

**TOWN OF HARTFORD, VERMONT  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
HARTFORD CLIMATE ACTION PLAN CONSULTANT**

**ISSUANCE: June 24, 2020**

**RESPONSES DUE: August 31 at 4:00 PM (EST); Bid Opening to Follow**

**Contact: Geoff Martin, Energy Coordinator**

Department of Planning and Development Services

Town of Hartford

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**PART I: BACKGROUND**

The Town of Hartford, Vermont (“the Town”) is a community of around 10,000 residents. The Town has been dedicated to climate and energy issues for many years, and its focus on these topics has become increasingly strong in recent years. In 2007, Hartford became one of the first towns in the State of Vermont to form an Energy Commission, dedicated to reducing energy consumption and increasing Hartford’s share of renewable energy. Demonstrating its leadership on energy issues, the Town has, among other things, completed energy audits of most of its facilities, contracted for close to 900 kW of net-metered solar, renovated its Town Hall to be net-zero ready and entirely fossil-fuel-free, acquired an electric vehicle for its vehicle fleet, and hired the first full-time, paid Energy Coordinator in the state.

In 2019 as part of a Town Plan update, the Town completely overhauled its Energy Chapter (**Appendix A**) to create a plan to meet or exceed the State of Vermont’s energy goals and achieved a Determination of Energy Compliance from the Two-Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). The Town, along with the Hartford Energy Commission (HEC), has begun implementing a number of the recommendations outlined in the Energy Chapter, including creating a pilot program to evaluate the impact of requiring net-zero new construction in Hartford, working with major employers in Hartford to encourage carpooling and telecommuting, and developing a plan to weatherize all municipal buildings.

As noted above, the Energy Chapter lays out a plan to meet or exceed State goals. The Town recognizes, however, that these goals are not aggressive enough to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. Despite the Town’s leadership on climate and energy over the past decade, Hartford understands that more fundamental and swift change will be needed to meet the urgency of the climate crisis.

As such, the Hartford Selectboard and School Board formed the Climate Advisory Committee (CAC) last Fall to draft a climate emergency resolution, and to develop language for a ballot initiative designed to

respond to the emergency. The Selectboard and School Board subsequently voted unanimously to pass [A Joint Resolution Declaring a Climate Emergency](#) (“the Resolution”) included in **Appendix B**. By declaring an emergency, the Resolution makes climate change a defining focus for Town planning, funding, and action, and resolves the Town to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions town-wide by 2030. The Resolution also demands that “Hartford’s response to the climate emergency be just and equitable, especially with respect to the most vulnerable and impacted members of society.”

Following the passage of the Resolution, the Selectboard voted to include the following question (“Article 25”) on the ballot:

“Shall the development, operation, and maintenance of the Town of Hartford’s municipal infrastructure and equipment be required to achieve carbon neutrality by 2027?”

This ballot initiative passed with 65% of the vote, requiring the Town to lead by example on the path to net-zero Town-wide GHG emissions by 2030. The warrant article and related information are included in **Appendix C**.

The CAC was then reconstituted as a standing committee charged with advising the Selectboard on achieving the objectives of the Resolution and Article 25. See **Appendix D** for its full charge.

**Hartford Climate Action Plan**

This RFP is intended to identify the most qualified consultant to help the Town create a Climate Action Plan. The Resolution commits the Town and the School District to developing a plan “that identifies action steps in response to the climate emergency and explains how progress will be tracked and measured”. The Hartford Climate Action Plan is primarily intended to address the town-wide goal of net-zero GHG emissions by 2030, and secondarily to achieve the carbon neutral municipal requirement.

The Selectboard has budgeted \$30,000 for the creation of this plan.

**RFP Timeline**

Item	Deadline
Proposals Due	August 31, 2020, 4:00 PM
Interview Consultants	September 1 – 4, 2020
Consultant Selected	September 9, 2020
Contract Documents Completed	September 14, 2020
Consultant Begins	As Soon as Possible Thereafter

NOTE: The impact of COVID-19 on Town revenue will not be clear until late August. As such, proceeding with proposal selection and award is subject to the Town’s assessment of its General Fund Revenue position at the proposal due date.

**PART II: GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Town recognizes that there are many pathways to achieving net-zero GHG emissions and anticipates a plan that introduces a significant paradigm shift. Piecemeal changes to our existing systems alone are unlikely to result in a sustainable and scalable way of life. In addition to achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2030, the Town seeks to establish a plan that aligns with the following guiding principles:

1. The plan must take a holistic approach to achieve this goal. The plan must recognize and minimize negative ecological and social consequences of recommended strategies and actions. Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. ecological impact
  - b. social and economic justice in Hartford and beyond
2. The plan must guide Hartford to a way of life that balances ecological footprint with biocapacity thereby providing an example for a sustainable and equitable existence.
3. The plan must take an approach that, if widely replicated, would not push the planet beyond global warming tipping points (e.g. relying too heavily on carbon offsets, not addressing demand).
4. The plan should emphasize quality of life over conventional economic measures (e.g. GDP).

### **PART III: SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES**

#### **Scope of Work**

Hartford will need guidance on the best-suited policies, programs, and technologies necessary to achieve the net-zero GHG emissions by 2030 goal while following the Guiding Principles above. The successful consultant will develop a Hartford Climate Action Plan that will put Hartford on a path towards its ambitious goal.

The ideal consultant is a systems thinker, is willing to react quickly to a rapidly changing global economy, and thinks broadly about the Town's options for achieving net-zero GHG emissions in order to develop "no-regret steps." (NOTE: No-regret steps are those that most closely adhere to the **Guiding Principles in Part II.**)

The required Scope of Work includes the following:

*Create an appropriate baseline for tracking relevant energy metrics across sectors in Hartford*

- Determine critical information for accounting and reporting of the Town's GHG emissions, including but not limited to setting an appropriate inventory boundary, reporting framework, and GHG emissions calculation methodologies.
- Calculate emissions by fuel type, source, and sector based on the determinations made in the bullet above.
- Determine what tracking mechanism would be used to monitor progress toward net-zero goal.

*Analyze a business as usual (BAU) scenario under current policy through 2030*

- Take into account current trends in terms of economic growth, population growth, vehicle travel, and new construction projects in Hartford, as well as the Town's plans and programs (as described in the Town Plan and Energy Chapter show at **Appendix A**), current Efficiency

Vermont and Green Mountain Power programs and incentives, and relevant current state and federal policies.

- Determine key technologies and economic sensitivities that have a potential for significant impact in BAU scenario (e.g. what impact the pricing of batteries might have on the Town's progress toward net-zero).
- Determine what the BAU scenario achieves relative to net-zero goal.

*Analyze and describe several pathways to net-zero*

- Quantify how each pathway aligns with the **Guiding Principles described in Part II**.
- Identify existing barriers to each pathway to net-zero.
- Consider potential policy and regulatory changes (regulation, incentives, disincentives) that would facilitate these pathways.
- Take into account technology acceleration, and changes in pricing and economics.
- Consider the industries, old and new, that Hartford should make way for, as well as those that Hartford should move away from, and the means by which Hartford should encourage/discourage these industries that takes into account the **Guiding Principles in Part II**.
- Consider the issue of stranded infrastructure costs for systems that would be rendered obsolete by moving to net-zero, and the impacts to the community, and identify alternative uses.
- Determine sensitivities in terms of price, technology, and policy that affect progress toward net-zero in different sectors.
- Consider options for carbon sequestration and storage, including not only climate-friendly forest management and agricultural practices, but other practices/technologies.
- The plan must include strategies and actions to mitigate climate change as well as to adapt Hartford to climate change.

*Cost/benefit analysis of each pathway*

- Articulate the cost of inaction.
- Model the total costs and savings for Hartford residents and businesses across all sectors (e.g. transportation, buildings, agriculture, public health, environmental/ecological health, etc.) impacted by each pathway.
- Suggest opportunities for making the case for federal aid to execute a just and equitable transition for Hartford's workforce, currently affected by the pathway.
- Describe co-benefits to the community.

*Propose roadmap to achieve net-zero goal*

- Outline near term strategies that achieve greatest benefits relative to cost, and represent "no regrets" steps toward net-zero goal regardless of sensitivities.

- Outline a preferred pathway from the pathways analysis to achieve the long-term goal of net-zero.
- Identify which stakeholders are critical to achieving the net-zero goal and what their role could be in achieving the goal, including but not limited to Town staff, the HEC, the CAC, community organizations, residents, and businesses.
- Consider pathways that would foster regional collaboration. possibilities for the greater Upper Valley community.
- Prescribe specific, actionable policy recommendations.
- Suggest free or low-cost ways to help with plan implementation.
- Outline additional policy tools that may be required at Town or State level, and if necessary Federal level, to overcome any barriers to the preferred pathway to achieve net-zero.

*Recommend strategies to maximize community engagement*

- Recommend a strategy for engaging and informing the community of the urgency and details of the Resolution and Action Plan, including through social and digital media, local print media, and sympathetic groups (churches, schools, etc.); and
- Identify grassroots actions that could be taken by local organizations (employers enacting telecommuting policies, local food growers, school groups, neighborhood groups, etc.).

**Deliverables**

Item	Due Date	Description
Evaluation of Pathways	TBD	Deliver a presentation for the Selectboard and the public detailing the BAU scenario and potential pathways to achieving the goal. Identify a recommended pathway. NOTE: This presentation is intended to inform, and get buy in from, the Selectboard and public.
Outline of Hartford Climate Action Plan	TBD	Provide a detailed overview of the CAP to be provided to CAC for evaluation and feedback.
First Complete Draft of Plan	No later than 11/02/2020	Complete a first draft with special attention paid to priorities that the Town should consider when developing a budget for FY 22.
Final Plan	No later than 12/16/2020	Deliver a presentation summarizing the completed CAP. The audience will again be CAC, SB, and public.

Notes:

- Consultant may propose additional deliverables as they see fit;
- The date of the completion of the first draft of the CAP is a firm deadline. Other dates are flexible within reason to accommodate consultants’ schedules. Priority will be given to consultants that can meet the 12/16/2020 deadline for the final product;

- The consultant will collaborate with Town staff, CAC, and other Hartford representatives throughout the contract period where appropriate. Following deliverables 1-3, there will be a 4-day response period for CAC to provide feedback; and
- The consultant shall provide regular progress reports to the Town, no less than once every two weeks.

## **PART IV: BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND AVAILABLE DATA**

**Appendix A** provides Hartford’s 2019 Town Plan, which includes an Energy Chapter designed to meet the State’s energy goals. The Energy Chapter provides background information and Hartford-specific energy data. It also includes Hartford-specific strategies and actions that, while not designed to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2030, may offer a starting point.

**Appendix B** shows the Joint Resolution Declaring a Climate Emergency passed unanimously by the Selectboard and School Board in December of 2019. This is the document that called for the development of a Hartford Climate Action Plan and includes a justification for the net-zero by 2030 goal as well as other objectives related to this goal.

**Appendix C** provides a document showing the language in Article 25, as well as “Frequently Asked Questions” developed by the CAC and made available to Hartford residents in advance of Town Meeting Day.

**Appendix D** provides the Strategic Vision for the Town developed by the Selectboard in 2018. The documents helps to guide planning and funding priorities.

**Appendix E** provides the TRORC Energy Implementation Plan. This plan received an affirmative determination of energy compliance from Vermont’s Department of Public Service and provides context on the regional energy initiatives and potential opportunities for collaboration among other towns in the Upper Valley and beyond.

## **PART V: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Insurance:** The Developer and any subcontractors if not covered by the Developer, shall maintain the following minimum coverages for the duration of the contract. The Certificates of Insurance shall name the Town as additionally insured party as its interests may appear. All policies shall be noncancelable without 30 days prior written notice from the insurance carrier to the Town.

**Workers’ Compensation:** Workers’ compensation insurance at minimum of \$500,000 for any one occurrence, in accordance with the laws of the *State of Vermont* and any other state in which it is performing the Contract Scope of Work.

**General Liability Insurance:** Commercial general liability written on an occurrence form with limits of not less than:

- \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence
- \$1,000,000 General Aggregate
- \$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate

### \$50,000 Damages for Premises Rented to You

Commercial general liability insurance shall cover liability arising from premises, operations, independent contractors, products-completed operations, personal and advertising injury, and liability assumed under an insured contract.

**Automotive Liability:** Automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, no matter the ownership status, used in connection with the contracted project. Limits of coverage shall be in the amount required by any applicable state law.

**Indemnification:** The consultant shall defend, indemnify and hold the Town harmless against: any injury, death, loss, suit or claim, including expenses and attorneys' fees arising from any negligent action or omission on the sole part of consultant in connection with the project.

**Contract, Payment, and Price Adjustments:** This will be a fixed fee contract. Payment will be made within 30 days of accepting the invoicing.

## PART VI PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

All proposals must be submitted no later than **4:00 PM on August 31, 2020**. Proposals must include contact information, including email for receiving addendums to the RFP, for all consultants. Proposals shall include at least the following items:

### *Section I Qualifications*

- Firm Profile:
  - Number of years in business
  - Firm history
  - Firm size
  - Firm location
  - Area(s) of specialty
- Project Team:
  - Identify team leader for the project, including contact information, key qualifications, and professional credentials; and
  - Provide résumés and copies of any licenses, if applicable, of key individuals on the project.

### *Section II Relevant Experience and Capabilities*

- Identify and describe relevant experience with:
  - GHG emissions accounting and reporting
  - The development of climate or energy action plans for government or private entities
  - Modeling capabilities
  - Projects related to justice, equity, and inclusion
  - Public outreach campaigns
  - Forest management and regenerative agricultural best practices

- Environmental law, policy, and engineering, particularly at the local level
- Municipal governance
- Building local economies
- At least one relevant work sample
- At least three references with contact information
- Any additional relevant experience

### *Section III Description of the Proposed Project(s) Approach and Expectations*

- A narrative describing the approach to the Scope of Work, including a clear breakdown and explanation of tasks;
- Definition of deliverables (e.g. preliminary reports, presentations to Town staff and Selectboard, final product(s), etc.);
- Timeline of deliverables including interim milestones;
- Expectations for collaboration with Town staff, CAC, and other Hartford representatives;
- Expectations for the Town's responsibilities (e.g. what data or other resources the Town must provide and by when);
- A detailed budget by activity for each person, with hourly rates. Although the contract will be awarded on a fixed fee basis, the budget breakdown is used to evaluate the proposal and for any additional services during the contract period; and
- Date available to begin work.

## **PART VII: EVALUATION CRITERIA**

This is a qualifications-based selection process. The Town will select the Consultant based on the following criteria:

- Quality and completeness of proposal
- Qualifications and relevant experience, with particular emphasis on ability to follow the Guiding Principles in Section 3
- Cost proposal and justification
- Project schedule
- Quality of sample work
- References

## **Part VIII: CONTRACTING**

The consultant, prior to being awarded a contract, shall provide evidence of registration with the Vermont Secretary of State's Office to do business in the State of Vermont, if not already so registered. The registration form may be obtained from the Vermont Secretary of State, 128 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05633-1101, PH: 802-828-2363, Toll-free: 800-439-8683; Vermont Relay Service – 711; web site: <https://www.sec.state.vt.us/>. The contract will not be executed until the Developer is registered with the Secretary of State's Office. The successful consultant will be expected to execute sub-agreements for each subcontractor named in the proposal upon award of this contract.

Prior to signing the contract, the consultant shall provide the Town with a completed W-9 form and provide proof of Insurance Coverage in accordance with this Request for Proposal requirements. The certificate of insurance coverage shall be documented on forms acceptable to the Town.

If the award of the contract aggrieves any firms, they may appeal in writing to the Town of Hartford Selectboard, 171 Bridge Street White River Junction, VT 05001. The appeal must be post-marked within seven (7) calendar days following the date of written notice to award the contract. Any decision of the Town Selectboard is final.

The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting is the sole expense of the firm. The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this solicitation or to cancel this RFP in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interests of the Town. This Request for Proposals in no way obligates the Town to award a contract.

## **Part IX: SUBMISSIONS**

Paper submittals are required. Consultants interested in this Project must submit four (4) copies of their proposals to:

Town of Hartford  
c/o Town Manager's Office  
171 Bridge Street  
White River Junction, VT 05001

Proposals must be submitted in separate sealed envelopes with the following information clearly printed on the outside:

Name and address of prime consultant  
Envelope contents  
Project name

All questions related to this Request for Proposals should be submitted in writing or by e-mail to Geoff Martin at [gmartin@hartford-vt.org](mailto:gmartin@hartford-vt.org) **no later than August 24, 2020.**

Submission of a bid by a consultant shall be accepted as prima facie evidence that he/she has examined the specifications and has satisfied him/herself as to the nature of the work and all matters which can in any way affect the work or cost thereof under this proposal.

All Proposals must be received by the Town **no later than 4:00 p.m. on August 31, 2020, with bid opening to follow thereafter.** Proposals and/or modifications received after this time will not be accepted. Fax or electronic submittal will not be accepted. The expense of preparing and submitting the proposal is the sole responsibility of the consultant. The Town of Hartford 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 if it is in the best interest of Town of Hartford. This solicitation in no way obligates the Town of Hartford to award a contract.

We thank you for your interest in this project and look forward to hearing from you.

## **Appendix A**

Hartford's 2019 Town Plan is available at:

<https://hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/2065/Hartford-Town-Plan-FINAL070419>

The Energy Chapter (Chapter 10) begins on page 229 of the document.

## **Appendix B**

A Joint Resolution Declaring a Climate Emergency is available here:

<https://hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/2775/A-Joint-Resolution-Declaring-a-Climate-Emergency>

## **Appendix C**

A document with information on Article 25 is available here:

<https://www.hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/2828/Climate-Action-Warrant-Article-FAQs-long-version>

## **Appendix D**

A link to Hartford's Strategic Vision developed by the Selectboard in 2018 is available here:

<https://www.hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/2302/Hartford-2019-Strategic-Vision->

## **Appendix E**

The TRORC Energy Implementation Plan is available here:

<https://www.trorc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Regional-Energy-Implementation-Plan-Adopted-7-26-17.pdf>