

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Downtown Improvement District (DID) Establishment Plan

BBA Project Number: 2017-001

PROPOSALS DUE: Friday, July 28, 2017 by 2:00 EST

Burlington Business Association

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Burlington Business Association is accepting sealed proposals for the **development of a business plan for the establishment of a full service Downtown Improvement District serving downtown Burlington from highly qualified multi-disciplinary consultant teams** until **2:00 PM, July 28, 2017**, at which time the proposals will be opened and reviewed, for the following project:

2017-001 DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ESTABLISHMENT PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Burlington Business Association (BBA), a nonprofit association (501(c)6), seeks proposals for the establishment of a Downtown Improvement District (DID). “Establishment” includes, briefly: planning; outreach to property owners, merchants, and residents; and the preparation of a business plan. The BBA is working in collaboration with the following departments of the City of Burlington on this effort:

- Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) - provides economic develop services to the City
- Church Street Marketplace (CSMP) - manages the Church Street Marketplace District (a DID)
- Department of Public Works (DPW) - operates and manages parking services in the DID

This group will hereafter be referred to as the DID Working Group.

The deliverable would be a business plan for the DID. This DID would encompass the retail/commercial area in downtown Burlington, Vermont, including all properties shown in **Exhibit 1: DID Map**. The DID Working Group will, in addition, explore expanding the DID area in collaboration with the consultant to create a proposed DID area.

The consultant will be asked to explore at least 3 governance models for the DID, as well as a tiered range of services. Basic services being considered for the DID will include a downtown ambassador program, district cleanliness services, marketing and branding services for the district, event planning, and security services. Enhanced services being considered include, economic development activities, visitorship services and parking and transportation management services. The selected consultant will be asked to report out on this range of services and prepare a business plan for implementation and execution with support from the DID Working Group.

Complete RFP packages are available to download from www.parkburlington.com and Burlingtonvt.gov/rfp.

The DID Working Group reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals or accept what is, in its judgment, the Proposal which is in its best interest.

The DID Working Group reserves the right to conduct discussions for the purpose of clarification to assure full understanding of, and responsiveness to the solicitation requirements with responsible organizations who submit proposals determined to be qualified to be selected for award.

2. HISTORY

By nearly every definition, Burlington, Vermont is a city; a city, however, at a smaller Vermont scale. Burlington has tall buildings, but most remain under five to eight stories; an important airport and public transit system; colleges and a university, theaters and galleries, offices, restaurants, hotels, banks and shops - yet still remains at just above 40,000 residents.

Burlington is also, in many ways, a traditional Vermont village in both form and function. The city is compact and serves as a central place of commerce, housing, education, industry, and government. People know local shop owners, and often encounter family and friends throughout their daily travels.

Burlington exemplifies the metaphor of the “urban village” -- both city and village are the essence of what makes Burlington such an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Burlington’s character and sense of place is widely celebrated – both locally and nationally. The city’s character has evolved over time by respecting historical development patterns and architecture; cultivating “community” in our neighborhoods; protecting valuable natural, historic, and recreational resources; developing lively cultural events, resources and activities; and putting the needs of City residents on par with the desires of visitors.

The major milestones outlined below affect the past, present and future of our downtown.

The Church Street Marketplace District - Founded in 1981, the Church Street Marketplace District, a downtown improvement district managed by the City of Burlington, was created in response to growing suburban sprawl and a desire by downtown stakeholders to maintain the downtown as the cultural, commercial and community center for the region. It came about because of a collaborative effort involving businesses, citizens and government. Church Street has become Burlington’s front porch – both shopping center and community center.

The Marketplace has specialty stores, national retailers and eating and drinking establishments; the occupancy rate is 100 percent. The Marketplace is adjacent to a privately-owned, enclosed Burlington Town Center shopping mall, built in 1979 which is slated for a major redevelopment.

The Downtown Improvement District (DID) - The DID was created in 1999 in response to proposed changes in the tax code. The BBA in collaboration with the City of Burlington determined that the best use for DID funds was to provide a funding source for 2 hours of free parking. Non-residential property owners in the DID pay a tax based on 120% of their property’s tax assessment value. The rate is capped at \$0.12/00 of value and is currently set at \$0.09/00. The DID generates over \$300,000 annually which is used to fund a portion of the cost of the 2 Hour Free Parking Program at the City’s three municipal parking garages. The City of Burlington, through its Department of Public Works, pays the other portion of the cost. Any increase in the DID tax must be authorized

by the City Council upon recommendation of the Church Street Marketplace Commission.

The DID was created via a change to the City Charter. Documents related to the creation, governance and operation of the DID and the Church Street Marketplace appear in **Exhibit 2**. A Fact Sheet summarizing DID history and creation appears in **Exhibit 3**.

planBTV - In early 2011, the development of [planBTV](#), the Downtown and Waterfront Plan, began with a series of studies to inventory and assess existing conditions and to identify primary needs, challenges, and opportunities for the designated area. The plan's goal was to refine broad city-wide goals for sustainable development into focused, actionable, area-specific strategies to ensure the vitality of the city's downtown. The planning process placed an emphasis on finding 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. Following two years of unprecedented public process, research, and more than 100 public events which engaged more than 1,200 participants, the City Council unanimously adopted planBTV in 2013. planBTV calls for the creation of a downtown wide DID as well as a parking management district.

Redevelopment of Burlington Town Center - Following the adoption of planBTV, the Burlington Town Center was sold to Devonwood Investors in December 2013. Devonwood cited the bold vision for the property articulated in planBTV as a factor in the decision to invest in the underutilized, suburban-style facility. In November 2014, City of Burlington and Devonwood Investors announced a partnership to comprehensively redevelop the property with mixed-use buildings on these two central blocks, including the creation of at least 270 additional housing units at a range of income levels, re-opening of St. Paul and Pine Streets, adding new retail, office space, housing, and related public improvements. The City and Devonwood began a transparent, public process soliciting, receiving, and incorporating public input into their negotiations to create a development agreement addressing public amenities, public infrastructure investment, and the project's scale. A broad coalition of community organizations and local businesses supported the redevelopment vision for the property. This process culminated in two public votes in November 2016, through which Burlington voters approved a change to the zoning in downtown to facilitate the redevelopment of the property, and the approval of up to \$21.8M in TIF investments to re-establish the two streets that had been closed by the existing building and to make streetscape and stormwater improvements to six additional blocks on Bank & Cherry Streets. To learn more about this project, [Click Here](#).

Downtown Parking & Transportation Management Plan - In December 2015, City Council unanimously voted to adopt the [Downtown Parking & Transportation Management Plan](#) (PMD Plan) representing more than two years of close collaboration between the Department of Public Works (DPW), the Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO), and the Burlington Business Association (BBA). The PMD Plan represents a new attempt to approach downtown parking issues systematically and comprehensively. The PMD Plan builds on extensive public input and recent steps to improve customer experience, including parking meters that accept credit cards and a new pay-by-phone option.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Burlington needs to expand its current DID to become a full-service DID. A full-service DID in Burlington's downtown would accomplish a number of objectives needed to foster a livelier and healthier business district. Within Burlington's DID is the Church Street Marketplace (CSMP), a 4-block DID.

The CSMP DID manages its 4-block area and provides a range of services including cleaning, snow removal, repair and maintenance, event management and marketing and promotion. Properties within the CSMP DID pay an additional assessment on top of their DID assessment. Since CSMP is a pedestrian mall, the businesses in the DID depend heavily on municipal parking services and receive a clear benefit from Burlington's 2 hour Free Parking Program. By Charter, CSMP is responsible for the cost of capital improvements in the DID and is restricted in its use of general fund tax dollars. (Please see the Exhibit 4 for the [CSMP FY 2018 Operating Budget](#)).

The City of Burlington is responsible for cleaning; snow removal; repair and maintenance; and capital improvements for the portion of the DID that is exclusive of the CSMP DID. (Please see the Exhibit 1 for the DID map). There is a marked difference between the quality of the streetscape inside and outside of the CSMP DID. The CSMP DID benefits from a higher level of services and a higher quality streetscape. The City of Burlington is not able to allocate sufficient funds to adequately clean and maintain the infrastructure within the DID at a level that the business and property owners desire. Funds collected from a DID assessment could fund a professionally managed common area maintenance program for the DID. These services would supplement those provided by the City of Burlington.

Safety is a concern in any neighborhood. A DID could fund a downtown ambassador program or additional security patrols to maintain a safer environment.

Marketing the business district could be another component of the DID. Currently, CSMP DID does marketing and promotion and maintains an informational website: [Church Street Marketplace](#). There is no similar effort for the entire downtown. The DID could develop marketing materials and strategies to engage businesses and increase traffic in the district to improve the health of the establishments therein.

Other possible DID initiatives could include management and maintenance of city parking services, economic development services, special event management, promotion of tourism, a website, and special events. The selected consultant will be asked to work with the DID Working Group and the DID Advisory Group to determine the scope of services for the DID and potentially create a phase-in of services over a 5 to 10-year period.

Because a DID is funded by an assessment on real property, a careful process must be undertaken to ensure the validity of the district and the legality of the assessment. Obtaining sufficient buy-in from area property owners is critical to the success of the process. Typically, property owners will pass the assessments along to their tenants in the form of increased rents. Therefore, the consultant should engage tenants of the district as well. In addition, the successful launch of an expansion of services in the DID would require a vote by the citizens of Burlington. Therefore, this complex project will require extensive public outreach to the residents, businesses, and visitors of the community, as a part of a future project phase. The consultant should consider this need for a

vote.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

The City of Burlington and the Burlington Business Association desire to strengthen the DID to ensure that it is a safe and inviting place that will catalyze growth and investment.

4.1 PREPARE THREE ALTERNATIVE MODELS AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES FOR A FULL-SERVICE DID

The partners are seeking a professional consultant to explore three alternatives models and governance structures for a full-service Downtown Improvement District (DID) ultimately leading to the preparation of a business plan for the DID. Among other duties, the models and structures should make provision for oversight and operation of the City's proposed Downtown Parking & Transportation Management District (PMD).

In preparation of the models and structures for a full-service DID, the consultant is expected to engage with downtown stakeholders, members of the DID Working Group and DID Advisory Group to receive input and feedback, ultimately leading to the development of a business plan for the DID.

4.2 PREPARE A BUSINESS PLAN FOR DID

Development of a business plan for the DID will occur in two phases. Following the preparation of three alternative models and structures for a full-service DID which contain comprehensive solutions and retain the project vision, the consultant will prepare:

1. A draft business plan for the DID
2. A final business plan for the DID.

In preparation of the draft business plan, the consultant will undertake research to support the proposed DID structure and governance models being proposed; research peer DID's; conduct small group interviews with downtown stakeholders and meet with the DID Working Group at regularly scheduled intervals, as well as the DID Advisory Group.

The draft draft business plan will include:

1. A description of the benefits a full-service DID would deliver to the community
2. A detailed description of the DID scope of services, including
 - a. A tiered service structure by geographic boundaries
3. A list of additional services the DID could deliver
4. A description of a suggested phased approach to the adoption of the scope of services over a five to ten-year period

5. A budget for the scope of services, including a five and ten-year proforma
6. A description of a DID structure and governance model, including
 - a. Three (3) alternatives
 - b. A preferred structure and governance model recommendation
7. An evaluation of a Parking Management District as a part of the DID, including a suggested financial structure and proforma budgets
 - a. Append the Plan's financial structure for a new Parking Management District, including how the following funding sources are incorporated, or not, into the District, that is,
 - i. Public parking and enforcement revenue
8. An evaluation of Economic Development Services, including a financial structure and proforma budgets –
 - a. Append the Plan's financial structure to include economic development services that would complement those currently at work in Burlington
9. An evaluation of Visitor's Bureau Services, including financial structure and proforma budgets:
 - a. Append the Plan's financial structure to include Visitor's Bureau Services
10. An evaluation of three assessment formulas for the DID
11. A listing of capital improvements the DID should undertake with a 5-year capital budget
12. A review of existing baseline level of City services (developed by City Departments) that would be supported through property taxes and proposed enhanced level of services through the DID assessment
13. A draft phased implementation plan for management of the DID and its associated funding.

Following preparation of the draft business plan and in preparing the final business plan for the DID, the consultant will evaluate options, continue engagement with downtown stakeholders and host a public meeting during evening hours to gather input and feedback from the community.

In addition to the items 1-13 listed above in the draft business plan, the final business plan for the DID will also include:

1. A definitive DID scope of services and budget, including sources and uses statement
2. A recommended DID assessment formula
3. A revised boundary map of the district with a list of property owners, developed in collaboration with the DID Working Group
4. A DID implementation plan, with timelines and key next steps
5. An outreach and education plan to create DID support through the implementation of next steps.

4.3 DELIVERABLES

The consultant should expect to provide, at minimum, the following deliverables to the BBA over the duration of the consultancy:

1. Three (3) alternative models and governance structures for a DID in Burlington, Vermont
2. At least one draft version of the business plan, including three alternative governance structures for

- a DID in Burlington, Vermont
3. A final version of the business plan, including three alternative governance structures, a recommended governance structure, financial information and proforma budgets, implementation plan, and steps to implement as required by City Charter and State Law, for a DID in Burlington, Vermont. The final version of the business plan, which incorporates stakeholders' and DID Working Group feedback, and is of a complete, professional quality, will also include the following appended sections:
 - (a) Parking Management District
 - (b) Economic Development Services
 - (c) Visitor's Bureau
 - (d) Revised boundary map of the district with a list of property owners.
 4. Presentation of the final business plan to DID Advisory Group and City Council that summarizes the recommended DID structure and governance model with financial implications and benefits of an expanded DID, along with a marketing plan and key next steps and any necessary data/research, for use by the BBA and other partners for presenting the DID Business Plan to various stakeholders.

5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Consultants or teams of professionals (consultants) must have experience with creating and expanding downtown improvement districts (DIDs), including planning, managing and financing of DIDs. Consultants must have experience in other relevant areas as applicable to the team's proposed approach to the Scope of Work, along with an understanding of the benefits to be derived from DID expansions, to include strengthening of neighborhood and business partnerships; crime reduction and safety strategies; promoting and marketing the area's many assets; supporting economic development and improving the overall appearance and image of the community served by the DID.

The proposal shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

1. Brief description of the consultant, or each consultant in the event of a proposal that includes a team of professionals, and resumes of key personnel that will be assigned to this project. This should highlight relevant work/projects completed by the firm or team to demonstrate experience on similar projects. Consultants or consulting teams should also submit three references with their proposal.
2. Detailed work plan setting out the approach to the Scope of Work tasks described in Section 4: Scope of Work/Deliverables. This proposal should detail any proposed adjustments to the scope of the individual tasks.
3. A proposed schedule which identifies the completion of individual work tasks, deliverables, and key meetings over the duration of the consultancy, consistent with Section 7: TIMELINE.
4. A budget for fee and reimbursable expenses associated with the completion of the Scope of Work.

It is important that all respondents are given clear and consistent information. Therefore, **all respondents are**

required to submit any questions related to this RFP via email. The BBA will distribute a list of questions and answers via email to all consultants. Direct all questions regarding this RFP to Kelly Devine at director@bbavt.org. Questions will be accepted up until noon on July 10, 2017, to ensure all parties have adequate time to review the answers.

Proposals shall be submitted via email by **July 28, 2017, by 2:00 p.m. EST**. Consultants may submit a hardcopy proposal via U.S. Mail, but must also provide an electronic PDF copy; all digital and print proposals must be received by the deadline to be considered. All proposals shall be sent to the attention of Kelly Devine; contact information is provided in Section 8.

6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

All proposals will be evaluated using the criteria listed below by a selection committee. The committee shall consist of the Executive Director, Burlington Business Association, the Executive Director, Church Street Marketplace, a representative from the Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO), a representative from the Department of Public Works, and two representatives from the Downtown Improvement District Advisory Group. The selection committee may elect to interview consultants prior to the final selection.

Proposals will be ranked based on the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of overall project understanding and knowledge of the local area (30 pts)
2. Specialized experience of the consulting team and key personnel to be assigned to this project and related experiences (30 pts)
3. Clarity/Quality of the proposal and thoughtfulness in addressing the scope of work (25 pts)
4. History of implementing successful projects with similar scopes of work (15 pts)

7. PROCUREMENT TIMELINE

The anticipated deadline for the completion of this Scope of Work is December 2017. The following key milestones include:

- June 30, 2017: Issue Request for Proposals
- July 10, 2017, by 12:00 noon, EST: Questions regarding the Request for Proposals
- **July 28, 2017, by 2:00 p.m. EST: Proposals Due**
- August 2017: Consultants under contract; first meeting with DID Working Group & Project kickoff
- October 2017: Draft business plan for review by DID Working Group and other partners

- December 2017: Final Deliverables Due to the BBA

8. CONTACT PERSON

All questions related to this Request for Proposals, and submissions of all electronic or hardcopy proposals shall be directed to the attention of:

Kelly Devine
Executive Director
Burlington Business Association
29 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401
director@bbvt.org
802-863-1175

9. EXHIBITS

Our Exhibits are presents as internet links. Please feel free to access any of our exhibits here. If you are not able to access the Exhibits please feel free to email director@bbavt.org and we will send you a pdf copy.

1. [DID MAP](#)
2. [City Charter for DID and Church Street Marketplace](#)
3. [DID Fact Sheet](#)
4. [Church Street Marketplace Budget FY 2018](#)