
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Looking for Planning or Web Design Consultants to help the City of Montpelier, Vermont, develop a web-based City Plan

March 4, 2022

Proposals Due on April 4, 2022

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The City of Montpelier, Vermont, intends to develop and adopt an entirely web-based city plan in the next 18 months. The Department of Planning & Community Development and the Montpelier Planning Commission have already been engaged in developing implementation strategies and chapter texts for the past four years and are now preparing to move to the final step of creating the web presence and solicit public input. The City has set aside \$20,000 in funds to hire a consultant to: 1) design and layout the plan in storyboards- likely in ESRI- Hub; 2) create required maps; and 3) help facilitate public input.

We have identified ESRI Hub as our product of choice because the City already owns a license for the platform and uses the product in other City efforts. We leave open the possibility of using another platform but the burden is on the consultant to convince staff and the Planning Commission that the product is superior to one we already use. Throughout this RFP, we assume ESRI Hub is the platform.

Context and Background

The City of Montpelier municipal plan was last given a comprehensive update in 2010. Since that time a great deal has changed in the City, the state, and the world. The great recession was just starting, floods and Tropical Storm Irene was still a year away, locally the now completed Transit Center and Shared Use Path projects were still in planning, and the City was about to engage in a seven-year odyssey to completely revise the zoning. New recent challenges included a worsening of the affordability of housing, the rise of Covid-19, political upheaval, and protests over racial discrimination and police violence.

City Plans have traditionally been one key place where communities come together to chart their common future. The issues listed above, and many others, cannot be solved in 5, 8, or

10 years. We therefore need a long-term vision and carefully considered implementation strategies. The current 2010 City Plan (readopted in 2017) was found to fall short in establishing a clear strategic plan for implementation and therefore no longer provides us with the guidance we need. Over the past four years the City has developed implementation strategies for new City Plan chapters following a model that ensures each chapter has clear aspirations and goals as well as very specific implementation strategies broken into 5 types - additional plans, new permits (regulations), one-time projects, programs (on going initiatives), or policies.

The plan also must be broadly accessible and available to a 21st Century audience. Our current plan is the typical PDF/print plan that is poorly utilized by the public and officials. To this end the Planning Commission and staff want to make our new plan a web-based digital plan. The City has purchased Arc-GIS Hub and intends to build out the plan in this program to better connect residents to the future vision with links to other existing plans and resources, graphically rich and tied to the implementation strategy. Creation of storyboards for each topic will help to educate residents about what their local government already does and what more they could do.

Covid has also introduced a new challenge for public engagement. The City would like to enlist the help of a consultant to maximize public outreach opportunities in this uniquely challenging time. The current City Plan is broadly recognized as needing to be updated as our most urgent issues today are not adequately being addressed. We know that ESRI Hub provides unique opportunities to increase public input throughout the plan development process and the City would like to take advantage of those opportunities.

Scope

The City has identified a model outline for tasks that we anticipate would be needed to complete the plan. The Planning Commission is open to reviewing alternative proposals for a process to reach the same outcome.

TASK 1 – Defining the Template

This first task for the consultant would be reviewing of the final plan document, figures, photographs, graphics, and other content provided by the city for digital delivery. During this review the consultant would clarify the anticipated organizational structure for the web-based plan, confirm the fidelity (resolution and quality) of provided graphic content, and make sure citation for any referenced images is clearly defined.

Following this review, the consultant would develop the initial template in ESRI Hub. Depending on the appropriate organizational structure, the Consultant may start with a publicly available template as a start and modify it. Once the basic template has been created, Consultant would share for review and approval.

TASK 2 – Content Management

With the template established, the Consultant would then begin the process of managing the population of the site with content. This will likely involve four considerations:

A. Narrative Elements – Narrative elements for the online plan as provided by the City will be integrated into the hub site with recommendations from the Consultant to create an excellent web-based product. As the Commissioners and staff are not web/storyboard designers, communication and guidance will be required for them in order to adjust content appropriately. Adjustments in spacing or font size may be necessary to address readability and accessibility.

B. Provided Graphic Elements – Figures, charts, photographs, illustrations, maps, and other products authorized for inclusion into the online plan will be added. Basic adjustments to provided graphic elements such as cropping or resizing may be necessary.

C. New (or Adjusted) Graphic Elements – It is expected that some new (or modified) graphic elements will be needed to effectively communicate important plan topics include the development of some statutorily required map elements. The Consultant will prepare (or update) graphic elements in consultation with the city to address this. The scope and scale of this need will only come into clarity once the content is available. The necessary data to generate graphic elements (including infographics and charts) will be provided by the city.

D. Digital Map Elements – One of the powerful aspects of the ESRI Hub site is its ability to integrate mapping directly into hubs and stories. It is expected that the city will want to have some mapping integrated into the online plan. The consultant will work with the city to take content provided and integrate it as part of relevant hub modules. Again, the scope and scale of map and cartographic integration cannot be known until we get into the project. It is expected that the city and/or partners will be responsible for creating the content. The Consultant may need to modify orientations and symbology to assure that any map products are visually and narratively consistent.

TASK 3 – Testing, Editing, and Delivery

With the content added, the next task involves three steps:

A. Testing Access and Readability – The consultant will work with the city to review the alpha-version of the online plan for technical features and readability. The goal is to make sure the document “flows”, that all links are resolving, and that narrative and visual elements are clear. After initial testing, the consultant would assist the city in delivering the content

publicly. This would start by launching a beta version of the plan to access from outside of the city’s ESRI tenant. This would help test access permissions and to confirm features are working across multiple browsers. This beta stage should also maximize the public’s opportunities to provide input and comments on the plan content. The Planning Commission will be holding other public input efforts with plans to integrate the two streams of input.

B. Editing – Based on the review, make changes to plan elements to address errors, typos, etc. the consultant would rely on the city to make any narrative edits but would assist if graphic content changes are needed. This step has additional time included as the City will be conducting the public outreach and input that will result in content changes to the web pages.

C. Delivery – With changes made, the Consultant will support the city’s delivery of the online plan.

Anticipated Fees

The City has approved spending \$20,000 from the General Fund to cover the expected costs of this effort.

Work Plan

Timeframe

Project to Commence on or Before May 1, 2022

Project to be completed by June 30, 2023

Proposals should address the following tasks and provide possible dates and deliverables. Below is a suggested timeline but proposals may deviate from it to match own schedules provided the project is completed by June 30, 2023.

| Proposed Task | Proposed Date | Deliverable |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Project Kickoff | June 2022 | |
| Define the template | June-August 2022 | Agreed upon template |
| Content management | September-December 2022 | |
| Testing, editing, and delivery | December 2022- June 2023 | Final City Plan |
| | | |

Deliverables

Project deliverables would include a complete web-based City Plan.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The proposal, encompassing items 1-4 below, shall not exceed 15 double-sided pages (30 total pages) including cover letter, project lists and contacts. Links to project examples are always encouraged and not counted in any page limits. All responses to the RFP shall include the following information:

1. **Cover Letter** - A letter of interest for the project.
2. **Statement of Qualifications and Staffing** – Provide a qualifications profile of the lead consultant and sub-consultants, including indication of the lead consultant, the proposed role of each member on the team. Also provide detailed information on each consultant, including the name of the firm, year established, and contact information.
3. **Summaries of relevant projects** – Describe relevant experience on similar projects for each consulting firm. Include a minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed.
4. **Proposed work plan** – Proposals should include a work plan, schedule, and deliverables. Please remember to include a detailed description of the proposed techniques or processes to be used to help the Planning Commission receive public input during the testing and comment periods.
5. **Cost Proposal** – The cost proposal will include hourly wages and proposed allotted time for each professional assigned to the project.

All information submitted becomes property of the City of Montpelier upon submission. The City of Montpelier reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFP as well as make modifications to the RFP or withdraw the RFP.

Submission Requirements

Respondents shall submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) by Monday April 4, 2022, 5:00p.m. To:

Municipality/Local Project Manager Contact Information
Mike Miller, Director of Planning and Community Development
802.262.6269
Mmiller@montpelier-vt.org

Please expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the proposal.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFP, please address them in writing to mmiller@montpelier-vt.org. We will respond to all questions in writing within 5 days. Both the question and response will be shared with the other consultants.

Selection Process Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from staff and the Planning Commission. A short-list of consultants will be selected to present their proposals to the Planning Commission. A final selection is made by vote of the City Council, usually as a part of the consent agenda, although they may from time to time want to meet consultants for a brief presentation.

RFQ Schedule Summary:

Proposals due Monday, April 4, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.

Consultants selected for short-list by April 11, 2022

Interviews will be Monday, April 25th at the regular Montpelier Planning Commission meeting

Consultant selection approved by Council on May 11, 2022.

Evaluation of Qualifications

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors:

- 1. Consultant Qualifications (experience with similar projects, ability to work with municipalities to attain desired outcomes, and knowledge of the topic) - 85%**
 - a. Experience with City Planning especially in Vermont
 - b. Experience developing and implementing storyboards and websites that are effective at conveying information using ESRI Hub
 - c. Experience using ESRI Hub to gather public input
 - d. Familiarity with ADA web protocols
 - e. Experience with the City of Montpelier
 - f. Experience using ESRI Hub
 - g. Proven ability of the team to work as an integrated unit across firms or disciplines (design, planning, outreach, etc.) and with client
 - h. Proven ability to work with committees and conduct public meetings
 - i. Availability to begin work on project start date

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