

Request for Proposal (RFP)
For Housing Study and Needs Assessment
Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC)
Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP)
Stowe Land Trust
(Identified below as ‘The Contracting Partners’)

October 17, 2017

Proposal Due Date: Friday, November 10, 2017 by 4:00 pm

Proposals shall be delivered to:
Lamoille County Planning Commission
attn: Seth Jensen
P.O. Box 1637
52 Portland Street
Morrisville, VT 05661

Five copies of submittal should be provided. Submittals received after the due date listed above will not be considered. The Contracting Partners reserve the right to reject any and all submittals are not responsible for any costs incurred in the development of the submittals.

Questions: Contact Seth Jensen at (802)888-4548

Background

Lamoille County and the Town of Hardwick are a growing region of the state with a 2015 population of 25,027 (Lamoille County) and 2,949 (Hardwick) as estimated by the American Community Survey 2011-2015. Unlike many other regions of Vermont, population in Lamoille County has grown consistently over the past three census cycles. Towns in the western portion of Lamoille County have increasingly become “bedroom communities” for job centers in Chittenden County and the I-89 corridor. A summary of key Demographic and Economic Data found in in the 2015 Lamoille County Regional Plan is attached to this RFP.

Stowe and Smugglers Notch Ski Resorts are two of the Region’s largest employers, and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, numerous restaurants, craft brewers and other tourist attractions form an important segment of the economy. Construction, light manufacturing, and value added agriculture/forestry are also important components of the economy. Vital statistics related to the Regional Economy demonstrate the reliance on these sectors (note that the most recent Census Data is from 2010 during the “Great Recession and may be skewed as a result.)

- The Services industries account for 7,734 jobs, or 73% of all Lamoille County jobs. The number of service establishments increased 7.4% from 2000 to 2010 while the number of employees increased only 1.9%. This phenomenon can in part be attributed to the size and growth of the travel and tourism industry over the period.
- As the number of manufacturing jobs decreased 41% from 2000 to 2010, wages increased 36%.

- In 2010, Consumer Durables Manufacturing (products sold directly to consumers or consumer dealers –“heavy” goods) included 28 establishments, and 341 jobs.
- The same pattern can be seen in the Nondurables Manufacturing sector. The Food, Textiles and Printing and Publishing industries accounted for approximately 225 jobs in 2000. Now, non-durables manufacturing includes seven sectors and 14 establishments for 102 jobs.
- The Construction sector has seen no change in employment since 2000. The number of establishments increased 12% from 2000 to 2010. This sector has seen growth in specialization, with more contractors performing skill-specific activities.
- The Services sectors employment accounted for approximately 73% of all Lamoille County jobs.
- Leisure and Hospitality is still the largest industry within the Services sector with over 3,048 jobs in 2010, the majority of these jobs in hotels. This sector contains the ski area employment.
- The Health Services industry has historically played a significant role in the region. In 2010, the Education and Health Services sector included 1,532 jobs, a significant increase from 1990 but only a slight increase from 2000.
- Retail accounts for almost 13% of all jobs in the County.

This reliance on the tourism, retail, and service sector creates several unique housing challenges. Much of the tourism employment is seasonally dependent, and some workers struggle with seasonal employment and the steady income stream needed for home ownership. In addition, the second home market increases places pressure on home prices for middle income renters and homeowners. As a result, many employees commute long distances to work – whether it is at resorts in Stowe, manufacturing in Hardwick and Morrisville, or professional positions in Chittenden County and the Barre/Montpelier Area.

Lamoille County contains the State Designated Village Centers of Waterville Village, Cambridge Village, Jeffersonville, Johnson Village, the Village of Hyde Park, North Hyde Park, Wolcott Village and the Lower Village of Stowe. Stowe Village is the only designated Downtown in Lamoille County. Hardwick Village is a designated Village Center.

Major concerns include:

- Age and condition of existing housing stock, specifically deteriorated state of multi-family housing and high concentration of poverty in several Village Centers, notably Johnson Village, Jeffersonville, and Hardwick.
- Gaps in the “Housing Continuum” particularly the lack of entry level homeownership opportunities that are both affordable and appealing to middle income households. It is recognized that housing that is both appealing and affordable to an educated workforce is a key component to economic development and job growth.
- Lack of affordable “step down” housing for residents reaching retirement.
- High cost of “housing plus transportation” due to spatial disparity between employment centers and housing centers.
- Insufficient infrastructure to support significant new development in many Village Centers.
- Need, supply and demand for the Region’s homeless population.

The proposed housing assessment study is expected to utilize and build upon existing data, such as labor market information published by the VT Department of Labor and U.S. Census Bureau, the appropriate sections of the 2015 Statewide Housing Needs Assessment, and data collected by the Vermont Mobile

Home Park Research Collaborative. The study will also make use of Town Grand List data, as well as information collected by local and State officials on the condition of multi-family housing units.

Project Overview

The Contracting Partners intend to contract with a qualified consultant with expertise in housing markets and economic development to prepare a housing report including 1) a detailed inventory and assessment of the housing, and 2) a strategic plan to improve the quality and range of housing options in order to serve a broad range of incomes and household sizes, and to foster re-investment in Designated Village Centers and Downtowns.

The strategic plan will incorporate the perspective of a broad range of local stakeholders, will document local and regional housing-related initiatives underway, and will outline a strategy that will provide direction to LHP, LCPC, municipalities, housing developers and other partners to take actions that will build an economically sustainable, thriving community.

Scope of Work and Work Product

The Consultant will provide a comprehensive housing report that includes, but is not limited to the following:

Provide a comprehensive assessment of the housing market including sales, homeownership and rental markets. Include area wide data, town by town data, and a comparative analysis.

Provide an assessment of the need, demand, and supply of housing available to households in the 100 to 120 percent of AMI (workforce) bracket including rental and homeownership opportunities.

Provide an assessment of the need, demand, and supply of housing available to the homeless in the region. Assess availability of shelters and other services for homeless persons. Describe the homeless population and types of housing needed to address the population.

Assess the current real estate market in the region and how it is or is not responding to the needs of the population and what development opportunities could be taken to meet those needs.

The following provides some guidance for achieving the above goals:

1. State and Regional Overview:

Using existing data sources and studies, provide a brief overview of demographics, labor market, and housing market trends including development patterns, vacancy rates, sales prices and rents; and information on housing cost burdens for both renters and owners.

Provide data on where residents of Lamoille County and Hardwick work, and where employees working in the region live, in various income categories (using OnTheMap or similar data tool).

2. Lamoille County and Hardwick Housing Inventory and Assessment:

Using best available data (including most current Grand List data) create an inventory identifying the number, type (e.g., single-family, multi-family, mobile home), disposition (rental or owned), and value of each unit (applying equalization rate¹).

Under each housing type and disposition, identify the number of:

- subsidized, income-restricted units (project based, tax credit, etc.),

- age-restricted units (both subsidized and market rate),
- handicap-accessible units (both subsidized and market rate),
- special needs units (e.g., D.O.C. transitional housing),
- units in mobile home parks, and
- unrestricted market-rate units

Using data available from the State Housing Authority, indicate the number of Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 8 Vouchers, and Placed Based Vouchers available and used in the Region.

Provide an inventory of multi-unit developments of five units or more (including mobile home parks) and key to a map.

Within selected study areas (State-designated centers and 1-mile perimeter; and the Towns of Johnson, Morristown and Stowe):

- Provide detailed information on housing units of each type, including age, condition, and whether located in a flood hazard area;
- Review and cross-reference housing unit inspection information collected on rental units by the local Code Enforcement Officer and Health Inspector, and in the State’s “Essential Maintenance Practices” database;
- Evaluate the availability of overnight parking for multi-unit housing and develop strategies for the accommodation of off-street parking needs for existing multiunit developments (in consideration of the winter overnight parking ban.)
- Rate the walkability of existing multi-unit residences and senior residences to transit hubs, places of worship, civic attractions, healthcare, grocery & drug stores, etc., utilizing existing data where available and identify suggested improvements to improve walkability in selected study areas to better serve residential developments.

3. Recommended Strategies

Identify within the selected study areas existing buildings that may be rehabilitated and re-purposed to fulfill existing housing needs and demand; and vacant or underutilized parcels appropriate for new housing developments, both rental and owned, both market rate and income-restricted, and serving various household types (student interns, seniors, young professionals, families).

Identify incentives to foster re-investment in existing owner-occupied housing units (e.g., grants to renovate, tax stabilization).

Develop strategies that deal with absentee property owners and vacant and blighted properties.

Develop strategies/incentives to foster redevelopment of underutilized properties, such as legacy motor lodges on the Route 108 Corridor in Stowe and Cambridge.

Examine expansion of “planned unit development” and conservation subdivision approach in rural areas, and potential incentives to incorporate low-moderate-income housing.

Investigate partnerships with major employers (including Johnson State College, Copley hospital and ski resorts about possible involvement in employer supported housing projects.

Identify potential funding sources to support recommendations.

Proposal Content

The Contracting Partners respectfully request a proposal from you, and/or your firm, for the provision of the services identified above. The brief proposal shall include the following.

A statement of consultant's background, qualifications and similar project experience that demonstrates knowledge of the project requirements.

A description of the consultant's technical approach to the project, including an outline of the sequence of tasks, major benchmarks and milestone dates.

A brief summary, with resumes attached, of key staff on the project team who will be directly involved in the project, including designation of a single point of contact for coordination of the project. Staff resumes should focus on individuals who will have primary responsibility for performance of the work.

A description of similar project experience involving key staff to be involved in the project. The consultant agrees to provide references upon request.

Proposed use of 'Contracting Partners' staff, office staff, as well as any equipment, materials or additional data that will be expected from the 'Contracting Partners' at the onset of the project.

Agreement to accomplish the project within the time frame contained in this RFP.

Estimated cost of the services to be provided under this proposal.

Proposed services to be sub-contracted if any, anticipated subcontractors, and anticipated costs for these services.

Any additional terms or conditions, which are deemed necessary for entering into a contract with the Lamoille County Planning Commission, should be attached or incorporated as part of the proposal. The Consultant will be required to comply with all applicable sections of the Grant Agreement between the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Lamoille County Planning Commission.

Specific compliance is required in the areas of:

- 1) Conflict of Interest, Section VII of the Grant Agreement
- 2) Equal Opportunity, Section X of the Grant Agreement
- 3) Retention of and Access to Records, Section XIV of the Grant Agreement
- 4) Audits, Section XII of the Grant Agreement

All proposals become the property of the LCPC, Lamoille Housing Partnership and Stowe Land Trust and will not be returned. The Contracting Partners reserve the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities, or to negotiate further with a responder who appears to most nearly meet the LCPC's desires.

Evaluation

Selection will be based upon the proposals submitted and will be ranked by a committee consisting of representatives of the Contracting Partners and primarily based upon the following criteria:

- Consultant's understanding and technical approach to the project.
- Consultant's ability to meet the project schedule.
- Pertinent experience and qualifications of the project team.
- Relative value of the services to be provided (cost will not be the primary determining factor but cost-effectiveness and efficiency will be given very serious consideration.)
- The project budget is capped at \$10,000.

Time Frame

November 10, 2017 – Proposals due

November 30, 2017 – Consultant selected

December 15, 2017 – Work begins

March 15, 2018 – Project complete

Deliverables

- Consultant will schedule monthly check-ins to review project progress with project administrators.
- Consultant will meet with the Contracting Partners two times during the project timeframe to provide project updates.
- Consultant will provide grant administrators with first drafts of the final report
- Consultant will provide final report to the Contracting Partners (1 unbound hard copy and 5 bound hard copies, digital, and PowerPoint)