

Town of Bristol

Municipal Planning Grant

(07110-MP-2026-Bristol-62)



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Comprehensive Planning & Design Consultant for Bristol Town Plan Update, Bristol, Vermont

March 2, 2026

Proposal Due on March 30, 2026

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The Town of Bristol is seeking a comprehensive update to the existing Town Plan. The desired outcome of this project is to create a draft plan for consideration by the Planning Commission, Selectboard and ultimately Bristol residents. This process will involve updates to statistical and plan map data, and compliance with Vermont State Planning Act. Bristol is seeking qualified planning consultants to coordinate an effective public outreach strategy that will inform plan elements and provide the Bristol Planning Commission with recommendations and new perspectives in approaching the Town Plan Update.

Context and Background

Bristol adopted its current town plan in 2020. The Vermont Planning Act requires that municipalities update town plans every eight years. The Town of Bristol seeks to have an updated Town Plan prepared for voter approval prior to the expiration of the current town plan.

An important cornerstone to the planning process is community engagement. When drafting the current town plan the COVID-19 pandemic limited traditional public outreach methods and resident engagement. In approaching this Town Plan, it is desired to increase efforts to bring the public into the planning process.

The Town of Bristol has adopted a Town Plan, an Enhanced Energy Plan, a Capital Improvement Plan and a Hazard Mitigation Plan. All four of these documents are connected in planning the future growth and development of the Town. However, the connection between these documents could be more effectively integrated in order to provide a comprehensive development plan that will influence decision-making in our community for years to come.

Since the adoption of the 2020 Town Plan, Bristol as a community has experienced an increase in climate disasters that have impacted both community infrastructure and wellbeing. With this update process the Town has the opportunity to further enhance the resiliency of the community through updated goals and policies. Bristol was selected in January 2026 to participate in a State of Vermont Climate Office pilot program designed to support municipal governments integrating climate change considerations into their municipal plans. Specifically, Bristol is piloting a Draft Social Resilience Process Guide, designed for Vermont municipalities to offer step-by-step guidance to work collaboratively with residents most impacted by climate change due to systemic vulnerability. While the town staff will primarily lead the work of implementing the Social Resilience Process Guide, the following work plan identifies key moments where the contractor will participate in the implementation of the Guide and weave the considerations of findings related to social resilience into the Municipal Plan.

Funding

A total of **\$21,400** is available for consultant services from the Municipal Planning Grant Program administered by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Department of Housing and Community Development.

Work Plan:

Tasks in bold are specific tasks as stated in the Bristol Town Plan Update grant agreement. Italic tasks are specific tasks desired by the Town of Bristol.

1. Meet with PC/Selectboard throughout update and editing process.

- a. Support town staff and Planning Commission in the planning process through utilizing the Agency of Commerce and Community Development “Vermont Planning Manual Module 1: The Municipal Plan”.*
- b. Attend Planning Commission meetings to provide recommendations, present reports and data, and other tasks as needed.*

2. Update statistical information throughout the plan.

- a. Utilize qualitative research methods to conduct community conversations with community members identified in “Tool 1: Identifying lived expertise in your community” of the State of Vermont Draft Social Resilience Process Guide. Integrate findings into Community Assessment of the Municipal Plan.*
- b. Review of existing planning inventories, studies and analyses to better inform current planning decisions.*

3. Update Plan Maps.

- a. Update required future land use map and other plan chapter maps as defined in 24 V.S.A §4382 and requested by Planning Commission.*
- b. Based on community engagement and emerging priorities, recommend and develop, following approval from municipal officials, other maps that reflect and support identified community priorities.*

4. Public Outreach Strategy- piggyback on on-going community events to provide transparency to community planning connection.

- a. Coordinate with Planning Commission to develop public outreach strategy with a focus on engaging community members. The public outreach strategy will be designed to center the voices of people who live and work in Bristol. As part of the Planning Guide Pilot program a focus of this outreach will be to those who experience disproportionate social vulnerability and who were identified by town staff through the Social Resilience Process Guide.*
- b. Analyze gathered feedback and provide recommendations to Planning Commission for integration into Town Plan.*
- c. The Town desires to organize a community charette as part of the planning process, consultant would support Town officials with implementation.*

5. Natural Resource Updates to include Flood, Shoreline, Forest Fragmentation and Hazard Mitigation discussion and revisions.

a. *Integration of recently adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan into Town Plan.*

6. Goals, policies, and task updates for all chapters

a. *Develop implementation strategy for priority items identified in planning process following adoption of updated Town Plan.*

7. Document revision and formatting.

a. *Provide design recommendations to improve accessibility of Town Plan through graphics and visual elements.*

8. Process to ultimately create draft plan for PC Public Hearing, Public Hearing notices, advertising, printing, meetings support and other expenses.

a. *Coordinate with Planning & Zoning Administrator to prepare documents for public hearings.*

b. *Maintain records of planning process to be included in final report.*

Timeframe

Project Start April 2026 – Project End December 2027

The grant award for this project ends in December 2027. The ultimate goal is to have a town plan approved by both the Planning Commission and the Selectboard that will go before the voters at Town Meeting Day in March 2028.

Deliverables

Format of Deliverables:

- A. All documents should be provided in digital format. Any hard copies of draft and final reports shall be printed on both sides (i.e., double-sided). Adobe PDF format is required for the draft and final reports.
- B. All data, databases, reports, programs, and materials, in digital and hard copy format created under this project, shall be transferred to the Town of Bristol upon completion of the project and become the property of the Town of Bristol.
- C. A digital copy as an Adobe .pdf document of both the draft and final reports shall be sent to the Town of Bristol.
- D. All GIS work must be submitted using the GIS Data Submission Online Intake Form specified in 1 V.S.A. §§671-679.

Expected Deliverables

- Draft Town Plan
- Updated Town Plan Maps
- Public Outreach Strategy
- Data and Research Findings
- Draft and Final Report

Additional Information

The selected consultant will be working primarily with the Planning & Zoning Administrator, Town Administrator and Grant Administrator. The Planning & Zoning Administrator will be the primary

point of contact for the Consultant. Consultant will be working in collaboration with the Planning Commission to revise and update the Town Plan. The expectation is that the consultant will be providing support to the Planning Commission as they embark on the planning process.

A copy of the draft Social Resilience Planning Guide will be provided to the selected consultant prior to the project start date.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Submission Requirements

All responses to the RFP shall include the following information:

1. **Cover Letter** – A letter of interest and a summary of qualifications, recommended approaches, scope of work, processes and deliverables for the project.
2. **Scope of Work** – Provide a detailed scope of work based on the work plan provided above, broken down by task. Describe the approach to the project and proposed methodology including:
 - a. A detailed scope of work with associated list of tasks broken down by task and team member.
 - b. Description of the proposed deliverables.The consultant may also propose additional supplemental items to the scope of work.
3. **Proposed Schedule** – Provide a schedule that includes completion of work tasks and deliverables including key meetings and complies with the timeframe provided above.
4. **Project Budget** – Provide a detailed budget broken down by task and team member. Include your overhead and hourly rates for the individuals involved.
5. **Qualifications and Staffing** – Provide a qualifications profile of the lead consultant and sub-consultants, including indication of the lead consultant, the role of each consultant on the team with organizational staffing chart and percentage of time devoted to the project by each consultant. Also provide detailed information on each consultant, including contact information, the name of the firm, year established, including a description of relevant experience on similar projects for each firm and listing of their individual work experience in this role on similar projects.
6. **Proof of Insurance** – Provide certificate of insurance.
7. **References** – A minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last ten (10) years.
8. **Page Limit** – The proposal, encompassing items 1-7 above, shall not exceed 20 double-sided pages (40 total pages) including cover letter, table of contents, project lists and contacts.

All information submitted becomes property of the Town of Bristol upon submission. The municipality Bristol 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. Once submitted, the consultant team (including specific staff assigned to the project) may not be changed without written notice to and consent of Town of Bristol. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the consultant.

The Town of Bristol reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this solicitation, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities or to cancel the RFP in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the Town of Bristol. This

solicitation of proposals in no way obligates the Town of Bristol to award a contract.

Submission Requirements

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) and one (1) printed copies of the proposal by **March 30, 2026** to:

Municipality/Local Project Manager Contact Information

*Town of Bristol
AZ Larsen, Planning & Zoning Administrator
PO Box 249
Bristol VT, 05443
8024533648
zoning@bristolvt.org*

Please expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the proposal by the Town Administrator or the Planning & Zoning Administrator.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFP, please address them by email to *AZ Larsen*. We will respond to all questions by email within *2 days*. Both the question and response will be shared with the other consultants.

RFP Schedule Summary

Proposals due *March 30, 2026*.
Consultant selection by *April 14, 2026*.
Project Work to begin *April 20, 2026*.
Complete project by *December 2027*.

Proposal Selection Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of Town of Bristol staff and officials.

Proposal Evaluation

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors (total of 100 points):

1. Demonstration of overall project understanding, insights into potential issues, and a demonstrated understanding of the project deliverables (30 pts)
2. Qualifications of the firm and the personnel to be assigned to the project, and experience with similar projects (20 pts)
3. Completeness and clarity of proposal and creativity/thoughtfulness in addressing the scope of work (15 pts)
4. Demonstrated understanding of, and ability to meet schedule and budget (10 pts)
5. Appropriateness of budget allocation by task (25 pts)

Final Consultant Selection

Following the selection process, one team will be selected to negotiate a final contract for services. The final scope of work with specified deliverables may be modified through negotiation of the final contract. The final project team may also be modified through negotiation of the final contract. Any expenses resulting from the proposal process will be the sole responsibility of the consultant.

Contract Requirements

The consultant contract will be subject to the terms of Attachments C and D of the Bristol Town Plan Update Grant Agreement.

The Town of Bristol is an equal opportunity provider and employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, gender, or familial status.