



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For the preparation of a

BETHEL CENTER TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN in BETHEL CONNECTICUT

1. OVERVIEW

The Town of Bethel (hereinafter referred to as the “Town”) has received a grant award from the Office of Policy & Management Intergovernmental Policy Division (OPM) as well as from the Bethel Affordable Housing Trust Fund to prepare a Bethel Center Transit Oriented Development Plan in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.

The Town invites proposals from consultants and/or firms having expertise in transit oriented development planning, facilitating public participation, transportation planning/engineering, architecture, design and civil engineering, economic analysis, and land use.

2. SUMMARY

Bethel is a quintessential New England town situated in northern Fairfield County, Connecticut and within the New York metropolitan region. With a “Main Street” like downtown, the busiest train station on the Danbury Branch of the Metro North rail line, and underused, outdated and incompatible industrial properties surrounding it, Bethel is perfectly suited for transit oriented development.

Transit oriented development (TOD) is not a new concept to Bethel. The Town has been steadily planning for TOD since it adopted its 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development. The Plan identified the many benefits of TOD and identified 130 acres that should be

considered as its potential boundary. In 2010, the Town and the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials, now known as the Western Connecticut Council of Governments, prepared a TOD feasibility study for Bethel. The Plan provided a better understanding of the development potential, economic impact, and other technical components for planning for TOD and provided a forum to inform and educate the public. However, it was a framework that was meant to be built upon with a more comprehensive Plan.

The following are several important elements that must be addressed in this new Plan:

Downtown Integration

Most important in this effort is that the Plan must incorporate the existing village center areas into the TOD planning area. The projected TOD area encompasses land to the east and west of the rail line with adjacent historic residential neighborhoods and distinct and established core commercial areas on Greenwood Avenue and Grassy Plain Street. A goal of the study will be to seamlessly integrate the new TOD area with these existing downtown commercial corridors both physically and economically. Development should serve to support and enhance the existing downtown areas so determining the right mix of new residential and commercial uses and density allowances is critical.

Density of Development

Related to the above, the Plan should determine the proper uses and density of development for residential and commercial components within the TOD. With a large area identified for TOD there are established neighborhoods where TOD must integrate with and transition from in terms of use, bulk, form, height, architecture, landscaping, and streetscape. Looking at the context of each area as it relates to density and use will be critical. Visualization tools and design concepts will be most helpful in this effort. The plan must also look at density as it relates to economic viability. To be attractive to the development community the economics of density must work.

Affordable Housing

As this plan is partially funded through a grant from the Bethel Affordable Housing Trust Fund, providing affordable housing is a primary objective of this planning project. The Town would like careful consideration given to incorporating an Incentive Housing Zone Overlay (Connecticut General Statutes 8-13m-x) and accompanying zoning regulations into the implementation plan. The Town recognizes the importance of providing affordable housing in centralized locations where services and infrastructure are in place. It also recognizes the need of such housing and its benefit in various population groups. The Town further recognizes that any commitment to providing affordable housing will likely require higher density housing within the TOD.

Sewer

Sewer demand, capacity limits and infrastructure are issues that will require careful consideration as well. The Town has an inter-local agreement with the City of Danbury to pump sewerage into their treatment facilities. While there appears to be sufficient capacity at this time to manage new TOD, sufficient study must be completed to identify any challenges and offer recommendations.

Common Elements

To properly implement TOD, there must be clear identification on what common elements are necessary for orderly development and to assign responsibility to the proper party for their implementation. The common elements include sidewalks, access points, parking lots, plazas, parks, pedestrian rail access, streetscape and other pedestrian friendly amenities that provide connection or may be shared within the TOD.

Traffic

A review of TOD's impact on the road network must also be evaluated to determine what improvements may be necessary to ensure safe and convenient travel throughout the downtown area.

Public Participation

Lastly, a key objective of this new Plan will be to engage the public, stakeholders, elected officials, and the development community; and encourage participation throughout the planning process. The end result would be the creation of a clearly outlined road map, guidelines, and regulatory framework to facilitate its implementation that is built on community consensus.

Previous Planning Documents

The following links provide the necessary background to help interested parties better understand what planning has occurred to date, what planning remains to be done, what the Town's goals are for the TOD Plan and process. It is strongly recommended that interested parties review each of the following:

The following documents can be found at:

2015 TOD Planning Grant Award

[http://www.bethelct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel Planning Grant Award OPM - 2015.pdf](http://www.bethelct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel%20Planning%20Grant%20Award%20OPM%20-%202015.pdf)

2014 TOD Planning Grant Application

[http://www.bethel-ct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel%2C CT - TOD Plannning Grant Application 2014.pdf](http://www.bethel-ct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel%20CT%20-%20TOD%20Planning%20Grant%20Application%202014.pdf)

2011 Downtown Parking Supply and Demand

[http://www.bethel-ct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel Downtown Parking Study - 2011.pdf](http://www.bethel-ct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel%20Downtown%20Parking%20Study%20-%202011.pdf)

2010 Bethel Rail Station Transit Oriented Development Study (see pgs. 66-73)

[http://www.bethel-ct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel March 2010 - TOD STUDY.pdf](http://www.bethel-ct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel%20March%202010%20-%20TOD%20STUDY.pdf)

2007 Bethel Plan of Conservation and Development

[http://www.bethel-ct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel 2007 POCD.pdf](http://www.bethel-ct.gov/filestorage/1190/136/8405/Bethel%202007%20POCD.pdf)

Time to Completion

The Town has been planning for TOD for several years, engaging property owners within the area and the development community in conversation about the potential for redevelopment. With that, and as the economy improves, the Town has seen heightened interest in TOD and several conceptual proposals and one formal application for development have been presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission in the past several months.

The Town wants to ensure there is ample time for the TOD planning process to take place; however, the reality of strong development interest and the state of the economy are also considerations. The Town's goal would therefore be to complete the study in a nine (9) to twelve (12) month period and sooner if feasible.

3. SCOPE OF WORK & DELIVERABLES

Presented below are the specific tasks and deliverables for this project. The tasks listed are meant to represent the minimum required end products. All responders to the RFP are encouraged to present their approach to meet the needs described in this RFP and the general scope of work.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

1. Engaging Stakeholders

- a. Preparation
- b. Interviews and Meetings

2. Technical Analysis

- a. Transportation
- b. Sewer Analysis
- c. Environmental Analysis
- d. Economic/Market / Build-out Analysis
- e. Interim Report

3. Planning Charrette

- a. Preparation
- b. Charrette Week

4. TOD Implementation Plan

- a. Draft
- b. Final Report

The process and deliverables for Bethel's TOD planning grant should be based on a balanced mixture of public input and technical analysis, design creativity and planning skill. Public input is designed to build buy-in and ownership from stakeholders, property owners and residents. The technical analysis is designed to address critical questions and provide a factual baseline for the TOD Vision and Implementation Plan. Below is a description of the proposed intended process and deliverables.

Task 1: Listening to the Community/Engaging Stakeholders – The first step in the process will be a series of interviews and a public information meeting to identify stakeholders’ and public’s perceptions and attitudes with regard to the TOD concept.

Deliverable: A shared set of planning principles to guide the remainder of the process.

Task 2: Technical Analysis – Concurrently, the project will focus on five technical areas: Transportation, Sewer Capacity, Environmental, and Market and Build-out Analysis.

- **Transportation** – Data will be refreshed and updated to examine access, mobility, parking and circulation issues and needs of all modes. The design of proposed train station improvements will be examined for their support of the TOD goals.
- **Sewer Analysis** – Data will be gathered to assess capacity and delivery systems and to ensure that the existing capacity and current disparities in peak flow at the three pump stations can be addressed in order to provide sufficient capacity and flow controls for TOD.
- **Environmental Analysis** – While a general analysis of the environmental conditions has been performed, a more detailed soils analysis will be necessary to determine the extent and location of wetlands. Furthermore, the limits of the 100 year flood plan will be established by use of mapping data available from FEMA.
- **Economic/Market Analysis** – Data gathering will focus on examining likely market demand for commercial and residential uses within the next 5-10 years, based on population change, demographic shifts, lifestyle preferences, and consumer preferences.
- **Build out-Analysis** - Based on data collected, and discussion with the committee, the consultant will develop a tabular listing of developable land/buildings by acreage/gross area, type of use, and potential parking demand. It will include underutilized parcels/buildings with infill potential in this analysis. This information will help inform the market study and be used later in the study process to help set the context for discussion of the options for a future development scenario for the TOD area.

Deliverable: The information gathered will be synthesized into an interim report that will be used during the Charrette to inform the public of the draft vision and plan.

Task 3: Planning Charrette – The Charrette will bring together planning, transportation, market analysis, and engineering expertise with the public to draft a vision plan for Bethel’s TOD. The Charrette will include public meetings, hands-on public design sessions, interviews, and technical meetings that will further engage the community. There will be specific meetings with special interest groups to address any discrepancies between technical analysis and the public’s vision. Hands-on design sessions will focus participants on the specific character of the TOD area and its integration with neighborhoods and downtown. Through the Charrette, the TOD Plan for Bethel will be created on-site and with transparently providing a strong foundation for community ownership and understanding.

Deliverables: The Charrette will produce:

- The Vision that reflects and identifies the community priorities and lays the foundation for the TOD Plan;
- The Plan's policy framework, including land use, regulatory, transportation, economic development, and engineering recommendations;
- TOD area schematic illustrative site plans and architectural renderings.

Task 4: The TOD Plan – At the end of the Charrette all the elements will be in place to enable the preparation of the Bethel's TOD Plan. The Plan will include recommendations for:

- **Land Use and Urban Design:** Appropriate and site specific uses, size, height, location and design of buildings; Densities and preferential location of residential and commercial uses in relationship to existing residential neighborhoods, proximity to the train station, and downtown; Details on the design of common area (including location, development and maintenance responsibilities);
- **Regulations:** Guidelines to develop new zoning regulations;
- **Transportation:** Accommodating future traffic demand while maintaining the quality of the pedestrian and bicycling environments; street and sidewalk design; access, mobility, parking and circulation, and rail service;
- **Economic Development:** Strategies and tactics to strengthen the economic performance of the TOD area and downtown; and
- **Implementation:** Steps for the orderly development of the TOD.

Deliverable: The TOD Plan

4. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal must contain the following information:

- a. Letter of interest, followed by information on the firm including description of current workload, also if available brochures for both the firm and proposed sub-consultants.
- b. Statement summarizing the experience of the firm and proposed sub-consultants with similar transportation planning, including at least three references and summaries of comparable projects (type, scale and scope) demonstrating knowledge and expertise.
- c. Detailed statement describing the organizational framework for this project, including clear identification of the lead firm, project manager and sub-consultants, the roles and responsibilities of each sub-consultant, identification of any disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) contractor, and disclosure of any shared interests among the firm and proposed sub-consultants, such as parent-subsidiary, joint ventures, formal affiliations, etc.
- d. No disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) contract percentage is specifically required, but is encouraged, for this planning project. If included, attach proof of Connecticut DBE Certification.

e. Narrative that describes the suggested study approach and addresses the goals and objectives stated in the scope of work, followed by resumes of key personnel to be assigned to this project and the amount of time they will devote to project activities.

f. Scheduling, followed by rates, person-hour estimates and a total fee, the total to be a not to exceed dollar amount for completing all aspects of this planning project.

5. SELECTION PROCEDURES

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated by the selection committee in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Technical competence of the consultant and subcontractors.
2. Qualifications of key personnel assigned to this project.
3. Experience with previous Transit Oriented Development planning projects.
4. Demonstration of understanding of study objectives.
5. Thoroughness, creativity, and clarity of suggested approach.
6. Knowledge of relevant federal and state procedures.
7. Experience and success with comparable projects.
8. Ability to meet expected project timelines and completion target date.
9. The selection committee reserves the right to rank firms based upon their written proposals only without an interview phase.
10. The Town may negotiate to refine the scope of services and reach agreement on details as to terms and fees for professional services.
11. The Town reserves the right to terminate negotiations at any time and commence negotiations with the next most qualified firm.

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

a. INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals (RFP) should be directed in writing to Steve Palmer, Planning & Zoning Director at the address noted above, or via email to palmers@bethel-ct.gov.

b. SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be signed by a representative of the firm having legal authority to contract on behalf of the firm. Proposals will be treated as bona fide offers and must remain open for a period of 90 days from the closing date for submissions.

c. STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications statements from consortia, joint ventures or teams will be accepted. In such cases, a lead firm must be identified for contracting purposes. A qualifications statement must be prepared for each member of the consortia, joint venture or team, and each qualifications statement should clearly identify the lead firm.

The lead firm should have sufficient experience and expertise to conduct or supervise all facets of the proposed project, and the lead firm will be legally responsible to the Town for performance of the total contract.

Also, the lead firm must have sufficient resources to carry out the contractual responsibilities of the consortium, joint venture or team; and the lead firm must conduct at least fifty one percent (51%) of the total work awarded under any contract issued as a result of this RFP.

Please note that firms that are subsidiaries or affiliates of another may not rely on the experience, expertise or resources of its parent firm to meet these requirements.

d. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT AND NONDISCRIMINATION

All contracts awarded as a result of this RFP are subject to Section 4a-60 of the Connecticut General Statutes, nondiscrimination and affirmative action provisions in contracts of the state and political subdivisions other than municipalities. Contracts also are subject to all other applicable state and federal laws concerning civil rights, nondiscrimination and equal opportunities for employment.

e. REJECTION RIGHTS

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP. The Town also reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time and to reissue this or a substitute RFP at a later date.

f. COST OF PROPOSAL PREPARATION

All costs associated with any response to this RFP, including the development of qualifications statements and participation in the selection process, are the sole responsibility of the respondent firms.

The Town will not reimburse any firms for such costs nor will any successful firms be permitted to negotiate such costs as part of any contract or agreement with HVCEO.

g. PROHIBITED INTEREST

No member, officer or employee of the Town, or member of a local public body having jurisdiction within the Town, during his or her tenure or one year thereafter, shall be permitted to share in, have interest in or benefit from, directly or indirectly, any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP.

h. OTHER

Any firm selected to perform any or all work associated with this RFP will be required to execute an agreement with the Town and meet any conditions on use of funds imposed by the State of Connecticut.

7. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

The Town will accept complete proposals for preparing the Bethel Center TOD Plan by mail or in person until 4:00 PM on Thursday, April 30, 2015.

Respondents must submit five paper copies of their proposal and a digital copy by email or on a CD to:

Town of Bethel Purchasing Authority
Purchasing Office
Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center
1 School Street
Bethel, CT 06801

Email: palmers@bethel-ct.gov