



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Comprehensive Plan, Bike and Pedestrian Plan, and Outdoor Recreation Plan

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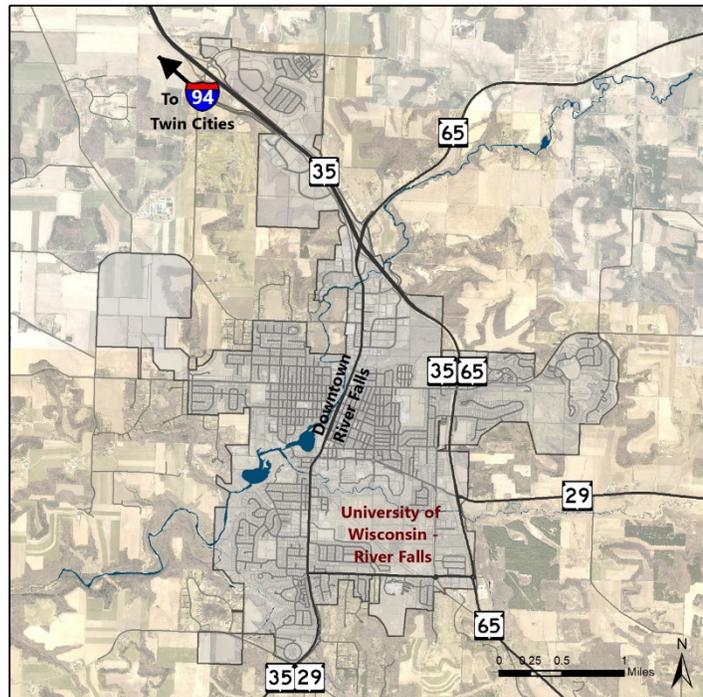
INTRODUCTION

The City of River Falls is seeking proposals from qualified firms to undertake a significant long-range planning effort that will update three comprehensive city-wide plans:

- [2005 Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [1995 Bike and Pedestrian Plan](#)
- [1995-2000 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan](#)

About River Falls

River Falls, [the City on the Kinni](#), is a small but fast-growing community of ~15,000-20,000 in northwest Wisconsin. Our location, just 30 minutes east of the Twin Cities, has influenced growth and development over the past three decades, which nearly doubled from 1990 to 2020. River Falls is home to the [University of Wisconsin – River Falls](#) which was ranked 8th in the nation for value according to the *Wall Street Journal*. It is also home to the [Chippewa Valley Technical College](#). The community is forward-thinking and committed to positive growth and change as evidenced by awards and recognition for renewable energy and sustainability.



PROJECT SCOPE

River Falls is growing, our plans are dated, and the world is changing; thus, we are in a position where planning for the future is not only timely, but necessary. This planning project is a chance to evaluate resources and examine River Falls—who are we as a community, how have we come to be what/who we are, and where and how the city will grow?

This three plan project is put forth because each document is overdue for review and update, there is much overlap in the contents of these plans and multiple synergies can be gained by completing them simultaneously, including data collection, outreach, and overarching policies and goals.

The goals and scope listed herein are purposefully broad. It is expected the consultants will provide a more detailed scope of services based on their proposed approach, qualifications, and project expertise.

Project Goals

The comprehensive plan and companion plans will be:

1. Visionary – imagine the future with a focus on our community values and aspirations.
2. Inclusive – consider all citizens and their disparate needs and points of view.
3. Data-driven – evidence-based with a strategic framework for long-range planning goals.
4. Systems-based – acknowledge and address the interconnectedness of planning elements, the complexities of modern society and the need to address issues in an integrated and cohesive manner.
5. Transparent – the planning process and its impacts will be accessible and consistently communicated.
6. Clear and concise – easy to use, reference and update.
7. Actionable – a realistic, phased implementation strategy.

At a minimum, it is expected that the consultant will complete the following tasks.

1. Review and assess past planning documents.
2. Conduct existing conditions and needs analyses.
3. Collect data and analyze historic and recent trends to understand the issues facing us today and opportunities for tomorrow.
4. Extensive outreach to gauge interest in planning concepts and development patterns that may venture beyond the status quo. Input shall be sought from staff, public officials, and citizens.
5. Growth scenario planning/development pattern analysis that considers direct and indirect costs/impacts of various land development patterns.
6. Propose future land use and development patterns from which long-range utility and transportation plans can be developed.
7. Compose planning policies that are clear, concise, and implementable.
8. Prepare an implementation framework detailing steps and timing to execute the plan and where appropriate, provide firm direction for future capital budget projects.

Additional project components and methodologies that have proven successful in similar comprehensive plan efforts are encouraged.

Project Partners and Stakeholders

- 1. Steering Committee.** The **Plan Commission** has been selected as the steering committee for the comprehensive plan and the project as a whole. Several ad-hoc committees will be formed to assist in the companion plans.
 - The **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board** will be a key partner in the preparation of the parks and open space requirement for the comprehensive plan.
 - A **Bike and Ped** committee will be established with representatives from the City, Kinni Off Road Cyclists, school district, Pierce and St. Croix counties, bike advocacy groups, and others.
- 2. City Council.** City Council will be provided periodic updates throughout the process and is the final approval authority for the plan.
- 3. Staff.** A project management team of city staff will be responsible for key project decisions and document review.
- 4. Stakeholders.** Stakeholders may include representatives from the following organizations: River Falls School District, UW-River Falls, Chippewa Valley Technical College, River Falls Business Improvement District, River Falls Economic Development Corporation, River Falls Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau, Kinni Off Road Cyclists, Kinni River Land Trust, Historic Preservation Commission, Kinni Corridor Collaborative, Trout Unlimited, religious institutions, Our Neighbor's Place, WestCAP, County governments, surrounding townships, Community Arts Base, River Falls Housing Authority, and Powerful Choices. This list is representative only to provide the broad view of potential stakeholder groups.

Public Engagement

The selected consultant shall develop a public engagement plan that builds on the engagement ideas identified below. As a foundation for this planning process, the consultant may rely on and build upon the findings of the 2017 engagement process from the Kinni Corridor Plan process.

Project Website

The pandemic has changed the way we work and socialize. For many of us we've been at home since March 2020 connecting with people through the internet. We're in a time where in-person engagement is challenging but web-based tools are becoming widespread and easier to use. Staff has considered several online engagement tools and landed on Bang the Table as our preference; however, we're open to an equivalent product. We anticipate the website to be the project hub that may include:

- Project overview and description, timeline, and event notifications and updates.
- Library of existing plans and studies.
- Mapping tool for location-based comments.

- Topical community surveys that focus on experience rather than asking the public to be technical experts.
- Conversation Corner – a place for a community conversation about the future and change. It will be a place for the public to share their ideas and reactions to those shared by staff in the form of links to articles and examples of planning concepts. Examples of possible topics include accessory dwelling units, live-work housing options, resiliency, equity, density, etc.

In-Person Activities and Events

In-person activities and events shall be proposed by the consultant.

Tours

Bicycle and walking tours to identify issues with the built environment, transportation network and preferred bicycle and pedestrian routes.

Student Participation

Additionally, Chris Holtkamp, Assistant Professor of Conservation and Environmental Planning, at UW-River Falls has offered to lend his students to assist in planning and outreach activities.

Comprehensive Plan

It is anticipated that the plan will be composed of various chapters/elements, such as land development, housing, parks and open space, services, resources. Over-arching themes of sustainability, equity, resource protection and preservation, etc. will guide each element. The plan will also meet Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law (§66.1001, Wis. Stats.) as well as the new requirement for a housing affordability report (§66.10013, Wis. Stats.). In addition, the plan shall examine the following questions:

- Is farmland preservation and community separation important? If so, where is it most important?
- What is the preferred development scenario (based on the growth scenario planning activity)?
- To what extent do we want to regulate private property?
- Is the community satisfied with the rate of land development and the products being developed?
- Is there support for higher density? How high and where?
- Is there support for change in existing neighborhoods (e.g. accessory dwellings or live-work units)?
- How do we build a resilient economy?
- How should we protect the environment?
- What equity issues do we have in the community and how can we address them?
- How does the community build strong, resilient neighborhoods?
- What does the community want city officials to focus on in the next 20+ years?

Bike and Pedestrian Plan

The City was awarded a grant from Wisconsin Department of Transportation to prepare an update to the city's 1995 Bicycle and Pedestrian. As listed in the grant application to WisDOT, the primary objective of this project is to develop a framework to enhance the safety and appeal of walking and biking in our community. Specifically, the plan update will:

- Combine past planning efforts with new research and analysis to integrate recent local and regional planning efforts and growth areas of the city.
- Inventory environmental features, gaps, and barriers that impact the walking and cycling, including existing infrastructure/facilities, or lack thereof. This analysis will include bicycle and pedestrian counts at key locations and bike and pedestrian-related traffic accidents.
- Identify and prioritize infrastructure projects, including new city and regional trail connections, sidewalk infill, and roadway design that will accommodate all users.
- Provide education and initiatives to elevate the importance and bike and pedestrian infrastructure in the City. This will include new data and research on biking population segments, safety, and efforts to increase use.
- Identify gaps and barriers, both perceived and actual, in the existing bike and pedestrian network.
- Develop and prioritize projects, including on and off-street improvements, sidewalk infill, regional connections, design direction that can be applied to a typology of different streets, and a tiered network serving experienced and less experienced riders.
- Establish policies and program recommendations to encourage the use of walking and biking as viable modes of transportation.
- Identify strategies to elevate our Bicycle Friendly Community designation with the League of American Bicyclists.
- Identify funding mechanisms to upgrade existing facilities as well as determine maintenance requirements.
- Set a capital improvement schedule for plan implementation.

Note that because this portion of the project will be federally funded, a separate scope of work and contract will be required for the bike and pedestrian plan. WisDOT consultant selection guidance will be followed for this plan component.

Park and Recreation Plan

The park and recreation plan is intended to provide the necessary data related to the supply and demand for outdoor recreation in River Falls that can be used to inform local decision-making regarding parks and open space. An adopted park plan is a prerequisite to participation in WisDNR outdoor recreation grant programs (per Chapter NR 50, Wisconsin administrative code). In addition to meeting WisDNR requirements (refer to this WisDNR [document](#)), the following shall be completed for the park and recreation plan:

- Update the inventory of existing park, recreation, and open space land and facilities of city parks as well as other public lands/parks (i.e. River Falls School District, UWRF, etc.).
- Public outreach to determine resident needs/desires for recreational needs. (Foundations in the 2017 Kinni Corridor Plan).
- Needs assessment based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards and latest research.
- Ensure compliance with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) [certification requirements](#).
- Identify opportunities to reduce maintenance and operation costs while providing high-quality park system.
- Long-term planning guidance for park and open space land acquisition, improvements, and maintenance of local parks.

Deliverables

The selected consultant will provide printable and digital plans that are simple to use and regularly referenced. Specifically, we're seeking:

- Format and layout design that is streamlined, easily searchable, with a logical organizational framework and text formatting that is easy and inviting to read.
- High-quality graphics and illustrations to communicate important plan concepts.
- Maps that are not be too detailed (too visually cluttered) with not too large (in file size). We need to be able to use them regularly.
- Ultimately, we'd like to not only produce paper plans, as is traditional, but also create an easy to use web-based product that can be referenced regularly by staff and the public and has searching and cross-referencing functionality.

Consultant v. City Staff Responsibilities

Below are the minimum required responsibilities. The consultant as project manager will work with city staff to detail further responsibilities as needed.

The consultant will:

- Coordinate and collaborate with staff and any subconsultants in preparing the comprehensive plan and its companion plans.
- Maintain primary responsibility for writing and editing the document, as well as design, format and branding of the document, and preparation of all final document materials.
- The consultant must be amenable to document edits by city staff.
- Project management

City staff will:

- Schedule coordinate Plan Commission, Park Board, and City Council meetings.

- Provide documents and data as needed.
- Review consultant work products and provide comments.
- Post project updates on social media.
- The City will provide the consultant(s) with the relevant documents for the project team to conduct a thorough review.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Ideally the Comprehensive Plan should be completed within 12-18 months of project start (**kick-off anticipated for October 2021**). Component plans would ideally be completed within 24 months of project start. If the consultant wishes to propose an alternative completion date, it should be proposed, and rationale provided in the submission.

SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

Requirements

The following materials must be received by 5:00 p.m. CDT on Friday, July 30, 2021 for a proposal to be considered.

The submittal requirements are as follows. City further reserves the right to request additional information from any Consultant/Firm.

1. Firm Overview: Provide a brief overview of firm, including qualifications to execute the contract, company mission or statement of beliefs.
2. Qualifications:
 - a. Personal Qualifications: Identification of lead project manager and their contact information.
 - b. Name, proposed role, hourly rate, anticipated time commitment to the project and biography of each team member.
3. References: Include a list of at least three municipal clients for which you have conducted comprehensive planning, visioning, community engagement and /or land use analysis.
4. Project Understanding: A summary of the consultants understanding of the project as described in the RFP.
5. Proposal Overview: Provide specific approaches, methods and assumptions that will be utilized to accomplish each task.
6. Proposed Work Plan and Schedule: Provide a proposed work plan with schedule, divided into phases identifying key tasks, milestones, approximate dates, project deliverables and resource needs.
7. Engagement Plan: Provide an overview of your approach to community engagement including anticipated activities, approach to collaboration with city staff and efforts to engage populations.

One electronic copy of the proposal, in Adobe PDF format, shall be submitted to Amy Peterson at apeterson@rfcity.org. Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Amy Peterson via email or phone at 715-426-3425.

Proposal Review and Consultant Selection

A committee of staff, a Plan Commission representative, and a Council representative will evaluate and rank all submittals. This committee will select 2 consultants to move forward to be interviewed by city officials at a joint meeting of the Plan Commission and City Council on **August 24th at 5:00** p.m. The City Council will approve the contract at their regular meeting on September 14th.