

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## Consulting Services

### Town of Poultney, Vermont

#### Town to Trails:

### Connecting Trails and Downtown Master Plan

**RFP Issued:** September 17, 2021

**Proposals Due:** October 29, 2021 (4 PM EDT)

**Project Funding:** \$75,000

**Budget for Consultant Services:** \$70,000

**RFP Information Page:** [www.poultneyplanning.com](http://www.poultneyplanning.com)

#### **Contact:**

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Rutland Regional Planning Commission  
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(802) 353-4559 | [devon@rutlandrpc.org](mailto:devon@rutlandrpc.org)

*All questions and communications regarding this RFP should be directed to Devon Neary, Local Project Manager, at [\(802\) 353-4559](tel:8023534559) or [devon@rutlandrpc.org](mailto:devon@rutlandrpc.org). See the RFP Information page for more details and supporting documents, any changes and responses to questions, and additional resources to support interested bidders.*

## **Project Summary**

*Town to Trails* will create a comprehensive master plan for the Town and Village of Poultney to guide direct connections, and develop amenities and infrastructure that supports these connections, from Downtown to recreational outposts, such as Slate Valley Trails (SVT), D&H Rail Trail, Boczek Marsh WMA, and Lake St. Catherine. In addition, the plan will address several transportation issues within the Downtown such as parking, access management, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and safety, and redevelopment opportunities and land-use changes to improve walkability and connections to recreation assets. The master plan will support both active and alternative transportation, while expanding the current economic development work in the Town. The Town of Poultney will use the planning effort to develop shovel-ready projects to implement and support recommendations from a recent Retail and Market Analysis and Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Plan. In the wake of closing Green Mountain College (GMC) in 2019, and the subsequent sale and proposed revival of the campus by private owners, the Town is motivated to reinvent itself as a destination with unrivaled access to recreation and a welcoming Downtown with a strong sense of place.

## **Context and Background**

The project will focus on the designated Downtown area in the Village of Poultney and the peripheral streets and neighborhoods adjacent to the Downtown. The project will also extend to the recreational assets (primarily focusing on connections to the Slate Valley Trails and Lake St. Catherine) which are located a few miles outside of the Downtown in the Town of Poultney along State Routes 140 and 30. The study area will also include portions of the designated Village of East Poultney due to its proximity to the existing trail network and its current uses which are also supporting the emerging recreation economy in the area. The project area will be a mix of municipal (within the Downtown) and private landowners (trail networks and connecting parcels).

The *Town to Trails* Plan will implement direct action items identified in both the Poultney Town Plan and the Rutland Regional Plan and will be informed by recent community forums like *Poultney Comes Together* and the planning initiatives described in the Project Summary. The Town received a municipal planning grant in 2020 to update the current 2015 Town Plan. Although not yet adopted, the Poultney Planning Commission, in collaboration with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, has completed a final draft that includes language that directly supports the proposed Better Connections project.

The updated plan offers goals to:

- develop new pedestrian facilities that fill gaps in service and connect to local assets;
- improve pedestrian safety Downtown;
- determine feasibility of bicycle lanes, markings, or routes;
- improve access to public transit;
- determine feasibility of a multi-modal park-and-ride;
- improve the streetscape of Downtown;
- develop a parking plan for Downtown;
- and plan connections to local recreation assets.

Poultney has demonstrated a commitment to public involvement and community-based planning since the closing of GMC. The Plan will support the work of a small *Town to Trails* committee that has been meeting bimonthly for the past year. Building off the Retail and Market Analysis, with support from the Economic Development Coordinator, the Town recently participated in the new planning assistance program, Recreation Economy for Rural Communities. The program included a planning committee comprised of the Economic Development Coordinator, Selectboard chair, Town Manager, Planning Commission chair, and representatives from the Downtown Committee, Recreation Committee, Vermont Forests, Parks, and Recreation, Slate Valley Trails, and the local snowmobile club. The program conducted a process of identifying opportunities and challenges through a series of workshops. The virtual workshops identified goals that directly support the *Town to Trails* Plan; continue to expand sustainable recreation assets and connect them to Downtown, develop the Town and Village sense of place and position Poultney as the center for recreation economy in the Region. Overall, the proposed plan will build directly off several years of focused, community-based planning efforts.

### Links to Planning Documents

1	Town Plan Update	<a href="http://poultneyplanning.com">The Plan – Planning in Poultney (poultneyplanning.com)</a>
2	Current Town Plan	<a href="http://vt.gov">Town Plan Adopted 7-20-2015 (vt.gov)</a>
3	Regional Plan	<a href="https://www.rutlandrpc.org/rr-plan-adopted-6-19-18.pdf">https://www.rutlandrpc.org/rr-plan-adopted-6-19-18.pdf</a>
4	Retail and Market Analysis	<a href="https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/bylaws/mpgprojectexamples/CPR-MPG-FinalProduct-Poultney-FY18.pdf">https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/bylaws/mpgprojectexamples/CPR-MPG-FinalProduct-Poultney-FY18.pdf</a>
5	Poultney Comes Together	<a href="https://www.vtrural.org/sites/default/files/PoultneyComesTogetherUpdateReport0120.pdf">https://www.vtrural.org/sites/default/files/PoultneyComesTogetherUpdateReport0120.pdf</a>

6	Recreational Economy for Rural Communities	<a href="https://www.poultneyplanning.com/news">https://www.poultneyplanning.com/news</a>
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## Better Connections Program

The Better Connections Program is led by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the Vermont Agency of Community Development (ACCD) in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and the Vermont Department of Health (VDH). Municipalities bi-annually compete for approximately \$260,000 in project funds to build more livable, walkable, and resilient communities.

The Agency of Transportation (AOT), Agency of Natural Resources, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) awarded \$75,000 to Poultney in Better Connections Grant funds to support the *Town to Trails* Master Plan. The Better Connections Grant Program seeks to help cities and towns build stronger communities that are more livable and walkable. All three agencies will be active partners on the project.

For more information, visit the Better Connections website:

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>

## Project Partners and Roles

Poultney has assembled a vast array of partners and supporters to assist the consultant with many aspects of the project. The partners, from both regional, municipal, recreation, business, and the public have committed to contributing substantial time and expertise in key areas. Local leaders and partners will take primary responsibility for designing and facilitating community engagement and public education components. The consultant team will hold primary responsibility for technical planning and assessments, data collection, development and prioritization of alternatives, plan development, and approval and review processes. Poultney seeks a consultant team that will complement and collaborate with our team.

Project partners and roles include:

1. **Town boards, committees, and government** (participation on Steering Committee and project design, volunteer and advisory roles, implementation). **Includes:** Planning Commission, Selectboard, Parks & Recreation, Town Manager, Public Works, and other town staff.
2. **Local organizations and institutions** (participation on Steering Committee and project design, volunteer and advisory roles, outreach to networks, implementation).

**Includes:** Slate Valley Trails, Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce, Poultney Public Library, Poultney Elementary and High School, Analog Bike Shop, Johnson & Son Bike works, other businesses and employers

3. **Regional and state partners** (technical assistance and education, coordination with regional and state priorities and resources, plan input and review). **Includes:** Marble Valley Regional Transit District, Vermont Agency of Transportation, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Rutland Regional Planning Commission, AARP Vermont, Vermont Department of Health, Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region, and other partners in accessibility, livability, economic development, historic preservation, and social services.

### Detailed Project Work Plan and Schedule

The *Town to Trails* Master Plan will focus on both recreation connections and multi-modal downtown revitalization, building off the work of previous studies recently completed by the Town. The recreation connections will include landowner data collection, trail linkage identification, public private partnerships, and implementation framework. The downtown revitalization will include gateway, parking, access management, and bicycle and pedestrian planning. The master plan will include goals and strategies, implementation and funding plan, and public engagement and outreach.

TASK	DESCRIPTION	DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
<b>1a. Kick-off Meeting</b>	Planning meeting with steering committee and consultants Steering Committee meet with consultant group to review project activities, deliverables, and timelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task outline and timeline</li> <li>• Identify supporting plans and studies</li> <li>• Public outreach plan</li> <li>• Identify additional partners/stakeholders</li> <li>• Site Visit</li> </ul>	<b>Nov-21</b>
<b>1b. State Agency Project Initiation Meeting</b>	Steering committee and VTrans staff meet with consultant to identify concerns, upcoming projects, or other opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine VTrans issues</li> <li>• Identify upcoming projects</li> <li>• Identify partners relating to Right-of-Way and other concerns.</li> </ul>	<b>Nov-21</b>
<b>2. Ongoing Public Engagement</b>	Create engagement plan, design and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Engagement Plan</li> </ul>	<b>On-going</b>

	creation of general outreach materials, updates to project website and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Website</li> <li>• Project poster/flier</li> <li>• Public outreach table at local events</li> <li>• Interviews with local stakeholders</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Existing Conditions Analysis</b>	Review background planning documents, solicit input from state agencies, prepare base map, collect necessary data, inventory of key locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create base map</li> <li>• Baseline data</li> <li>• Site visit with state agencies</li> <li>• Inventory of key locations</li> <li>• Summary report</li> </ul>	<b>Jan-21</b>
<b>4. Community Launch and Existing Conditions Community Workshop</b>	Steering committee and consultant group to present results of Task 3 to introduce the project and solicit comments and community input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold hybrid public workshop</li> <li>• Hold public walk audit</li> <li>• Allow for input outside of meeting</li> <li>• Present descriptive report of findings</li> <li>• Collect public feedback in matrix</li> </ul>	<b>Feb/Mar-21</b>
<b>5. Opportunities and Concepts</b>	Identify high value opportunities, present preliminary findings, Evaluate desired improvements based on existing constraints, standards, costs, State agency technical review, community input (including feedback from website and outreach materials at local businesses), develop maps and graphics to illustrate desired improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate desired improvements based on existing constraints, standards, and costs</li> <li>• Gather data from focus groups, interviews, and public surveys.</li> <li>• Present findings in summary report/matrix</li> <li>• Add details to summary report to include relevant design elements such as streetscape enhancements, roadway typicals, signage design</li> </ul>	<b>Apr-22</b>

	improvements, etc.	and locations, etc.	
<b>6. Opportunities and Concepts Community Workshop</b>	Steering committee and consultant group to present results of Task 5 to solicit community input on findings and proposed improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold public workshop</li> <li>• Allow for input outside of meeting</li> <li>• Present descriptive report of findings.</li> <li>• Collect public feedback in matrix</li> <li>• Determine feasibility of demonstration project with Town and RPC.</li> </ul>	<b>Jun/Jul-22</b>
<b>7. Recommendations, Prioritization, and Implementation Plan</b>	Rank highest priority projects/investment and develop implementation plan, including cost estimates for each proposed improvement, and potential funding resources and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify high priority project/investments</li> <li>• Prepare cost, permit, and funding analysis.</li> <li>• Capital Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Draft Implementation Plan presentation to steering committee</li> </ul>	<b>Aug-22</b>
<b>8. Pop-Up Testing/Demos and Community Input</b>	Test and/or demonstrate projects through appropriate pop-up projects, temporary installations, or demonstration events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Town, RPC, and Local Motion to create demonstration or pop-up event.</li> <li>• Determine eligibility for VDH- Quick Build Grant.</li> </ul>	<b>Sep-22</b>
<b>8. Final Presentations</b>	Recommendations, prioritization, and implementation plan to Selectboard and state agencies for review and hold public meetings. Determine what is needed to improve land use or redevelopment, or local zoning to facilitate and advance the plan's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold two public meetings to present findings to local decision makers and public</li> <li>• Create community sub-committees</li> <li>• Descriptive report of findings</li> <li>• Facilitation of State Agency technical review of draft.</li> </ul>	<b>Oct-22</b>

	recommendations.		
<b>9. Master Plan Report</b>	Prepare final Master Plan, review draft with steering committee and state agencies, submit completed report package to Town and State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare final Master Plan</li> <li>• Submit to Town, State, and BC Program.</li> <li>• Make available to public</li> </ul>	<b>Nov-22</b>
<b>10. Master Plan Implementation</b>	Develop roles and responsibilities based on action matrix and evaluate implementation timeline and funding streams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-project funders meeting</li> <li>• Municipal budget item</li> <li>• Grant applications</li> <li>• Create sub-committees and routine meetings</li> <li>• Community celebration event.</li> <li>• Explore alternative funding such as crowdfunding.</li> </ul>	<b>On-going</b>

**Project Funding**

A total of \$70,000 is available for consultant services from the Better Connection Grant Program administered by Vermont Agency of Transportation and Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

**Proposal Requirements**

All responses to the RFP shall include the following information:

1. **Cover Letter** - A cover letter of interest and general description of 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 in the RFP for the project broken down by task. Describe the project approach and overview of engagement. The consultant may also propose additional supplemental items to the scope of work. While the work plan in the



RFP serves to illustrate a general process and structure for creating the plan, we are very much open to and interested in hearing any new/creative approaches to this type of plan and our approach.

3. **Proposed Schedule** – Provide a schedule that includes completion of work task and deliverables, as well as key meetings, and complies with timeline given in the RFP.
4. **Project Budget** – Provide a detailed budget broken down by task and team member. Include your overhead and hourly rates for the individuals involved. Also, provide an estimated budget with staff hours for completing each phase of the proposed scope of work.
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 the name of the firm, year established, including a description of relevant experience on similar projects for each firm and detailed resume listing of their individual work experience in this role on similar projects;
6. **References** - A minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last five (5) years.
7. **Page Limit** - The proposal, encompassing items 1-6 above, shall not exceed 25 double-sided pages (50 total pages) including cover letter, table of contents and resumes.

All information submitted becomes property of the Town of Poultney upon submission. The Town of Poultney 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 the Town of Poultney. The cost of preparing, submitting, and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the consultant. The Town of Poultney 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 Poultney. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates the Town of Poultney to award a contract.

### **Submission Requirements**

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) of the submittal by **October 29, 2021** to:

**Municipality/Local Project Manager Contact Information**

Rutland Regional Planning Commission  
 Devon Neary, Local Project Manager  
 67 Merchants Row, Rutland, VT 05701  
 802-353-4559  
 devon@rutlandrpc.org

Please expect a confirmation email upon the Local Project Manager’s receipt of your proposal.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFP, please address them via email to Devon Neary within six (6) days of proposal due date. Both the question and response will be shared with the other consultants.

**RFP Schedule Summary:**

Requests for Proposals Released: **September 17, 2021**  
 RFP Questions Due: **October 21, 2021**  
 Proposals Due: **October 29, 2021**  
 Potential Interviews: **November 8 & 9, 2021**  
 Consultant Selection and Notification: **November 10, 2021**  
 Project Work to Begin: **November 15, 2021**  
 Project Completion: **December 31, 2022**

**Proposal Selection** Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from the Town of Poultney, Rutland RPC, Slate Valley Trails, VTrans, and ACCD. A short-list of consultants may be selected for interviews.

**Proposal Evaluation**

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
Consultant Qualifications	Experience with similar projects; team experience and skills; and familiarity with project area and topics.	25
Work Plan	Scope of work, methodology, schedule, public engagement, and alignment of approach with local team skills and project goals.	35
Quality, Completeness, and Creativity	Overall completeness and quality of proposal; clarity and creativity of approach and proposal; commitment to inclusion,	25

	accessibility, and collaboration; and public engagement.	
Costs and Fee Schedule	Efficiency and quality of services, relative to funding; reasonable and appropriate allocations and costs.	15
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Bonus	Priority consideration is given to teams including woman, minority-owned firms, diverse teams, and consultants with a demonstrated commitment to equity, inclusion, and accessibility.	5

### **Interview Framework**

The Town of Poultney, Vermont reserves the right to select a short list of top-scoring consultants and invite them for an interview prior to awarding the contract. In this process, the selection committee may ask the respondents to elaborate or clarify aspects of their approach. The purpose of this interview is to explore the fit between the consultant team and local project, discuss potential approaches, and allow for a more complete understanding of the consultant team and approach.

If deemed necessary by the selection committee, consultants will be invited to participate in an interview and conversation on November 8 & 9, 2021. Consultants should indicate availability on those dates in the cover letter. Invited consultants will be notified of a final interview time at least three business days prior to the meeting, which will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams. Representatives of the selection committee will conduct 30-60 minute interviews.

### **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 interview and proposal process will be the sole responsibility of the consultant.

### **Contract Requirements**

The Town of Poultney will negotiate contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by the municipality's legal counsel. The contract shall not start until the successful applicant enters into a written contract with the municipality. The Town of Poultney is not liable for any cost incurred by consultant prior to issuance of a contract.

The consultant and subcontractors must comply with all State and Federal covenants required by virtue of the funding source or contained or referenced in all the municipality's subcontracts including, but not limited to the following provisions:

- Insurance Coverage
- Indemnification
- Workers Compensation
- Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) Obligation
- Audit and Record Retention
- Lobbying restrictions

### **Mapping and Graphic Standards**

The planning project may have mapping to inventory, assess, and communicate geographic concepts. Consultants will develop data layers in GIS. Data should be in Vermont State Plane coordinates, meters NAD 1983. These data layers can be developed from existing data layers and/or augmented with additional engineering work. Any artistic renderings or other graphical illustrations should be provided in pdf or jpeg file format along with native editable file formats in Adobe Illustrator/Photoshop and InDesign format. Upon completion, the data will be transmitted in ESRI shapefiles format and associated mapping in Adobe Acrobat formats to the municipality.

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