

East Montpelier's Orchard Valley Proposal Summaries

Draft made by Carl Etnier with help from LLM qwen/qwen3.6-35b-a3b

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Firm	Core Approach	Team Structure	Technical Depth	Key Deliverables	Budget
Bowman Consulting Group	"Planning must lead to action." Engineering-first, feasibility-driven, with direct CHIP funding strategy.	Entirely in-house (civil, survey, environmental, planning, landscape). Led by Jenn Desautels, PE.	High upfront technical work: topographic survey, wetland/WOTUS delineation, soil testing for septic capacity, infrastructure feasibility.	3 comparable concepts, 2D renderings, order-of-magnitude cost estimates, housing needs assessment, permitting summary, CHIP funding roadmap, NEPA compliance docs.	\$100,000
Utile, Inc.	Design & equity-centered planning. "Think tank" model emphasizing architectural excellence, Passive House/net-zero, and innovative community engagement.	Lead firm (architecture/planning) + coordinated consultants: Horsley Witten (civil/env), Offshoots (landscape), All At Once (financial feasibility), PCI (cost estimating). Led by Nick Buehrens, AIA, CPHC.	Conceptual/feasibility level. Explicitly defers field survey, subsurface testing, and detailed engineering to future phases. Relies on existing GIS/data.	2 conceptual schemes + 1 refined preferred scheme, 2 illustrative visualizations, housing needs summary, environmental/permitting memo, funding & implementation roadmap.	\$99,885
SE Group	Pragmatic planning-to-implementation bridge. "Feasibility first, then concept exploration, then pathways." Strong emphasis on visual communication and community alignment.	SE Group (planning, landscape, recreation) + Wiemann Lamphere Architects (architecture/visualization). Led by Mark Kane, APA & Steven Roy, WLA.	Planning-level site analysis using available data/GIS. Includes site walk, but no dedicated budget for full survey or geotechnical work.	3 comparable concepts, community open house, planning-level cost estimates, development pathways, funding roadmap, final graphic-heavy planning document.	\$99,955

Key Similarities

- All proposals stay within or just under the **\$100,000 CDBG-DR planning grant cap**.
- All commit to delivering **3 development concepts** (Utile delivers 2 + 1 refined preferred), a **housing needs/affordability analysis, planning-level infrastructure/water/wastewater strategies**, and an **implementation/funding roadmap**.
- All acknowledge the site's **environmental constraints** (wetlands, Winooski River corridor, flood risk) and align with Vermont's **Homes for All / 802 Homes** initiative.
- All aim to produce a **grant-compliant, developer-facing planning document** to attract partners and secure future state/federal funding.
- All include **community engagement** as a core component, though methods vary.

Key Differences

Dimension	Bowman	Utile	SE Group
Technical Due Diligence	Highest: funds upfront survey, wetland flagging, soil testing, and infrastructure capacity testing.	Lowest: explicitly defers field work to future phases; relies on desktop/GIS analysis.	Moderate: site walk & desktop analysis; no dedicated survey/geotechnical budget.
Design vs. Engineering Focus	Engineering & implementation-first. Concepts grounded in hard constraints.	Design, equity, & sustainability-first. Strong architectural & Passive House focus.	Balanced planning & architecture. Strong emphasis on visual clarity & pragmatic sequencing.
Community Engagement	Targeted stakeholder meetings + online survey.	Innovative: Pol.is digital platform, pop-ups, walkshops, science-fair workshops.	Community open house with visual materials. Focused on concept comparison & feedback synthesis.
Funding Strategy	Heavy emphasis on CHIP funding strategy, application prep, and municipal tax-increment financing.	Broader funding landscape; includes financial feasibility consultant (All At Once).	Clear development pathways (public-led, P3, private) + funding roadmap (VHCB, DEC, USDA, CHIP).
Interpretation of "Shovel-Ready"	Developer-ready feasibility: actionable technical data, clear constraints, funding alignment.	"Advancement-ready": conceptual framework; notes full survey/engineering would exceed budget.	"Development-ready framework": clarifies scope limits vs. construction-ready expectations.