

# Memorandum

TO: Greg Duggan, Town Manager and Selectboard  
FROM: Katherine Sonnick, Community Development Director  
Aaron Martin, P.E., Public Water Director *AKM*  
DATE: September 23, 2024  
SUBJECT: Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Grant, Fall 2024

ISSUE: Whether the Selectboard will approve the application for the Northern Border Regional Commission, (NBRC), Catalyst Grant submission for the scoping and design of the water and sewer infrastructure for the 80 & 90 Upper Main Street Project, and direct staff to apply for the grant.

DISCUSSION: The Catalyst grant program, administered through the NBRC, was designed to provide financial support for stimulating economic growth in communities within the designated border regions in the north-east New York, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The counties within Vermont are separated into three categories, Distressed, Transitional, and Attainment. Chittenden county is categorized as a Transitional County within the NBRC zone, which is eligible for 50% subsidy under the Catalyst program. This grant program is a two-part process. Each community or nonprofit organization that intends to apply for funding through this program was required to submit a pre-application prior to September 06, 2024. Staff was notified that our project was selected to proceed with a full application which will be due NBRC on October 18, 2024.

On October 30, 2023, the Town of Essex applied to the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, (GBIC), to be placed on their Regional Project Prioritization List. The Town of Essex was notified last December that the Town Center waterline project was placed number two on the priority list for GBIC. It was determined at that time that this project was too far along and was not bid with the proper federal project requirements, (BABA and Davis Bacon). The Town was encouraged to apply for another project, based on this original project, for the Fall 2024 round of NBRC Catalyst Program funding. Although this is not the project the Town of Essex is applying for through the NBRC program, staff has been informed that the review points for receiving second place on the GBIC prioritization list will still be provided to the Town. This would give the Town of Essex additional support when applying for this grant funding.

The Town of Essex is currently working with Stantec to plan the future municipal buildings and development of the remaining lands known as 80 and 90 Upper Main Street. Through this planning process, a future site plan and anticipated mixed-use urban neighborhood will be developed. Expanding this planning of future utilities into an infrastructure redevelopment project including both water distribution and sanitary sewer collection is the current goal. This project would include all planning, permitting, and design of both utilities.

The proposed municipal water and wastewater facility expansion project that would extend to the 80 and 90 Upper Main Street site and the Essex Town Center will have multiple benefits. It will assist the Town with its proposed future municipal complex. However, the infrastructure will also allow for more compact and higher density development. Higher densities are crucial for stimulating affordable housing and creating walkable neighborhoods and downtown areas, which

is the Town's vision for its town center area as noted in its ETC plan completed in 2021. This will encourage private sector investment in new and expanded mixed use and residential developments. This results in increase in land values and enlarge the property tax base.

**COSTS:** The Town of Essex has contracted with Stantec Consulting Engineers to plan the new project area located at 80 and 90 Upper Main Street. Public Works staff has worked with Stantec to come up with rough layouts of the proposed site. The project scope was reviewed, and seeing the need to proceed with a project that is a direct "off-shoot" of the original Town Center Waterline project, the stormwater portion of the project is not part of this grant scope. The total estimated cost for design and permitting of the water and sewer utilities have been estimated to be \$1,596,816.00. The Town's total grant request for this water and sewer design project would be \$500,000.00. This is the maximum award for this grant category.

The costs associated with the Town's unfunded portion of this water and sewer design project would be accessible through both capital funding and other funding sources. Some additional funding opportunities that could assist with this project could include the Vermont Community Development Program and both the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund administered through the Vermont Agency of Natural Resource.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** It is recommended that the Selectboard approve the application for the NBRC Catalyst Grant submission for the scoping and design of the water and sewer infrastructure for the 80 & 90 Upper Main Street Project, and direct staff to apply for the grant.



# Northern Border Regional Commission

Re: Pre-Application Submission **PR-NBRC-0381**

Good day,

On behalf of the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) and the State of Vermont, we are pleased to inform you that **Town of Essex** has been invited to submit a full application, through NBRC's Grants Management System (GMS), no later than 5:00 pm on October 18, 2024. Please retain this e-mail as it contains important information you will need to complete the application portion of the process.

Detailed program information for Catalyst Program Fall 2024, including the user's manual, which will walk you through the application questions, is available on our website at <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/Catalyst>. In addition to the resources available on our website, NBRC is hosting three application workshops during the application window to support development of high-quality applications. Please view the workshop details and register on NBRC's Events page, here: [www.nbrc.gov/content/events](http://www.nbrc.gov/content/events).

NBRC's GMS can be accessed at [nbrcgrants.my.site.com/ApplicantLanding?username=null](http://nbrcgrants.my.site.com/ApplicantLanding?username=null). The Catalyst Program Fall 2024 application and required support documents are required to be submitted through NBRC's GMS to be eligible for funding consideration.

In addition to the application resources listed above, NBRC and program partners offer the following feedback and recommendations, meant to strengthen the proposal at time of application. Please consider this feedback and where applicable(\*), review the corresponding application manual section for additional information and instructions.

NBRC Feedback (no additional feedback if blank):

— No Funding Sources listed\* - The Funding Sources and Commitments table was incomplete. This information is required with the application.

State Feedback (no additional feedback if blank):

All the best,

Andrea K. Smith  
Program Director

## **Appendix: Additional Application Considerations**

**Authorized Official and Authorized Official Resolution Required.** The (AO) must be a single person who is named in your AOR. You may not have more than one AO. This name must also match the Authorized Official on file in the Grants Management System. If this is not the case, you will need to designate a single AO and adjust your AO in the GMS. The AO designated in the GMS must align with the Authorized Resolution (AOR) you are required to submit as an application support document. The Authorized Official Resolution must conform to the specifics required by NBRC. A sample Authorized Official Resolution can be found on the NBRC Resources webpage: <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/administration>.

**LDD Required.** All Catalyst applicants are required to designate a Local Development District to provide grant administration services, unless your organization is a state agency or has an approved LDD waiver. Forest Economy and Timber for Transit applicants have the option to utilize LDD assistance. Here are the LDD requirements for your application:

1. Designate the appropriate LDD for your award.
2. Add an "LDD Contact" to the Contacts section of the application and associate as an "LDD Partner" under Contact Role.
3. Add LDD Grant Administration costs as a line item in the SF424cbw detailed budget document. These costs should be clearly identified in Category 6 Consultants. The costs should be equal to 2% of the NBRC requested amount.

**NEPA Required.** NEPA applies to all NBRC funded projects. Here are the NEPA requirements for your application:

1. Review NBRC's website on the NEPA process and requirements: <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/NEPA>
2. Add NEPA to your project timeline. Clearly demonstrate that your project has considered the impacts of environmental review on your project timeline. The time to complete NEPA should range from 1-2 months for Categorical Exclusion, 1-6 months for Categorical Exclusion with a section 106 consultation, or 6-12+ months for an Environmental Assessment.
3. Add NEPA costs as a line item in the SF424cbw detailed budget document. These costs should be clearly identified in Category 6 Consultants. The costs should range from \$500-\$10,000+ depending on the expected level of review or actions to complete the environmental review process.
4. Include a completed NEPA Intake form in the Supporting Documents Checklist.

Pre-Application

## Essex Town Center Utility Project

Create Application (/a148200000emWGAAAY?isntp=vw) 

EGMS ID

PR-NBRC-0381

Status

Accepted

Pre-Application Due Date

09/06/2024 5:00 PM



For more details related to the programs, please Click here (<https://www.nbrc.gov/content/program-areas>)

Created  Submitted for Review  Reviewed  Submitted  Accepted  Converted to Application

 Overview

 Locations

 Budget

 Forms and Files

 History

 Collab

### ▲ Applicant Information (/a1082000000RSVoAAO?isntp=vw)

Applicant Organization

Town of Essex

Address

81 Main Street

Essex Junction VT 05452

USA ( )

EIN 

036000897

UEI 

k979eyza59b5

SAM Expiration Date 

01/18/2025

Organization Type

Local governments (village, town, city, and county)

### ▲ Opportunity Overview (/a1082000000RSayAAG?isntp=vw)

Funding Opportunity

AN-NBRC-008 (/a27cs0000003jgXAAQ)

Opportunity Title

Catalyst Program Fall 2024

Opportunity Type 

Competitive

Budget Type 

Construction

Funding Organization

Northern Border Regional Commission

Pre-Application Due Date

09/06/2024 5:00 PM

Application Due Date

10/18/2024 5:00 PM

Estimated Project Period Start Date

03/01/2025

Accessibility Policy (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/accessibility->



▲ Pre-Application Overview (/a1082000000RSWrAAO?isdtp=vw)

Title	Funds Requested ⓘ
Essex Town Center Utility Project	\$500,000.00
Total Project Amount ⓘ	Does this application have a co-applicant?
\$1,596,816.00	No

▲ Project Information (/a1082000000RSVnAAO?isdtp=vw)

Project Abstract

- Provide a description of the proposed project. See Program User Manual for additional instructions on completing this section.

*There is an identified need for water and sewer infrastructure within the Essex Town Center (ETC) area, specifically within the area where proposed municipal facilities are to be located at 80 and 90 Upper Main Street. The Town of Essex purchased both lots last year for future development and a location for a new municipal building, fire station, library, and community space. Upgrades to the existing water distribution system in the ETC area will be necessary for future development to occur at this location. Planning, permitting, design, and installation of new sanitary sewer facilities will also be necessary to provide the additional service required for the proposed future development. A new 12-inch waterline is currently under construction through this area. This project, known as the Town Center Waterline Project, was planned and designed to increase the capacity of water throughout this area. This project was a first step to begin the process of developing the new municipal site.*

*Additionally, on October 30, 2023, the Town of Essex applied to the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, to be placed on their Regional Project Prioritization List. The Town of Essex was notified last December that the Town Center waterline project was placed number two on the priority list for GBIC. A NBRC Project Interest form was submitted on March 15, 2024, for the Town Center Waterline Project for construction funding. It was determined at that time that this project was too far along and was not bid with the proper federal project requirements, (BABA and Davis Bacon). The Town was encouraged to apply for another project, based on this original project, for the Fall 2024 round of NBRC Catalyst Program funding. This new water and sewer distribution system project is the genesis of this original project.*

*The Town of Essex is currently working with Stantec to plan for the future municipal buildings and development of the remaining lands known as 80 and 90 Upper Main Street. Through this planning process, a future site plan and mixed use urban neighborhood will be developed. Expanding this planning of future utilities into an infrastructure redevelopment project including both water distribution and sanitary sewer collection is the current goal. This project would include all planning, permitting, and design of both utilities.*



## Project Goals & Outcomes

- What are the project goals and expected project outcomes and outputs? Explain the anticipated economic outcomes and outputs of the project. See Program User Manual for additional instructions on completing this section. (https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/privacy.html) | Disclaimers (https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/exit-disclaimer.html) | 508 Compliance (/apex/GNT\_\_Help?uniqueName=Help-0113)

*The near-term goal is to begin the planning and design phase of the municipal water and sewer systems throughout the new municipal site at 80 and 90 Upper Main Street. Long term, the Town intends to implement the construction of both utilities, in conjunction with the new Town Center and relocate the hub of municipal services within the Town of Essex to this new location.*

*In 2021, the Town of Essex worked through the master planning process for this area, the Essex Town Center (ETC). The ETC NEXT Master Plan envisions a lively, walkable, mixed-use center. The Plan calls for increased residential and commercial densities. A copy of this plan has been attached for reference. One of the key recommendations of the ETC NEXT Plan calls for addressing existing infrastructure needs. The primary concern has been the availability of water and sewer to support the evolution of the ETC area. The issues are primarily focused on a lack of static water pressure versus a lack of capacity, which is generally sufficient. The problem is particularly acute for the development of taller buildings and increasing density. As the vision for the ETC affords some significant increases in density and associated multi-story development, addressing this lack of water pressure will be critical.*

*The Town Center waterline project currently underway, is the first step in achieving increased water flows, both fire and domestic, within the ETC area. As stated previously, this project was awarded the second-place spot on the GBIC Project Priority list. This project is the first step in the process of providing both commercial and residential development throughout the project corridor, as identified in previous planning studies. Future planning and design of both water and sewer infrastructure is a critical next step to move the future growth of the ETC area closer to completion.*

*The design and construction of the infrastructure throughout the project corridor is the first step in providing critical services for future development. This project will not only address the current needs of the Town of Essex in relocating the municipal offices, fire station, library, and community space within the community but will provide the necessary infrastructure to encourage further residential and commercial growth. As stated in the ETC NEXT Plan, increasing the density within the ETC area is critical for future economic growth within the community.*

## Project Beneficiaries & Community Context

- Describe the project beneficiaries including the service area and demographic data. See Program User Manual for additional instructions on completing this section.

*This project is located within developed core area within the Town of Essex and referred to as the Essex Town Center (ETC). It is roughly the geographic center of the Town of Essex. The exact location of the proposed project is located on 32 acres of two undeveloped lots known as 80 and 90 Upper Main Street, which were recently purchased by the Town. Refer to the attached project location map for further geographic reference. The ETC area*

provides the community with retail, housing, and entertainment at the Experience Essex complex, also known as the EE. The addition of the Town's municipal offices, fire station, library, and community space within this area is significant for the Town. The site will also address the housing shortage in the Town by including new housing opportunities. The development of the 80 and 90 Upper Main Street parcels, as a mixed use dense development will be a step in creating an identity for the town and a more cohesive and connected ETC area. The colocation of all the Town's municipal facilities within the ETC area and providing much needed housing and commercial space, will provide a benefit to all within the community, not one specific demographic.

#### Statement of Need

- What is the challenge or problem the project seeks to address? See Program User Manual for additional instructions on completing this section.

*The project area, located within the Essex Town Center, (80 and 90 Upper Main Street), does not currently have municipal water or sewer infrastructure. Additionally, the municipal water distribution project currently und construction will address the design and construction of the infrastructure throughout the project corridor is the first step in achieving increased water flows, both fire and domestic, within the Essex Town Center (ETC) area. This area is the highest point within the Towns water distribution system and requires the additional domestic water flows throughout the area to achieve future mixed-use residential and commercial development along with the Town's municipal offices, fire station, library, and community space within the ETC area.*

#### Program Investment Priorities

- Explain how your project aligns with Program Investment Priorities. See Program User Manual for additional instructions on completing this section.

*The Town Center Utility Project will provide the roadmap for the future layout and development of a significant new portion of the Essex Town Center. Investing in the critical infrastructure, both water and sewer, is the keystone for this future growth within the community. This infrastructure project will not only provide the Town the ability to foster the economic growth for the community but will address the current housing shortages in the Town and the county.*

Have you previously received NBRC funds?

- If yes, please provide NBRC grant number.

The Town of Essex has not received funding from NBRC in the past.

Does this project serve a rural community with a population of less than 5,000?

No

Does this project benefit an underserved community?

- NBRC definition of Underserved Community: A community who suffers from a combination of economic, health and environmental burdens, including high unemployment and poverty, basic resources or conditions, such as standard housing, medical and educational facilities, and civil rights and vulnerable populations, including minority, low income, rural, tribal, indigenous, homeless, and limited English-speaking populations. See Appendix H of



Although the Town of Essex is not considered a "Underserved Community", the Town does see this project critical for future growth within the community. Not only for new municipal facilities but for additional needed housing within the Town, which is critical for the future growth of the community. This housing on this site will be for a mix of incomes, including underserved and vulnerable populations within the community, as well as providing housing that is affordable for the middle-income demographic, who generally cannot find housing in the Town. The 2019 ETC NEXT Master Plan, which includes the project site, calls for increased density consisting of mixed-use housing and commercial development. The ETC area is the designated growth area for the Town, where the Town, county and state want to see the majority of our residential and commercial development. This project will be vital to allow for an increase in the number of housing units, helping to achieve the goals, outlined in the ETC NEXT plan, and housing goals currently in place within Chittenden County.

Which of these is most applicable to the applicant organization?

Is a first-time applicant for NBRC funding

### ▲ Contacts ⓘ



To add a new co-applicant, please click the New button and enter the co-applicant contact details. If you are associating a co-applicant, you have previously added within an application in GovGrants, click the Associate button and select the co-applicant.

To associate an LDD with the application, click the Associate button and select the LDD contact.

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 records

Project Role	Name ↑	Email	Is Key Contact
Project Director/Manager	Aaron Martin (/003cs0000086b0f	amartin@essex.org (mailto:amartin@essex.org)	✓
Other	Taylor Newton (/00382000003BH	tnewton@ccrpcvt.org (mailto:tnewton@ccrpcvt.org)	✗

Total Records:2

### ▲ Acknowledgement (/a1082000000RSYmAAO?isdtp=vw)

I here by certify that the information provided above is accurate and complete.

Acknowledgement

I Agree

Submitted By

Aaron Martin (/apex/ProfileRedirect?id=005cs000005OhddAAC)

Submitted On

09/05/2024 8:00 PM

### ▲ System Information (/a1082000000RSVpAAO?isdtp=vw)

Created By

Created Date



Aaron Martin (/apex/ProfileRedirect?  
id=005cs000005OhddAAC)

Last Modified By

Adrienne Harrison (/apex/ProfileRedirect?  
id=00582000001KqMrAAK)

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Last Modified Date

09/20/2024 3:46 PM

Create Application





# TOWN OF ESSEX VERMONT

81 MAIN STREET, ESSEX JUNCTION, VERMONT 05452  
**Fax:** 878-1353 • **E-mail:** [manager@essex.org](mailto:manager@essex.org) • **Website:** [www.essex.org](http://www.essex.org)

October 07, 2024

Northern Border Regional Commission  
Municipal Assistance Section  
Attn: Andrea Smith, Program Director  
53 Pleasant Street, Suite 1501  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: NBRC Catalyst Grant, Fall 2024 Submission

Dear Ms. Smith:

The Town of Essex Selectboard supports the grant application for scoping and design funds in connection with the proposed Town Center development located at 80 and 90 Upper Main Street in the Town of Essex. The grant funding would allow the Town of Essex to retain a consultant to provide scoping and design services for water and sewer infrastructure throughout the proposed project.

The Town of Essex has sufficient funds to meet the local financial share for this project as proposed. The local match amount of \$1,096,816 for the Town could be derived from the approximately \$4,000,000 in unrestricted net assets within the Water & Sewer Fund or could be incorporated into future billing calculations.

The Town of Essex Selectboard enthusiastically supports this application and looks forward to beginning the process of reimagining our Town Center. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracey Delphia,  
Selectboard Chair

Cc: Greg Duggan, Town Manager  
Aaron Martin, P.E., Public Works Director  
Katherine Sonnik, Community Development Director  
Dan Roy, Town Finance Director  
File

TOWN MANAGER	PARKS AND RECREATION	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	PUBLIC WORKS	ASSESSOR	FINANCE	TOWN CLERK	LIBRARY	POLICE
878-1341	878-1342	878-1343	878-1344	878-1345	878-1359	879-0413	879-0313	878-8331