

Request for Proposals

Housing Needs Assessment



Date Issued: Friday, September 6, 2024

Responses Due: Friday, October 11, 2024 – 1:00pm

Purpose: The Town of Stowe (“the Town”) issues a request for proposals (RFP) from qualified professional service firms, teams, and/or individuals (“the consultant”) for the preparation of a comprehensive housing needs assessment. The target completion date for this work is July 1, 2025. Responses shall be submitted via email as follows:

Town of Stowe
Will Fricke, Assistant Town Manager
wfricke@stowevt.gov

Background

Located in Lamoille County, Vermont, the Town of Stowe covers approximately seventy-three (73) square miles and hosts a year-round population of 5,200 residents. During peak periods the Town can often have more than 10,000 visitors per day, many of whom occupy Stowe’s 2,500 hotel rooms and short-term rentals. Often named as one of the best small towns to visit in America, Stowe is famous for its world-class outdoor recreation, well preserved and vibrant historic -downtown, and scenic forested hillsides and natural landscapes. Residents have long valued the town’s character while enjoying the vibrancy of a premier four-season resort community (e.g., restaurants, shopping, special events, and the arts, etc.) more commonly associated with a more urban community.

At 73 square miles, Stowe is the largest municipality in Vermont by land area and over 80% larger than the median Vermont town. Nearly half of all land in Stowe is conserved as either publicly owned state forests or permanently protected through conservation easements

Stowe has approximately 3,500 housing units, most of which are seasonal homes. Stowe has the third highest grand list in Vermont with a total assessed property value of over \$5 billion. The median property value in Stowe is approximately \$900,000, up from \$380,000 a decade ago. Local workers report an increasingly difficult time finding quality housing at an affordable price in Stowe and surrounding towns, leading to longer commute times and a smaller supply of labor for employers. There are also concerns about the loss of socioeconomic diversity in Stowe, as middle-class and working-class families have been less able to financially sustain or acquire homes in Stowe due to drastic increases in home prices and education taxes.

In order to address these critical issues, Stowe must first accurately assess and quantify its current and future housing needs with data. Then viable and attainable strategies must be mapped to meet those identified needs, along with effective regulatory and non-regulatory tools to pursue, which will allow the community to better support a mix of year-round housing types at more affordable price points.

Scope of Services

Objectives: Consultant will present options to address housing in Stowe in the form of a written report. The report should cover the following objectives. Percentages are provided as general guidelines to Level of Effort (LOE).

- [10%] Complete a housing inventory documenting Stowe existing housing stock. Document the number and type of existing housing units within Stowe and associated occupancy (i.e., year-round owner occupied, seasonal, short or long-term rentals, etc.)
- [10%] Complete a housing needs assessment to understand Stowe's unique housing needs for affordable, workforce, employer provided, and market rate housing. Identify existing organizations involved in the development of affordable, workforce, and employer provided housing within Stowe and the larger region.
- [15%] Document the existing challenges that restrict/prevent the development or support of year-round residential housing at more affordable price points in Stowe.
- [30%] Understand and document both regulatory and non-regulatory tools and incentives available to the Town, and those that have been used by similar towns, to better support year-round residential housing at more affordable price points.
- [30%] Develop a recommended program for public and private actions to address Stowe's housing needs, specific actions to address the needs of persons with low income and moderate incomes, and improvements to better account for residential development as described in 24 VSA § 4412. Such recommendations should provide a cost/benefit analysis or other assessment to document the viability of such recommendations. Consider the roles and responsibilities of the different organizations and partners, and who might be best positioned to implement the recommended actions.

Data Sources: The consultant will infill data as necessary, and is expected to utilize a number of pre-existing sources of data and datasets for statewide and regional housing studies, including but not limited to:

- [Lamoille County/Hardwick Regional Housing Assessment](#)
- [Vermont Housing Needs Assessment: 2025-2029](#)
- <https://www.housingdata.org/>
- [Town of Stowe Grand List](#)

Study Components: Components of the study will include but not necessarily be limited to:

1. Introduction and Executive Summary
2. Housing, Demographic, and Socioeconomic Trends
 - Data review and Gaps Analysis
 - Examination of local/regional organizations currently in housing development
 - Case studies of similarly situated municipalities
3. Community Engagement Summary
 - Examples:
 - Community survey utilizing existing Town email list (2000+ contacts)
 - Workshop/Charette with public feedback on policies and concepts being explored
4. Barriers Analysis
 - Zoning Review, based on discussions with Stowe Planning & Zoning
 - Sewer/Water Capacity, based on discussions with Stowe Public Works
 - State law
5. Conclusion
 - Recommendations and Strategies
 - Cost-Benefit Analyses
 - Action items and policies that the Town of Stowe may pursue to accomplish its housing goals
 - Action items and policies which are not recommended
6. Appendices

It is anticipated that the selected consultant will work with the recently formed Stowe Housing Task Force, and that a community survey utilizing the Town of Stowe email listserv will also be part of the process.

The recommendations and strategies should include a feasibility analysis and a cost-benefit analysis.

Timeline: The work will follow a general timeline as outlined below:

October 2024	Contract Awarded and Introduction Meeting(s)
December 2024 February 2025	Community Engagement
April 2025	Present and discuss data and survey findings with Housing Task Force Report sections 2-6
May 2025	Craft outline of draft recommendations alongside Housing Task Force
June 2025	Present and discuss draft report with recommendations and cost-benefit analysis with Housing Task Force
July 2025	Present and discuss final report with recommendations and cost-benefit analysis with Selectboard

Submission Requirements

Proposal must include, at a minimum, the following sections:

Cover Letter to contain the following:

- A. Respondent's name, address, telephone number and email address.
- B. A brief summary of the respondent's understanding of the analysis to be performed. The successful consultant should demonstrate or be willing to ascertain an understanding of the housing market and potential need for housing in Stowe and the surrounding region, the land use regulatory environment, and constraints stemming from utility capacity and other factors.
- C. The respondent's qualifications to complete the analysis including key personnel assigned to the project.
- D. The respondent's approach to completing the analysis.
- E. A timeline for completion of this work. The target completion date is July 1, 2025.

Financial Proposal

Submit a fixed-price proposal covering all the services described in this RFP.

References and Examples of Prior Work

A list of at least three references with contact information for clients' where similar services were provided and can speak to the quality of the company/individual's work. Preferably references for resort communities in New England of a similar size. Cite and/or provide an example of your work.

Submission Deadline: Submission must be received via email to the below address by 1:00pm on **October 11, 2024** . An extension of the deadline may occur if necessary.

Town of Stowe
Will Fricke, Assistant Town Manager
wfricke@stowevt.gov

Selection Criteria: A selection committee will conduct an evaluation of qualifications and will consider the following criteria:

- A. Cost for services
- B. Professional expertise to conduct this analysis and provide recommendations with a cost/benefit analysis
- C. Understanding of the request for proposals and project approach
- D. Satisfaction of previous clients
- E. Quality of proposal

This will be a qualification-based selection process where factors other than cost may be considered, although cost will be a primary consideration. Through its Town Manager, the Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals deemed not to be in the best interest of the Town.

Costs Associated with Proposal: Any costs incurred by any person or entity in preparing, submitting or presenting a proposal are the sole responsibility of that person or entity. The Town will not reimburse any person or entity for any costs incurred.

Rejection of Proposals: Through its Town Manger, the Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to negotiate with one or more parties, or to award the contract to the proposal the Town deems will meet its best interests, with price not being the sole consideration. The Town reserves the right to re-advertise for additional proposals, split proposals, and to extend the deadline for submission of the proposals. This Request for Proposals in no way obligates the Town to award a contract.

Ownership of Documents: Any materials submitted to the Town in response to this Request for Proposals shall become the property of the Town unless another arrangement is made by written agreement between the Town and the responding party. The responding party may retain copies of the original documents.

Public Records: Any and all records submitted to the Town, whether electronic, paper or otherwise recorded, are subject to the Vermont Public Records Act. The determination of how those records must be handled is solely within the purview of the Town. All records the responding party considers to be trade secrets, as that term is defined by subsection 317 (c)(9) of the Vermont Public Records Act, or that the responding party otherwise seeks to have the Town consider as exempt must be identified clearly and specifically at the time of submission. It is not sufficient to merely state generally that a proposal is proprietary, contains a trade secret, or is otherwise exempt. Particular records, pages, and sections which are believed to be exempt must be specifically identified as such and must be separated from other records with a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify each exemption from release consistent with Section 317 of Title 1 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.