

**CITY OF NORWALK, CT  
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)**



**FOR:  
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The City of Norwalk is seeking the services of a consulting firm or firms qualified to undertake an update of our 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development (Plan). We are a growing, dynamic community located in Fairfield County CT that is approaching a population of 90,000 neighbors. We are a community that embraces our diversity in terms of our population, neighborhoods and economic base. Like many other historic communities, Norwalk has transformed itself throughout its history, from an important colonial seaport, to a major manufacturing center, and to today as a hotspot for millennials and empty-nesters with an economy that supports Fortune 500 companies, a busy marine harbor, high-tech manufacturing and innovative start-up companies.

Over the past decade the City has continued to grow despite the Great Recession and the economic challenges within the State of CT. The city has leveraged its idyllic waterfront, its location on Metro North as well as the major intersections of the Merritt Parkway and Route 7 and the intersection of Interstate 95 and Route 7 to attract both new residents and new businesses.

While Norwalk has many positive attributes that have lead to growth within the community, the City is looking to establish a clear vision for sustainable future growth in the face of continuing economic challenges, a shift in housing needs and demands, changing household spending patterns as well as climatic changes that affect how we use and develop the built environment. Considering the historic nature of the community, the beauty of our coastline and the development pressures our older neighborhoods face, the Plan must be sensitive to ensure that development does not occur simply for the sake of development.

The current Plan was adopted in 2008 and obviously there have been significant changes since that time that have impacted everyone. In addition, there have been many past planning studies conducted on behalf of the city as well as many planning studies that are presently underway. It is the intent of the City that this Plan be the umbrella document for all future planning within the City and serve as justification for future actions in terms of capital spending and development by the City. Prior City plans can be viewed at the following locations:

Planning Commission: <http://ct-norwalk.civicplus.com/index.aspx?nid=210>

Redevelopment Agency: <http://www.norwalkct.org/index.aspx?NID=652>  
<http://norwalkredevelopmentagency.com/>

Public Works: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?A=3529&Q=542234>  
<http://my.norwalkct.org/trafficalming/TrafficPrimer.aspx>

Public Schools: <http://norwalk.ss4.sharpschool.com/>

Recreation & Parks: <http://www.norwalkct.org/index.aspx?nid=275>

While conducting our review of the current plan and researching plans that have been prepared by other communities, we realize that many of the goals and aspirations we envision for our community are also the goals and aspirations expressed by many other communities. In light of that, we are looking for the expertise to assist us in actually realizing our goals and aspirations and not just simply “checking the box” on assigned tasks. At the completion of the plan we expect to receive a clearly articulate, actionable Plan that provides Norwalk’s vision for the next ten (10) years.

## **PLAN ELEMENTS**

Consistent with §8-23 of the CT General Statutes and Chapter XII of the Norwalk City Charter, the updated plan shall:

1. State the policies, goals and standards for the physical, economic and cultural development of the city;
2. Provide a modern multi-modal transportation system, leveraging the existing rail, bus and maritime assets;
3. Promote a compact, transit-accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development pattern, centered on our urban core;
4. Outline and map the most desirable use of land within the City,
5. Recommend residential density throughout the City;
6. Plan for all housing opportunities, as outlined in §8-23(f);
7. Ensure consistency with the State of Connecticut’s Conservation and Development and Policies, 2013 – 2018 and The South western Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, 2006 – 2015 (or as amended);
8. Be consistent with the municipal coastal program requirements of sections 22a-101 to 22a-104; and
9. Consider the restoration and protection of the ecosystem, habitat and water quality of Long Island Sound.

In addition, the Plan update should include, but not be limited to:

- a review of the completed and ongoing plans undertaken by various city agencies including Redevelopment, Public Works, Recreation and Parks and Public Schools and a coalescing of the outstanding elements as future goals;
- a detailed examination of demographic data and patterns, not limited to past, current and projected population, household size, employment and commuting patterns;
- analysis of future build-out, considering present regulations as well as ongoing planning studies, focusing on opportunities near transit;
- an assessment of infrastructure impacts and demands in light of current and projected development, population growth and job growth;
- reviewing existing survey data and possibly conducting and tabulating additional survey data to assess community concerns and goals;
- A summary of the status, challenges, desires and goals for our diverse neighborhoods;
- formulation and incorporation of sustainable living and development practices into city policies;
- outline options for a future (modern) transportation network that not only provides mobility for people but considers all modes of transit and that also serves as the basis for economic and housing development;
- recommendations on best-practices as it relates to municipal handling of stormwater and drainage;

- a review and recommendations regarding the use of city parks and recreational areas;
- exploring future opportunities for land conservation;
- provide the framework for a city-wide sidewalk, foot-path and bicycle lane plan;
- analysis and recommendations regarding energy sources, energy use and energy consumption in light of potential climatic changes, rising energy costs and the availability of future energy sources;
- exploring alternate regulatory approaches to zoning within the city, such as the possibility of form-based code or a hybrid form-based code;
- unique recommendations that have utilized or seen utilized in other communities that will benefit the City;
- identifying tasks and goals, prioritizing them and assigning the agency(s) that are responsible for their implementation and a recommended time frame and anticipated budget for each task; and
- recommendations and examples of best practices on plan implementation.

## **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Community involvement, from Plan inception to Plan adoption, will be a critical element to gain wide acceptance of the Plan and subsequently achieve the goals within the Plan. Part of Norwalk's diversity is the many neighborhoods throughout the City. The physical, cultural and economic differences of each of these neighborhoods must be considered when forming a comprehensive Plan for the City. It is anticipated that there will be individual meetings with the various neighborhoods by the consultant team as well as the Plan oversight committee. In addition to a Plan update web page, we are seeking a firm that has demonstrated innovative ways of reaching out to the community, keeping in mind that a diverse community has different ways of keeping informed.

## **SUBMITTAL AND PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

The RFQ should also contain references and shall clearly identify personnel who will have a role and lead the plan update, including resumes of team members, noting the specific individuals representing the lead consultant for these comparable projects, within the past five years. In addition, the RFQ shall also identify any sub consultants and provide experience of the firms working together. Firms shall provide the recommended approach for the update, examples of experience with such approach, a time line for the project, options for what the final Plan would look like, an estimated schedule on how long it would take to complete the project and an estimated budget.

## **FIRM QUALIFICATIONS**

The City seeks a firm(s) with a demonstrated track record of planning expertise in peer communities that are not only similar in size to Norwalk but are also similar demographically and geographically. The firm should not only have a working knowledge of the major plan themes but has proposed innovative approaches that have been enacted in other communities.

The selected firm(s) will also have a strong track record in conducting public outreach, including, but not limited to, facilitating public meetings, web surveys, social media, interviews with key stakeholders, meetings with the oversight committee and reaching consensus in a diverse urban community.

The team shall include a broad range of planning professionals. Specific expertise must include urban planning and design, multi-modal transportation, housing, infrastructure, sustainability, statistics and demographic data and economic development. In addition, the team must also have a proven background in regards to coastal resources, historic preservation and planning for potential climatic changes to ensure a sustainable future for the City.

The City of Norwalk shall be responsible for reviewing the proposals received and will further evaluate them, using the following criteria. The City of Norwalk reserves its rights to examine any other criteria and take the same under consideration and to reject any firm or proposals despite its compliance with these criteria if it determines that to do so would be in its best interests. Proposal submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The key personnel to be assigned to the Plan update and their present workload.
- The firm's qualifications, experience, and demonstrated familiarity with Plans in general and specifically Plans of a similar, size, scope, and nature.
- The proposed Plan update approach and how staff and consultants will be organized and utilized throughout the key phases (please outline) of the Plan update.
- Extent of services offered, and depth and extent of overall resources that can be put to use to ensure the success of the Plan update.
- Quality of references from previous clients.
- Candidate response format and estimated Plan update fees.

## **SCHEDULE**

The City seeks to adopt the Plan in July of 2018. As part of the RFQ, the consultant shall provide a draft work schedule for Plan completion. Selected firms should be prepared to make a presentation to a committee established by the City to demonstrate their firm(s) and individual's ability to carry out the plan. Subsequent to that presentation a final selection will be made. The following timeline has been established by the City regarding the RFQ:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TASK</u>
1/6/17	Issuance of Request for Qualifications
1/18/17	Deadline for submittal of inquiries from respondents
2/1/17	Deadline for submission of required materials
2/13/17	Initial screening complete and individual presentations scheduled
2/24/17	Final evaluation of qualifications and recommendations

## **SUBMITTAL PROCEDURE**

Ten (10) copies of all RFQ responses must be received by the City no later than 4:00 PM February 1, 2017. Send all responses to Steve Kleppin, Planning and Zoning Director, 125 East Avenue, PO Box 5125, Norwalk, CT 06856-5125.

Any questions may be directed to Steve Kleppin at 203.854.7956 or [skleppin@norwalkct.org](mailto:skleppin@norwalkct.org)

Responses to the Request for Qualifications will be reviewed by a Committee established by The City of Norwalk.

Following the review of responses, the Committee may elect to interview some or all of the respondents or may otherwise seek clarification or amplification of the materials.

Upon completion of the review, the Committee will make its recommendation. The recommendation may include:

1. Rejection of all submittals
2. Selection of one or more respondents to submit formal proposals.
3. Selection of one respondent to enter into exclusive negotiations.