



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **REGIONAL HOUSING SOLUTIONS PROJECT**

#### **Social Aspects of Housing in the Upper Valley**

The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (RPC) of NH, Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission, and Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, jointly as the “Tri-Commissions”, are soliciting proposals from consultants for support in research and outreach on resident’s perspectives on and experience with housing under their Keys to the Valley Initiative 2019-2020 or “Keys” ([www.keystothevalley.com](http://www.keystothevalley.com)). Keys seeks to understand and support vibrant homes. For this RFP, the “Upper Valley” will refer to the 67-town service area of the Tri-Commissions in New Hampshire and Vermont. Keys is a collaborative process requiring coordination among multiple parties and stakeholders. This RFP focuses on work related to community engagement and the social aspects of housing in the Upper Valley.

#### **KEYS PROJECT OVERVIEW**

In order to understand the context in which the work under this RFP is based, the entire Keys project is summed below:

The Tri-Commissions will:

1. Perform a regional housing needs assessment to fulfill regional planning commission obligations under NH RSA 36:47 and 24 VSA 4348(a). This analysis will be regional and broken down to the municipal level to inform municipal planning under NH RSA 674:2 and 24 VSA 4382(a)(10). To make housing needs relevant and actionable, these needs must be broken down into types of units (renter, owner, detached, etc.) and households (single persons, elderly, new families, generational families, etc).
2. Once the need is understood, place this need in a social and geographic/infrastructure context. (For example, more rental apartments are needed in downtown XX or new apartment buildings should be along transit lines). Both regional and local plans under the two state statutes are instructed to talk about where development is and should go. Housing has varied desirable aspects, often related to demographics (e.g. retirees versus young professionals). An in-depth understanding of housing desirability can further clarify housing that is both needed and desired. Housing is intrinsically related to land, infrastructure and a community’s social webbing.
3. Elucidate the impacts of housing. “Housing” is often liked or loathed based on preconceptions that are not fully accurate. This objective will involve showcasing stories of the personal effects of housing, regional perspectives on current housing and potential solutions, making the financial effects of housing on municipalities clearer, identifying existing physical examples in the Upper Valley, and creating visual examples of proposed housing.

4. Evaluate regulatory, infrastructure, workforce, cost, and social barriers to housing production and propose solutions, if applicable. It is likely that all of these play parts in reducing the production of housing.

Such a project will entail copious amounts of data that must be rendered into a form that is useful to municipal level volunteers and staff, and understandable and meaningful to the general public. It must not only be a cogent report, it must educate, provide visual and financial examples, overcome stigmas and create social momentum through stories that further understanding and collaboration. To achieve these goals, initiative outcomes will have to be produced in ways beyond the traditional report, such as video, online presence, graphics, and likely over a period of time.

Together, meeting these objectives will fulfill necessary statutory requirements on housing, and serve to create the conditions for action necessary to sustain and grow vibrant communities and attract needed residents.

### **RFP SCOPE OF SERVICES – Social Aspects of Housing in the Upper Valley**

The Tri Commissions seeks a consultant to evaluate the social aspects of housing. Other aspects of Keys will identify feasible organizational models of housing production (non-profit, public/private, coop, etc.), as well as solutions to regulatory barriers, demographic needs, rehabilitation and infill, production costs and labor needs, etc. For this scope, the consultant will need to act in a unique role within the project while still working in concert with the goals and processes of other project tasks and overall vision. The consultant will receive the results of other tasks when available, including housing unit projections, demographics, a base set of outreach materials, housing examples, and a ‘heat map’ of housing development potential according to need and infrastructure. These, and any guidance from Keys’ staff/Steering Committee, will focus consultant efforts.

In this RFP, the Tri-Commissions seek to gain an impartial and in depth understanding of what residents think and feel about various aspects of housing that they themselves want and that they want for housing developed near them, regardless as to whether these are factually correct. These insights will need to be broken by socioeconomic categories (older residents, new arrivals, and in particular, as well as, what is desirable to a new workforce.) Such social aspects play a critical role in supporting or opposing housing. Some informational outreach may be done in order to change views, but that is not the purpose of this scope. Rather, this project will make those views clear so that they can be addressed as obstacles or used as support.

Relevant questions Keys is looking for answers to include:

- What kind of homes do respondents want to live in (e.g. apt., house, urban, rural, co-housing)?
- What would make it easier to “age in place” in your home?
- We have heard that it is a challenge to recruit new employees due to the housing situation in this area. What kind of homes do you think are lacking?
- What kind of homes do respondents want their neighbors to live in?
- What amenities are desirable in their optimal neighborhood (e.g. sidewalks, parks, public transit, etc.)?
- What would be their concerns about more homes that are affordable in their neighborhood?

- What do they think are the main barriers to affordable housing?
- Which renderings of homes (we will provide pictures) are most like what they want?
- Which renderings of homes (we will provide pictures) are they most interested and open to?
- Would respondents rather rent or own?
- If they do rent/want to rent, what has been/is their biggest housing challenge?
- If they do own/want to own, what has been/is their biggest housing challenge?
- Would respondents rather see new construction or building rehabilitation in their town?
- What are respondents' concerns about building in vacant lots in urban and rural areas?
- Would respondents move to another place in the region if a home that was suitable was available there? And where is that?
- What do respondents consider the most desirable areas in the region and why?
- What aspect of more affordable homes in their town is most appealing (e.g. more kids in school, more community volunteers, easier to find employees, etc)?
- What are the top aspects of a home and site would respondents be concerned about when choosing where to live (e.g. school, energy efficiency, taxes, number of bedrooms, flooding, driving distance to work, etc.)?

The Tri-Commission would like these questions addressed by multiple sources and strategies, including focus group settings, and online and paper surveys. Compilation of respondent answers will be accompanied by an internal analysis of how does the location and demographics of respondents affect their answers.

Data gathering is expected to:

- Have a minimum of 1,000 responses
- Include community discussions that engage diverse communities and stakeholders of the Upper Valley. This must include at least the following: 2 events with older adults, 2 events with those in need of transitional housing (and/or professionals in), an event in a rural area and in an urban area, and an event with younger adults. (Tri-Commissions can provide guidance if needed on finding such cohorts.)
- Include expert presentations (such as by Keys advisors) in engagement activities where deemed appropriate.
- Gather information across the social spectrum.

The consultant must propose how best to make such input opportunities accessible to the broadest array of people while maintaining in-depth conversation. These efforts might include provisions of transportation, food, and/or child care.

Project Reporting

- Conduct monthly conference calls with Keys' staff.
- Present a mid-project report to Keys' staff.
- Collaborate with Keys' staff on report format for optimal integration. Present draft and final report to Keys' staff, clearly summarizing findings about what residents think and feel about various aspects of housing and what is desirable to a new workforce. Report will identify the most common themes from respondents regarding each of these two topic areas, in addition to cataloging virtually all of the

data gathered. The consultant should summarize each focus group as well as provide tabulations of the results of each survey

- Provide raw data and a digital copy of the final report in Microsoft Word and Excel formats, along with copies of all background information used for and developed through the process.

#### Optional Task

The Tri-Commissions believe that similar efforts to this scope have no doubt taken place around New England or the country. The consultant may propose to find and summarize a review of similar housing campaigns' findings. Depending on responses, the Tri-Commissions may make this task a stand-alone project, or not include this in the final scope.

The **TECHNICAL PROPOSAL** must include the following items

a) Summary

A brief summary of the consultant's understanding of the project and relevant knowledge and experience. Provide information on all sub-consultants if more than one firm is involved.

b) Work Plan

An outline of the approach proposed to accomplish the scope of services and the manner in which the consultant will work with the Tri-Commission in coordinating the project. Suggestions for additional work, which may be beneficial to the project, may be considered. The consultant may recommend partnering opportunities where synergies exist. Creative approaches to completing the study and any additional work are encouraged. If proposals include the optional task, this discussion should be clearly identifiable as a separate task.

c) Qualifications

A description of the consultant's qualifications, capabilities, and organizational structure will be provided by the consultant. The description will include identification of the project team including qualifications, experience, and specific responsibilities of the project manager and staff that will be assigned to the project (include a brief resume for each person).

d) Relevant Work Experience and References

Provide a brief description (including completion date, type and scope of project, and the contact person with telephone number for reference), of up to three (3) examples of projects similar in scope and scale completed by the consultant/team (by the staff that would be assigned to this project, if possible).

e) Work Schedule

The consultant is expected to be hired as early as December 2019 and asked to start as soon as possible. **The final product will be due by the end of June 2020.** Keeping to this timeline is important as the results of the Social Aspects work is needed for other phases of the Initiative. Provide a detailed schedule indicating how the project tasks will be organized to complete the work product in the allotted time frame. Schedule to include a matrix of the project and hours assigned broken down by personnel assigned.

## **COST PROPOSALS**

The consultant's proposed budget and cost for completing the work must be submitted with a clear designation of the contractor's name and the title "COST PROPOSAL." The cost proposal must include a task breakdown of the project cost by each staff/team member and hours assigned to each staff/team member. If proposals include the optional task, this discussion should be clearly identifiable as a separate budget item.

The total proposed budget should not exceed \$30,000; however, proposed budgets with a higher budget will be considered if providing appropriate added value to target outcomes.

## **PROJECT COORDINATION**

The Tri-Commissions will have a project manager assigned to this scope, who will serve as the project lead in coordinating with all three commissions. The selected consultant will work under the supervision of the project manager, but will meet and collaborate with staff from the Tri-Commissions jointly, as well as with the steering advisory committee on this scope of services and how it relates to other Keys' Tasks.

## **SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

**Proposals are due by 4:00 PM EST on November 22, 2019 at the e-mail address of [ouyizeye@uvlsrc.org](mailto:ouyizeye@uvlsrc.org) with "Keys – Social Aspects RFP Submission" in the subject line.**

Qualified disadvantaged (DBE), minority and women-owned (MBE/WBE) businesses are encouraged to submit proposals. The Tri-Commissions assume no responsibility and no liability for costs incurred relevant to the preparation and submission of proposals, or any other costs prior to issuance of a contract. The Tri-Commissions reserve the right to reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP as in its best interest. This solicitation in no way obligates the Tri-Commissions to award a contract.