

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Housing-Ready Bylaws for Vermont Municipalities

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

RFQ ISSUED: January 28, 2019

PROPOSALS DUE: Noon EST on February 15, 2019

Project Summary

The Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and partners seek planning and urban design experts with experience working in rural areas and small communities to produce guidance for Vermont municipalities on updating local land use regulations (bylaws) to help meet housing needs and improve the quality of life in Vermont's walkable downtowns, village and neighborhoods. The project will engage several case study municipalities and result in an audit tool, best practices, graphics, and language that Vermont municipalities can use for updating their zoning bylaws to encourage construction of residential infill, provide affordable housing, promote fair housing, and support smart growth.

Context and Background

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median house in Vermont was \$223,700 in 2016 -- 20% more than the national median price and 18th highest of the 50 states. High housing costs are caused by many factors, but one part of the solution begins by encouraging municipalities to adopt development-ready land use regulations. Many studies have concluded that outdated local land use regulations contribute to the high cost of housing development in Vermont and beyond.

Typical zoning and subdivision regulations in Vermont's villages and neighborhoods, require large setbacks from the road, low densities, separations of use, limited housing options, excessive parking requirements, overly wide streets, and out-of-date historic preservation standards. These standards unnecessarily restrict opportunities for housing, increase costs for individuals and communities, perpetuate sprawling, auto-oriented development, negatively impacting Vermont's villages, farms, forests, and natural resources.

While we can do little to control the costs of materials and labor that continue to rise and strain the already-insufficient public resources for affordable housing, we can update local land use regulations that drive costs with little public benefit. However, updating bylaws can be overwhelming for volunteer planning commissions even when they have a consultant or staff support. With so many towns needing to improve the local regulations that govern housing development, it is inefficient for each town to research regulations that result in best practices independently.

Project Objectives

The Housing Ready Bylaw project aims to provide municipalities – especially those that recognize the need for new housing but that have limited staff capacity – with clear instructions and good examples and templates to use in preparing housing-ready

bylaws for housing affordable at a range of incomes, walkable, inclusive, and age-friendly neighborhoods. In addition to promoting development in infill locations, the bylaw guidance will also address ways to create opportunities for homes suitable for people with special needs.

Vermont already has municipal guidance on the general principles and regulatory tools needed to reduce housing barriers in walkable places. These include DHCD's [Planning Manual](#) and the [bylaw checklists](#) for Neighborhood Development Area Designation, VHFA's [regulatory toolbox](#), housing-related topic papers in the [Vermont Land Use Planning Implementation Manual](#) and VNRC's [Resilient Communities Scorecard](#).

The Housing Ready Bylaw project will build on these tools, providing detailed guidance, specifically targeted to Vermont's existing historic settlements, similar to the guidance produced by Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) for the State of Michigan through their [Project for Code Reform](#). The format for issuing the recommendations, whether primarily in a printed, online or other medium, is yet to be determined.

The housing-ready bylaws will address at a minimum:

- Provisions that further not only the letter but the spirit of Vermont's required housing provisions including, affordable housing, group homes, homeless shelters, recovery housing, mobile home parks and accessory and multi-family dwelling units
- Bylaws that meet the density and design requirements for the state [Neighborhood Development Area \(NDA\)](#) designation, resulting in complete streets and smart growth in-fill development

Municipalities vary widely in how they organize and administer their regulations, so the guidance needs to recognize that one size does not fit all. We aim to produce a bylaw audit tool and options for model/example language that can fit the various community sizes, types, character, and administrative capacity represented by Vermont's municipalities with downtowns, village centers, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Clear graphic illustrations convey best practices better than words. Illustrations are usually outside the budgets of local bylaw updates, so the Housing-Ready Bylaws will include illustrations that municipalities can adapt and incorporate into their zoning bylaws.

The Housing-Ready Bylaws will be:

- Included as one component in a Housing-Ready Toolkit that DHCD and partners are preparing for municipalities that seek to improve housing opportunities (other tools will not be part of the Housing-Ready Bylaw consultant contract).
- Used by municipal planning commissions and staff to help update zoning, subdivision and/or unified land use regulations to facilitate housing development and meet the community's housing needs.
- Available online and presented at multiple events by DHCD staff and others throughout 2020.

- Used by DHCD to communicate the regulatory standards that will qualify for Neighborhood Development Area designation.

Project Schedule

March 1, 2019 – Consultant selection

March 2019 – Complete consultant contract and begin work

April – August 2019 – Review case study bylaws and produce recommendations

September 2019 -- Complete draft documents and illustrations

December 2019 – Complete final content

February 2020 – Complete final documents

2020 – Outreach to municipalities (by DHCD and partners)

DHCD Role

DHCD will manage the project with oversight from a steering committee consisting of key partners, including the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) and AARP-Vermont, and will also convene an advisory committee of municipal, regional, and statewide experts with housing and regulatory experience in Vermont municipalities to review and comment on project outputs.

DHCD, with input from both the steering committee, advisory committee, and consultant will select 4-6 Vermont municipalities to serve as case studies. The consultant will evaluate the land use bylaws:

- using an audit tool that will be tested for use statewide
- propose bylaw improvements for those municipalities including best practices, proposed language, and illustrations where appropriate.

DHCD will work with the consultant and advisors to develop a public outreach program to build interest in updating bylaws and communicate key principles during the project and after the products are completed. DHCD staff will organize all meetings and public events and handle communications with the consultant as well as the case study communities. DHCD will also direct training and outreach to communities once the Housing Ready Bylaws are produced.

Project Work Plan

1. **Define project approach** – With DHCD and Steering Committee define project goals and principles for the bylaws, make decisions on case study communities, public outreach, and the form and content of guidance materials.
2. **Review and evaluate case study bylaws** – Prepare an audit tool that can be applied to the land use bylaws of the case study communities and refined over the course of the project. Identify barriers to fair housing, new housing opportunities, and walkability in the bylaws.
3. **Prepare recommended best practices** – Propose updates and solutions to municipal bylaw language, processes, and procedures to address the barriers to housing found in the bylaws of the case study communities.

4. **Public outreach** – Help organize and participate in two or more public events focused on the case study communities. Public meeting costs will be covered by DHCD.
5. **Prepare guidance materials** – Produce draft guidance materials, proposing a graphic design concepts for the agreed upon format(s), and incorporating feedback on the recommended best practices from the case study communities, steering committee, and advisory committee.
6. **Prepare illustrations** – Produce draft illustrations for use in bylaws to help communicate the form that housing-ready development should take. Illustrations shall be in a digital format commonly used by urban designers and drawn in a way (in commonly-used software) that can be easily adapted for use in historic settlements around Vermont.
7. **Finalize documents** – Incorporate feedback from DHCD that will compile comment from the steering committee, and advisory committee. Complete the guidance documents, present in an effective graphic design layout, ready to publish in the agreed-upon formats. Any publication expenses such as printing, or website costs will be covered by DHCD.

Project Funding

Total project cost is anticipated to be \$90,000, with \$50,000 for consultant services from funding provided by VHCB and AARP. DHCD expects to contribute more than \$30,000 in staff time and expenses to the project in 2019-2020.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Submission Requirements

All responses to the RFP shall include the following information:

1. **Cover Letter** - A cover letter of interest and general description of recommended approaches, scope of work, processes, and deliverables for the project.
2. **Acknowledgement of State of Vermont Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract.** The cover letter must include the following language with a separate signature indicating that the [State of Vermont contract terms](#), including the specific insurance requirements, can be met by the consultant:
I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand all of the Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants, have had the opportunity to consult with legal counsel, and hereby state that my business and I agree to all of the same.
[with a signature line]
3. **Scope of Work and Project Approach** – Provide a detailed scope of work based on the work plan provided above and broken down by task:
 - a. Describe the project approach, including a detailed scope of work with associated list of tasks broken down by task and team member with organizational chart.
 - b. Describe the schedule and proposed deliverables.

The consultant may also propose additional supplemental items to the scope of work. While the work plan in the RFP serves to illustrate a general process and structure for the Housing Ready Bylaws, we are very much open to and

interested in hearing any new/creative approaches to this type of guidance and our approach.

4. **Project Budget** – Provide a detailed budget broken down by task and team member. Include your overhead and hourly rates for the individuals involved. Also, provide an estimated budget with staff hours for completing each phase of the proposed scope of work.

5. **Qualifications and Staffing** – Provide a qualifications profile of the lead consultant and any sub-consultants, including indication of the lead consultant, the role of each consultant on the team with organizational staffing chart and percentage of time devoted to the project by each consultant. Also provide information on each consultant, including the name of the firm, if applicable, year established, including a description of relevant experience on similar projects for each firm sample work products, and detailed resume listing of their individual work experience in this role on similar projects.

NOTE: Consultant teams should consider involving a Vermont planner with knowledge and experience working with Vermont communities on bylaws and the state statutes governing local land use planning and regulations ([24 V.S.A. Chapter 117](#)).

6. **References** - A minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last five (5) years.

7. **Page Limit** - The proposal, encompassing items 1-6 above, shall not exceed 20 double-sided pages (40 total pages) including cover letter, table of contents and resumes.

All information submitted becomes property of the State of Vermont upon submission. DHCD 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 DHCD. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the consultant. DHCD 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 RFP in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the State of Vermont. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates the State of Vermont to award a contract.

Submission Requirements

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) of the submittal by noon EST on Friday, February 15, 2019 to:

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development
Faith Ingulsrud
802-828-5228
Faith.ingulsrud@vermont.gov

Please expect a confirmation email upon DHCD's receipt of your proposal. If you have any questions about this project or the RFP, please address them in writing and email to [Faith Ingulsrud](mailto:Faith.Ingulsrud@vermont.gov). The Department will respond to all questions in writing within 4 business days. Both the question and response will be shared with the other consultants at <https://accd.vermont.gov/content/housing-ready-bylaws>. Consultants preparing a proposal are responsible for reviewing the questions and answers on the website.

RFP Schedule Summary:

Proposals due Friday, February 15, 2019

Consultant selection by Friday, March 1, 2019

Proposal Selection

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of DHCD and representatives of partner organizations. A short-list of consultants may be selected for interviews.

Proposal Evaluation

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors:

1. Consultant qualifications and experience with similar projects and references - 40%
2. Scope of work, methodology, public engagement, and scheduling - 35%
3. Overall quality, completeness and clarity in the proposal - 15%
4. Consultant costs and fee schedule – 10%

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 proposal process will be the sole responsibility of the consultant.

Contract Requirements

DHCD will negotiate contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by DHCD's legal counsel. The contract shall not start until the successful applicant enters into a written contract with DHCD. DHCD is not liable for any cost incurred by consultant prior to issuance of a contract. The consultant and subcontractors must comply with all State and Federal covenants required by virtue of the funding source or contained or referenced in all the municipality's subcontracts including, but not limited to the following provisions:

- Insurance Coverage
- Indemnification
- Workers Compensation
- Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity

- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) Obligation
- Audit and Record Retention
- Lobbying restrictions

Mapping and Graphic Standards

Any artistic renderings or other graphical illustrations should be provided in pdf or jpeg file format along with native editable file formats in Adobe Illustrator/Photoshop and InDesign format.

The bylaw project is not expected to include mapping tasks to inventory, assess, and communicate geographic concepts, but if it does, consultants will develop data layers in GIS. Data should be in Vermont State Plane coordinates, meters NAD 1983. These data layers can be developed from existing data layers and/or augmented with additional engineering work.
