



Woodstock, Vermont The Shire Town of Windsor County

TOWN-VILLAGE MANAGER GOVERNMENT

Town Hall • P.O. Box 488 • Woodstock, Vermont 05091 • 802-457-3456

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Housing & Economic Development Strategic Plan

Date Issued: May 12, 2026

Proposals Due: June 4, 2026, 12 p.m.

Overview

The Town of Woodstock is seeking proposals from qualified, forward-thinking firms with demonstrated experience to conduct an economic data analysis, lead stakeholder engagement and develop a housing and economic development strategic action plan.

Background

The Town of Woodstock, Vermont is a historic rural community in the center of Windsor County, widely recognized for its preserved village character, strong tourism economy, and high quality of life. With a small but relatively affluent and aging population, Woodstock's economy has transitioned from its 19th-century roots in agriculture and light manufacturing to a service-based model anchored in tourism, hospitality, and small local businesses. The community benefits from a strong brand as a premier New England destination, a walkable historic downtown, and increasing appeal to remote workers and second-home owners. However, it faces key challenges common to amenity-based rural economies, including housing affordability constraints, workforce shortages, seasonal economic fluctuations, and limited economic diversification. These dynamics create both urgency and opportunity for a strategic housing and economic development plan that supports year-round vitality, broadens the local economic base, and sustains community character.

Over the past decade, Woodstock has pursued a range of initiatives with mixed results. These efforts include developing grant programs to encourage ADU units and rental to local workers, supporting daycare center development, conducting studies of the Village's "East End" to encourage growth, and completing a broader housing development study. The Village of Woodstock's zoning bylaws are currently being updated to allow greater housing density. In 2025, the Town purchased the privately-owned village water system and is now investing in infrastructure improvements to expand capacity and enable new connections. In addition, the Woodstock wastewater treatment facility is slated for a \$35 million replacement which will increase capacity of that system and allow for additional connections. With these changes underway, the Town recognizes a significant opportunity to attract and retain businesses while expanding housing. To guide this opportunity, the Town is soliciting proposals to create a strategic plan.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant shall:

1. Project Management & Community Engagement:

- Develop and maintain a detailed project schedule, including timeline, milestones, and deliverables.
- Coordinate regularly with Town, which may include some Town committees.
- Design and implement a robust, inclusive community visioning and engagement strategy to ensure participation from residents, employers, developers, business owners, housing stakeholders, and community organizations.
- Ensure engagement strategies incorporate diverse and underrepresented populations, particularly related to housing access and workforce participation.

2. Data Review & Market Analysis:

- Review relevant local, regional, and statewide reports pertaining to housing and economic development trends.
- Prepare baseline assessment, including:
 - demographics and population trends
 - labor force characteristics and commuting patterns
 - housing supply, affordability, and gaps (including workforce and middle-income housing)
 - industry clusters, employment trends, and business composition
 - infrastructure, land use, and development constraints
 - quality of life and placemaking assets
- Perform a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.
- Evaluate tourism and visitor trends, where applicable, and their impact on housing and the local economy.

3. Competitive Positioning & Opportunity Identification:

- Identify key strengths and barriers affecting the Town's ability to attract and retain businesses, residents, and investment.
- Define target markets for business attraction, workforce/resident attraction (including remote workers), and housing development.
- Recommend priority industry clusters and emerging sectors for economic growth.
- Identify opportunities for housing development and redevelopment, including workforce, affordable, and mixed-use housing.
- Identify placemaking, downtown vitality, and destination development opportunities.

4. Strategic Framework:

- Develop a unified vision and guiding principles integrating housing, economic development, and marketing/branding.

- Establish strategic goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes for a five-year planning horizon.
- Address, at minimum, the following focus areas:
 - Business attraction, retention, and expansion
 - Housing production, affordability, and regulatory strategies that remove barriers to development.
 - Placemaking and quality of life enhancements
 - Village core vitality
 - Tourism development and visitor economy
 - Regional partnerships and collaboration

5. Strategic Implementation Plan:

- Prepare a detailed, prioritized implementation plan with specific actions, timelines, and responsible parties.
- Identify catalytic and high-impact projects, including priority housing developments, redevelopment sites, and economic development initiatives.
- Recommend policy, zoning, and regulatory changes to support housing and economic development goals.
- Develop a marketing and branding strategy that supports housing and workforce attraction and retention.
- Identify potential funding sources, grants, incentives, and public-private partnership opportunities.
- Establish performance metrics and monitoring tools on housing development, workforce attraction and retention, and marketing and outreach effectiveness.

Deliverables

The selected consultant shall provide the following deliverables:

1. Project Work Plan and Schedule
2. Existing Conditions & Market Analysis Memorandum
3. Community Engagement Summary
4. Draft Strategic Plan
5. Final Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan
6. Public Presentation of Strategic Plan and Public-Facing Materials

Qualifications:

The Town of Woodstock will select the most qualified consultant as determined based on these criteria:

1. Proven experience in housing, economic development, and strategic planning.
2. Expertise in market research, data analysis, and trend forecasting.
3. Demonstrated ability to facilitate inclusive stakeholder engagement processes.
4. Strong understanding of sustainable housing and economic development practices.
5. Excellent communication, facilitation and report writing skills.
6. Positive client references and prior project performance.

Timeline

Results of the strategic plan could be incorporated into the upcoming update of the Comprehensive Municipal Plan, anticipated to begin in Summer 2026. To align with this schedule, the Town expects the project to be completed within approximately six (6) months from notice to proceed through final presentation. Proposers should demonstrate their ability to meet this timeline.

Proposal Requirements

Include the following in your submission:

1. **Company Profile:** Provide a detailed overview of your firm, including relevant experience, team qualifications, and past projects related to economic development strategies.
2. **Project Approach:** Describe your proposed methodology for conducting market research, stakeholder engagement, and plan development, including timelines and key milestones.
3. **Team Composition:** Identify key personnel who will be involved in the project, outlining their qualifications and relevant expertise.
4. **Work Samples:** Provide at least three (3) examples of similar projects completed within the past five (5) years, particularly those involving housing, economic development, or strategic planning.
5. **Budget Breakdown:** Submit a proposed compensation and reimbursable budget outlining project cost, including personnel, travel, research, and other expenses.
6. **Client References:** Please provide names and contact information for five (5) recent or current clients.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

1. Demonstrated experience in housing and economic development strategic planning.
2. Clarity and feasibility of proposed work plan
3. Cost-effectiveness
4. References and quality of previous work

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. Any expenses resulting from the proposal process will be the sole responsibility of the consultant.

Miscellaneous

The Town of Woodstock reserves the right to withdraw this Request for Proposals at any time; to accept or reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part; to waive any informalities or any irregularities in the proposals received; to accept any proposal even through it may not be the lowest proposal; to negotiate with any bidder; and to make an award which in its sole and absolute judgment will best serve the Town of Woodstock's interest. The Selectboard reserves the right to investigate the financial condition of any bidder to determine the bidder's ability to provide reliable service throughout the term of the contract.

The Town has the right to disclose information contained in the proposals after an award has been made. All reports, documents and materials developed by the consultant for this project shall be considered public information and shall be the property of the Town of Woodstock. All products and borrowed materials shall be delivered to the Town of Woodstock prior to final payment.

The selection of a consultant shall be made without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or political affiliation.

Submission Instructions

Submit proposals in PDF format via email to Stephanie Appelfeller at sappelfeller@townofwoodstock.org by 12:00 p.m. on June 4, 2026. Late proposals will not be considered.

Questions

Direct all questions in writing to Abbie Sherman at asherman@townofwoodstock.org, copy to Stephanie Appelfeller at sappelfeller@townofwoodstock.org, before the time of your proposal submission.