



## **TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY**

Department of Planning & Zoning

77 Main Street

Middlebury, Vermont 05753

### **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

Planning and Engineering Services to Create a Downtown Master Plan

Issued: May 28, 2019

Deadline for Submission of Qualifications: June 12, 2019

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

##### **Project Summary**

This project will create a Downtown Master Plan for enhancing the vitality and improving the functional efficiency of Middlebury's Designated Downtown.

A public process will be held to:

- Identify key issues and unique assets
- Create an overall vision for the next 20 years and beyond
- Develop actionable goals for achieving this vision

A series of design charrettes/public meetings will be held to:

- Develop an overall master plan map, consisting of an illustrative master plan showing design interventions
- Develop an area-specific illustrative master plan for the Bakery-Lane Municipal Site
- Develop a bike-ped strategy for transportation linkages and safety improvements to enhance connectivity into Downtown
- Conduct conceptual visioning exercises focused on improving the built environment along portions of the lower Weybridge St and Seymour St gateways
- Develop engineering drawings (30% design plans) showing a green alley stormwater design for Bakery Lane, as well as other selected green stormwater infrastructure treatments throughout the project area.

The planning process will be summarized in a master plan report, to include:

- Logically-organized treatment of key issues arising from the public process
- Implementation strategies for achieving specific objectives
- A land use analysis to review underlying zoning and provide high-level recommendations for revising zoning as needed to support the vision in the plan
- Description of new and improved transportation linkages identified during the public process
- A market analysis and limited strategy focused on Downtown, to be prepared with the assistance of planning staff and interns, who will collect local-level data
- Appendix (Maps, Plans, Renderings, Etc.)

## **Context and Background**

Middlebury's Downtown area is the heart of activity for our community. It serves as both a commercial center and a center of social activity. Downtown has many assets, including: beautiful public spaces (Riverside Park, Town Green, Triangle park, college park) and public buildings (Hsley Library, new municipal offices, fire house). Middlebury is the shire town serving all of Addison County. Downtown provides a centralized location for essential services, including law firms, emergency services (police, fire, and sheriff), social service agencies, a homeless shelter and day station, and several churches. It is the heart of our creative economy including galleries, the Sheldon Museum, the VT Folklife Center, Town Hall Theater and the annual New Filmmaker's Festival. It is a place where children can be seen walking throughout the day, containing three preschools and an elementary school. There are festivals and events held in Downtown throughout the year. And of course, Downtown contains a variety of retail stores and restaurants. It is a place that both attracts visitors and provides a gathering place and local destination for residents.

The last comprehensive planning effort in downtown (Downtown Improvement Plan) was conducted in 2000. In the last two decades Downtown Middlebury has seen many changes, including the creation of Riverside Park (2014), new construction of the Cross Street Bridge and traffic circle (2010), renovation of Town Hall Theater (2012), a new municipal office building (2016), two streetscape projects (2004 and 2011) and significant improvements to the built environment resulting from the current VTrans Bridge and Rail project (2017-2021). The rail project will replace a railroad bridge and section of track in the center of the Downtown area, improving safety and allowing Amtrak to add a stop in Downtown Middlebury in 2021. In the past, these changes have often come about due to infusions of capital from outside sources (such as Middlebury College) and the energy of town leaders and committed groups of citizens rather than as a result of long-term strategic planning. This Downtown Master Plan will introduce decision makers to some long-term planning tools and processes for prioritizing needs and publicly vetting creative solutions.

Unlike many Vermont Downtowns that have empty lots or entire blocks in need of revitalization, Downtown Middlebury is generally well-utilized, happy and healthy. This master plan will focus on strategies for maintaining that vitality and encouraging new investment using opportunities for infill development. To accomplish this, the consultant will be asked to provide a Downtown Market Analysis suitable for use in economic development planning. Planning staff and summer interns will assist the consultant by collecting relevant local-level inventory, sales and customer data in support of this analysis and report.

In addition to the report, the project will produce an overall illustrative master plan map of downtown, showing infill development opportunities, potential trail/path/sidewalk connections and linkages, options for public parking, etc. There are few specific areas of Downtown that will receive targeted attention as part of this project (see attached map):

**Bakery Lane Municipal Area:** A critical component of this project will be a design charrette process leading to the creation of an area-specific illustrative master plan for the Bakery Lane Municipal Area. This is a municipally-owned parcel located between the Town offices and the river, which is currently (fully) utilized as a municipal parking lot. In 2015, the site was identified as an infill development opportunity and an RFP was issued to solicit development proposals. Since then, the Town has decided to regroup and create a master plan for the site first. The

area-specific illustrative master plan will be developed to complement surrounding uses, including the potential future expansion of Ilsley Library, potential redevelopment along Bakery Lane, adjacent Otter Creek, and the adjacent Municipal Offices. A public charrette process will incorporate the input of a variety of stakeholders and the general public. Using a separate line of Clean Water funding, the consulting team will create 30% design engineering plans for Bakery Lane as a green alley. Remaining clean water funding will be used to design other green stormwater improvements in this vicinity, which complement the illustrative plan and advance the community's vision.

Western gateway (lower Weybridge Street): Weybridge Street is bordered by the Middlebury College campus to the West and the Downtown Core to the east. The southern end is presently zoned to encourage single family residential uses, but contains several parcels with development potential as commercial, school/office and higher-density residential uses. Given the limited availability of parcels in Downtown, the Planning Commission has been considering revisions to the zoning in that area (see map). To the extent that the budget allows, assistance visualizing the appearance of that neighborhood and associated zoning recommendations are requested to advance the conversation about integrating this transitional zone into its surroundings. This would be incorporated in the overall public process. Bike-ped connectivity improvements serving commuters and the College are also germane to discussions of this area.

Northern gateway (Seymour Street): The Seymour Street corridor is an important gateway into downtown. It runs parallel to Route 7, acting as a local route for receiving traffic from the Exchange Street industrial area and sending it through Downtown Core to Routes 125 and 30 to the West. The street has potential for improvement, as it is wide and out of scale with its surroundings. The neighborhood includes both residential and commercial uses. Assistance is needed to create a publicly supported vision for a mixed use, bike-ped friendly corridor that will handle vehicular traffic demands as well as creating an active transportation link connecting the Downtown core with biking/hiking destinations to the North (e.g. Amtrak station, MALT trails network, Exchange St. bike path). To the extent that the budget allows, the selected consultant will use their knowledge of urban design to assist the Planning Commission and other participants to visualize alternatives and preferences for new mixed-use development along this street. Seymour Street also provides excellent opportunities to explore stormwater and bike-ped improvements that define it as a gateway.

Connectivity with areas East of Court Street (Rte 7): Immediately east of Downtown are several neighborhoods/destinations that produce significant bicycle and pedestrian traffic, which require improved connectivity with Downtown. The consultant will work with stakeholders to contemplate better ways of connecting Downtown to these activity centers. As the Town controls State Route 7 in the area between Exchange Street and Creek Road, this could potentially include recommendations pertaining to Court Street. These proposed connections and linkages will be reflected on the overall illustrative master plan, with recommendations in the report.

## **Resources**

Background materials may be reviewed at the following Dropbox link: [Supporting Documents](#)

### Funding

Total project funds for consultant services are \$108,333. \$75,000 is available for master planning from the Better Connections Grant Program. An additional \$33,333 is available from the State of Vermont Clean Water Initiative Fund for planning & design work related to green stormwater infrastructure improvements (30% design plans). These public processes may be conducted concurrently.

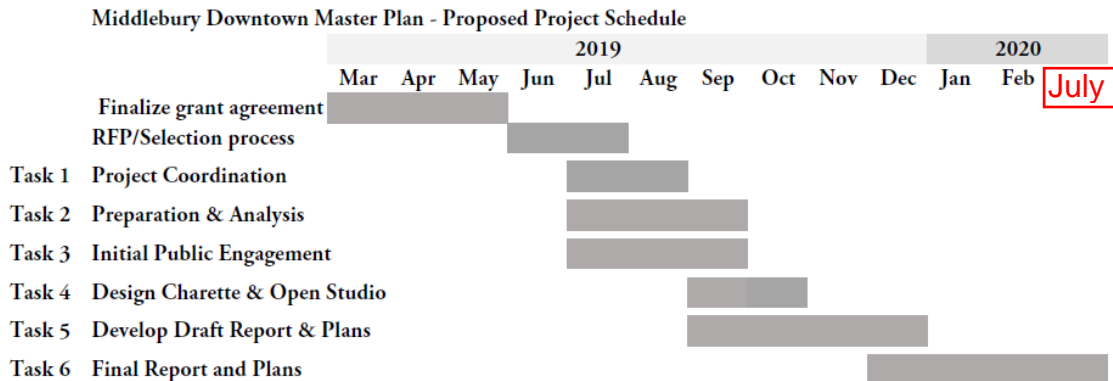
### Project Work Plan

The proposed work plan follows:

	Task name	Description	Deliverables
<b>Task 1</b> <b>Task 2</b>	<b>Project Coordination, Preparation and Analysis</b>	Review background documents, prepare base maps, collect baseline economic data and work w/ project team to create project branding and outreach plan.	Base mapping, baseline data
<b>Task 3</b>	<b>Initial Public Engagement</b>	Create and send printed materials, hold initial stakeholder meetings, conduct outreach campaign, advertise at Farmer's Market and other public events.	Public meeting #1, printed materials
<b>Task 4</b>	<b>Primary Public Outreach/ Charrette</b>	Conduct at least 4 public events, including: Kickoff meeting, 2 public progress meetings, and closing presentation. Create concept plans and maps and manage input. Develop creative survey methods and tools. Work with project team and focus groups. Display progress plans in an open studio.	
<b>Task 5</b>	<b>Develop draft report and plans</b>	Consultant provides draft master plan report Work with staff and interns to create a market analysis, plan maps and assist staff in the creation of an implementation plan to present to the steering committee for review, meet with steering committee (via Skype or in person).	Draft report and plans
<b>Task 6</b>	<b>Final report and plans</b>	Consultant provides final report and plans incorporating steering committee/technical review/Selectboard comments, edited and ready for final endorsement.	Final report and plans

### Schedule

The project will be completed by March 2020. After their initial meeting, the Steering Committee and Consultant will spend 2-3 months promoting the project and conducting stakeholder meetings in preparation for a series of public meetings/ design charrettes in Sep-Oct.



## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

**We are not seeking a detailed scope of work or cost proposal at this time**

Please furnish five (5) hard copies and one electronic copy of the statement of qualifications with pages numbered consecutively.

All responses to the RFQ shall include the following information:

1. Cover Letter  
A statement of interest in the project and list of partnering firms
2. Statement of Qualifications and Staffing  
Provide a qualifications profile of the lead consultant and subconsultants, including identification of the lead consultant and proposed role of each consultant on the team. Please identify the staff who will be working with the project manager, as well as those leading public meetings and charrettes.
3. Summary of Relevant Projects and References  
Describe relevant experience on similar projects for each firm and list the work experience of staff involved in the project. Include a minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last ten (10) years.
4. Page Limit  
The proposal, encompassing items 1-3 above, shall not exceed 10 double-sided pages (20 total pages) including cover letter, project lists and contacts. Links may be provided for other materials, work samples, etc.

All information submitted becomes the property of the Town of Middlebury upon submission. The Town of Middlebury reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating 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 the Town of Middlebury. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the

sole expense of the consultant. The Town of Middlebury 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 Town of Middlebury. This solicitation in no way obligates the Town of Middlebury to award a contract.

#### **Submission Requirements**

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy by pdf and five (5) printed copies of their statement of qualifications postmarked by the deadline above, to:

#### **Municipality/Local Project Manager Contact Information**

Town of Middlebury  
Jennifer Murray, Planning Director  
77 Main Street  
Middlebury, VT 05753  
(802) 458-8010  
[jmurray@townofmiddlebury.org](mailto:jmurray@townofmiddlebury.org)

Please expect a confirmation email upon receipt of qualifications by Town of Middlebury

#### **Selection Process**

Qualifications will be reviewed by a selection committee composed of representatives from the Town of Middlebury, RPC and VTrans/ACCD. A short-list of consultants will be selected to submit detailed proposals for the project with a project approach, scope of services, schedule and budget with details on staffing and hourly costs. Finalists may be requested to present additional details via a Skype interview.

#### **RFP Schedule Summary**

Qualifications due: June 12  
Consultants selected for short list: June 19  
Proposals due: July 3  
Possible Interviews on: July 8  
Consultant selection by: July 12  
Project work to begin: July 26  
Complete project on or by: **July 2020**

#### **Evaluation of Qualifications**

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors:

1. Consultant Qualifications – 85%
  - a. Experience doing similar work
  - b. Ability to approachably communicate complex transportation planning, land use planning and engineering concepts and consequences to stakeholders and build consensus
  - c. Knowledge of land use, transportation, and stormwater planning and engineering
  - d. Knowledge of urban design and writing form-based code
  - e. Previous experience with metropolitan clients outside the State of Vermont

- f. Experience working with the development community
- g. Proven ability to work with committees and conduct public meetings
- h. Availability to begin work on project start date

2. Quality, completeness and clarity of submission – 15%

**Interview Framework**

If no obvious winner can be selected based on the qualification submissions received, the Town of Middlebury reserves the right to select the top two or three highest scoring consultants and invite them for an interview. In this process, the selection committee may ask the respondents to deliver an oral presentation of their respective proposals. The purpose of an interview would be to provide an in-depth analysis of qualifications, experience in performing similar services, and an opportunity for the consultant to clarify or elaborate on their qualifications without restating the proposal. If deemed necessary, interviews for all applicants will be conducted by Skype.

**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 negotiated through the negotiation of the final contract and is subject to the final approval of the ACCD and VTrans grant administrators.

**Contracting Requirements**

The Consultant will be subject to the terms of Attachments C, D and E of the Better Connections grant agreement. A sample contract meeting these requirements is available upon request.



