

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
FOR A COMPLETE REAPPRAISAL**

**ISSUED BY**

**THE TOWN OF STRAFFORD, VERMONT**

**227 JUSTIN MORRILL HIGHWAY, PO Box 27, STRAFFORD, VT 05072**

**DATE OF ISSUE: October 31, 2024**

**DUE DATE FOR PROPOSAL: December 2, 2024**

The Town of Strafford is requesting proposals from qualified, certified reappraisal Contractors to work with Town's Board of Listers to perform a complete town-wide reappraisal of real taxable and nontaxable property for the 2026 or 2027 Grand List.

The selected Contractor will be responsible for a thorough analysis of local real estate market conditions and review of the existing Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) data leading to the development of computer models for estimating the fair market value of all taxable properties in the Town of Strafford.

Proposals will be accepted until 4:00 p.m., December 2, 2024. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative. Copies of this request for proposal may be obtained by calling Lisa Kendall, the Town Clerk, at (802) 765-4411, or by email at [townclerk@straffordvt.org](mailto:townclerk@straffordvt.org).

## TOWN OF STRAFFORD COMPLETE REAPPRAISAL

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Strafford is situated near the eastern side of Orange County. It has a total area of 44 square miles and about 68 miles of roads, most of which are not paved. Water comprises only 0.25% of the total area, but the West Branch of the Ompompanoosuc River flows through the town. There were about 1,100 residents as of the 2020 census.

Most parcels are classified as residential and most of that land is forested. There are some active agricultural parcels, a few retail /commercial properties and no industry. Most housing is single family homes (either residents or seasonal dwellings) with a small number of landed and unlanded mobile homes and individual apartments. The Town of Strafford has designated upper and lower village districts, no TIF Districts, and a single property with Covenant Restricted Housing. The town shares a 5 MW solar park, situated on the old Elizabeth Mine EPA Superfund site, with the adjoining Town of Thetford.

The Town was last reappraised in 2014 by The Vermont Appraisal Company. Our Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) and Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) were well within accepted limits until 2021. Like most towns and cities in Vermont, these statistics began inflating during the COVID pandemic, but did not cross the thresholds mandating reappraisal until this year, when our CLA was 82.76%, the COD was 21.4%. We continue to see sales for  $\geq 1.5$  times our assessed values.

In the 2024 Grand List there were 795 total parcels, of which 674 were taxable (the difference is mostly due there being 95 inactive contiguous properties). There are also 27 non-taxable parcels. There were 165 parcels enrolled in the Vermont Use Value Program (aka 'Current Use'), and they comprise about 61% of the total land area. The parcel breakout was as follows: R1 = 201, R2 = 280, S1 = 11, S2 = 40, MHU = 4, MHL = 40, C = 12, CA = 1, UE = 6, F = 24, W = 52, M = 32 (details are on the Form 411 summary page provided as an addendum).

The Town currently uses MICROSOLVE CAMA software provided by the New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC), and the reappraisal project will be completed using this software either running on the town's server or, more likely, in the NEMRC cloud service.

## 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- A. **Objective:** This reappraisal should generate accurate, defensible estimates of the fair market value for every property in the Town of Strafford as soon as possible. In addition, the models shall be integrated into the CAMA system so that future construction, subdivisions and changes to existing properties may be valued using the same methodologies.
- B. **The project shall involve:**
  - Development of new land schedules and neighborhood delineations to estimate land values for every parcel in the Town.

- Detailed analysis of all sales over a three-year period to develop direct sale comparison and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) approaches as well as formulating accurate, localized cost and depreciation schedules to develop a cost approach for all types of properties.
- Exterior inspections and photography of dwellings and outbuildings on all the parcels. Exterior measurements of structures will be acquired when necessary to update current data.
- Interior inspections of as many dwellings as possible and of sufficient number to produce accurate results for all properties. (Inability to complete interior inspections must be beyond control of the site inspector and noted on the record.)
- Working closely with Town Listers and staff throughout the project.

These, and any other applicable methods, shall be incorporated into the existing MICROSOLVE software system and the existing property listing data will be reviewed to assure compliance with the new analyses.

### **3. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

- A. The Contractor shall review existing CAMA property descriptions, neighborhood delineations, tax maps, zoning descriptions and other relevant information to understand the current assessment system.
- B. The Contractor shall analyze up to three (3) years of sales information, verifying the sales information and correcting, as needed, the associated assessment information.
- C. The Contractor shall review and refine neighborhood delineations, analyze vacant and improved property sales and develop land-pricing schedules that result in accurate estimates for land values for every property in the Town. The new land schedules must also produce current Homestead and Housesite site values, where applicable.
- D. The Contractor shall review existing CAMA property descriptions to assure compliance with new market models for valuation using the MICROSOLVE software.
- E. The Contractor shall produce new models in the MICROSOLVE system for cost and depreciation, sales comparisons, multiple regression analysis, income and any other applicable valuation methods for all types of real property in the Town of Strafford.
- F. The Contractor shall test the various computer models against the existing sales data to verify the reliability and accuracy of the models for estimating fair market values.
- G. The Contractor shall produce, review and verify fair market value estimates for every property in the Town of Strafford.
- H. The Contractor shall, when necessary and possible, measure all physical improvements and give a listing of interior and exterior construction details. Quality of construction, age, effective age and condition will be shown. Additional area above or below the first floor of buildings shall be accurately measured where the square footage cannot otherwise be precisely determined based on first floor areas.
- I. The Contractor shall provide a plan for using alternative sources and approaches for estimating interior improvements in lieu of physical inspection.

- J. The Contractor shall take a minimum of two (2) digital photographs of each dwelling and at least one photograph of each structure greater than 100 square feet. Photographs shall be incorporated into the CAMA database.
- K. The Contractor, working with the Town, shall produce a Change of Assessment Notice, including every assessment change, to be mailed to every taxpayer as the official notification.
- L. The Contractor shall defend values at the grievance level, at the Board of Civil Authority level, and, if necessary, at the State Board of Appraisers or Superior Court.
- M. The Contractor shall produce manuals clearly explaining the valuation methods, the data and the processes to aid the Town in defending the new assessments, and valuing new properties, subdivisions and changes to existing properties. This includes a thorough description of land grading values as well as how peculiarities in construction that are not described in Marshall & Swift are appraised.
- N. The Contractor shall complete all these activities in compliance with Vermont's reappraisal evaluation (formerly, the Three Prong Test) as described in the Vermont Department of Taxes document [GB-1267](#) "Reappraisal Activity for the Equalization Study (June 2022)", accepted appraisal practices and conform to all applicable state statutes and rules.

#### **4. AVAILABLE INFORMATION**

- Current tax map and parcel data, identification numbers and acreage
- Current zoning maps
- Surveys where available
- Examples of current land schedules
- Property descriptions from the current CAMA system (cost sheets and Lister cards)

#### **5. TOWN INVOLVEMENT (SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO)**

- The Board of Listers and selected staff will take an active role in assisting in the selection process for the successful Proposer by the Selectboard
- The Town will be responsible for printing and mailing of postcards announcing reappraisal and requesting appointments
- The Town will be responsible for the cost of supplies such as paper, post cards, postage and the mailing of the official notification
- The Town will provide workspace in the form of one (1) office with telephone that has access to copy/print/scan during regular business hours at the Town Hall, as well as for pre-hearings and formal hearings.
- Providing an available copy of parcel maps with 911 locations for in-office use and to data collectors for assistance in the location of properties; these are also available via the QGIS mapping software used currently
- Scheduling of appointments as needed.
- Copies of property transfer tax returns for sales review
- The Listers office will keep values current for properties with building and/or subdivision permits
- The Listers office will maintain Current Use annual updates and calculate allocations

## 6. PROPOSED AWARD SCHEDULE

The Proposal must include a work schedule and a final completion date.

Proposal Issued	October 31, 2024
Proposals Due By	December 2, 2024

If additional information or consultations are needed from any Contractor during this window, the Contractor(s) will be notified by the Town of Strafford.

## 7. DELIVERABLES

The final work product will be the 2026 or 2027 completed Grand List, and will include the Change of Assessment Notices, updates to the MICROSOLVE CAMA software that reflect the new land schedules and updated cost, income and market models and the successful completion of the grievance and BCA appeals. The documentation produced for this project shall include: a new land valuation manual that includes neighborhood delineations, land schedules and descriptions of adjustments, a copy of the sales file and adjustments made to create the land schedule, copies of any data collection or review manuals developed for or used during this project, and copies of any other manuals, tables or reference materials developed or used during this project. All data, maps, reports, forms and worksheets used or developed for this reappraisal shall belong to the Town of Strafford.

## 8. ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

The proposals are due by **4:00 p.m., December 2, 2024**. Proposals may be submitted in electronic form to [townclerk@straffordvt.org](mailto:townclerk@straffordvt.org), or one (1) original and two (2) copies of the complete proposals shall be submitted in a sealed envelope, clearly marked **2025 TOWN OF STRAFFORD REAPPRAISAL** and addressed to: **Town Clerk, PO BOX 27, Strafford, VT 05072**.

### The proposal should include the following qualifications:

- A. Scope of services
- B. Professional qualifications and names of the principals of the firm
- C. Qualifications of the project manager and key staff assigned to the project
- D. Description of the proposed methodologies for assessing values on each class of property
- E. Description of quality control and testing results
- F. A cost proposal
- G. A work schedule and a final completion date
- H. List of all municipal reappraisals currently underway or completed within the last three years including client contacts and references
- I. Number of Inspectors to be deployed.

Firms submitting Qualifications for the project shall bear the full cost of preparing the Qualifications and negotiating the final contract if selected by the Town. There shall be no claims whatsoever for reimbursement from the Town for the cost and expenses associated with this process.

**Evaluation of the proposal will be based on:**

- A. Firm’s understanding of the scope
- B. Proposed methodology for completing work
- C. Qualifications of the firm and personnel dedicated to the project
- D. Work on similar projects
- E. Cost proposal
- F. Work Schedule

The Town of Strafford reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to modify or issue changes to the original RFP. Any change will be distributed to all those originally issued the RFP. The Town also reserves the right to select the Contractor that, in the best judgment of the Town, will perform the best work in a timely manner irrespective of the estimated fee for completing the project. The City may also negotiate with Contractors to modify or amend certain portions of their respective proposal.

The work shall not be assigned or sublet without previous consent of the Town of Strafford and the Contractor shall not either legally or equitably assign any of the moneys payable under this agreement, unless by and with consent of the Town of Strafford.

This Request for Proposal is intended to be explanatory, but should any discrepancy appear or any misunderstanding arise as to the intent of anything contained therewith, the interpretation and decision of the Town of Strafford shall be final and binding. Any corrections of errors or omissions in the Request for Proposal may be made by the Town of Strafford when such correction is necessary for the proper fulfillment of their intention as construed by the Town of Strafford.

**9. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Equal Employment Opportunity**

The Contractor shall comply with the applicable provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Executive Order 11246 as amended by Executive Order 11375 and as supplemented by the Department of Labor Regulations (41 CFR Part 60). The Contractor shall comply with all requirements of Title 21 V.S.A Chapter 5, Subchapters 6 and 7 relating to fair employment practices to the extent applicable. A similar provision shall be included in any and all subcontracts.

**Insurance**

The Contractor shall take out and maintain during the life of this project, such Comprehensive General Bodily Injury Liability Insurance and Property Damage Liability Insurance as shall protect them and any employee for personal injury, including accidental death, and from claims for property damage, which may arise from operations under this project, whether such operations by themselves or by any employee or by anyone directly or indirectly employed by them. The Contractor shall have minimum umbrella coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

## **Indemnification**

The Contractor shall and hereby agree to indemnify, save harmless and defend the Town of Strafford from the payment of any sum of money to any person whomsoever on account of claims or suits growing out of injuries to persons, including death, or damages to property caused by the Contractor, the Contractor's employees, agents of sub-Contractors or in any way attributable to the performance and prosecution of the work herein contracted for, including (but without limiting the generality of the foregoing), all claims for service, labor performed, materials furnished, provisions and supplies, injuries to persons or damage to property, liens, garnishments, attachments, claims, suits, costs, attorney's fees, costs of investigation and of defense.

### **10. TOWN CONTACT**

Tim Denny, Board of Listers Chairperson

[tdenny@straffordvt.org](mailto:tdenny@straffordvt.org)

802-765-4360

**11. ADDENDUM:** Town of Strafford 2024 Vermont Form 411, first page



(Taxable properties only - State and Non-tax status properties are not listed below)

REAL ESTATE Category/Code	Parcel Count	Municipal Listed Value	Homestead Ed Listed Value	Nonhmstd Ed. Listed Value	Total Education Listed Value
Residential I R1	201	49,777,800	37,832,300	11,945,500	49,777,800
Residential II R2	280	107,920,100	73,894,200	34,025,900	107,920,100
Mobile Homes-U MHU	4	55,800	25,400	30,400	55,800
Mobile Homes-L MHL	11	1,465,500	806,600	658,900	1,465,500
Seasonal I S1	11	984,200	321,600	662,600	984,200
Seasonal II S2	40	10,529,100	1,710,000	8,819,100	10,529,100
Commercial C	12	5,774,000	0	5,774,000	5,774,000
Commercial Apts CA	1	213,900	0	213,900	213,900
Industrial I	0	0	0	0	0
Utilities-E UE	6	12,996,500	0	12,996,500	12,996,500
Utilities-O UO	0	0	0	0	0
Farm F	24	14,216,300	6,596,100	7,620,200	14,216,300
Other O	0	0	0	0	0
Woodland W	52	8,049,600	5,700	8,043,900	8,049,600
Miscellaneous M	32	2,857,100	0	2,857,100	2,857,100
<b>TOTAL LISTED REAL</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>214,839,900</b>	<b>121,191,900</b>	<b>93,648,000</b>	<b>214,839,900</b>
P.P. Cable	1	433		433	433
P.P. Equipment	0	0			
P.P. Inventory	0	0			
<b>TOTAL LISTED P.P.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>433</b>		<b>433</b>	<b>433</b>
<b>TOTAL LISTED VALUE</b>		<b>214,840,333</b>	<b>121,191,900</b>	<b>93,648,433</b>	<b>214,840,333</b>
<b>EXEMPTIONS</b>					
Veterans 10K	5/5	50,000	40,000	10,000	50,000
Veterans >10K		150,000			
<b>Total Veterans</b>		<b>200,000</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>
P.P. Contracts	0	0			
Contract Apprv VEPC	1/1	981,500	0	981,500	981,500
Grandfathered	2/2	595,200	0	595,200	595,200
Non-Apprv(voted)	0/0	0			
Owner Pays Ed Tax	0/0	0			
<b>Total Contracts</b>	<b>3/3</b>	<b>1,576,700</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,576,700</b>	<b>1,576,700</b>
FarmStab Apprv VEPC	0/0	0	0	0	0
Farm Grandfathered	0/0	0	0	0	0
Non-Apprv(voted)	0/0	0			
Owner Pays Ed Tax	0/0	0			
<b>Total FarmStabContr</b>	<b>0/0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Current Use	165/165	17,598,300	6,164,600	11,433,700	17,598,300
Special Exemptions	3		0	2,736,900	2,736,900
Partial Statutory	0/0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub-total Exemptions</b>		<b>19,375,000</b>	<b>6,204,600</b>	<b>15,757,300</b>	<b>21,961,900</b>
<b>Total Exemptions</b>		<b>19,375,000</b>	<b>6,204,600</b>	<b>15,757,300</b>	<b>21,961,900</b>
<b>TOTAL MUNICIPAL GRAND LIST</b>		<b>1,954,653.33</b>			
<b>TOTAL EDUCATION GRAND LIST</b>			<b>1,149,873.00</b>	<b>778,911.33</b>	<b>1,928,784.33</b>
<b>NON-TAX</b>	<b>25 NON-TAX PARCELS ARE NOT INCLUDED ON THE 411</b>				