



Request for Proposals for:
Environmental Sustainability Plan Technical
Consulting Services

November 16, 2020

INTRODUCTION

The City of Winona (“City”) is seeking a Consultant to provide technical services in developing a citywide Sustainability Plan with guidance from a steering committee of local experts (“Steering Committee” or “Committee”). The Sustainability Plan will serve as a comprehensive strategy for addressing environmental considerations in the City of Winona. It will identify targeted policies, programs, and projects that will address both current issues and future sustainability concerns. The final document will be incorporated into the City's Comprehensive Plan as supplemental material. Topics of emphasis in the plan will include climate change, energy use, land and water stewardship, material use and reuse, transportation, and food production. Total cost not to exceed \$51,000.

Community Context

The City of Winona is home to nearly 28,000 people, including many students from three higher education institutions. The largest city in a rural county, Winona was established in 1851 and retains a historic downtown near the riverfront. The unique topography and geology of the driftless region in Southeast Minnesota means the City is surrounded by bluffs and unique ecosystems.

The sustainability plan aims to protect the valued environmental features of Winona, and ensure the community sets and meets our goals for environmental improvement. This will be achieved through community engagement, application of scientifically determined best practices, and learning from the experiences of peer communities.

An all-encompassing sustainability plan has never been developed for the City, but various aspects of such a plan are already in place including energy action planning, solid waste management planning, and a bluff park area plan. The successful applicant to this RFP will be able to synthesize existing materials and City plans, and augment when necessary, to create a comprehensive sustainability plan to guide near term and future efforts. Political opposition may arise, and will require tact to demonstrate the value of environmental projects. City staff and a GreenCorps member will be extensively involved to help navigate political and other unique considerations of the community. For instance, social and environmental justice will be included in the framework, but will largely be guided by local partners. The City’s budget is constrained to a maximum cost of \$51,000, so proposals will need to detail the depth and breadth of work that can be achieved within this budget.

Inquiries and Submission Details

Inquiries about the request for proposal should be addressed to:

John Howard, Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator
jhoward@ci.winona.mn.us
507-457-8273

Submit three (3) hard copies and one electronic copy of the proposal prior to the deadline of 4 pm on December 18, 2020. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. It is the proposer's/responder's responsibility to assure that a proposal is received in a timely manner by the City. It is neither the City of Winona's responsibility nor practice to acknowledge receipt of any proposal unless requested.

The City will not reimburse any expenses incurred by the proposer/responder including, but not limited to, expenses associated with the preparation and submission of the response and/or attendance at any interviews, if required. At the discretion of the City, firms/individuals submitting proposals may be requested to take part in an interview or oral presentation as part of the evaluation process.

The City of Winona reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any concepts and ideas in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the proposing firm/individual of the conditions contained in this request for proposal, unless clearly and specifically noted in the submitted proposal. The approval of the firm selected will be made by the City Council.

TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

The City of Winona is seeking a Consultant that demonstrates excellent understanding of climate change and climate change mitigation and adaptation planning, technical expertise in urban planning and municipal sustainability, and knowledge of our community and region. Acknowledging that solutions will need to be implemented by, or with support from, city government, community and stakeholders, higher levels of government and outside entities, the Consultant should demonstrate expertise in zoning and municipal codes, state regulations and incentives in Minnesota, and the federal policy landscape. The material developed by the consultant for the plan should tie in with the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program and be suitable to be incorporated by reference into the City's comprehensive plan.

The Sustainability Plan Steering Committee of local experts will actively manage the scope and overall progress of the Sustainability Plan. The Consultant's primary role is to lead the development of the Plan by providing technical expertise, drafting text for plan chapters, and developing informational materials/figures. The Consultant is expected to work closely with staff and the Committee to develop the Plan. The City's GreenCorps member will be a very active participant in planning and outreach efforts.

Additionally, the Plan will be developed with public participation and input from:

- Winona City Council
- Winona residents and stakeholders

SCOPE OF WORK

While the envisioned scope presents a desired approach and key deliverables, the Consultant is encouraged to think creatively about how outside expertise and existing plans can be used to best meet the City's needs. Ideally, the plan provides suggestions that apply to built, social, economic, and environmental systems. In their proposal, the Consultant shall provide a detailed technical and project management approach that incorporates and expands on the tasks within specified core areas. The consultant should outline the extent of work that is possible within the allotted time frame and budget.

Core Areas

The Sustainability Plan will be structured to provide integrated, actionable solutions in core areas in which the City's baseline studies have identified the greatest opportunities for resilience and emissions reductions. The Steering Committee will develop core focus areas and work with the Consultant to establish specific recommendations. Each of these will take into account the residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal opportunities with the goal of addressing climate change and creating a healthy community in all aspects (economic, social, and environmental). The core areas and extent of work desired from the consultant on each is outlined below:

- Materials and Waste - linkages with County Solid Waste Plan
 - Increased recycling
 - Waste Reduction
 - Compost and organics management
- Energy Use
 - Energy conservation and efficiency - household and business
 - Renewable energy opportunities
- Natural Areas Management
 - Invasive species management
 - Natural ecosystem restoration and protection
 - Wildlife and pollinator enhancement
- Food
 - Local food availability and production
- Water
 - Green stormwater infrastructure
 - Drinking water conservation and protection
- Transportation
 - Multi-modal feasibility
 - Clean transportation infrastructure

Tasks

Data Analysis – City Staff will be primarily responsible for data gathering, while the consultant will be primarily responsible for data analysis and utilizing their technical expertise to provide public-facing presentation, modeling and reporting of data. The consultant will need to:

- Review existing data on city and community green house gas emissions
- Analyze baseline data of the area’s water usage and food consumption habits
- Analyze baseline data of the Winona Community’s forms of transportation
- Present the data to the Steering Committee
- Include tables and targets as part of the presentation

Engagement and Outreach Assistance– A local organization, [Engage Winona](#), will lead the public engagement and outreach efforts, which will be outlined in a separate RFP. The Technical Consultant will be responsible for working collaboratively with the engagement and outreach consultant to achieve effective outreach and public input, but will not need to lead such events. The technical consultant proposing on this RFP will need to:

- Produce public facing documents for use in engagement and outreach efforts, such as summaries of the plan, core areas and status reports.
- Present drafts and the final report to the Steering Committee, Staff and City Council.
- Ensure outreach efforts are collaborative with Engage Winona.
- Ensure outreach is flexible to accommodate limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Drafting and Developing – The first draft is to be prepared by the end of May 2021 and finalized and ready to present to the City Council by August 2021. The consultant is expected to:

- Assist in the creation of a final sustainability plan that is accessible and readable to a general audience — including an executive summary that will preface the plan.
- Work collaboratively with City Staff on the drafting and development of the plan. City Staff will primarily assist in drafting and developing the less technical aspects of the plan.
- Bring forward their knowledge of best practices implemented in other communities.

Resources Provided

The City will provide the following items to the Consultant to facilitate the Sustainability Plan:

1. A Project Manager – Sustainability Coordinator
2. A Community Team – including City Staff and the Steering Committee
3. Relevant existing plans and reports:
 - a. Greenhouse Gas Inventories (2017)
 - b. [Winona County Solid Waste Management Plan](#) (2012)
 - c. [Complete Streets Plan](#) (2017)
 - d. [Energy Action Plan](#) (2017)
 - e. Community Water use summary
 - f. [City’s Bluff Traverse Management Plan](#) (2020)

- g. [GreenStep Cities Progress](#) and Action Items
- h. Environment and Energy Plan section of the [City's Comprehensive Plan](#) (2007)

TENTATIVE PROJECT SCHEDULE

Data Gathering and Analysis Start Date: Immediately after contract execution

Engagement and Outreach: Winter/Spring 2021

First Draft Review: April/May 2021

Final Draft Review: July/August 2021

SPECIFICATIONS / REQUIREMENTS

The City is seeking a Consultant that has experience developing and enacting climate action and/or sustainability plans for other municipalities and has demonstrated an ability to analyze existing information to propose tailored solutions for municipalities based on their unique conditions. The City is seeking a Consultant that is able to become familiar with Winona during the project. The City intends to have a close working relationship with the Consultant and is looking for a Consultant that has technical expertise, and is also willing and able to creatively problem solve to develop a Plan that is designed specifically for Winona's needs. The Consultant should be capable of producing both sound analysis and high-quality written materials.

The City of Winona has completed some reports and prior planning documents, and will provide these as part of the data-gathering phase. These reports will be used to provide the baseline for the Sustainability Plan. The City seeks a consultant whose approach is both efficient and appropriately scaled to the planning-level analysis of the Sustainability Plan. The City of Winona expects all analyses, data, original graphics, and editable copies of all written reports to be turned over to the City at the completion of the project. No portion of the completed Plan will be proprietary.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include the following:

1. Written Proposal

The Written Proposal should detail how the Consultant will compile information and do analysis for the tasks identified in the Scope of Work. Proposals must include an explanation of the project management approach to executing project scope. The proposal should also include a description of the Consultant's expertise and capabilities necessary for completing the tasks identified in the Scope of Work.

2. Proposed Project Timeline

The Proposed Timeline should outline the time period and estimated completion dates of the project outlined in the Scope of Work based on the Tentative Project Schedule provided. It should include a schedule and description of the tasks outlined.

3. Sample Work

Please include sample reports, graphical and online communication materials that demonstrate consultant capabilities. Proposals should include sample materials from the primary and sub-consultants as necessary in order to demonstrate all consultant capabilities.

4. Qualifications

Qualifications and experience of all project staff from primary consultants and sub consultants must be included. References are optional, but appreciated.

5. Fees and Compensation

Provide a proposed cost-plus expenses budget for completion of the scope of services with cost breakdowns by scope element. Project cost not to exceed \$51,000.

Proposal Scoring

The proposal will be scored according to the following criteria:

1. Consultants technical expertise related to sustainability planning – 30%
2. Consultants Experience – 25%
3. Consultants ability to meet project goals and timeline – 25%
4. Project Budget – 20%

Submission of Proposal

All proposals must be sent to and received by:

John Howard
Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator
Jhoward@ci.winona.mn.us
PO Box 378
Winona, MN 55987

Proposals shall be submitted no later than 4PM, CST, on Friday Dec. 18, 2020.

An electronic submission to the City’s Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator (Jhoward@ci.winona.mn.us) as well as three (3) hard copies of the proposal must be submitted. Proposals will be considered on time if the electronic submission is received prior to the deadline, and the hardcopies are postmarked by Dec. 18. Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals are to be sealed in mailing envelopes or packages with the responder’s name and address clearly written on the outside. Each copy of the proposal must be signed by an authorized member of the firm(s).

The City will not reimburse any expenses incurred by the proposer/responder including, but not limited to, expenses associated with the preparation and submission of the response and/or attendance at any interviews, if required.

Winona Sustainability Plan RFP

The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive irregularities and informalities, to request additional information from all respondents, to negotiate terms and conditions with proposers/responders, and further reserves the right to select the proposal that furthers the best interests of the City in the City's sole judgment and discretion. The approval of the firm selected will be made by the City Council.

The City reserves the right to negotiate the final terms and conditions of the contract to be executed. Should the City and a consultant be unable to mutually agree upon the entire contract, the City reserves the right to discontinue negotiations, select another consultant or reject all of the proposals. Upon completion of negotiations agreeable to the City and the consultant selected, a contract shall be executed. The form of the contract for services with the City shall be the City's standard consultant services contract; a copy of which may be requested from the City Clerk. By submitting a proposal, all firms hereby agree to the terms and conditions contained in the City's standard consultant services contract.