

City of Newport
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan
Newport City, Vermont
Issued November 15, 2017

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Summary

On behalf of the City of Newport, White + Burke Real Estate Investment Advisors, Inc. (“W+B”) seeks a community planning consultant (or consultant team) to prepare a master plan focused on the waterfront and designated downtown of Newport (see Appendix A for boundaries of designated downtown). **The goal of this waterfront and downtown master plan is to identify opportunities, public facility and infrastructure improvements, land uses, and other physical enhancements that will generate increased activity, excitement and economic vitality in downtown Newport.** This project will involve engagement of the community, creation of a unified vision for downtown and waterfront revitalization, and establishment of a clear implementation plan to further this vision. The resulting plan will identify implementable public facility and infrastructure improvements, multi-modal transportation enhancements, redevelopment opportunities, and land use related projects and strategies that will guide Newport into making smart investments. The Newport City Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan (the “Master Plan”) should address, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Opportunities to increase activity and excitement in the downtown – attract more people, businesses and tourists throughout the year.
- Enhance access to and enjoyment of Lake Memphremagog.
- Improve connections throughout downtown, between Main Street and the lake, and between Main Street and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Identify infrastructure improvements that are needed to attract more people and encourage and support private investment.
- Streetscape enhancements.
- Opportunities to expand public green space and hard space, and provide other interesting places for the public to gather.
- Pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements.
- Opportunities to leverage recreational amenities in the region.
- Enhance gateways and improve wayfinding.
- Evaluate downtown parking needs and formulate strategies.

Context and Background

Since the fallout of the EB-5 controversy, which left Newport with a razed downtown city block, the City has been working diligently and pro-actively to reverse its fortunes for the better. The

City and other stakeholders have undertaken several initiatives in recent months to promote community engagement and economic revitalization including expansion of its lakeside bicycle and recreation path, construction of a new downtown boat access and dock, sidewalk reconstruction, establishment of a Wednesday night concert series near the waterfront, and securing the Vermont Council on Rural Development to conduct its Community Visit Process starting this fall. The City also hired W+B to conduct a downtown development strategic analysis and market assessment. One of the recommendations that grew from the strategic analysis was to prepare a downtown master plan designed to generate more activity and excitement, and foster both public and private reinvestment in the downtown.

Detailed Project Work Plan

The Master Plan should include, but is not limited to, the following tasks:

Task 1: Existing Conditions Analysis

- Review and build upon relevant plans and studies produced to date including, but not limited to, the City's Municipal Plan, the Newport R/UDAT studies by AIA Communities by Design, the Age Friendly Community Action Plan and studies by AARP, and the Newport City Downtown Development Strategic Analysis and Market Assessment by W+B. These studies can be viewed at: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hvkuSKzFQ_EL8Gg2DeKHvvxVH62O-tB-
- Analyze existing conditions including identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to making the waterfront and downtown Newport more vibrant and economically secure. Review and build upon previous opportunities and constraints analyses prepared to date including the Opportunities and Constraints Plan prepared by W+B in 2017, which can be viewed at: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hvkuSKzFQ_EL8Gg2DeKHvvxVH62O-tB-

Task 2: Community Engagement

- Engage the community including residents of Newport and local business owners to obtain their thoughts, desires and ideas related to making downtown Newport more exciting and interesting.
- Coordinate with the Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit Process, and address, where appropriate, the results of the community visit process in the Master Plan. The consultant should describe how it proposes to coordinate a Master Plan public engagement process with the Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit process which will be conducted from December 2017 – February/March 2018. A description of the community visit process is attached as Appendix B. More information on the Newport Community Visit process can be obtained by contacting Jenna Koloski, Community and Policy Manager, at (802) 225-6091.

- Development of this Master Plan should involve an open and transparent public process. The consultant should address how it proposes to promote an open and transparent process within the allowable budget.

Task 3: Newport City Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan

- Identify physical improvements such as enhanced public connections, streetscapes, waterfront amenities, expanded or new public facilities, pedestrian and bicycle paths, utilities, parking, green space, children spaces, wayfinding, gateways, and other improvements that address the elements presented above and promote increased activity and excitement.
- Consider the Complete Streets and Smart Growth principals promulgated by the State of Vermont.
- Develop site plan sketches for several select properties recommended for specific improvements (e.g. public plazas, expanded green space, event spaces, improved lake access, parking facilities, new specifically recommended public/private buildings, etc.).
- Develop illustrations or three-dimensional sketch up models for key locations throughout the downtown and waterfront.
- Develop conceptual streetscape, gateway and/or wayfinding plans/illustrations for several priority locations in the downtown.
- An objective of this Master Plan is to build upon previous “broad” planning efforts (e.g. R/UDAT and AARP studies) by providing more detailed conceptual design plans and illustrations for several high priority projects to be identified through this downtown master planning process.

Task 4: Implementation Plan

- Identify and prioritize strategies that can be implemented through the City’s capital planning process.
- Create a step-by-step guide that will instruct the City on the direct implementation of the master plan recommendations.
- Identify potential funding strategies for each of the recommended improvements and plan recommendations.

Project Deliverables

- Regularly scheduled conference call meetings with a Downtown Master Plan working group to be established by the City. The purpose of these conference call meetings is to provide updates on project progress and solicit input from the working group.

- A public engagement process to solicit input from the public and local business owners. Recognizing budget limitations, the Consultant should propose an efficient and effective public engagement process, which may include holding a public visioning workshop, obtaining feedback through the Community Visit process, or some other creative means of soliciting public input.
- A written Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan including goals and strategies, conceptual design plans and illustrations showing recommended improvements and site enhancements, and a detailed implementation plan.
- Presentation of the draft Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan at a public meeting.

Project Funding

A total of \$35,000 is available for consultant services.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Submission Requirements

1. Cover Letter – A cover letter expressing the consultant’s interest.
2. Project Approach - A description of the general 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 (including additional supplemental items to the scope work), and any insights into the project gained through development of the proposal. While the project work plan in the RFP serves to illustrate a general process and structure for creating the Master Plan, we are very much open to and interested in hearing any new or creative approaches to preparing this type of plan.
3. Scope of Work - A scope of work that includes detailed steps to be taken, including any products or deliverables resulting from each task.
4. Project Budget/Cost Proposal - A project budget/cost matrix which identifies the hours generally expected to be provided by task. Proposed total costs associated with each task shall be provided, including per hour staff costs and anticipated expenses (materials, travel, etc.).
5. Proposed Schedule – A proposed schedule that indicates project milestones and overall time for completion.
6. Qualifications and Staffing – A list of individuals that will be committed to this project and their professional qualifications, including identification of the lead consultant. The names and qualifications of any sub-consultants shall be included in this list.
7. Experience – Demonstration of success on similar projects, including a brief project description. Provide contact information for at least five (5) references for the primary consultant and three (3) references for any sub-consultants.

Selection Criteria and Process

The decision for award of the contract will be based upon the following considerations:

- Understanding of the project.
- Consultant qualifications and experience with similar projects, including the ability and capacity to perform the contract.
- Overall quality, completeness and clarity in the proposal.
- Consultant costs and fee schedule.

Contract Period

Funding for this planning work is made possible by a grant to the City of Newport, Vermont from the Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development. The period of this contract will be from December 2017 through June 2018. All work on the project in the contract must be completed by June 30, 2018.

Grant Requirements

The selected Consultant will be required to provide evidence of Professional Liability Insurance of \$1,000,000.

Submissions

Four (4) hard copies and one (1) digital copy of the proposal shall be submitted to:

Joe Weith
Senior Project Manager
White + Burke Real Estate Investment Advisors, Inc.
40 College Street, Suite 100
PO Box 1007
Burlington, VT 05402-1007
jweith@whiteandburke.com

All proposals must be received no later than 12:00 PM (noon) on December 8, 2017.

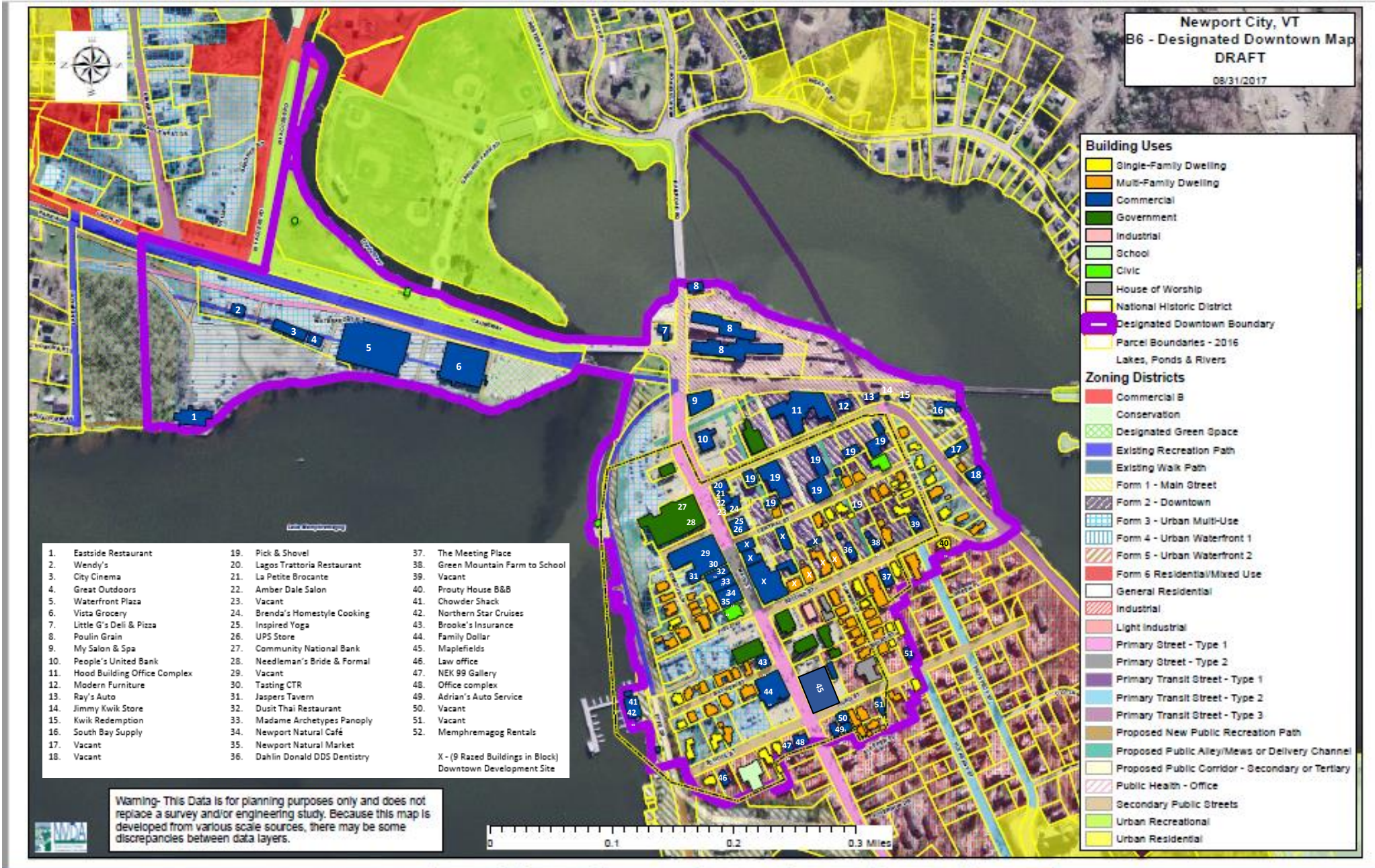
Any questions, comments or concerns regarding this Request for Proposal shall be emailed to Joe Weith by November 29, 2017.

The City of Newport intends to conduct Consultant interviews via telephone conference December 11 – 14, and choose a Consultant for the project by December 15, 2017.

All proposals upon submission become the property of the City of Newport, Vermont. The expense of preparing and submitting a proposal is the sole responsibility of the consultant. The City of Newport reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP as in the best interest of the City of Newport. This solicitation in no way obligates the City of Newport to award a contract.

Work on this project will be through a sub-contract with W+B. Monthly invoices shall be submitted to W+B, who will then forward to the City of Newport for payment. W+B will pay the Consultant invoice within 10 days of receipt of payment from the City of Newport.

Newport City Designated Downtown Business Key





Vermont Council on Rural Development's Community Visit Program

Vermonters know that local action makes our communities vibrant. But local action often needs support from regional, state, and even federal resources to achieve goals for prosperity. The Vermont Council on Rural Development's (VCRD) **Community Visit program** is a way for towns to engage and bring together their residents, set common goals and directions in a neutral and facilitated structure, and access resources that will help them take action on those goals. The program gets citizens engaged in working for their communities and connects them to the resources they need to be successful.

How It Works

The Community Visit program happens in four months, with a series of major community events, bringing together a broad mix of community members with a *Visiting Team*, made up of state, federal, non-profit, and philanthropic experts, to create intensive partnerships and tailored work plans for long-term local success. VCRD provides the structure and neutral facilitation each step of the way. The Visit begins with a series of focus forums (STEP 1) followed by a community wide discussion where residents champion their ideas for the future of their town (STEP 2). After the community chooses its priorities, interested citizens join local task forces to work forward on the community goals set through the process (STEP 3). Each task force has a *chairperson* who will manage meetings and keep work moving forward. A local *Community Visit chairperson* ("chair of the chairs") will help to keep the community informed and involved as the program progresses. While the program is provided to towns for free, residents are expected to assist with logistics, outreach, and community meals.

"VCRD hosted its first community visit to Bellows Falls, at a time when the community was really at a loss on how to move forward. Ten years later we have an active main street, a strong arts community and a great integration between our industrial park and downtown."

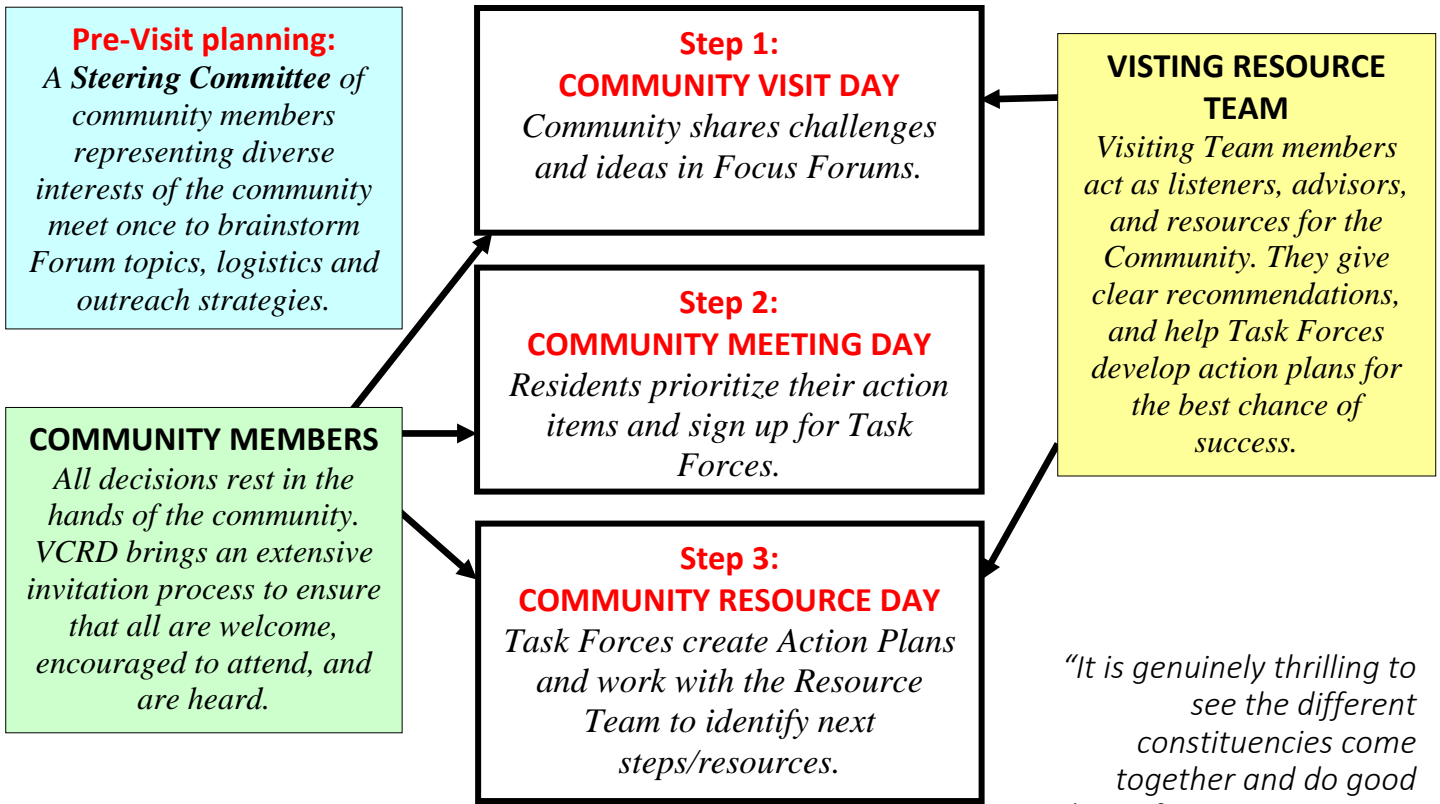
~ Robert McBride, RAMP,
Bellows Falls

"I have been involved in dozens of planning sessions and community forums here in St. Johnsbury over the last 15 years and I can truly say that this event was, by far, the best – and will, without a doubt, result in productive outcomes for St. Johnsbury."

~ Mike Welch, St. Johnsbury
Community Visit Chair

"I have never seen as much activity, excitement, and accomplishment in our town. VCRD is doing meaningful work that will improve the quality of life in Vermont towns for generations to come. I will always be grateful."

~ Sandy Kilburn, Swanton Resident



“It is genuinely thrilling to see the different constituencies come together and do good things for our community. The most significant results of the process are the lasting effects in the town around community engagement. The town has been transformed.”
~ April Tuck, Cambridge Community Visit Chair

“I have been hearing such a great buzz today after all of the fun yesterday. Thanks again for helping our community get reinvigorated. I really believe in the task forces that have been formed and their determination and ability to better serve our community.”
~ Emily Maclure, Craftsbury Community Visit Chair

What Does a Community Visit Produce?

The Community Visit program is built from the priorities that a community decides together, so results vary from town to town. Overall, towns report energized volunteers, better community engagement, and new connections to state, federal, and regional resources. For some towns, the Visit creates community goodwill and celebrations, such as *Rutland’s Friday Night Live* series; outdoor each summer week with live music, food and shopping opportunities. For others, it is used to leverage funds or planning resources, such as *Pownal’s affordable housing project* or *Johnson’s downtown redesign*. For some towns, the Visit provides a mechanism to talk about important issues and begin long term work for the future, as in *Killington’s 4-season tourism planning*, or *Poultney’s downtown revitalization work*. And for still others, it is a chance to help the community get healthier; *Troy, Westfield, Jay and Woodstock built and advertised new walking trails*.

Find out more about the Community Visit program:
<http://vtrural.org/programs/Community-Visits>.