

Department of Planning and Zoning

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Request for Proposals (RFP) for Professional Planning Services *Burlington VT, Downtown/Waterfront Plan Retail Market Feasibility Study*

Date of Issue: February 25, 2011

Proposal Deadline: 4:00pm Friday, March 18, 2011

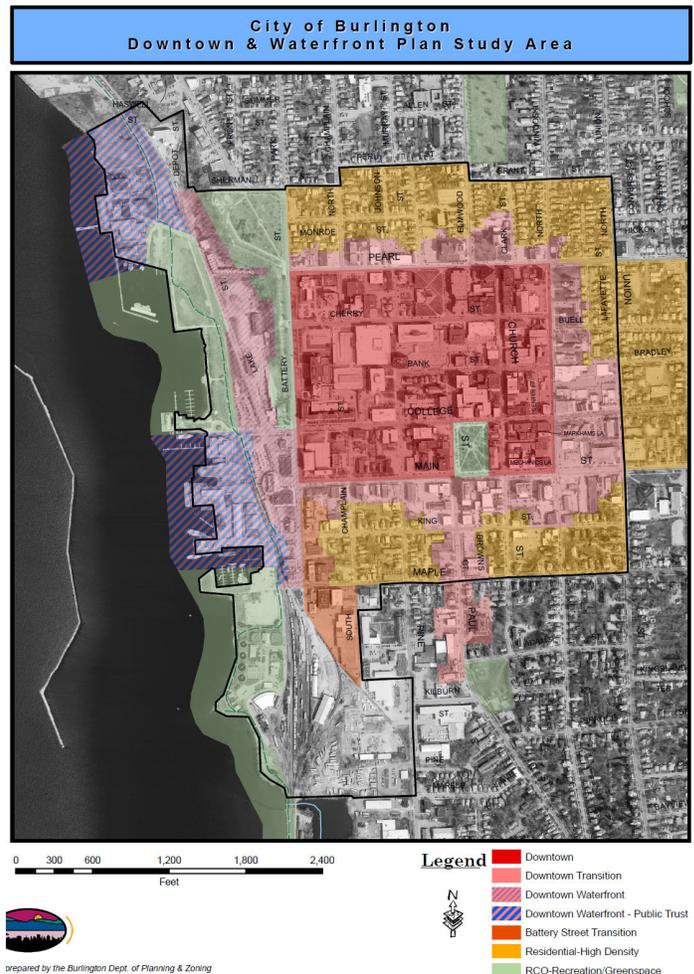
The City of Burlington is seeking the services of a qualified urban planning professional, firm or team to complete a retail feasibility study that will help identify future retail market development opportunities in Burlington's Downtown/Waterfront Plan study area.

Downtown & Waterfront Plan - Overall Project Background

The development of a land use and development plan for Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront has been a long-standing action-item in the City Municipal Development Plan since at least 1996. In September 2009, the City Planning Commission and Dept. of Planning & Zoning were directed by the City Council to develop a scope of work, timeline, and budget for such a project. While many other planning efforts involving the downtown or waterfront have taken place over the years, none have been as comprehensive in scope and strategic in design.

In the fall of 2010, Burlington's Planning and Zoning Department received a Sustainable Communities Challenge Planning Grant providing a unique opportunity to invest in the future, and advance Burlington's place as one of America's most livable and sustainable communities. Burlington struggles to address complex urban challenges in a small, under-resourced New England community with big ideas and even bigger ideals. We struggle with how to really become the community we say we want to be.

The plan will refine broad city-wide goals for sustainable development into focused, actionable, area-specific strategies to ensure the vitality of the central core of our community and enable us to achieve our community vision. The planning process will place an emphasis on ways to promote and improve mixed uses and quality urban design, affordable and workforce housing, transportation and parking management, and the quality and capacity of public infrastructure. Our intent is to identify, understand, and address current barriers to the creation of new infill development. At the same time we need to make the hard decisions necessary to facilitate the continued evolution and maturation of this vital and dynamic mixed use district.



The planning process we are about to undertake will help us to address many questions regarding the future of Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront including:

- How to encourage and accommodate infill development on under-utilized sites - particularly for workforce housing and office uses?
- How to enhance Burlington's economic vitality and build upon our creative and entrepreneurial spirit?
- How to support additional development without compromising important views and Burlington's character and scale?
- How to balance mitigation of traffic congestion and parking demand with desires for expanded public transit?
- How to leverage future downtown development to facilitate and support expanded public transit service and visa-versa?
- What kinds of waterfront activities and improvements can we encourage without compromising public access to the lakeshore?
- What land-side improvements are necessary to support future harbor activities?
- What public investments can we make that improve lake quality, reduce stormwater overflows, save energy, improve traffic flow and safety?
- How to encourage and support more "green" building and development?
- How to grow smarter and use our compact mixed-use urban form as a tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

The first phase of this overall planning process consists of a series of existing condition analyses that will bring perceptions into reality and increase our understanding of the gaps to fill and opportunities to seize. Below is the description of the tasks and work needed for a Retail Feasibility Analysis, a sub-task of this first phase. **For more information on the overall project please visit our website: http://www.ci.burlington.vt.us/planning/downtown_plan/**

This particular RFP - Retail Feasibility Analysis

A retail market analysis will help the downtown determine strengths, gaps and opportunities for retail development and retention.

PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

- Burlington is home to one of the most dynamic small downtowns (population 40,000) in the United States. The centerpiece of the community from a retail, dining, and entertainment perspective is Church Street Marketplace – widely regarded as one of the most successful mixed-use pedestrian districts in the nation. Downtown provides a variety of office, residential, cultural, retail, and institutional uses and is the undisputed center of urban life for the State of Vermont.
- Over the past several years, the retail climate in Burlington has evolved. Major retail developments in Taft Corners in Williston, traditional retail competitors such as University Mall/Dorset Street and Shelburne Road in South Burlington, have added worthy competitors to downtown Burlington.
- Downtown has benefitted from several analyses of the retail climate including a 2002 study by Market Insight Group of Troy, Michigan and white paper critiques by leading members of the International Downtown Association.
- Downtown Burlington is now at a crossroads of development. The community has enjoyed marked success since the inception of the Church Street Marketplace in 1981 and does not wish to rest on those accomplishments. The recent recession has "complicated" the market forces at work in the country, the Burlington region, and downtown resulting in store closures, reduced profits, and retail churn. All of this is happening at the same time that retail and dining destinations have expanded out of the traditional Church Street core.

- Burlington is on the cusp of a new downtown master plan process that will provide detailed analysis of downtown. Furthermore, the community has received a “Community Challenge Planning Grant” that will amplify the ability of the community to plan for the future of downtown Scope of Services

Scope of Work and Final Products

The Consultant(s) will be working under the direction of the Department of Planning & Zoning staff throughout the development of the project. The Consultant(s) will also be expected to independently collaborate with other relevant City departments and non-profits (Church Street Marketplace, Community & Economic Development Office, Burlington Business Association) in order to gather and synthesize relevant information.

Anticipated Work Tasks:

1. Review and understanding of prior market studies.
2. Overview of local and regional retail trade patterns and capacity
3. **Downtown Market Assessment/Analysis**
 - Market definition;
 - Market segmentation and demographic analysis;
 - Retail leakage and retail shares;
 - Analyze the existing retail mix and growth for the Downtown and Waterfront of Burlington and the region including the assessment of visitor versus local traffic;
 - Conduct a competitive analysis of downtown with regard to retail mix and relationship to suburban locations in the metropolitan area;
 - Conduct a zip code analysis to determine where customers of businesses in the study area are coming from and provide template for conducting ongoing zip code studies;
 - Identify potential retail voids in the downtown area;
 - Identify potential retailers to fill the voids;
 - Forecast sales that could be achieved by retailers that would fill the identified retail voids; and
 - Recommendations to capture retail market opportunities and reinforce customer base.
4. **Marketing recommendations** - Develop a series of marketing, business retention, and recruitment recommendations for downtown.
5. **Implementation strategy** - Developing a successful implementation strategy, understanding that this project will comprise a partnership of a number of entities.

Specific Deliverables:

- Final Report detailing the results of the tasks mentioned above, also including an Executive Summary of major findings.
- An annotated presentation for sharing findings easily with stakeholders.

Schedule and Submittals

Responses to this RFP must be received no later than: **4:00 pm, Friday, March 18, 2011**

Selection of the consultant(s) will be complete by: **April 1, 2011**

All data development and analysis should be completed by: **July 15, 2011**

All materials, maps, data, and documents prepared under this project should be provided to the City by: **July 30, 2011**

Consultant Selection Criteria

In selecting the Consultant, the City will use the following criteria:

Review Criteria	Weight	Max Points	Points * Weight
Overall quality of the Scope of Work	5	5	25
Qualifications/Expertise of Proposed Staff	4	5	20
Experience on similar projects	4	5	20
Ability to meet Project Schedule	3	5	15
Understanding of the Project	2	5	10
Proposal Cost	2	5	10
TOTAL			100

Submission Requirements

Responses to this RFP should contain the following:

1) A *Technical Proposal* (not more than 15 pages) consisting of:

- A cover letter expressing the firm's interest in working with the City including identification of the principal individual(s) that will provide the requested services;
- A description of the approach to be taken toward completion of the project, an explanation of any variances to the proposed scope of work as outlined in the RFP, and any insights into the project gained as a result of developing the proposal;
- A scope of work that includes steps to be taken, including any products or deliverables resulting from each task;
- A summary of estimated labor hours by task that clearly identifies the project team members and the number of hours performed by each team member by task;
- A proposed schedule that indicates project milestones and overall time for completion;
- A list of individuals that will be committed to this project and their professional qualifications. The names and qualifications of any sub-consultants shall be included in this list;
- Demonstration of success on similar projects, including a brief project description and a contact name and address for reference.

2) A *Cost Proposal* consisting of:

- A composite schedule by task of direct labor hours;
- An itemized schedule of all expenses, including both labor and direct expenses. If the use of sub-consultants is proposed, a separate schedule of expenses must be provided for each sub-consultant.

****This information MUST be RECEIVED by 4:00 pm, March 18, 2011 to be considered. Proposals must be submitted in digital format (PDF) to sthibault@ci.burlington.vt.us or on a CD. Applicants will received a confirmation email once the proposals are received. Please ensure that the document is easily printable, so use regular paper formats (8X11, 8X14 and/or 11X17).**

For questions contact Sandrine:

Sandrine Thibault, AICP, Comprehensive Planner

Direct Phone: 802-865-7193

sthibault@ci.burlington.vt.us

This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates the City of Burlington to award a contract.

Equal Opportunity – The selection of consultant shall be made without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or political affiliation. The City of Burlington is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages proposals from qualified minority and woman-owned businesses.