

# **Request for Qualifications Winooski Riverwalk East Path Network Planning, Permitting and Design**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Winooski is seeking to contract with a qualified consultant to assist in the planning, permitting and final design of improvements to the City's existing trail network in Casavant Park. The existing trail network extends eastward from the east end of the existing Winooski Riverwalk to Gorge Road (also known as South Road), and from the west side of the I-89 interstate bridge northward to East Allen Street (see attached map).

The purpose of this project is to provide improved connectivity from Winooski's downtown to Route 15, improve access, recreation and educational opportunities within Casavant Park and to limit current environmental impacts to the trails and surrounding areas.

The Winooski downtown project has concentrated both residential and commercial development in the core downtown area. The increase in the numbers of people both living and working in the area have significantly increased the use of Casavant Park and the surrounding trail network. Today the trails are routinely traveled by hundreds of pedestrians, bikers, fisherman, kayakers, dog walkers and outdoor enthusiasts per day. In addition, Community College of Vermont has begun using the park for outdoor classrooms and hands on education for science and biology related courses.

Although the City is excited about the increased use of public space, we are also cognizant of the impacts to the river banks and surrounding areas that the increased use has brought with it. Portions of the existing trails are located directly on the riverbanks or go through potentially environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands. Several areas become very wet during inclement weather and visitors tend to wander off the trails in search of a dry path. Erosion and significant plant trampling are common in these areas. The trails formed over several generations along the banks of the river from fisherman and nature enthusiasts who wanted access to the river. Many of these trails are located on steep banks and areas which are especially susceptible to erosion. Requests to improve the trails so that they can be used in any weather and to accommodate people with special needs is increasing.

Finally, the City regularly gets complaints about the lack of safe alternatives for pedestrians and bikers who want to travel the Route 15 corridor from Burlington to

Essex. The CCMPO is currently beginning work on a pedestrian study from Susie Wilson Road west to the Winooski City line to improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians. The City is considering alternatives to Route 15 for pedestrians and bikers from the Winooski's downtown to Route 15.

For simplicity, this project will be split into two phases:

Phase I – Information Gathering and Planning

Phase II - Permitting and final design

This project is funded with a Federal Transportation, Community and System Preservation (TCSP) earmark. The City's goal is to complete both phases of this project with this funding.

## **Phase I – Information Gathering & Planning**

### **Information Gathering**

The initial phase of this project will consist of gathering existing technical data and supplementing that data with additional information where necessary. In addition, this phase will consist of soliciting municipal, regional, state and public input regarding current issues and what the public would like to see in a final project including trail surfaces and amenities such as picnic areas, access points to the river, etc. It should be noted that this work is being done with transportation funds and is not a master planning process for Casavant Park. This process is specific to improvements in and around the existing trail network and future recreational activities along the riverfront. It is the City's goal to encourage input from all segments of the public including residents, businesses, pedestrians, bicyclists, recreational enthusiasts, etc. in developing this plan.

Once a qualified consultant has been selected, the City shall appoint a project Steering Committee. The selected consultant will have access to and utilize the latest ortho-photo and flyover topographic data that shall be used during the planning process. The selected consultant's Project Manager shall walk the site with the City's representative and interested members of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee and consultant shall also hold a project kickoff meeting with the Steering Committee. The project goals and objectives shall be clearly identified as well as any initial concerns and ideas of the Steering Committee and consultant. One of the primary functions of this meeting will be to identify what existing information is available, issues that need to be addressed, identify additional technical studies or surveys that need to be conducted, identify current environmental concerns and permitting or design information that may be relevant or considered during future planning. Additional information such as floodplain limits, zoning, setback distances, wetlands, high and low water lines, current problem areas, etc.

**Existing Condition Plan Preparation** - The Consultant shall compile an initial base plan using existing ortho-photo, parcel, topographic, flood plain and other mapping as currently available. If existing information is not of sufficient detail, the Consultant shall survey and collect additional data as necessary to ensure acceptable planning and design level plans.

**Wetland Mapping** - The City contracted Jeff Severson of Oakledge Environmental Services, Inc. in 2007 to conduct a wetland survey of the majority of the Casavant Park Area. The City will make this information available to the selected consultant in an electronic format. The City anticipates that additional wetland delineation will be required in several areas as part of this project to supplement the City's current wetland mapping data particularly near the Winooski River and east of I-89.

**Flood Plain** - The City has the most recent FEMA data related to the 100-year flood plain in hard copy format. This will be provided to the selected consultant.

**Plant Inventory** - The City also anticipates that an inventory of invasive and endangered plant species in proximity to the existing path (assume 50-feet each side) will be necessary for evaluating potential alternate trail locations and developing a maintenance plan that will be

required as part of phase II. Consultants shall assume for the purpose of developing a responsive proposal that detailed horizontal and vertical survey information will be necessary at least 50-feet (where possible) on each side the existing path network. Identification of important land elements such as the existing Riverwalk, ditches, streams, bridges and wetland crossings will also be necessary. Identification of large trees or other important design elements directly adjacent to the existing path that may have an impact on design decisions will also be identified. An electronic two-dimensional survey shall be assembled with horizontal and vertical data survey data sufficient to develop final design and maintenance plans for this project.

**Public Survey** - A survey shall be conducted by the Consultant to gain information and public input on the public's concerns, desires and goals. The survey shall be designed and developed by the consultant with input from the Steering Committee. The goal of the survey should be to gain as much input from the public as possible on current use of the existing trails and future ideas, concerns and needs. This survey may be conducted in conjunction with the public planning meeting (discussed later). Issues to consider should include but not be limited to: water quality & environmental concerns; transportation connectivity; ADA access; scenic overlooks; aesthetics, picnic areas; education and outdoor classrooms; hiking; biking; snowshoeing; cross country skiing; access to the river for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and other uses.

The design of the survey and how and where it gets distributed shall be agreed upon by the Steering Committee. It is anticipated that the majority of the survey process will be conducted electronically or through electronic forums such as the City website, Front Page Forum, etc. The consultant shall read and summarize all responses for the Steering Committee. This information shall be used in the planning process. For cost estimation purposes, the consultant shall assume \$2,000 in material costs, 40 hours of consultant time and 20 hours of administrative time for this task.

**Alternative Alignments** - The Consultant will assist in identifying potential alternate alignment(s) for the pedestrian/bicycle path utilizing the information compiled for the base plan, site visit(s) and public comments. Alternate alignments should consider setbacks from the Winooski River, bank stabilization, erosion, wetlands, flooding, plant trampling, improved access for those with disabilities, aesthetics, large trees, river views, etc. Connectivity to the existing Riverwalk at the west end of the project and Gorge Road to the east end of the project will be considered. The alternatives evaluated will also contain a "No Action" alternative which would evaluate continued use of the existing facility without modification. The selected consultant shall review the proposed alignment(s) and improvements with the goal of meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines and other applicable State and Federal requirements to the extent possible and practical.

**Right of Way** - The existing path network is located predominately on City lands. Two exceptions to this may exist. The first exception may be the existing path network where it passes under the I-89 Interstate bridges. The second is a rail crossing on the east end of the site east of I-89. The consultant shall research and identify ownership of the two areas of concern as well as restrictive easements or rights of way. If additional easements are necessary for alternate pathways, the consultant shall identify those locations. It is anticipated that deed research will be necessary to confirm ownership and types of easements, restrictions and rights of way that

currently exist. The City anticipates that this task may require a reasonable amount of time and resources. Consultants should be reasonable with regard to their assumptions.

All resources in the immediate vicinity of the project shall be identified. These resources include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Topography
- Wetlands
- Plant Inventory
- Flood Plain elevations and limits
- Archaeological and historic sites/districts (where impacted)
- Endangered/threatened species (where impacted)
- Agricultural lands
- Land and Water Conservation Funds lands (Section 6(f))
- Public and recreational land (Section 4(f))
- Rights of way/easements
- Utilities
- Current trail locations
- Important land forms such as drainage ditches, wetland crossings, bridges, etc.
- Existing permits and restrictions (including Act 250)
- Land use and Zoning

**Public Planning Meeting** - The consultant in conjunction with the Steering Committee shall assemble a complete list of names of stakeholders and persons or entities that should be contacted directly regarding planning or input regarding this project. The consultant shall conduct direct mailing of the notification to all interested parties identified and conduct general advertising in community calendar sections of local newspapers (Free Press and/or Seven Days) as well as using other electronic means such as the City's website, Front Page Forum, CCRPC website and other means identified during this process to encourage input from the public. Notices regarding the meeting shall be posted and mailed at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Once the initial base information has been obtained, the Steering Committee and Consultant shall schedule and hold a public planning meeting to discuss project goals and solicit ideas and suggestions from the public. The Consultant shall prepare minutes of the meeting and distribute them to the Project Steering Committee. Comments received from any interested party not present at the meeting will be attached to the minutes of the meeting.

Following the public planning meeting, the consultant in conjunction with the Steering Committee shall develop a list of potential alternatives to achieve the project goals identified. Consultants should assume that this will be an iterative process. The Consultant shall prepare an evaluation matrix that compares all alternatives being considered. Each alternative will be analyzed to determine its feasibility, permitting concerns, cost effectiveness and practicality of permitting and construction. It should be assumed that the City will not have access to external funding for construction of these alternatives. Cost and constructability considerations shall be factors in determining the viability of each alternative considered.

The matrix should contain information regarding the pro's and con's of each alternative, right-of-

way issues, permits required, potential permitting hurdles, estimated cost, operation and maintenance issues, potential regulatory concerns and any other issues identified during this process. From this process, the Steering Committee and the consultant shall define a set of preferred final alternatives for consideration by the public.

**Final Alternatives Presentation** - The Consultant shall organize and facilitate a final Alternatives Presentation with the Project Steering Committee and the public. The Consultant shall give at least two weeks written notice of the meeting following the same notification procedure as for the public Planning Meeting. The goal of the Final Alternatives Presentation will be to obtain final public input on the preferred alternatives selected prior to presentation to the City Council. Using information gathered from the activities outlined herein and from the meetings with the public and Steering Committee, the Consultant shall produce a Final Alternatives Report outlining the findings of the study (see Standards and Deliverables for number required) and recommending a set of preferred alternatives. A draft of the Final Alternatives Analysis Report shall be provided to the Steering Committee for comment prior to finalizing.

The consultant shall also develop preliminary cost estimates for design, permitting and construction costs of the project. The estimates should be based on the assumption that the project will be constructed using a combination of State and local funding and will be managed by the City. Cost estimates should include costs for permitting, engineering, construction, municipal project management and construction inspection.

**City Council Presentation** - The selected Consultant in conjunction with the Steering Committee shall present the preferred alternatives to the Winooski City Council for consideration. The meeting will be a public hearing format designed to allow the public and the City Council an opportunity for final comment on the project prior to final approval of a plan by the City Council.

### **Project Schedule**

The project shall follow this general schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Milestone</u>
February 2012	Project Award
April 2012	Existing Baseline Data Assembled
June 2012	Survey and ROW Research Completed
July 2012	Additional Wetland Delineation & Plant Identification Complete
August 2012	Public Survey Complete
September 2012	Public Planning Meeting
October 2012	Final Alternatives Presentation
November, 2012	City Council Presentation
December 2012	Phase II – Permitting/Design Phase Begin
September 2013	Phase II - Permitting/Design Phase Complete

## **Phase II – Scope of Work, Proposed Schedule & Cost Estimates**

Upon completion of Phase I, the selected consultant shall develop a Scope of Work, Proposed Schedule and Cost Estimates for Phase II. The City at its sole discretion may issue a change order to the consultant for Phase II upon successful completion of Phase I.

Phase II shall consist of the permitting and design of approved alternatives identified during Phase I. Phase II shall also include development of a Maintenance Plan to address routine maintenance issues for the current and future trail network and other recreational areas adjacent to the trail network addressed as part of this process.

## **STANDARDS AND DELIVERABLES**

All final documents and reports shall be provided in both hard copy (paper) and digital format. Consultants should assume that 12 copies of all draft and final reports will be necessary to satisfy the needs of the Steering Committee and the public.

All final data, databases, reports, programs and materials, shall be provided in both digital and hard copy format. All materials or information gathered or created under this project shall be transferred to Winooski upon completion of the project and will become the property of the City.

### **Specific project tasks & deliverables include:**

- A. Existing Conditions Plan
- B. Updated Wetland Delineation/
- C. Flood Plain
- D. Inventory of invasive and endangered plant species
- E. Detailed horizontal and vertical survey information at least 50-feet around the existing path network.
- F. An electronic two-dimensional survey shall be assembled with horizontal and vertical data survey data sufficient to develop future design and maintenance plans for this project.
- G. Develop potential alternate alignment(s).
- H. Property line and ownership research.
- I. Assemble a complete list of names of stakeholders and interested persons.
- J. Direct mailing of the notification to all interested parties.
- K. Preparation of meeting minutes and distributing.
- L. Preparation of Evaluation Matrix.
- M. Draft alternatives report
- N. Final alternatives report
- O. Preliminary cost estimates
- P. Final Alternatives presentation

## **RESPONSE FORMAT**

Consultants interested in this project should submit eight (8) copies of their Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) to:

Steven L. Palmer, P.E.  
City Engineer/Public Works Director  
City of Winooski  
27 West Allen Street  
Winooski, Vermont 05404  
Telephone: (802) 655-6410  
FAX: (802) 655-6414  
E-mail: [slpalmer@winooski.vt.org](mailto:slpalmer@winooski.vt.org)

Questions about the project should be directed to Steven Palmer at the above address.

SOQ's must be received at Winooski City Hall no later than 4:00 PM February 23, 2012. SOQ's received after this time may not be accepted or reviewed at the City's sole discretion. The City reserves the right to request interviews with one or more of the firms prior to final consultant selection.

All SOQs become the property of the City of Winooski. The expense of preparing and submitting a SOQ is the sole responsibility of the consultant. Winooski reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFQ as in the best interest of Winooski. This solicitation in no way obligates Winooski to award a contract.

Consultants shall submit six (6) copies of the SOQ consisting of the items detailed below. SOQ's shall not exceed 10 double sided pages, excluding resumes.

Responses to this RFQ should consist of the following:

1. A cover letter expressing the firm's interest in working with Winooski.
2. Introduction to the consultant firm(s).
3. Qualifications of the consultant firm(s). Describe experience in all areas likely to be required under this contract.
4. A description of the general approach to be taken toward completion of the project, an explanation of the proposed scope of work as outlined in the RFQ, and any insights into the project gained as a result of developing the proposal. The scope of work should include detailed steps to be taken, including any products or deliverables resulting from each task.
5. A schedule of estimated costs shall also be included for Phase I. The cost breakdown should include but may not be limited to: personnel; total labor hours; hourly rates; estimated material costs; subcontractor costs; all other misc. costs that can reasonably be anticipated for Phase I. All anticipated costs should be included. The reasonableness of the cost assumptions shall be a consideration in the review process.

6. A proposed schedule that indicates project milestones and overall time for completion.
7. Project organization including project management structure.
8. Resumes of individuals that will be committed to this project. Resumes of any sub-consultants shall also be included in this section.
9. Demonstration of success on similar projects, including a brief project description and a contact name and address for reference.

## **CONSULTANT SELECTION**

The submittals will be reviewed and ranked according to qualifications by a selection committee to be determined by the City. The selection committee will review and evaluate all proposals based on the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of overall project understanding and scope of work (15 Points)
2. Qualifications of the firm (15 Points)
3. Experience of the proposed project team with similar projects (35 Points)
4. Demonstrated knowledge of project area, existing City permits, potential issues, concerns, ideas, constraints, etc. (20 Points)
5. Quality of the overall proposal and reasonableness of consultants assumptions (15 Points)

The consultant will also be required to submit the most current version of the VTrans Form AF38 available from VTrans website at <http://www.aot.state.vt.us/conadmin/relateddocs.htm>.

**Attachment A**

**Casavant Park Path Network**