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Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Professional Planning Services *Burlington VT, Downtown/Waterfront Plan - Activities 2 and 3*

Date of Issue: Monday, April 25, 2011

Proposal Deadline: 4:00pm Tuesday, May 17, 2011

This **Request for Qualifications** invites responses from qualified and experienced professional planning consultants who will assist the City of Burlington in the creation of a land use and development master plan for Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront area.

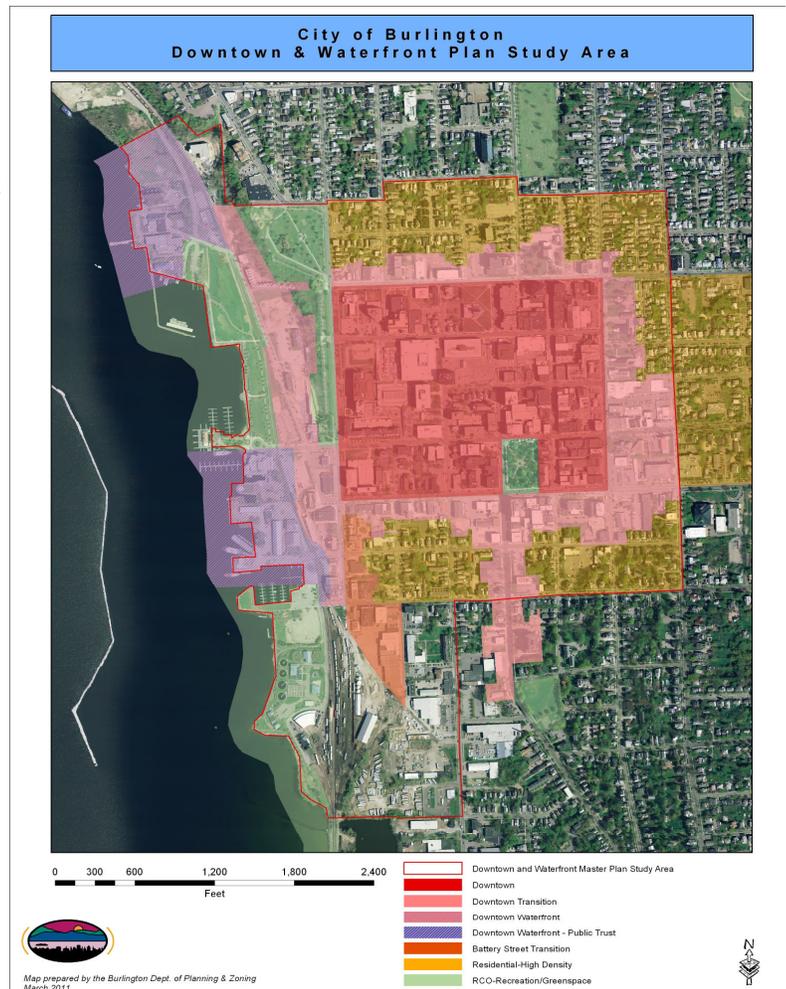
Project Overview & Purpose

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?

Goals/Desired Planning Outcomes

This Plan will provide recommendations, tools, and strategies that will help us to achieve the following **goals and outcomes**:

- Maintain Burlington as a regional population and economic center that offers meaningful jobs at livable wages and a diverse housing stock that serves all incomes, while encouraging the continued growth of the city's commercial tax base.
- Promote urban development measures that facilitate economically competitive, environmentally sound, socially responsible, and aesthetically-pleasing land-use combinations and urban design elements.
- Emphasize the importance of preserving historic and cultural features and architecture, and encouraging high-quality building design to compliment the existing fabric.
- Strengthen the linkages between the Downtown, Downtown Waterfront, and surrounding neighborhoods, including the Hill institutions (University of Vermont, Champlain College, and Fletcher Allen Health Care).
- Promote a mix of land uses including the need for affordable/workforce housing, both local and world class businesses, entertainment and culture, live/work spaces, etc.
- Provide a focused sustainable transportation and accessibility system within the context of the existing street network and emphasizing alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle (SOV). This should build upon the Complete Streets system and Street Design Guidelines already included in the soon-to-be-completed City-wide Transportation Plan
- Provide a comprehensive parking allocation and management system that meets visitor, business, and resident needs consistent with the goal of increasing public transit and reducing dependence on the single-passenger automobile.

- Provide the quality and capacity of public infrastructure, including pedestrian, bicycle, parking, and/or transit-related facilities, necessary to support new or expanded commercial and residential development.
- Strengthen Burlington's leadership position in clean energy and climate action planning by enabling broad-based community participation in the identification, quantification, visualization, and decision-making related to the energy and greenhouse gas impacts.
- Provide the foundation for the development of a Form Based Code for the Downtown and Downtown Waterfront to guide and regulate future development in a coherent and consistent manner centered on urban form, design, and performance.

Additional information about this project can be found online at: http://www.ci.burlington.vt.us/planning/comp_plan/downtown_waterfront_plan/index.php

Downtown & Waterfront Plan - Project Scope of Work

The scope of work planned under this project encompasses a logical series of activities that build from information collection (Activity 1 - currently under way), to community master planning (Activity 2), and finally to implementation (Activity 3). Each step is dependent upon the outcome of the previous. **This RFQ invites responses from professional planning consultants who will be charged with undertaking Activities 2 and 3 and related public outreach activities as described below:**

- **ACTIVITY 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS (Currently underway) - To be completed August 30, 2011:** This first phase (currently underway) includes the preparation of a comprehensive inventory and assessment of existing conditions (e.g. Development Inventory and Modeling, Economic Analysis, Infrastructure Analysis, Transportation & Parking, etc.) to identify primary needs, challenges and opportunities. This assessment will provide information and perspective necessary to inform a meaningful and realistic visioning and planning process to follow.
- **ACTIVITY 2: DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT MASTER PLANNING PROCESS - To be completed May 2012:** This second phase is a comprehensive planning process that will result in a community consensus master plan for Burlington's Downtown and Downtown Waterfront area. Information and analysis collected in Phase 1 will be used to inform participants about needs, limitations and opportunities in order to ground the planning process in a real-world present-day context. The formal kick-off to this planning effort will re-evaluate, and re-affirm as appropriate, the community vision for this area. The process will then move towards considering a range of development issues, concepts and alternatives. Building upon each of the previous activities, specific actions and recommendations will then be developed regarding how to best achieve and implement the vision and development plan.
- **ACTIVITY 3: FORM-BASED CODE DEVELOPMENT - To be completed January 2013:** The final activity is the development of a form-based code. Form-based codes foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for development regulation. Information, analysis and community objectives developed in both previous phases will be used to create a regulating plan and public space standards and building form standards.

Public Outreach and Engagement (During all three phases/activities)

This project includes a significant public involvement process to develop, articulate and visualize future scenarios for the downtown and waterfront, and develop a consensus around priorities and objectives. A comprehensive public engagement strategy was developed to actively engage the public throughout the planning process. This strategy includes public engagement goals and methods as well as the identification of key stakeholder to the process.

A wide range of communication/participation methods will be deployed apart from formal public meetings. These include use of the web, social media, television and radio; participatory workshops/charrettes; and road show presentations

to local groups. Particular attention will be paid to engaging people who do not usually participate including youth and seniors, low income and immigrant communities, small business owners, and visitors. To consult the Public Outreach and Engagement Strategy please go to: <http://www.ci.burlington.vt.us/docs/4245.pdf>

RFQ Submittal and Selection Process

Process Overview

This process begins with the receipt of statements of qualification as a response to the RFQ outlined herein. Following review of the submissions, a short-list of consultant teams will be created and ranked by the Burlington Selection Committee. City staff will then initiate a scope of work development and interview process with the top ranked 3 to 5 consultant teams. Once that process is complete, the City will identify its top choice and enter into a contract agreement.

Selection Committee

A Selection Committee will be established to review RFQ responses, select finalists, and conduct interviews. The individuals serving on this committee will consist of members of City staff, Planning Commission and City Council, as well as business and community leaders.

Terms and Conditions

Communications

It is extremely important that all respondents are given clear and consistent information. Therefore, all respondents are required to submit any questions related to this project or RFQ process in writing so answers can be distributed to all potential respondents. Any and all questions should be directed in writing to Sandrine Thibault at sthibault@ci.burlington.vt.us.

Questions must be received with sufficient time for the City to respond in advance of the RFQ deadline for submissions. Inquiries received within seven (7) days of the submission deadline will not be considered or answered. Responses to all written inquiries will be available no later than five (5) days prior to the submission deadline on the Downtown & Waterfront Plan website: www.ci.burlington.vt.us/planning/comp_plan/downtown_waterfront_plan/documents.php

Respondents should not communicate with any City department or employee during the submission process except as described above. In addition, no communications should be initiated by a respondent to any City Official or persons involved in evaluating or considering the statement of qualifications. Communication with any parties for any purpose other than those expressly described herein may cause an individual firm, or team to be disqualified from participating.

Other terms

The City of Burlington reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Statement(s) of Qualifications, with or without cause. All decisions related to this solicitation by the City will be final.

The City reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information of one or more respondents.

Costs for preparing the Statement of Qualifications in response to this request are solely the responsibility of the respondent.

This solicitation 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.

It will be necessary for responding parties to comply fully with the terms and conditions outlined in this document if they are to be considered. A letter attesting that the respondent has read, understands, and followed all procedures is a part of this RFQ must be included as part of the final submittal (see Attachments A).

Submittal Requirement and Procedures

Responses to this RFQ must include the following: **(not more than 20 pages in total length)**

- **Cover Letter**
- **Attachment A provided in this RFQ.** Signed by representative of the lead consultant team attesting that all terms, conditions and procedures outlined in this RFQ are understood and have been followed.
- **Project Understanding Statement** - A statement describing the applicant's understanding of the goals and objectives defined for the project, and the special skills and innovative thinking that the team would bring to the table.
- **Project Approach** - Describe the applicant's general approach to and philosophy regarding elements of the project.
- **Proposed Project Team Members** - Submit a written description of the applicant's organizational composition, disciplines and the primary role of each firm or individual on the team. Also, include an organizational chart. The information must clearly indicate the applicant's designated team leader for this project and the responsible party in each firm who will be providing the required professional experience.
- **Individual Experience** - Provide background of the key members of each firm in the team and their specific participation in previous projects that would directly related to this project.
- **Specific Project Experience** - Provide information on similar or relevant projects (e.g. a downtown and or waterfront master plan) that the applicant has executed. Include graphic representation. Links to similar or relevant projects are encouraged.
- **List of References** - Provide a minimum of 4 client references with which the applicant has provided similar planning/design services within the last five years. Reference shall include name and telephone number of the contact person. The applicant may include additional references from earlier work if the applicant feels it is pertinent and better defines the team's capacity. Each listed reference shall include a description of the services provided to client and specific role.
- **Additional Information** - Provide other information you feel is relevant to indicate the applicant's abilities to successfully complete a project of this nature.

****This information MUST be RECEIVED by 4:00 pm, Tuesday, May 17, 2011 to be considered. Proposals must be submitted in digital format (PDF) to sthibault@ci.burlington.vt.us or on a CD mailed or hand delivered at the address below. 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 or electronic submittals:

Sandrine Thibault, AICP, Comprehensive Planner
sthibault@ci.burlington.vt.us

Submittals can also be mailed or hand delivered to:

Attn: Sandrine Thibault, AICP
 Planning & Zoning Department
 149 Church St - City Hall
 Burlington, VT 05401

Anticipated Schedule of Events

The City reserves the right to amend dates. While the timeline may be subject to change, all participating parties will be notified.

- RFQ Submittal Deadline - **Tuesday, May 17, 2011 at 4:00pm**
- Distribute submittals to Selection Committee - **Thursday May 19, 2011**
- RFQ shortlist produced - **June 10, 2011**
- Conduct interviews with finalists - **July 18-22, 2011**
- Selection of the project team - **July 30, 2011**

Selection Criteria

Consultant proposals will be evaluated by the Selection Committee using the following criteria as a measure of the applicant’s ability to successfully complete the project scope of work.

Review Criteria	Max Points
Qualifications and previous related work of key personnel and/or sub-contractors	35
Depth of relevant technical expertise of the consultant team with efforts of this type.	35
Level of utilization of innovative approaches and solutions in the consultant team’s past projects.	30
Depth of interdisciplinary skills related to urban design, land use planning and transportation analysis, and public engagement.	20
Level of understanding of the Plan’s project goals, downtown Burlington’s issues and local needs.	20
Level of experience with municipalities of similar size, government structure, complexity and issues.	20
The demonstrated ability to organize and lead effective, productive public meetings and in-house project meetings, while using innovative participation techniques/tools.	15
Ability to meet timeframe required to complete the plan and phasing of the plan and phasing of deliverables.	15
Quality of sample materials and qualifications package submittal.	10
TOTAL	200

Attachment A
Understanding of RFQ Procedures, Terms and Conditions
To be returned with qualifications submission

I acknowledge that I have read and understand all procedures and requirements of the above referenced RFQ and have complied fully with the general terms and conditions outlined in the RFQ.

Consultant Team: _____

Representative's Printed Name: _____

Representative's Signature: _____

Date: _____