

**NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**  
**Freese Park Master Plan**  
**Request for Proposals**

Notice is hereby given that the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, Norwalk, CT, is seeking a qualified consulting firm to provide professional planning, community design and public meeting facilitation services in preparation of the Freese Park Master Plan.

**RFP Schedule**

Release Date: June 30, 2016

Proposal Submittal Deadline: July 29, 2016

Site Visit: July 13, 2016 @ 10am RSVP to Tami Strauss at [tstrauss@norwalkct.org](mailto:tstrauss@norwalkct.org)

Interview for Selected Consultants: August 8<sup>th</sup> – August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Agency Approval of Consultant Contract: September 13, 2016

Proposals shall be submitted no later than 5:00pm on the above date and addressed to:  
Tami Strauss  
Director of Community Development Planning  
Norwalk Redevelopment Agency  
125 East Avenue, room 202  
Norwalk, CT 06851

All questions regarding this solicitation should be emailed to the Redevelopment Agency representative listed below. Do not attempt to contact other staff members regarding your submittal or any related proposal submittal.

Tami Strauss  
Director of Community Development Planning  
(203)854-7810 x46787  
[tstrauss@norwalkct.org](mailto:tstrauss@norwalkct.org)

The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency reserves the right to reject any or all proposals thereof, to accept a proposal or portion thereof, and to waive any informality.

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION**

The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, Norwalk, CT is seeking a qualified professional planning firm or consultant to facilitate a community planning process that culminates in a Freese Park Master Plan, including construction plans and bid specifications for Norwalk, CT. The selected consultant will facilitate the public outreach efforts, develop conceptual elements based on the input received through the public participation efforts, and prepare recommendations for location, design, and features of park and recreation elements.

## **STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION**

Norwalk is the sixth largest City in Connecticut with a population of nearly 88,000. The City is located in Fairfield County along Long Island Sound and covers an area of 36.3 miles. The City is governed by a Mayor, who serves as the Chief Elected Official and a 15 member Common Council.

The City Recreation and Parks Department maintains over 1,200 acres of public park land including 2 public beaches, 143 acres of open space at Cranbury Park, 70 acres of waterfront parks at Veteran's Park and many neighborhood parks. The Department also maintains numerous athletic fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, and playgrounds throughout the City. The Department's Recreation Division sponsors a full complement of active and passive recreational programs for all age groups.

Within Norwalk, the Wall Street area has long played an integral role in the economic and historic fabric of the City. Beginning during the colonial period and for much of Norwalk's history, Wall Street was the city's center for banking and commerce, politics and local governance, entertainment and hospitality. It was also a major employment center, with factories, workshops, and trades throughout the district. Besides the large population that lived and/or worked there, it was a destination for Norwalk citizens, and indeed for the region. The reach of its bustling commerce brought visitors from Norwalk's borders to Norwalk's downtown – Wall Street.

By the middle of the 20th century, two factors led to Wall Street's decline in prominence. Like many downtown areas throughout Connecticut, shifts in the economy and the patterns of land use and transportation caused Wall Street to lose ground to the area's growing suburbs. Then in 1955, flood waters from the Norwalk River caused catastrophic damage to Wall Street by destroying a river crossing, several local roads and buildings on each side of the river.

In the years following this disaster, the City of Norwalk has undertaken initiatives to help the Wall Street area reclaim its former stature. Today, Wall Street is showing signs of rejuvenation, with several development projects underway. The Redevelopment Plan Area features storefront shops and restaurants and a growing residential population. There are numerous residential and commercial development projects underway in the Wall Street Redevelopment Plan Area, that will increase the residential population, visitors, and open space users to downtown Norwalk, including:

- Wall Street Place: Wall Street & Isaacs Street, mixed use residential & retail development
- Wall Street Theater: 71 Wall Street, renovation of a historic 750-seat theater
- Head of the Harbor: Smith Street and East Wall Street – mixed use residential & office development
- New business openings

The current implementation document for Wall Street redevelopment initiatives is the Wall Street Redevelopment Plan (amended 2006).

### **Open Space Issues and Opportunities**

Within the Wall Street Redevelopment area, there are several open spaces and esplanades that are disconnected and inaccessible, making for an uninviting, underutilized and fragmented open space system in the Wall Street area.

Irving Freese Park is the largest green space in the Plan area. Freese Park is 0.5 acres located on the banks of the Norwalk River. The park was created in the mid-1960s as part of reconstruction work following the flood of 1955. Enjoyment of the park is hampered somewhat by its aging equipment, especially the fencing, and infrequent maintenance.

This RFP calls for improvements to Freese Park and to establish physical and/or signage connections from these spaces to the Mechanic Street Esplanade, Klondike Park, 3-mile Harbor Valley Loop Trail, and the longer 26-mile Norwalk River Valley Trail (map attached). Such improvements and connections will allow the City to take advantage of Freese Park's location as a riverfront vista and the most significant green space in the burgeoning Wall Street area.

In the past, Freese Park has hosted an Artists Village, street festivals, and other community events.

### **PROJECT OBJECTIVE**

In order to determine how best to address the issues faced in Freese Park, the Redevelopment Agency would like a consultant to develop a Master Plan that would coordinate with existing plans and projects including:

- Wall Street Redevelopment Plan
- Connectivity Plan
- Norwalk Harbor Loop Trail Plan
- Norwalk River Valley Train Plan
- Pedestrian & Bikeway Transportation Plan
- Wall Street Intersection Improvements Plan
- CT DOT Wall Street Bridge over Metro North Railroad Project (coordination through Norwalk Department of Public Works)

The Master Plan will include an inventory of Freese Park's assets, an analysis of forecasted needs, requirements, and suggested implementation strategies. Specific Scope of Work items to be outlined within the contract shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Park Open Space: identify existing open space conditions, opportunities, short-comings and/or deficiencies;
2. Recreational Facilities: Identify appropriate recreational facilities standards including opportunities, short-comings and/or deficiencies with existing facilities to establish a recreation facilities program;
3. Recreational Programs and Services; examine and evaluate current recreational programs and services to identify opportunities, short-comings and/or deficiencies for proposed future recreational programs and services;
4. Park Partnerships: identify potential Park partnerships and alliances for collaborative Park development and programming;
5. Park Maintenance: identify a probable Park maintenance program for proposed improvements, programs and enhancements with a strategy for allocating maintenance responsibilities;
6. Expenses and Funding Sources: identify probable programming expenses, funding sources and mechanisms while maintaining City ownership for the Park to become self-sustaining;
7. Provide design development, construction cost estimates, final design, bid documents and specification for proposed physical improvements;
8. May be required to provide site survey, prepare environmental documents and perform review of shop drawings and construction supervision.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Public participation is a key element in the Master Plan process. The City of Norwalk, stakeholders, and residents will play a key role in the planning process. Workshops, community meetings, and interviews will be utilized to gain face to face, first hand feedback on design elements. Outreach activities should focus on a variety of stakeholders, including property and business owners, residents, recreational users and the general population. These include:

- The Norwalk Historical Society / Mill Hill Park
- Norwalk Bike/Walk Taskforce
- City of Norwalk Main Library on Belden Avenue
- First Taxing District
- Norwalk 2.0
- Norwalk Center Task Force

- City of Norwalk Recreation & Parks Department
- Restaurant and Business Owners
- Property owners
- Recreation and Parks Committee of the Norwalk Common Council
- Norwalk Common Council

Community outreach efforts will also include:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Stakeholder group meetings
- Online survey and face to face survey
- Other methods to measure the public’s reaction to the process and adjust the planning process as necessary.

## **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

The Proposed Project will have two very important elements:

1. **A community participation process that includes at least one community stakeholder meeting, interviews, and public outreach materials:** Redevelopment Agency staff will assist the selected consultant in the development and utilization of these public participation elements. The Redevelopment Agency shall be responsible for the scheduling, notices and any other costs associated with the public participation in the Master Plan development process. To ensure these elements are conducted in an efficient and timely manner, meetings with the Redevelopment Agency must be conducted at the outset of the project to refine the schedule, assign responsibilities, and ensure accountability is built into the process.
2. **Public Participation Conceptual Elements developed by the selected consultant:** The various design elements will be presented to the community via a custom project website to measure the receptivity to the design features under consideration. These conceptual elements will be modified as necessary, based on feedback from the public. At least two public meeting shall be held (locations and times to be determined) in addition to any public hearings, Agency or City meetings in order to adopt the plan. Data will be gathered and presented as need to supplement the conceptual elements by meeting with stakeholders and others. The schedule will be refined during the initial meetings with the selected consultant.

A final recommendation for a Master Plan to address the needs will be developed by the selected consultant with input from Agency, City staff at the conclusion of the public participation process. The Plan design and engineering plan will be presented to the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency Commission, Recreation & Parks committee of the Norwalk Common Council and Norwalk Common Council for adoption. The consultant’s presence at these meetings will be required. The timing for this final report will be determined (preliminarily) at the meetings with the selected consultant at the outset of the project, and may be adjusted during the course of the project. The process will increase the residents’ knowledge of the issues that are present and provide a vehicle for eliciting public input for solutions to these issues. Ultimately, the project will gain public support

and make it more likely that implementation of the Plan elements will occur. Upon approval of the design and engineering plan, the consultant will develop bid specifications for the project.

### **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The Proposal response should reflect clearly and accurately the capabilities, knowledge, experience, and capacity of the Respondent to meet the requirements of the project and the RFP. At a minimum, this will include submission of the following information:

- Letter of Interest
- Firm Description
- Relevant Experience, including experience with working with flood related information and technical data
- Online project management experience
- Resumes of Project Team
- Approach to Fulfilling Project Objectives
- Time Frame for major milestones, completion
- Statement indicating the firm is independent, properly licensed to practice in Connecticut, and has no conflict of interest with regard to any other work performed by the firm for the City of Norwalk / Norwalk Redevelopment Agency
- Fee Schedule, itemized rate schedule, including typical hourly charge rates for labor classifications anticipated
- References (minimum of three within the last five years)
- Other information deemed necessary to support the proposal

Three (3) bound copies of qualifications and a copy in PDF format on a flash drive should be submitted to the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency offices at 125 East Avenue, Room 202, Norwalk, CT 06851 no later than 5:00pm on July 29, 2016. Submittals and questions can be sent to Tami Strauss, Director of Community Development Planning, at [tstrauss@norwalkct.org](mailto:tstrauss@norwalkct.org) or (203)854-7810 x46787. Interviews with the most qualified firms will be held August 8-12, 2016.

In order to be considered, all requested information shall be submitted. All material shall be presented in the same order as presented in this RFP. Facsimile, emailed or electronic format proposals are not acceptable. The Redevelopment Agency will not be responsible for proposals delivered to a person/location other than specified above.

### **CONDITIONS OF REQUEST and REQUIREMENTS**

The following conditions apply to this RFP:

- The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency reserves the right to withdraw this RFP without prior notice. Further, the Agency makes no representations that any agreement will be awarded to any firm submitting a proposal.
- The Agency reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted in response to this request and to reject and sub-consultant or individual working on a consulting team.

- Any changes to the proposal will be made by addendum.
- In any event, the Agency shall not be liable for any pre-contractual expenses incurred by any proposal or Consultant. This shall include pre-contractual expenses such as preparing the Proposal, submitting the proposal to the Agency, negotiating with the City on any matter related to the Proposal or other expenses incurred prior to the date of award for any agreement related to the services herein described.
- No prior, current or post award verbal agreements with any officer, agent of employees of the Agency shall affect or modify any terms or modifications of this RFP or any contract or option resulting from this process.
- The Agency reserves the right to waive any minor irregularities, informalities or oversights at its sole discretion. The term “minor” as used herein means any proposer or Agency irregularities or oversights that do not materially affect or alter the intent and purpose of this RFP, and is not in violation of any State of Connecticut or Federal Government rules, laws and regulations that may apply to this procurement.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA and PROCEDURES**

### **Distribution and Outreach**

This RFP is being distributed to a list of consultants who have expertise in related areas, posted on the City’s website and the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency’s Facebook page.

### **Selection Team**

Norwalk Redevelopment Agency staff will rate prospective consultants (firms) for this work using only objective criteria based upon the information obtained from the proposals

The firms with the highest ranking based on experience and qualifications as described in the proposal to provide the required services will be invited interviews. The proposed project manager and personnel will be requested to represent the firm at the interviews.

### **Selection Criteria**

The Agency’s evaluation will consist of a matrix of requirements, qualifications and experience. The following criteria will be used in evaluating the submittals received in response to this RFP:

- Background and experience of firm and personnel – 20%
- Past performance and service on similar assignments / projects – 20%
- Firm’s quality assurance and control procedures – 20%
- Proposed approach to completing the project objective (proposed scope of work) – 20%
- Technical qualifications (staff who will work on the project) – 20%

## **SELECTION PROCEDURE**

Consideration of a prospective consultant’s (firm’s) proposal will be made only if the prospective consultant meets all the minimum requirements of this RFP. The Agency reserves the right to adjust, increase, limit, suspend or rescind the rating based on subsequently learned information. The Agency reserves the right to award a contract to the

firm or firms that present the best qualifications and which best accomplish the desired results.

Any consultant (firm) deemed not qualified, or consultants (firms) who's rating changes sufficiently to disqualify them, will be notified in writing. No consultant shall have the right to an appeal based upon an incomplete or late submission of the proposal.

Request for Supplemental Information: The Agency reserves the right to require, from any or all consultants (firms) supplemental information that clarifies submitted materials.

Questions: All questions regarding this solicitation should be directed to the Agency representative listed in this RFP. Do not attempt to contact other Agency staff members regarding your submittal or any related proposal submittal.

Incomplete Proposal: Incomplete and/or unsigned submissions will not be considered. However, if a submission is incomplete, and if it appears that the omission can be corrected promptly, the affected firm may be contacted and offered the opportunity to complete the proposal and provide the required information within a prescribed amount of time, which will not be extended. If a firm does not respond within the time stated, the proposal will not be considered.

Rejection of Submitted RFP: Proposals that are not current, accurate, and/or completed accurately in accordance with the prescribed format shall be considered non-responsive and eliminated from further consideration.

Selection Process Termination: The Agency reserves the right to terminate the selection process, at any time, without making an award to any or all consultants.

Disqualification: Factors such as, but not limited to, any of the following may be considered just cause to disqualify a proposal without further consideration:

- Any attempt to improperly influence any member of the selection staff;
- Existence of any lawsuit, unresolved contractual claim, or dispute between consultant and the Agency;
- Evidence of consultant's inability to successfully complete the responsibilities and obligations of the proposal; and
- Consultant's default under any agreement, which results in the termination of the agreement.

Undue Influence: All firms submitting proposals declare and warrant, on a separate attachment, that no undue influence or pressure is used against or in concert with any officer or employee of the Agency in connection with the award or terms of the Agreement that will be executed as a result of award of this contract, including any method of coercion, confidential financial arrangement, or financial inducement. No officer or employee of the Agency will receive compensation, directly or indirectly, from the consultant, or from any officer, employee, or agent of the consultant, in connection with the award of the Agreement or any work to be conducted as a result of the Agreement.

