
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Economic Development or Planning Consultant for Cabot Village Revitalization Plan

Cabot, Vermont

January 30, 2017

RFQ Due on February 17, 2017

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The Town of Cabot seeks an economic development or planning consultant to create a detailed economic development strategy and implementation plan for Cabot's Designated Village Center.

Context and Background

In June of 2010, results from a community-wide survey strongly indicated that "a healthy economy" was the number one factor in maintaining a high quality of life within the Town of Cabot.

Data from the 2010 U.S. Census shows that Cabot grew in both population and housing from 2000 to 2010. While all of Washington County experienced a population growth of only 2.6% in those 10 years, Cabot's population increased by 18.1% to 1,433 residents. While housing growth countywide was 8.3%, the number of units in Cabot rose 21.6%, bringing Cabot's total housing count to 771 units, surpassing projections. During that same time period, the Town of Cabot saw seven new commercial, office, or retail uses of which only two were located within the Designated Village Center.

In September of 2012, the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) conducted a Community Visit with the Town of Cabot. Three priorities were included in the Community Visit Report and Action Plan:

1. Develop a Cabot Agricultural Network
2. Develop a Community Arts Center
3. Improve Community Communications

In 2014, the Town of Cabot applied for and received Village Center Designation from the State Of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. This was the first step towards the goal of economic development and community revitalization.

Helpful links:

[VCRD Community Visit Report](#)
[Cabot Community Data Profile](#)

These three priorities are actively being addressed through existing programs of the Cabot Community Association (CCA) including the Greater Cabot Working Landscape Network, Cabot Arts, and *The Cabot Chronicle*. An additional discussion topic was whether and how to promote economic growth within the community.

Cabot is home to Cabot Creamery, which attracts 35,000 visitors a year and could be a more significant partner in local economic development. Although we want our local economy to take better advantage of tourist traffic, we need to establish a holistic approach, with all key partners, to identify strategies that will serve residents and visitors alike. By developing a plan for economic development that focuses in and around the Designated Village Center, the Town can identify opportunities for a diverse mix of uses to support the community.

Two high profile businesses are struggling to stay open and another business owner wants to retire and has no idea of how his building might be used in the future. The status quo is not an option for Cabot as we will only see more vacant buildings and fewer services available to serve our community. A focused approach to economic revitalization in and around the Designated Village Center is required to effectively and comprehensively address economic development within the Town of Cabot.

The Cabot Economic Development Workgroup of the CCA will serve as the project steering committee and work with the consultant to guide the project. The Workgroup members are:

- knowledgeable of Cabot's strengths and weaknesses;
- willing to invest time to attend meetings and review documents throughout the project;
- active proponents of the importance of economic development planning; and
- committed to working after project completion as part of an effort to successfully implement the strategy.

The VCRD Community Visit Report and Action Plan stated, "Cabot is what much of New England was, and what much of Vermont still wants to be." Support from the Municipal Planning Grant will allow us to plan, learn, and develop strategies to boost our economy, but not lose what makes Cabot the special place it is.

To successfully make a long-term impact on the sustainable growth of our current businesses, provide an inviting climate for new vibrant business, and encourage & support entrepreneurship, we need a well-informed plan to guide coordinated development in our village center. We require a plan, developed in cooperation with professionals who are experts in rural economic development, to inspire and give residents the tools we need to do this work. We also desire a consultant with experience with public affairs and communications to assist in methods of community involvement.

Other links to reference:

[Cabot Town Plan](#) approved 2012

[Cabot Village Sampling Map](#)

Suggested Project Outcomes

- Analysis of current conditions in the village, e.g., businesses, commercial properties, streetscapes, etc.
- Identification of the factors that promote and/or hinder business development, redevelopment or reuse in Cabot village (i.e. local and state regulatory policies, zoning, available community facilities & utilities, etc.);
- Identification of the priority sites to develop or reuse;
- A market analysis that identifies:
 - current demographics and projected trends;
 - who is moving to Cabot and what is drawing them here;
 - how Cabot village can adequately serve residents, businesses and visitors; and
 - the types of businesses that are likely to be economically viable, compatible, and appropriate for Cabot village.
- Recommendations as appropriate, such as:
 - Strategies to attract and support identified businesses;
 - An Economic Gardening Strategy that encourages entrepreneurship;
 - Strategies for redeveloping vacant or underutilized sites; and
 - Other recommendations for revitalizing and increasing economic activity in Cabot village.

For additional information see Attachment A - RFQ Phase 2 Work Plan Development Requirements

Funding

Our project provides funds to hire an economic development or planning consultant with experience in small towns and rural communities to work with our residents and town leaders to create a Village Revitalization Plan, with action steps, for developing a high-impact business cluster in Cabot village.

A total of \$26,000 is available for this project and is provided by the Municipal Planning Grant Program administered by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the CCA.

Timeframe

Proposed project start date: April 15, 2017

Ending date: May 31, 2018

Request For Qualifications Response - SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All responses to the RFQ shall include the following information:

1. **Cover Letter** - A letter of interest for the project that includes a brief description of the consultants approach to the project.

2. **Statement of Qualifications and Staffing** – We expect qualifications to reflect the identified tasks and deliverables in Attachment A - RFQ Phase 2 Work Plan Development Requirements.

Include the name of your firm, year established and primary contact information. Provide a statement of qualifications of the proposed Lead Consultant, team members and sub-consultants to carry out the objectives of this project.

3. Summaries of relevant projects –List and briefly describe comparable projects undertaken by your firm and team members. Provide a minimum of three (3) professional references.

All information submitted in the RFQ becomes property of the Town of Cabot upon submission. The Town of Cabot reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFQ as well as make modifications to the RFQ or withdraw the RFQ. Updates to the RFQ will be posted online at <http://www.cabotvermont.org/cabot-community-association/cca-programs/#cedw>

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) and 5 printed copies of the RFQ response and one hard copy of any supporting documentation by February 17, 2017 to:

Lori Augustyniak, CCA Executive Director
P.O. Box 245
Cabot, VT 05647
802-563-3338
Lori@cabotvermont.org

Expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the qualifications by the CCA Executive Director.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFQ, please address them in writing either via U.S. mail or email to Lori Augustyniak. Both the question and response will be posted online at <http://www.cabotvermont.org/cabot-community-association/cca-programs/#cedw>

Selection Process

Qualifications will be reviewed by the steering committee and finalists will be invited to submit written project proposals.

Finalists will be required to submit a work plan based on the attached Phase 2 Work Plan Development Requirements – Attachment A. Proposals submitted by finalists should also include a project approach, scope of services, a timeline/schedule, staffing details, hourly costs and overhead. Finalists may be invited to present their proposals in person to the steering committee.

RFQ Schedule Summary

Qualifications due – February 17, 2017

Selected consultants invited to submit written detailed proposals - March 1, 2017

Detailed proposals due - March 24, 2017

Presentation interviews – dates to be determined

Consultant selection by April 15, 2017

Interview Framework

The Town of Cabot reserves the right to select the finalists and invite them for an interview. In this process, the selection committee may ask the respondents to give an oral presentation of their respective proposals. The purpose of this oral presentation is 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.

The interview and presentation will provide consultants an opportunity to present project facts and explanation to the steering committee and allow the committee to ask targeted questions of the consultant. The interview and presentation, if deemed necessary by the review committee, will be held in Cabot, Vermont. All costs and expenses incurred in traveling for the purpose of interview and presentation shall be the responsibility of the consultant.

Consultant Selection

Upon completion of presentations and interviews one preferred consultant will be selected . The final scope of work and deliverables, as well as project team will be specified and a final contract will be negotiated. Any expenses resulting from the interview, proposal and presentation process will be the sole responsibility of the consultant.

Contract Requirements

The consultant contract will be subject to the terms of Attachment D of the Municipal Planning Grant Agreement (Procurement Procedures and Other Grant Requirements).

Attachment A

RFQ Phase 2 Work Plan Development Requirements

| | Task | Proposed Deliverables | Lead/s | Other Participants |
|----|---|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Project Preparation | Draft Project Schedule | Consultant | Steering Committee CCA Staff |
| 2. | Review of Existing Conditions and Stakeholder Input | Inventory & review of existing planning documents, Compile economic and demographic information Interviews with 12-15 key, civic and community leaders Online survey developed and distributed to reach a broader cross-section of the community Develop SWOT analysis and list of Indigenous Assets. | Consultant Project Manager CCA Exec. Director | Cabot Economic Dev Workgroup |
| 3. | Initial Public Meeting | Presentation & supporting materials that include: Current state of Cabot Designated Village Center Results of initial research and findings Process for project Opportunity for participants to contribute to project | Consultant Project Manager CCA Exec. Director | Steering Committee |
| 4. | Market Analysis | Market study using recognized and reliable data sources to determine the current and future demand for retail, industrial, commercial and housing uses in Cabot. | Consultant | |
| 5. | Draft Economic Development Strategy | Draft economic development strategy including the qualitative and quantitative research and proposes a series of goals, objectives and actions designed to address weaknesses and leverage opportunities. | Consultant Project Manager CCA Exec. Director | Cabot Economic Dev Workgroup |
| 6. | Draft Implementation Plan | A plan for implementation of the Cabot Village Economic Development Strategy including capacity assessment, metrics and measurement tools, and year 1 and years 2-5 action plans. | Consultant CCA Exec. Director | Cabot Economic Dev Workgroup |
| 7. | Final Public Presentation of Village Revitalization Plan | Presentation to the community of the proposed economic development strategy & implementation plan. | Consultant CCA Exec. Director Steering Committee | Cabot Economic Dev Workgroup |