selection by July 10, 2025

Project work to begin by July 21, 2025

Complete project on or by March 30, 2027

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 Community Flood Resilience Plans
 - b. Ability to map and assess infrastructure
 - c. Knowledge of short-term and long-term flood mitigation strategies and nature-based solutions.
 - d. Understanding of rural residential and business collaborations
 - 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%

Interview Framework

The Town of Hardwick reserves the right to select the top two to three highly scored consultants and invite them for an interview. In this process, the selection committee may ask the respondents to give an oral presentation of their respective proposals. 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 is merely to present facts and explanation to the review committee and allow the selection committee to ask targeted questions of the consultant team. The interview and presentation, if deemed necessary by the review committee, will be held at the Hardwick Municipal Building in Hardwick, Vermont. The day and time will be notified to the respondents at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting. All costs and expenses incurred in traveling for the purpose of interview and presentation shall be the responsibility of the consultant. A Zoom link and meeting is also a possibility.

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 [here](#).