

Request for Proposals

Downtown-Basin Master Plan, City of Vergennes

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Vergennes Downtown-Basin Master Plan is a *Strong Connections, Better Communities* (SCBC) project funded in partnership by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Vergennes and Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC). This is a master planning project, expanding on recommendations and momentum cultivated in the *2014 Community Visit and Plan of Action* facilitated by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD).

The end goal of this project is to create a comprehensive master plan for the Downtown and Otter Creek Basin areas which considers opportunities and constraints for enhancing mobility connections within and between them. Analysis will include economic, land use, transportation and recreational constraints and opportunities for the City and its residents.

Citizen participation and support is crucial to the success of this project and any future concept implementation. A creative community engagement plan which includes a diversity of formats and opportunities for dialogue is expected throughout the project.

The Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services will be conducting a master plan project for the Northlands Job Corp site, west of Downtown Vergennes. Due to the close proximity of this site to the Basin and Downtown areas, it is expected that the SCBC project team and DBGS project team would meet to determine overlapping concerns, considerations and opportunities during the course of this project. More information on the *Strong Connections, Better Communities* program can be found at: <http://vtransplanning.vermont.gov/programs/scbc>

PROPOSED PROJECT SCHEDULE

March 16 th , 2015	RFP released
March 27th, 2015 5pm	Deadline for submission of questions and <u>Intent to Respond</u>
April 3 rd , 2015	Response to questions posted
April 15th, 2015 5pm	RFP submission deadline
May 6 th , 2015 5pm	Consultant selection notification
May (Date TBD), 2015	Project kick off
June (Date TBD), 2016	Project completion (there are other internal deadlines throughout the project)

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The City of Vergennes is a small, compact urban center within Addison County, population approximately 2,600. State Highway 22A acts as both a major trucking route to and from Route 7 and also as the City's Main Street through a busy Downtown area. Despite heavy tractor trailer traffic, the Downtown is lively with over 60 commercial and retail operations including restaurants with outdoor patios, shops and services, as well as the town green and the Vergennes Opera House theater building. To the west the Downtown area abuts the Otter Creek Basin District, where the Vergennes Falls tumble into flat water flowing directly to Lake Champlain. Currently under-used park land surrounds the base of the waterfall. There have been various efforts to restore and improve the latter, but there is currently no master plan.

This project addresses the greater potential to connect the Downtown (including the *Central* and *Limited Business Districts*) and Otter Creek Basin District together, improving multi-modal opportunities, street design and recreational opportunities, while increasing the potential of each district in and of itself. **See attachment A for project boundaries.**

The project will build on numerous planning studies and participatory efforts the City has been involved in, particularly the most recent *Community Visit Day* with the Vermont Council on Rural Development. This project identified three focus areas and associated task forces which align with the three task areas of this SCBC project. These are: 1. Downtown Mobility and Infrastructure, 2. Basin and Riverside Plan, and 3. Economic Development.

See the Vergennes City website for more information on the VCRD project and task force focus areas: <http://vergenes.org/vergenes-community-visit-day/>

The successful consultant will have the following skills/experience:

- Creative stakeholder/public engagement
- Transportation planning and data analysis, inclusive of complete streets planning and design
- Urban design and landscape architecture
- Recreation and park planning and design
- Economic development /market analysis
- Land use planning – both regulatory and non-regulatory

- Familiarity with the Addison County region and/or similar scale municipalities
- Other skills necessary for successful completion of this phase of the project

BUDGET

Funding for this project comes from federal, state, regional and local sources. The additional cash match of \$25,000 noted in the table below will be provided by ACRPC’s Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to support complete street priorities for Main Street, previously identified in the Vergennes City Plan.

Grant Funds Requested (SCBC)	\$40,500
Local Match (City of Vergennes)	\$4,050
*Additional Cash Match (ACRPC)	*\$25,000
Total Consultant Budget	\$69,550

*ACRPC funds must be used by September 30th, 2015

SCOPE

As previously noted, this project addresses the greater potential to connect the Downtown (including the *Central* and *Limited Business Districts*) and Otter Creek Basin District together, improving multi-modal opportunities, street design and recreational opportunities, while increasing the potential of each district in and of itself. The three focus areas are: 1. Downtown Mobility and Infrastructure, 2. Basin and Riverside Plan, and 3. Economic Development. Within each of these, analysis, prioritization and implementation mechanisms will be addressed and ultimately inform a final master plan of the study area. Below is an outline of the tasks and deliverables. It is expected that work associated with each task will overlap and reference other tasks throughout the project. Opportunities for public engagement should be evident throughout the project, as reflected on the schedule on page 6.

Task 1: Analysis of Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints

Task 1 proposes to organize, document, confirm and expand on results from the most recent associated planning documents and resources, including the 2014 VCRD Community Visit Report and the recently adopted City Plan, creating a foundation for the Master Plan.

Subtask 1.1 Downtown Transportation Analysis and Conceptual Plan

This task will include a general mobility assessment of the Downtown area, including detailed analysis of all transportation systems and supporting infrastructure. The study will identify existing deficiencies, needs and opportunities in public transit service, linkages and safety for walking and biking, access management, traffic calming and mitigating truck noise and volumes. An inventory of existing parking and projected parking needs will be included.

Analysis shall be inclusive of, but not limited to an evaluation of the following: existing water, wastewater, stormwater, telecommunications, transportation structures such as bridges and culverts, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and multi-use paths, community facilities, parks, street trees, street

lights, and signage. A conceptual plan for the Downtown will illustrate multi-modal connections and circulation, alternative parking scenarios, street and crossing design alternatives, and wayfinding improvements.

Previous transportation studies may be reviewed at: <http://acrpc.org/vergenes/>

Subtask 1.2 Basin Analysis and Conceptual Plan

Vergennes will build off the Basin Task Force’s work by documenting and prioritizing the City’s remaining opportunities in the Basin and how each would contribute to the City. The Basin Conceptual Plan will focus on physical enhancements, including transportation and infrastructure improvements, to the Basin and the River Walk area in order to create a prime recreation area. Any plan must also recognize the ecological services of this area as a wildlife habitat and floodplain.

The Basin analysis and conceptual plan should include but not be limited to the following tasks: identifying existing and future connections between the Basin and Downtown, existing and future recreational opportunities, existing and future mooring opportunities, existing and future buildings (boat house, pavilions, restrooms) existing and proposed seating areas, tables, landscaping, public art, lighting and signage.

Subtask 1.3 Economic Development, Land Use and Market Analysis

The consultant will identify existing deficiencies, needs and opportunities within the Vergennes economy by conducting a Land Use and Market Analysis in order to identify and prioritize both public and private investments in infrastructure and Downtown development/redevelopment opportunities. This analysis will provide a snapshot of the current market conditions in Downtown, identify gaps and opportunities for new development, retail, office and housing opportunities. Analysis must consider and complement master planning work being done by the State of Vermont and the City of Vergennes on the State-owned 340 acre property immediately adjacent to the designated Downtown, currently home of Northland Job Corp. Subtask 1.3 will include a review of Vergennes’ zoning regulations to determine barriers and opportunities relevant to this project and which support compact, sustainable growth and the historic development pattern of the City.

Deliverables

1. Graphic rich analysis of opportunities and constraints of Downtown and Basin areas, including but not limited to specifics noted above.
2. Conceptual design plan, including plan and section drawings for Basin and River Walk study areas as a recreational asset and linkage to the Downtown, including specific information listed in task 1.2.
3. Conceptual design plan, including plan and section drawings for Downtown area with emphasis on improving mobility connections and circulation including, but not limited to specifics listed in task 1.1.
4. Landuse and market analysis to include but not limited to: existing landuse and development restrictions and opportunities, regulatory restrictions and opportunities, available, developable land and current market conditions.
5. Public/stakeholder engagement event(s).

Task 2: Identify Project Priorities

Based on findings and recommendations presented in Task 1, Task 2 will begin the work of prioritizing investment opportunities based on feedback from project committee, relevant stakeholders, and the general public. This task will identify and rank projects that are realistic, achievable and sustainable within each of the three focus areas.

This task will include a strong public engagement process in order to best understand and represent the priorities of residents, ultimately coming to a shared community vision going forward for implementation. This participation process will continue efforts made at VCRD's Community Visit in the fall of 2014. Vergennes will rely on its planning commission, existing Citizen Task Force committees, the City's service organizations, business community and general public to develop a consensus around the city's priorities under each Subtask.

Deliverables

1. Strategic plan and schedule presented to the project committee regarding proposed community engagement process and strategies for project prioritization.
2. Public engagement event(s).
3. Summary report of successes, challenges and conclusions made during community engagement process, including ranking of priority projects based on analysis and community engagement efforts.

Task 3: Implementation Plan

Task 3 will create an implementation plan focused on the priority projects identified in Task 2. This implementation plan shall be inclusive of the three focus areas listed in subtasks 1.1-1.3: Downtown mobility and infrastructure, Basin Area planning and other economic development opportunities. Recommendations and next-steps for implementation will speak to: funding mechanisms, supporting infrastructure and improvements, alternatives for new development/redevelopment, regulatory and non-regulatory tools such as zoning codes and standards, performance measures, capital improvement planning, special events and marketing, development assistance, and other topics as the consultant sees fit.

Deliverables

1. Document clearly outlining mechanisms and recommended next steps for implementation of the top priority projects.
2. Presentation of implementation plan to committee for review and comments.

Task 4: Final Master Plan

The final master plan will aggregate all project work into one concise living document, including conceptual design plans and actionable implementation steps based on findings within the project. It is expected that the master plan will enable the City of Vergennes to take this project into the next stage of design and implementation.

The final master plan will include an executive summary brochure and/or poster of the final plan’s recommendations, desired outcomes, and conceptual design. This should be presented in a user-friendly, illustrative manner to share with residents, potential investors, business owners, grant providers, and tourist industry.

Deliverables

1. An Illustrative master plan including a concise report aggregating analysis, task outcomes and next step recommendations with conceptual designs for the Downtown and Basin Districts.
2. Executive summary of master plan project in poster and/or brochure format for public engagement purposes.
3. Public presentation on final product and outcomes of the project.

APPROXIMATE TIMELINE

STRONG CONNECTIONS, BETTER COMMUNITIES PROJECT VERGENNES 2015-2016 PROJECT SCHEDULE																				
TASK #	TASK NAME	NOTES	2015												2016					
			Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
	CONSULTANT SELECTION																			
	KICK OFF MEETING																			
on-going	COMMUNITY OUTREACH	Develop strategic community engagement plan appropriate to each task and topic area.																		
1.1-1.3	ANALYSIS	Opportunity and constraints for the three focus areas: mobility, land use and economy, and basin area. Present to project committee and public for feedback.																		
2	PRIORITIZE PROJECT INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Engage citizens and task force committees to determine priorities for each focus area. Record and present finding to project committee for feedback.																		
3.1-3.3	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN and REVIEW	Determine mechanisms for implementation for the three focus areas: mobility, land use and economy, and basin area. Present to project committee and public for feedback.																		
4	FINAL MASTER PLAN and PRESENTATION	Aggregation of tasks 1-3 into final, living document with outreach components. Present to project committee and public.																		

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please furnish six (6) hardcopies and one (1) digital (CD) copy of the proposal with pages numbered consecutively, preferably double sided.

A. Required Technical Information

1. Cover Letter
2. Qualifications of the Consultation Firm – describe experience in areas needed to fulfill the project scope. Specifically list which proposed project team members have worked on which related projects.
3. Scope of Work – a scope of work for the project detailing the consultant’s proposed approach to the base scope of the tasks described in the RFP, and any recommended adjustments to the scope or tasks. The consultant may also propose additional supplemental items to the scope of work.

4. Proposed schedule – The schedule should include completion of work tasks and deliverables as well as any key meetings and comply with the timeline given in this RFP.
5. Project organization – discuss project management structure and relate the job categories listed
6. Resumes of key staff who will be working on the project (not exceeding 2 pages for each), a brief description of their roles in the project, and a brief description of their work on related projects.
7. References – please provide a minimum of three, including the name and telephone number of each
8. The proposal, encompassing items 1-7 above, shall not exceed 20 pages

B. Required Cost Information (not to exceed two pages) Cost information should be included with the proposal, including a schedule of staff to be assigned to the project, their hourly rates, and estimated hours per person by task, and overhead rate and fee.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL TO :

Claire Tebbs, *Vergennes SCBC Project Manager*
Addison County Regional Planning Commission
14 Seminary St., Middlebury VT 05753

- **Questions and Intent to Respond should be emailed by 5pm, March 27th, 2015 to:**
Claire Tebbs, Vergennes SCBC Project Manager
ctebbs@acrpc.org
- By 5pm, April 3rd, the Project Manager will post answers to all questions for consultants who submitted a timely Intent to Respond.
- **Final Submission must be received no later than: 5pm, April 15th, 2015**

CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCEDURES

All proposals will be evaluated using the criteria listed below by a selection committee. The selection committee will consist of the Vergennes Planning Commission Chair and City Manager, ACRPC Staff, and the VTRANS and ACCD project team. Proposals will be ranked based on the following criteria:

- ▶ Demonstration of overall project understanding, insights into potential issues, and demonstrated understanding of the project deliverables (25 pts)
- ▶ Qualifications of the firm and the personnel to be assigned to the project, and experience with similar projects (25 pts)
- ▶ Completeness and clarity of proposal and creativity/thoughtfulness in addressing the scope of work (20 pts)
- ▶ Demonstrated understanding of, and ability to meet schedule and budget (20 pts)
- ▶ Demonstrated knowledge of the project area (10 pts)

Review Criteria	Weight	Max. points	Weighted total
Understanding of the project	5	5	25
Qualifications/experience of the proposed staff	5	5	25
Quality of Proposal	4	5	20
Demonstrated understanding of budget and schedule	4	5	20
Demonstrated knowledge of project area	2	5	10
TOTAL			100

Vergennes reserves the right to seek clarification of any proposal submitted and to select the proposal considered to best promote the public interest. Proposals will be evaluated, teams will be shortlisted, with top 2-3 teams selected for in-person interview.

All proposals become the property of Vergennes upon submission. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the consultant. Vergennes 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 Vergennes. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates ACRPC to award a contract.

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

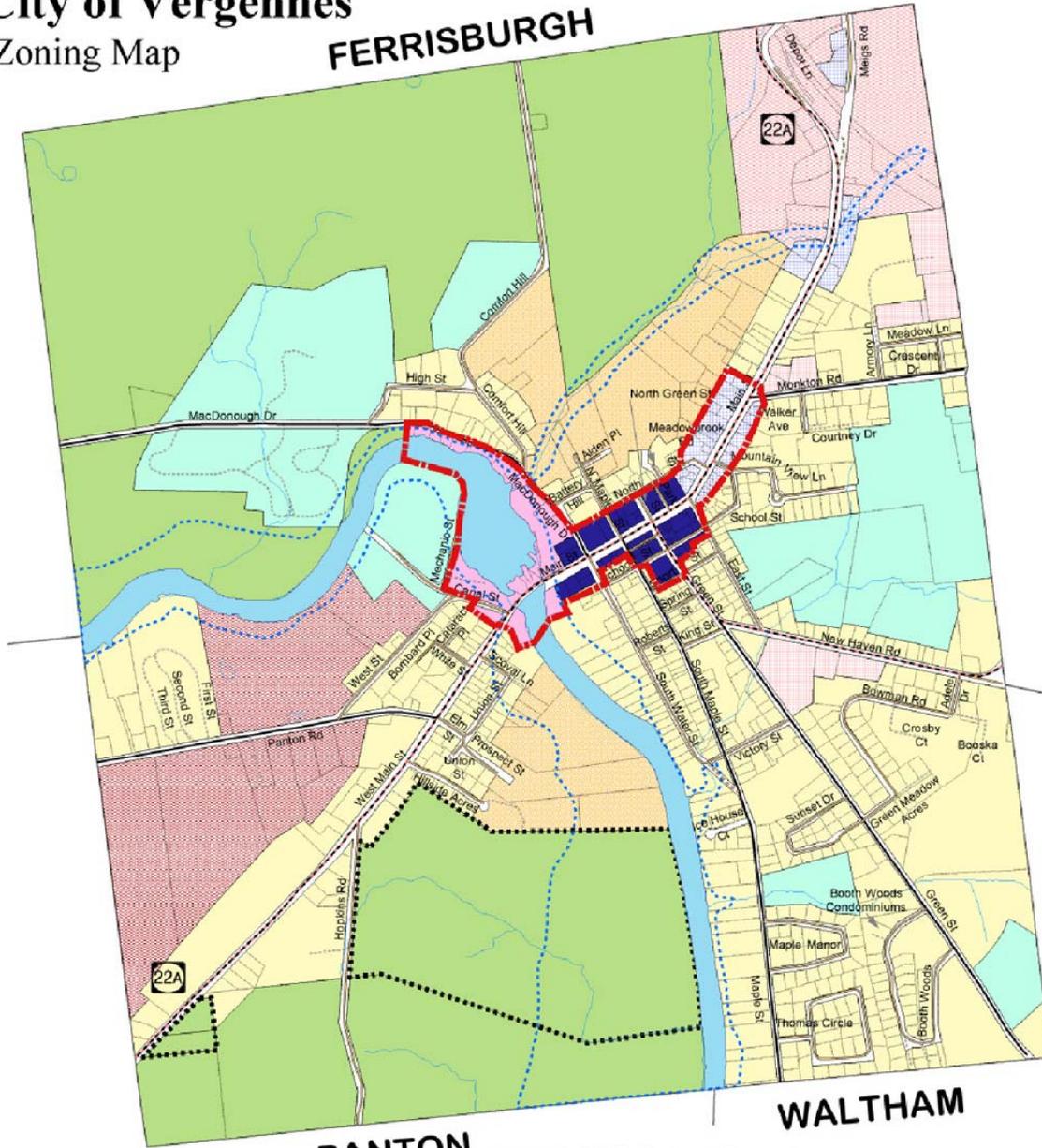
The contract shall not start until the successful applicant enters into a written contract with Vergennes to perform the work subject to this RFP. Sub-contractors must comply with all State and Federal covenants required by virtue of the funding source or contained or referenced in all Vergennes subcontracts including, but not limited to the following provisions:

- Insurance Coverage
- Indemnification
- Workers Compensation
- Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- DBE Obligation
- Audit and Record Retention
- Lobbying restrictions

ATTACHMENT A: PROJECT BOUNDARY

City of Vergennes

Zoning Map



Zoning Districts

- Central Business District; CBD
- Commercial District; C
- Industrial/Commercial District; IC
- Industrial District; IND
- Residential/Limited Business District; RLBD
- High Density Residential District; RH
- Medium Density Residential District; RM
- Agriculture and Rural Residential District; AGR
- Otter Creek Basin District; OCBD
- Public District; PUB
- AGR Overlay PUD District
- Flood Hazard District (100yr)

SCBS Project Boundary

Sources:

Zoning Districts: As amended by City Council - February 22, 2011.

Parcel Boundaries: Digitized from city tax maps, 1997.

See Zoning Administrator for current information.

