

Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee

Notice of Request for Quotation (RFQ)

**Squannacook River Rail Trail in Townsend - Environmental and Engineering
Assessment**

September 6, 2007

The Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee is soliciting proposals from experienced, qualified consulting teams to complete an engineering and environmental assessment of the conversion of the rail bed in Townsend owned by the MBTA into the Squannacook River Rail Trail. We are seeking proposals to cover the 2.4 mile section in Townsend from Depot Road in Townsend center to the Groton/Townsend border. The proposal and 10 copies must be received at the Nashua River Watershed Association, 592 Main Street, Groton, 01450, by 5:00 PM on October 15, 2007. Proposals shall be submitted in two (2) separate envelopes, one labeled "Cost Proposal" and the other "Technical Proposal".

The committee reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and to accept any proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the committee.

Note: The town of Groton, MA is separately contracting for an environmental and engineering assessment of the conversion of approx. 0.9 miles of rail bed from the Townsend/Groton border to the Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area. Although both projects are related and planned to be timed for simultaneous execution, the studies are being contracted for separately to conform to municipal procurement regulations.

Steve Meehan, Chairman,
Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee

Section 1. Instructions to Proposers

Technical and Cost Proposals (with 10 copies of each) must be received at the Nashua River Watershed Association, 592 Main Street, Groton, 01450, by 5:00 PM on October 15, 2007.

Proposers shall submit a sealed Technical Proposal marked “RFQ: Townsend Rail Trail Assessment – Technical Proposal” along with the proposing consultant’s name, address and due date. Proposers shall also submit a separate cost proposal in a separate sealed envelope marked “RFQ: Townsend Rail Trail Assessment – Cost Proposal”, also with the proposing firm’s name, address and due date.

Regardless of the cause of delay, proposals that are received by the committee after the terminal time may not be considered. The responsibility for assuring the receipt of proposals before the specified closing time is incumbent upon the proposers.

Section 2. Introduction

The Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee invites qualified planning/engineering firms to submit proposals to conduct an environmental and engineering assessment for a shared-use path (rail trail, multi-use trail or bike trail) in the right-of-way of an unused railroad now owned by the MBTA. The assessment shall evaluate the feasibility of developing a shared use path along this corridor in accordance with MassHighway design guidelines.

The Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee through the Nashua River Watershed Association has won a Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) grant for a total of \$20,000.00 to allocate towards this effort which sum shall include all reimbursables including travel. These funds will be available after they are released by DCR. Proposals greater than \$20,000.00 cannot be considered. Proposers must demonstrate that they can fulfill all tasks set forth in the scope of work within the projected time frame. Questions regarding this RFQ may be directed to Al Futterman, Nashua River Watershed Association, 592 Main Street, Groton, 01450, by e-mail: alfutterman@NashuaRiverWatershed.org, or phone (978) 448-0299.

Section 3. Background

The Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee is considering a multi-use trail along an approximately 2.4-mile segment of the unused MBTA rail line in Townsend. The section being considered runs from Townsend/Groton border west to Depot Street in Townsend center. The trail parallels the Squannacook River, and for a portion of the way runs next

to the Squannacook River State Wildlife Management Area. The trail also parallels Route 119, providing a safe and scenic alternative to that bicycle-unfriendly state highway which connects two of the major population centers of Townsend. This proposed trail crosses South Road and Old Meetinghouse Road, and terminates at Depot Street.

Our committee has been studying this project since 2002. A report giving our assessment of the feasibility of this rails-to-trail conversion may be found on our web site at <http://www.SquannacookRiverRailTrail.org>. This site also contains a FAQ page and other documents related to this project. Proposing firms are encouraged to use any and all material on the above web site to develop their proposal and, if awarded a contract, in their final report. Money for the design and construction portion of this project has been earmarked in the latest federal highway bill (SAFETEA-LU).

This preliminary environmental and engineering assessment serves two purposes: 1) to satisfy Mass Highway of project feasibility before those federal funds can be released, and 2) to address certain issues critical to the towns' decisions as to whether to approve this project or not

Section 4. Characteristics of the Consulting Team

The Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee is seeking a multi-disciplinary team for an assessment of the environmental and engineering issues for a rail trail conversion. Several areas of expertise are required and the team should have at a minimum a

- Professional civil engineer, licensed in the State of Massachusetts
- Structural engineer
- Wetland scientist
- Environmental engineer (Licensed Site Professional)
- Conservation biologist

Applicant firms should have a multi-disciplinary staff within house, or include subconsultants in their proposal that have successful track records in their area of expertise. Our committee requires a team that has experience working on rail trail projects in Massachusetts, and has a thorough understanding of Mass Highway funding and design guidelines.

Section 5. Project Scope

The study will include an environmental and engineering assessment with the following tasks:

- 1) A review of the location and dimensions of the railroad right-of-way (ROW), prominent features, and wetland areas near the rail line.

- 2) Identify encroachments, easements and leases of the ROW.
- 3) A general physical assessment of the existing conditions of the rail bed (i.e., vegetation, erosion, etc.) to determine where a more detailed engineering survey and design may be needed, especially for at-grade road crossings.
- 4) A review of road crossings and sight lines along with recommendations for crosswalks and traffic signals at the crossings. Evaluate any other potential safety issues along the proposed rail trail.
- 5) Evaluate conditions of draining system along proposed trail, and make recommendations for upgrades as part of the final assessment report.
- 6) Provide recommendations for minimizing impact of rail trail on Shepherds at the southeast corner of Route 119 and South Street, where rail trail passes in front of that business.
- 7) Discuss possible routing options in South Road area. The routing considerations should be at a minimum A) Following the existing rail bed. B) Crossing South Road at 119 intersection, then returning to rail bed before Reed Homestead. C) Crossing South Road at 119 intersection, then returning to rail bed via Harbor Church parking lot.
- 8) Request input from the Townsend Historical Society on how to blend the proposed rail trail within the historic area.
- 9) Discuss possible shifting on the trail south in Townsend Harbor area, including but not limited to: A) behind Harbor Auto (98 Main Street) to avoid conflict with fence built over rail bed, B) from 86 Main Street to 112 Main Street to increase distance from abutters and avoid conflict with fence at Harbor Auto, and C) from 106 to 112 Main only to increase distance from abutters in that section only.
- 10) Evaluate erosion risk due to step grade 11 feet south of rail bed in Depot Street area.
- 11) Identify sections of the trail where special designs may be needed to ensure user safety or mitigate environmental and historic impacts (e.g. boardwalks, soft surface, narrowed surface).
- 12) Have a Licensed Site Professional investigate areas most likely to have been contaminated to a significant level using all techniques allowed by the MBTA, including historical records and a visual site assessment. Outline design approaches for handling soil that are consistent with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection guidelines and all applicable laws, regulations, and other public policies for capping soils with varying degrees of contamination.

- 13) Identify sections of the trail where storm water management will present engineering challenges. Provide conceptual designs that meet NPDES and Mass. DEP guidelines for storm water management.
- 14) A preliminary needs assessment of screening and/or barriers to mitigate trail impact on abutting residences, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- 15) Identify potential points of access along the trail and quantify the need and availability of parking at access points. Our feasibility report gives two preliminary suggestions, which the report should include but not necessarily be limited to: 1) just east of Depot Street, and 2) directly east of Shepherd's on the south side of Route 119. Discuss how a possible extension of the rail trail into Groton, with parking at the Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area, would affect these plans. Identify possible solutions to any possible nuisance parking issues elsewhere along the proposed rail trail.
- 16) Identify wetlands, vernal pools and areas of rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife habitat in or close to the rail bed using information from the Townsend Conservation Commissions and state and federal databases and from direct field observation. Outline design and construction procedures that will minimize habitat disturbance in general. Coordination letter should be sent to the Townsend Conservation Commission to request their input and concerns relative to the project.
- 17) Identify any ways this rail trail may provide safe access to North Middlesex Regional High School.
- 18) Investigate issue of safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists to trail head at Depot Street from Townsend center area.
- 19) Identify possible design features to improve access for blind and other handicapped users.
- 20) Implementation Plan
 - a) List environmental (e.g., wetland) and other permits that will be needed prior to the start of construction.
 - b) Provide a budget cost estimate for construction of the 2.4-mile trail and associated amenities and infrastructure, in as detailed form as possible at this time. Provide separate estimates for two types of trail surfaces, a paved surface and a non-paved surface such as stone dust or crushed limestone.
 - c) Provide recommendations as to the best way to proceed with the project, with a detailed list of implementation steps needed to advance the project through

construction. The recommendations should also include coordination with Mass Highway on funding and include appropriate schedule for securing design and construction funding.

d) This project shall conform to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines, including but not limited to: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106), Commonwealth's Archeological Regulations (950CMR70), the Transportation Act of 1966 (section 4f), the Massachusetts Architectural Barriers Board Regulations, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, requirements of the local Conservation Commission, the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design guidelines, the Federal Highway Administration Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the Mass Highway Project Development and Design Guidebook.

Section 6. Deliverables expected from winning bidder

All Consultant reports, surveys, drawings, plans and other data and material, including data and material stored on electronic media, furnished to our committee during the course of the project (collectively "Materials") shall become the property of our committee thereafter in such manner and for such purposes as we (or such parties as we may designate) may deem advisable, without further employment of or additional compensation to the Consultant. The Consultant shall not release or disclose to any third party any Materials produced for us without obtaining our prior written consent. At no time shall the Consultant release or disclose to any third party any Materials furnished to the Consultant by us in connection with the performance of the Consultant's services.

On original, nine (9) copies and one electronic file on CD of the following materials shall be submitted to: Al Futterman, Nashua River Watershed Association, 592 Main Street, Groton, 01450.

- A. A description of the rail bed as described in this RFQ.
- B. An environmental assessment plan showing existing conditions (vegetation/erosion, easements, known historic and archeological resources, points of access, and potential parking, etc.)
- C. A report addressing all information requested in the proposal.
- D. A preliminary Cost Estimate for construction of 2.4 miles of trail (including the proposed scope of work broken down by major task elements), in MHD format that can be forwarded to MHD for review and approval.

- E. The team must be prepared to make the following public presentations: one with the Townsend Board of Selectmen, and one informational meeting with the general public. It must also be available to meet twice with the Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee and appropriate members of town staff. If the proposing firm does receive a contract for the Groton portion, these two meetings with the Squannacook River Rail Trail may be used to satisfy both contracts. However, an informational meeting in each town will still be required. A line item amount of a minimum of 16 hours shall be allocated to this effort. Also, Mass Highway District 3 and Montachusets Regional Planning Commission must be kept informed during all phases of the study, including notification of all public meetings. The contact person at Mass Highway is Sarah Bradbury at sarah.bradbury@state.ma.us 508-929-3908. The contact person at MRPC is Brad Harris at Bharris@MRPC.org 978-345-7376 x: 2268.

Section 7. Proposal Submission Requirements

Written proposals will be received until 5:00 PM on October 15, 2007 at the following address:

Al Futterman
Nashua River Watershed Association
592 Main Street
Groton, 01450

Each proposal must include a sealed Technical Proposal that shall be clearly marked “RFQ: Townsend Rail Trail Assessment – Technical Proposal” with the lead firm’s name and address. Ten (10) copies of the technical proposal shall also be submitted. Each proposal must also include a Cost Proposal that shall be clearly marked “RFQ: Townsend Rail Trail Assessment – Cost Proposal” also with the lead firm’s name and address. 10 copies of the cost proposal shall be submitted in a sealed envelope separate from the technical proposal.

All Technical Proposals shall include, as a minimum, the following information:

1. Name of lead consultant.
2. Address of lead consultant.
3. Name of contact person (including phone and fax numbers and email address).
4. Names and resumes of development team who will be assigned to work on the project including any registrations and required certifications.
5. Description of how the proposal meets the Minimum Criteria in Section 8 below.
6. A list of recent similar rails to trails study or design projects as required in Sections 8, including a brief description of the project, location, costs, and date services provided. Identify projects as completed or underway. Photographs or other visual representations of recent projects should be included where possible along with a point of contact for each project

7. Contact name, phone number and project name for up to 3 references for similar projects.
8. A description of the general skills of the consultant team, and any specific skills to be brought to this proposal. Any certifications/licenses shall be provided.
9. Other information which will document the team's capabilities and qualifications for the project.

All Cost Proposals shall include, as a minimum, the following information:

1. Price of work requested in this proposal assuming proposing firm does not receive contract for Groton portion of the work
2. Price of work requested in this proposal assuming proposing firm does receive contract for Groton portion of the work. In the case that the proposing firm does receive a contract for the Groton portion, the Squannacook River Rail Trail Committee will accept a single environmental and engineering assessment report for the whole 3.3 mile trail.
3. Proposal expiration date (if any).
4. Special terms and conditions desired by the proposer.

Questions regarding this RFQ may be directed to the Al Futterman, Nashua River Watershed Association, 592 Main Street, Groton, 01450, by e-mail: alfutterman@NashuaRiverWatershed.org, or phone (978) 448-0299.

Section 8. Minimum Qualifications of Consultants

- Meet qualifications of designers for Shared Use Paths and Trails design per the Mass Highway Project Development and Design Guidebook.
- Have prior experience in the planning and design of shared-use paths.
- Experience in developing creative and environmentally sensitive approaches to design problems, and in producing landscape architectural drawings and engineering plans suitable for approval by the Mass Highway Dept.
- The team should have at a minimum a professional civil engineer, a structural engineer, wetland scientist, an environmental engineer and a conservation biologist, all with current Massachusetts registrations in good standing.
- Experience with local, state, and federal regulations and permits necessary for constructing shared-use paths.
- The selected firm should be available to begin work within four weeks upon acceptance and signing of a contract and to complete the project tasks within the

projected time frame given in section 11.

Section 9. Comparative Evaluation Criteria

In general, firms must be responsive to the requested information set forth in the RFQ. Firms submitting proposals deemed to be non-responsive shall be given a ranking of Unacceptable. Specifically, the proposing firms will be evaluated and rated according to the following criteria:

I. The Consultant Team includes all the required skills listed in Section 8:

Highly Advantageous: The Consultant Team includes more than the required skill areas if shown to offer a benefit to the project.

Advantageous: The Consultant Team includes all of the required skill areas.

Not Advantageous: The Consultant Team includes less than the required skill areas.

II. The Consultant Team is experienced and highly qualified:

Highly advantageous: Team members have an average of 10 or more years experience in the work for which each will be responsible.

Advantageous: Team members have an average of 5-10 years experience in the work for which each will be responsible.

Not Advantageous: Team members have an average of less than 5 years experience in the work for which each will be responsible.

III. The Consultant Team is experienced with similar rail trail projects:

Highly Advantageous: At least half the Consultant Team has experience with 5 or more similar projects.

Advantageous: At least half the Consultant Team has experience with 3-5 or more similar projects.

Not Advantageous: Less than half of the Consultant Team has experience with 3 or more similar projects.

IV. Presentation skills of the Consultant Team:

Highly Advantageous: The Consultant Team demonstrates extensive experience in public presentation with visual presentation materials and physical plans.

Advantageous: The Consultant Team demonstrates some experience in public presentation with visual presentation materials and physical plans.

Not Advantageous: The Consultant Team demonstrates little or no experience in public presentation with visual elements and physical plans.

V. Quality of the References provided:

Highly Advantageous: The work of the Consultant Team is deemed excellent by all of their 3 references.

Advantageous: The work of the Consultant Team or its individual members is deemed good or excellent by at least 2 of their 3 references.

Not Advantageous: The work of the Consultant Team is deemed good or excellent by 1 reference, or deemed poor by any reference.

VI. Readiness to Proceed and Complete Project Within Time Frame:

Advantageous: Consultant able to begin upon execution of contract (within two weeks of notice to proceed) and complete within the projected time frame.

Not Advantageous: Unable to begin within 60 days of notification to proceed.

Section 10. Award of Contract

Contract award, if any, will be made by our committee upon determination of the most advantageous proposal from a responsible, qualified and responsive proposer, taking into consideration cost and all evaluation criteria set forth in the RFQ.

The team selected for the work will need to provide certification of insurance coverage and will be required to indemnify and hold our committee harmless.

Section 11. Timetable

Some of the major milestones foreseen at this time relating to the submission, review, and approval of proposals, and to certain other aspects of the project development process are as follows:

STEPS	TASKS	COMPLETION DATE
1	Deadline for proposal submission	October 15, 2007
2	Award of contract	November 15, 2007 Assuming DCR funding released.
3	Meeting #1 with SRRTC	First month after award of contract
4	Meeting #2 with SRRTC	Third month after award of contract
5	Townsend Board of Selectmen & Public Meeting on overall assessment	Fifth month after award of contract
6	Final Report Due	Sixth month after award of contract