

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Montpelier Rivers Edge Action Plan

City of Montpelier, Vermont

Issued: September 29, 2026

Proposals Due: October 30, 2026

1. Overview

The City of Montpelier is seeking proposals from qualified planning, landscape architecture, engineering, or urban design professionals to develop a comprehensive Plan—the River’s Edge Action Plan (REAP)—for the revitalization and enhancement of its river’s edge. This initiative aims to create a vibrant and accessible riverfront that benefits the community, improves flood resilience, and enhances the city's connection to its natural resources.

2. Background and Context

Sitting at the confluence of multiple branches of the Winooski, rivers are a core part of Montpelier’s identity. Given the location and the surrounding watershed, flooding has been a consistent part of the city’s story. This history came to the fore in July of 2023, when a devastating flood damaged 100 buildings in the designated downtown, severely impacting many local businesses, public buildings, homes, and the community as a whole. Not since the tragic flood of 1927 had Montpelier experienced this level of inundation. The 2023 flood is the latest in a trend of increased high precipitation events that pose a long-term threat to the vitality of Montpelier’s downtown.

Following the floods and in the midst of efforts to clean and rebuild, a series of community conversations were convened to plan for recovery and to chart a path towards greater resilience as a community. The Montpelier Commission for Recovery and Resilience was an outgrowth of these forums, an independent 15 member Commission made up of a team of issue-area experts who met to distill community priorities into concrete projects for a more resilient future for Montpelier. A director was hired to implement the projects that separated into 3 distinct areas of focus:

- Engaging the full watershed towards greater flood resilience
- A more adaptive downtown that is better able to withstand flooding events
- Better emergency preparedness for individuals, businesses, and the community as a whole

Within the theme of “an adaptive downtown,” developing a community-wide vision for the river’s edge in Montpelier was prioritized as a key action. The community reckoning after the 2023 flood would serve as a starting point to bring people together to re-envision Montpelier’s relationship with its rivers and to chart a path towards the goals of greater flood resilience, public access, recreational opportunities and aesthetic beauty.

Montpelier’s Planning Department guided the community through a process of crafting a new City Plan, culminating with final adoption by the City Council in July of 2025. Development of a Rivers Edge Master Plan is named as an Implementation Strategy in the Resilience Chapter of the plan. With extensive public engagement completed as a key component of City Plan development, it was logical to embark on a separate planning process focused on the river’s edge after the City Plan was adopted. Working in collaboration with MCRR, a successful application for a \$30,000 Municipal Planning Grant was submitted in fall of 2025. Montpelier’s City Council also voted to dedicate enough additional dollars to secure the remainder of needed funding. The planning process will be a collaborative effort between the City Planning Department and Foundation for a Resilient Montpelier, the organization

that evolved after MCRR completed its 2-year charge. Foundation for a Resilient Montpelier will play a lead role in project management and will serve as a public engagement partner to the planning consultant hired as a result of this RFP.

The following are some additional community dynamics and moving pieces that will inform efforts to develop a Rivers Edge Action Plan for Montpelier.

- **5 Home Farm Way Floodplain Restoration and Pioneer Dam Removal** - A collaboration between * Preservation Trust of Vermont and the City of Montpelier with support from Vermont River Conservancy, this project has been funded through the State of Vermont's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. It includes the restoration of floodplain at the 5 Home Farm Way property (at the confluence of the Main and Stevens Branch of the Winooski), along with the removal of the Pioneer Street Dam.
- **Restoration of the Capitol Complex** - Home to the Statehouse, Supreme Court, and many State Offices, the Capitol Complex lies a short distance from downtown Montpelier. State buildings and infrastructure within the complex suffered major damage in the 2023 flood. Negotiations with FEMA are ongoing to reach a settlement regarding FEMA Public Assistance funds that will be paid to the State for restoration of the complex. The Complex includes significant riverfront property in Montpelier stretching from the Taylor Street Bridge nearly all the way to the Bailey Bridge, much of the land which is used for parking. Depending on the nature and amount of FEMA funding that is secured, the State of Vermont will be evaluating different options for restoring the complex including some of the property along the river. The Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services will be a participant in the Rivers Edge Action Planning Process.
- **The RIVER project funded by the state to scope out Hazard Mitigation Grant Projects** - With substantial funding coming to Vermont for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program as a result of the 2023 floods, Vermont Emergency Management piloted a program in partnership with Vermont's Regional

Planning Commissions to identify, prioritize and develop potential projects in targeted communities including Montpelier. Working with SLR Consulting, the result was a list of 5 projects prioritized by Montpelier for grant proposals selected from a full list of 35 prospects. The full list with submitted projects highlighted can be seen [here](#).

- **Study of in-water recreation opportunities overseen by the Montpelier Parks Department** - With an award from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Collaborative, the Montpelier Parks Department commissioned a study of potential in-water recreation opportunities in the rivers of the city. The resulting report was presented at a public meeting hosted on April 15, 2026. The report can be found [here](#).
- **Property Buy-Outs resulting from the 2023 floods** - Property buy-outs have taken place at 127 Elm St, 189 State Street, and 197 State Street in Montpelier. Once the houses are removed, these properties will become permanent greenspace. The property at 127 Elm is directly adjacent to the river, whereas the two on State Street lie on the other side of State St. (Rte 2). Through their Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, the National Park Service is providing design services to the Montpelier Parks Department regarding the property at 127 Elm St.
- **2025 Discussion and Decision about Confluence Park** - Emerging from 1995 community plans for Montpelier's riverfront, and resurfacing in multiple city plans since, Vermont River Conservancy worked with a range of city residents and stakeholders to design Confluence River Park. The park would provide bench seating, and accessible paths for fishing, paddling, and splashing in the heart of downtown. In August of 2024, Montpelier's City Council rescinded support for the park on a 1 - 5 vote. This decision was informed in part by public concerns about investing in a place frequented by Montpelier's growing population of people experiencing houselessness, along with financial concerns. The park is fully designed and – with renewed city support and funding – would be ready for implementation.

- **A Riverfront Made Up of Public and Privately Held Land** - Montpelier's riverfront consists of a diversity of landowners including the City, the State of Vermont, and private businesses, individuals, and organizations. This planning process has the potential to influence all property types. In developing and implementing the Rivers Edge Action Plan, strategies for privately held properties will need to be different than those focused on existing public lands. In selecting the 2 - 3 areas for specific design work that is envisioned as part of this planning process, ownership of the property should be a consideration. For privately held properties, owners with an openness to implementing potential plan recommendations should be a factor in selection for design work.
- **Montpelier's Community of People Experiencing Houselessness** - Due to many local, regional, and statewide factors, the presence of people experiencing houselessness has grown significantly in Montpelier's downtown since the Covid-19 pandemic. This has resulted in many challenging conversations as the community tries to balance compassion with a commitment to shared norms and public safety. At times debate focuses on current or proposed public spaces and how to ensure that they are accessible and safe for all. Montpelier's river's edge has and continues to serve as a gathering place and camping location for those experiencing houselessness. While no discussion or planning effort focused on use of the river's edge will resolve the difficult social and economic trends that exacerbate the issue, it will be important for any planning process to account for these dynamics and to be sure that all voices in Montpelier are part of the conversation about our rivers.

3. Funding

The project is funded by a Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development along with an appropriation from the City of Montpelier. The total maximum amount available for consultant services and any associated expenses are **\$75,040**.

4. Scope of Work

The selected consultant will be responsible for the following key tasks, as outlined in the Municipal Planning Grant work plan:

- **Existing Conditions and Baseline Assessment:** Analyze current policies, community and environmental conditions, and previous planning efforts (e.g., City Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, RIVER Project List).
- **Public Engagement Support:** Co-develop a Public Engagement Plan with Foundation for a Resilient Montpelier to ensure broad and diverse participation. Support the implementation of that plan through steering committee participation, preparation of materials, and compilation of input.
- **Plan Development:** Co-create a plan with the community's vision and values, including identifying 3 target areas and providing conceptual designs that align the riverfront land use and design with the community vision and values revealed during the public engagement process. The 3 target areas would have specific conceptual designs and land use and zoning recommendations. The plan would also include recommended city-wide property buy-out policies and urban design and riverfront guidelines. Where appropriate, incorporate the [Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines](#).
- **Implementation & Costing:** Provide phasing strategies, implementation plan and recommendations, and conceptual cost estimates for 2 - 3 proposed projects.

5. Timeframe

This project will be launched within 4 weeks after signing a contract with a planning consultant. The deadline to expend Municipal Planning Grant funds is December 31, 2027 and the goal is to complete this project in the fall of 2027.

6. Deliverables

- Existing conditions and baseline assessment

- Site inventory map, including current land use, zoning and other land use/flood regulations, ownership, and points of public access
- Compilation of previous planning efforts and engineering studies
- Environmental assessment, including water quality, existing and potential floodplains, and wildlife habitat
- Community assessment, including existing infrastructure (water, wastewater, stormwater, parking and transportation, etc.), public space use and utilization, access and connectivity, and community use
- Review and compilation of pertinent policies and regulations, including local, state, and federal policies and regulations
- Input for the development of a Public Engagement Plan
 - Foundation for a Resilient Montpelier will take the lead, with consultant support, on public engagement for this planning effort, beginning with the development of a plan. The hired consultant will bring their expertise and experience to bear in the crafting of this plan, with an eye towards inclusivity, creativity, and gathering meaningful input.
- Public engagement implementation, compilation and reporting
 - Foundation for a Resilient Montpelier will play a leading role in implementing a public engagement plan with support from the hired consultant. That support will include:
 - Drafting of materials, presentations, and visuals needed for public engagement
 - Actively participating in meetings of a Community Steering Committee that will help to guide the planning process and public engagement efforts
 - Compiling and synthesizing the results and outcomes of public engagement
 - Producing a report for the community that provides compiled results and a summary of public engagement efforts
- Articulation of Montpelier's Vision and Values for the river's edge

- Based on input gathered from the community, a key goal of this planning process will be the establishment of a statement of vision and values for Montpelier's river's edge.
- A Draft Plan including:
 - The existing conditions and baseline assessment
 - A Community Vision and Values Statement for the river's edge in Montpelier
 - An overall vision framework and physical master plan for the planning area
 - A prioritized list of potential actions/opportunities to align riverfront land use with vision and values
 - The identification of 2 - 3 specific public and/or privately held river's edge locations where there is the strongest opportunity to better align riverfront land use with community vision and values
 - Specific conceptual designs for the 2 - 3 targeted locations along the river's edge
 - Recommendations for municipal and regional policy and regulatory changes, public and private investment, climate adaptation strategies, and implementation and funding recommendations that will contribute to the realization of the aforementioned Vision and Values
- Final Plan including all of the components listed above plus:
 - A compilation and summary of public input received through the planning effort
 - An outline of actions and potential costs necessary to implement final designs and plan recommendations

7. Submission Requirements

All responses to the RFP shall include the following information:

Cover Letter – A letter of interest and a summary of qualifications, recommended approaches, scope of work, processes and deliverables for the project.

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 an 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. While the work plan above conforms with the requirements of the Municipal Planning Grant, feel free to propose new/creative approaches to this project. (If chosen, alternative approaches may require approval from the state.)

Proposed Schedule – Provide a schedule that includes completion of work tasks and deliverables, including key meetings and complies with the timeframe provided above.

Project Budget – Provide a detailed budget broken down by task and team member. Include your overhead and hourly rates for the individuals involved.

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.

Sample Contract and Grant Requirements - Applicants should review and confirm that they are able and willing to meet all grant requirements and provisions in the [attached sample contract](#).

References – A minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last ten (10) years.

Page Limit – The proposal, encompassing items 1-6 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 City of Montpelier upon submission. The City 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 City. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the consultant. The City 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 City. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates the City to award a contract.

8. Submission Instructions

Submission Instructions

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF) of the proposal by October 30, 2026 to:

Local Project Manager Contact Information

On behalf of the City of Montpelier:

Jon Copans, Executive Director, Foundation for a Resilient Montpelier

PO Box 364, Montpelier, VT 05601

Phone: (802) 272-0162

E-Mail: jon@montpelierstrong.org

Please expect a confirmation email upon receipt of the proposal.

If you have any questions about this project or the RFP, please address them via email to the project manager. We will respond to all questions in writing within 7 days. Both the question and response will be shared with all consultants.

9. RFP Schedule Summary

- Proposals due October 30, 2026

- Questions due October 16, 2026
- Answers posted October 23, 2026
- Interviews on November 16 and 17, 2026
- Consultant selection by December 11, 2026
- Project Work to begin January 4, 2027
- Complete project on or by November 30, 2027

10. Proposal Selection

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee composed of representatives from the City of Montpelier and Foundation for a Resilient Montpelier. A short-list of consultants may be selected for interviews.

A. Proposal Evaluation

Respondents will be evaluated according to the following factors:

- Consultant Qualifications (experience with similar projects, ability to work with municipalities to attain desired outcomes, and knowledge of the topic) - 40%
- Scope of work, fees, methodology, and schedule - 40%
- Proposal quality, completeness, and clarity - 20%

B. Interview Framework

The City reserves the right to select the top two to three highly scored consultants and invite them for an interview prior to awarding the contract. In this process, the selection committee may ask the respondents to give an oral presentation of their respective proposals. The purpose of this oral presentation is to provide an in-depth analysis of qualifications and experience. The interview will last 60 minutes, consisting of a presentation and Q&A. All costs incurred in traveling for the purpose of the interview shall be the responsibility of the consultant.

C. Final Consultant Selection

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

11. Grant & Contractual Requirements

The consultant contract will be subject to the terms of Attachment D of the Municipal Planning Grant Agreement (Procurement Procedures and Other Grant Requirements). Please review this [sample contract](#), as it meets stated requirements.