

Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting of EDC

Meeting called to order at 12:02

Attendees: Ken Signorello, Jean O'Sullivan, Nick Fukuda, Melissa Stewart

Motion to approve the RFP made by Melissa S., seconded by Nick F.

Discussion: Ken Signorella – motion to make 2 changes, friendly amendments:

1. General Questions section reference to Vermont 285, should be 289.
2. Economic Development Item "v:" add "agriculture" to list
 - i. What assets are needed within the community for sustainable growth (i.e. office space, housing, commercial space)?

Vote to accept with friendly amendments was all in favor, vote 4/4.

Amended document following.



Town of Essex, VT

2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Economic Development Study & Strategy

The Town of Essex, VT seeks proposals from experienced and knowledgeable firms to produce an Economic Development Study and provide strategic recommendations for the Town of Essex, VT based on research. The main objective of this work is to understand Essex's current economic status and help us craft economic development goals and strategies for the town of Essex. A primary goal, post-study, is to ensure Essex is positioned for sustainable growth that builds off its unique strengths, is responsive to new economic realities and is consistent with the desires of town residents as documented in the 2024 Essex Town Plan.

This document constitutes a Request for Proposal ("RFP") to provide all, or part of the services requested to the Town of Essex, VT as described in the Scope of Work.

RFP Posted: August 2nd, 2024

RFP Questions Submitted: Wednesday, August 7th, 2024 – 5:00 pm EST

Responses Posted: Wednesday, August 14th, 2024 – 5:00 pm EST

Proposals Due: August 30th, 2024

Finalist Selection: Late - August to Early September 2024

Submittal Requirements:

Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to providing a high level of service, experience, passion and enthusiasm for the project and provide sufficient detail to enable the Town of Essex and Economic Development Commission to thoroughly evaluate and compare it with other proposals. Proposals should include the following components:

1. **Letter of Interest:** Signed by an officer of the firm who is authorized to execute a contract.
2. **Consultant Team Qualifications and Key Personnel:** This section should list likely team members, their role and describe their areas of expertise and provide demonstrated experience in completing work for municipal clients or other economic development entities.
3. **Proposed Work and Timeline:** Include an estimated start date, with a detailed phasing timeline and key task list, estimated completion time of tasks and target completion date. Project work is to be completed within **6 months** of executed contract. The goal is to have deliverables completed by March 2025.
4. **Project Experience and References:** Provide brief descriptions of three (3) projects dealing with economic development studies and/or strategies, or similar topics prepared by or under the direction of your firm. Where applicable, provide examples where municipalities have followed your plan and successfully reached stated goals.
 - a. **Process for Evaluation and Selection:**
 - i. The Town Manager, Community Development Director, and Economic Development Commission will review the submitted proposals based on evaluation criteria as identified below.
 - ii. Each proposal submitted within the deadline will be reviewed to ensure all required materials have been submitted according to the guidelines set forth in this RFP.
 - b. **Evaluation Criteria:**
 - i. Demonstrated level of experience and qualifications; inclusive of experience on municipal and/or economic development projects.
 - ii. Demonstrated capacity and capability of the firm to perform the work within the specified time, scope and budget. Ability to produce deliverables within 6 months of contract.
 - iii. The level of creativity and innovation in the proposed approach to the project.
 - iv. Cost competitiveness of the application.

Questions and Submittal

RFP Questions and Clarifications – To ensure consistent responses and correct information to all interested parties, potential respondents must submit all questions and requests for clarification in writing to Jean O’Sullivan, Economic Development Coordinator, community-development@essex.org.

All questions must be submitted by Wednesday, August 7th at 5:00 9m EST to receive a response in advance of the solicitation closing. An addendum will be provided showing official responses to all questions submitted. Responses will be posted on the Essex Economic Development website by Wednesday, August 14th at 5:00 pm EST. **All proposals must be submitted digitally to community-development@essex.org** with the formatted email title, “Town of Essex VT – Economic Development

Study RFP – [Submitting Organization’s Name]” by 11:59 pm EST on August 30th, 2024 to be considered for this project opportunity.

Please limit proposals to 20 pages or less.

General Terms and Conditions

To be added – Greg/Katherine

Economic Development Commission Recommendation: Preference for in-state firms.

Project Scope

Intent and Objectives: The main objective of this work is to understand Essex’s current economic status and help us craft economic development goals and strategies for the town of Essex.

A primary goal, post-study, is to ensure Essex is positioned for sustainable growth that builds off its unique strengths, is responsive to new economic realities and is consistent with the desires of town residents as documented in the 2024 Essex Town Plan.

Essex hopes to continue building a community that is connected, diverse, inclusive, sustainable, and a joy to live in.

General Questions:

- What competitive advantages do we have over other municipalities in the area?
- As we build out a “town center” area, how do we find the right mix of development in Essex and ensure we are smartly developing vs. creating urban sprawl?
- What percentage of retail sales is coming from Essex residents vs. non-residents?
- What is the economic opportunity for Essex based on traffic going through Essex? Does Essex’s geographic location provide an advantage or disadvantage to attract and maintain businesses in town. Does VT-289 promote economic development?

Essex has identified general questions with five key focus areas in the [2024 Town Plan](#):

1. Housing

- a. Potential Question(s) to answer, analyze, and collect data:
 - i. How does our housing profile match our residents’ income?
 - ii. How do we extrapolate the needs for housing units in Essex (i.e. does Essex need more mixed-use buildings, apartments, standalone houses etc.)?
 - iii. Employment and housing. What percentage of people working in Essex are living here? How do we support housing and job opportunities so that people who live in Essex can work in Essex?

2. Economic Development

- a. Potential Question(s) to answer, analyze, and collect data on:
 - i. How does the ETC Next [\(link\)](#) and new 2024 Town Plan [\(link\)](#) fit into optimum economic development for the future?
 - ii. Analysis of the current business landscape including commercial spaces and/or sector breakdown.

- iii. What is unique to Essex's business community that will foster or hamper long-term growth?
- iv. What kind of business development best suits the profile of the Town of Essex?
- v. What assets are needed within the community for sustainable growth (i.e. office space, housing, commercial space, Agriculture)?
- vi. What is the appropriate proportion for high-density, mixed-use buildings within our town?
- vii. What is the impact of adjacent land uses that conflict within the community?
- viii. What types of industries have been successful in Essex?
- ix. Are we over-reliant, or at risk of being over-reliant, on any one company or industry?
- x. Is there an opportunity to connect current employers and desired employers with the local educational system (i.e. CTE and Essex High, Vermont Tech, UVM, St. Mike's, etc.)?

3. Conservation, Climate, and Agriculture

- a. Potential Question(s) to answer, analyze, and collect data:
 - i. Should we and how can we preserve our agricultural land and support our farming community?
 - ii. What development practices should Essex include for appropriate mix of development vs. conservation?
 - iii. Does Essex have a proportionate amount of conserved land vs. vendor-provided benchmarks of similar communities?

4. Infrastructure

- a. Potential Question(s) to answer, analyze, and collect data:
 - i. How do we assess our current infrastructure and if it meets the needs of our community mix of industry vs. residential?
 - ii. Is our infrastructure in Essex properly zoned and labeled?
 - iii. How is our infrastructure positioned to handle the impact of climate change?

5. Recreation

- a. Potential Question(s) to answer, analyze, and collect data:
 - i. Will recreational development focused on biking be beneficial to the economic development of the town?
 - ii. How do we compare to the economic development of Kingdom Trails and Mt Snow?
 - iii. Does the town have other recreational economic opportunities?
 - iv. What percentage of recreational users are from outside of Essex?
 - v. Are we considering the economy of recreation and the services that support it adequately? For example, active recreation in Saxon Hill, and the brick-and-mortar businesses that locate in Saxon Hill.
 - vi. Should Permitted Uses be updated in the Zoning Regulations?

Formal Deliverables for Study:

- Produce a publicly presented Economic Development Study document with recommendations.
- All deliverables anticipated to be completed within a 6-month project timeline.