

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS



Wooster Square/Water Street Planning Study



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Project Overview

The City of New Haven (the “City”) is soliciting qualifications for a multi-disciplinary consultant team (the “Consultant”) to prepare land use and transportation concepts for the southerly portion of the Wooster Square neighborhood along Olive and Water Streets (the “District”). The District is close to Downtown, adjacent to the State Street Commuter Rail Station, and within a 1/2 mile of Union Station. The City has received funding from the State Office of Policy and Management to study and develop a plan based on Transit Oriented Development principles for the area.

The introduction of the commuter rail station at State Street (which is soon to add a second platform), has shifted patterns of development in the District. These changes, and the public's increased interest in mixed-use development, walkable neighborhoods, transportation choices, and economic diversity and opportunity, all support a project to plan a new future for the area, based on properly-planned transit-oriented activity for the neighborhood.

Wooster Square is one of New Haven's most economically, ethnically, and racially diverse neighborhood. Despite being heavily impacted by urban renewal activity, the neighborhood has survived and prospered, in large part because of its historic character and human scale, and plan which has nurtured community cohesion

For this project, the Consultant is expected to review existing conditions, conduct field visits, meet with the community and then build upon that knowledge to develop credible design concepts and other deliverables. The Consultant is expected to meet extensively with officials from various government agencies along with a community stakeholder group.

This project is funded primarily by the State of Connecticut’s Office of Policy and Management and municipal matching funds. The project will be administered by the City pursuant to the grant agreement and the City’s administrative protocols.

New Haven Planning & Development

New Haven is the social and economic center of Southern Connecticut and among the fastest growing cities in New England, both in terms of population and economic significance.

In recent years, the City's business mix has evolved from a traditional industrial city to a broad and diverse economic center. The City is experiencing an encouraging growth in employment in basic industries in spite of global competition in knowledge-based economic sectors.

Because of the diverse mix of long-time residents and the constant influx of students from Yale University, New Haven supports strong rental and home ownership markets. Recent years have shown a burst of activity in residential development, and there is a prevailing sense that this underserved market will remain strong even as the national residential market softens.

While development has been concentrated in the Downtown, it increasingly has spread into abutting neighborhoods, particularly those served by public transit and commuter rail, such as the District.

New Haven is also considered to be one of the most livable cities in the region with high percentages of residents who walk and/or bike to work. As the State's premiere arts, culture and tourism center, New Haven attracts visitors throughout the year in part due to this diverse mix of activities and the city's rich history. In the District, for example, places which attract visitors include historic Wooster Square, the Court Street and Chapel Street residential areas and the restaurants on Wooster Street. The District's major annual cultural event is the Cherry Blossom Festival. Fests hosted by historic Italian-American religious societies also attract visitors from the entire region.

Shoreline East service was initiated in 1990 in response to commuter demand from the easterly suburbs to New Haven and points south and west. There are eight stations on Shoreline East (including the new State Street Station), which handled over 600,000 passengers in 2011, representing almost a 40% increase since 2006. Shoreline East service continues to improve, with proposals to expand services to New London, enhance rail stations, add new suburban parking facilities and introduce weekend services.

In addition to serving Shoreline East, the State Street Station also offers established, albeit limited, service for Metro-North riders and, in the coming years, will offer a new commuter-rail service to

Hartford/Springfield. The service infrastructure, including a new platform at State Street, is moving into construction, and will accommodate a projected annual rider-ship of 630,000.

Finally, CT Transit's public bus service along Grand Avenue (D-line) is one of the most frequent and heavily used lines in the region. The District is also served by the F-line and G-line on Chapel Street, the Z-line on State and part of Water Street, and the Q-line on State Street. These lines have less frequent service, particularly at night. Improving the transit system in the District to link the community with its desired trip origins and destinations, and integrating it with the larger regional system, is essential to creating a viable TOD plan.

Planning District

The District is generally bounded by Chapel Street, East Street, Water Street, Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Orange Street. The District covers parts of two city neighborhood planning districts: Downtown and Wooster Square and includes parts of the Wooster Square Historic District. Prior to final contract, the city reserves the right to amend the boundaries in a manner consistent with the overall scope of work.

Scope of Work

A. Project Vision

The project is intended to elevate and enhance the transit-oriented growth in the District and the City. Wooster Square's historic growth pattern was based on transit, walkability and a mixture of uses in a very densely developed, low-to-moderate scale neighborhood. Expanding this historic pattern, and incorporating current best practices for complete streets and transit improvements will help guide coherent development that is in character with the District. To be successful, the project needs to study and recommend the specific financial structures and tools needed to enable this TOD plan. By doing so, the project also offers an opportunity to strengthen other major developments in the city, including the Downtown Crossing project and the Hill-to-Downtown Plan, and the resurgence of New Haven as a bike, pedestrian and mass transit-rich community that affords its residents opportunities to live in close proximity to living-wage employment, and have low cost (economic and environmental), high value options to travel to these jobs – in addition to schools, shopping, parks and entertainments.

B. Specific Consultant Responsibilities

Task #1 - Background Research. The Consultant shall conduct all necessary preliminary research and discovery including plan review, field visits, initial consultations with government officials and community stakeholders in a manner sufficient to develop a full understanding of the community setting, key challenges and opportunities in the District. Given the extensive and rich history of the neighborhood, the Consultant is expected to provide context on the change in land use over time as well as the related changes to transportation, environment and retail character.

Task #2 – Existing Conditions Memo. The Consultant shall prepare an existing conditions study to include land use, demographics, building conditions, zoning, and environmental considerations. The study shall be prepared in memo format and may rely heavily on existing work, such as the recently-completed draft of the Comprehensive Plan of Development Update (see www.cityofnewhaven.com) together with field observations.

Task #3 – Community Outreach. The Consultant shall plan for up to six (6) community meetings, to include four (4) small-group discussions with the community stakeholder committee, one (1) community meeting and one (1) presentation to the City Plan Commission and/or Board of Alders at the time of plan adoption. City staff will assist with set-up, notice and other meeting-related preparations with the exception of presentation materials and community engagement materials, which must be provided by the Consultant. As part of the small group process, the Consultant and the City shall jointly arrange for a field tour to include walking, transit and bike activities.

Task #4 – Preliminary Design Concepts. The Consultant shall prepare a general-level concept graphic for the neighborhood, together with site-level “test fits” for up to four (4) sites, one of which will be the C. Cowles site and setting, as well as up to three (3) additional sites to be identified in partnership with the community stakeholders group. The test fits will show wire- or box-style massing for redevelopment and/or infill, showing how new buildings will interact with the existing residential and business environments, especially around, walking, bus routes (current, proposed) and shelters, bike paths, parking and traffic flow.

Task #5 – Fair Street Connection. The Consultant shall review a previously-prepared concept for the reconnection of Fair Street from Union Street to Olive Street and then furnish a preliminary design concept at the 10% level. Concept plan shall be drawn at 1” – 40” scale and include the conceptual design of the roadway including Complete Streets features, number and assignment of lanes, intersection and roadway geometry, general grading, drainage, utilities traffic controls, and bike/pedestrian and transit facilities. An accompanying report shall catalogue existing traffic information together with next steps for project implementation, including recommendations on other potential new or redesigned public rights of way.

Task #6 – Farmington Canal Greenway (FCG) Routing Memo. The Consultant shall review the current FCG plan for the prepare a technical memo concerning a proposal to establish a second (future) Farmington Canal Greenway route in the State Street area between Grove Street and Water Street.

Task #7 - Conceptual Plan(s). The Consultant shall prepare up to three (3) overall concept development plans in a manner informed by the previous tasks and then, with the selected alternative, prepare a complete document pulling together Tasks 1-7 and 9 into a cohesive community plan for the Transit Oriented District within the Historic District.

Task #8 – Retail Positioning Memo. Recognizing the neighborhood-scale, the Consultant shall prepare a retail positioning memo for use by the City and project developers in retail attraction efforts. The Consultant is not expected to conduct primary research. Instead, the Consultant may draw from existing reports prepared by the Town Green Special Services District (www.infonewhaven.com) and for the Hill to Downtown Study (www.edcnewhaven.com). With this baseline information, the Consultant shall identify niche opportunities associated with the neighborhood-scale retail space(s) available within the district or planned with new development.

Task #9 - Housing -- "Keep Wooster Square Diverse." The Consultant shall prepare a housing memo, outlining recommendations for maintaining Wooster Square's diversity. The District plan needs to support housing for families, older and young people, and for people at the various income levels typical of New Haven and its employment opportunities.

C. Deliverables

For Tasks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 & 9: The Consultant shall prepare individual technical memoranda with interview notes, contact information and other background material as appropriate. Road plans under Task #5 and #6 shall be drawn to 1"=40' scale and provided in PDF and CAD formats.

For Task #7: The Consultant shall furnish a digital original (.pdf) and twenty (20) full-color, bound copies of the final development plan. The Consultant shall likewise provide backup files for the report in .doc format and the development pro-forma in .xls format.

Request for Qualifications Guidelines

Goals for the Study

The City was awarded a \$65,000 Transit-Oriented Development Grant from the State of Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management. This study is one planning element of a broader TOD implementation effort and job creation strategy for Downtown New Haven and neighborhoods surrounding Union Station. This study area is experiencing a surge in new housing with approximately 1500 new housing units coming online over the next few years. The significant remaining underused land in the area, coupled with the pending vacancy of the C. Cowles Manufacturing Company site, opens new opportunity for properly planned TOD- projects. This planning element will include zoning analysis, land/use design concepts, complete streets technical analysis and a retail positioning report.

Application Documents

Information provided must be submitted with the following format, identifying each item by its corresponding number. Failure to provide any of the categories of information requested below may result in the City determining the proposal to be nonresponsive.

1. Introduction

The introduction should be on letterhead that includes all relevant contact information for your organization and should consist of a brief, concise summary of your proposed concept plan.

Information should also include without limitation:

- Legal name of organization
- Date organized
- Legal form of ownership and if a corporation, where incorporated
- Tax identification number(s)
- Number of years engaged in services under present name
- Ownership: names, titles, reporting relationships, background and experience
- Describe any previous and pending litigation or other factors that could affect your organization's ability to perform this agreement

Note: The statement set forth below must be included separately on your organizations letterhead, bearing the signature and title of an authorized representatives of your organization, and duly notarized:

“The undersigned hereby authorizes and requests any persons, firm or corporation to furnish any information requested by the City of New Haven in verification of the recitals comprising this response.”

2. Proposal:

The consultant’s qualifications should include the following elements: a narrative demonstrating project understanding; relevant examples of prior work; and qualifications of personnel assigned to the project. In addition, the consultant is expected to demonstrate an approach to the project taking into account significant community involvement and the multi-disciplinary nature of the scope of work which includes market, land use, design and transportation elements.

3. Disclosure & Certification Affidavit of Outstanding Obligations to the City of New Haven

Each applicant must include in its response a fully completed Disclosure and Certification Affidavit, a form is attached.

RFQ Review Criteria:

Upon receiving the grant award, a committee of community stakeholders was formed to help in advising in the planning process. This committee is composed of local residents, elected officials and selected city staff. Qualified applicants will be asked to present their qualifications to the entire community stakeholder group, before the final selection, based on the following criteria:

- i. Firm’s awareness and understanding of planning issues, opportunities and constraints.
- ii. Qualifications and experience of personnel to be assigned to the Project.
- iii. Ability to perform within time constraints (see Schedule below).
- iv. Quality and performance of past work.
- v. References.

An Optional Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Wednesday July 29, 2015 at 11:00 am, New Haven City Hall, 165 Church Street, 2nd floor, Meeting room one. Following review and initial selection, the consultant shall prepare a fee proposal for review by the City. In the event the City and the consultant cannot reach agreement on scope of work and fee, the City reserves the right to terminate negotiations and seek fee proposals from other consultants deemed qualified by the Committee.

Schedule:

The consultant is expected to deliver all final work product within 365 days of contract execution.

Supplemental Contract Requirements:

The Project shall be funded through a Transit Oriented Development Planning Grant made available by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. Due to the nature of the funding source, the consultant shall be required to administer and complete the Project in a manner consistent with an Assistance Agreement between the State of Connecticut and the City of New Haven.