

Chuckanut Community Forest Park District Request for Qualifications

I. Purpose

The Chuckanut Community Forest Park District (“CCFPD”) is seeking a qualified consultant (“Consultant”) to develop a protection, conservation, and restoration design for the Chuckanut Community Forest that would contribute to the City of Bellingham’s Park Master Plan process.

II. Background

In 2011, the City of Bellingham (the “City”) purchased an 82-acre forested property (“the Chuckanut Community Forest” or “Property”) out of foreclosure through its Greenways Endowment Fund. The Property had been slated for development, and the City considered selling part of the Property for development while keeping the remainder as a park. In 2013, voters in south Bellingham approved the formation of CCFPD as a metropolitan park district organized under Ch. 35.61 RCW, funded by a property tax levy. The mission of CCFPD is “to ensure the entirety of the [P]roperty is protected in perpetuity in public ownership, with respect for its ecological, recreational, and educational functions and to serve as a fiscal mechanism through which the district, via a tax levy, will repay the City of Bellingham for the Greenways Endowment Fund loan.” The Property is owned by the City, but is now subject to a conservation easement negotiated between CCFPD and the City as consideration for repayment of the loan.

The loan to the City is now almost repaid, and the City has commenced a process to develop a Park Master Plan. The Master Plan will likely also include similar adjacent properties owned by the City. Discussions between the City, CCFPD, and the public have recently begun. The Consultant will work for the CCFPD, with the City, to ensure the City Master Plan for the Chuckanut Community Forest advances the conservation interests of CCFPD.

Documents the Consultant will find useful are on the CCFPD website, by clicking on the “Documents” tab. The Consultant’s work must be informed at minimum by the following:

- **Baseline Report.** The Baseline Report details the condition of the Chuckanut Community Forest. Utilizing the Baseline Documentation report (see link below) goals and processes must be identified to restore key ecological functions that have been interrupted by prior or current use. With specific consideration of domestic pet impact on wildlife in the community forest, pedestrian/bicycle/motor vehicle use, and identifying and planning for a process to find resolution of conflicts between users of the forest. This will need to be done in the context of a trail planning process that is respectful of the

goals and objectives of the conservation easement and the mission of the park district. Trail planning especially for secondary trails and elevated walkways is critical to this outcome. Construction of over wetland walk ways must be considered. Developing strategies to overcome the cost barriers is a critical issue that will need to be addressed.

Consideration must be given to fulfillment of the final goals set by the steering committee for the Master Planning process for CCF and the larger planning area for the project (some adjacent properties with ownership by the City and some with already existing conservation easements managed by other entities (the Whatcom Land Trust)

<https://www.chuckanutcommunityforest.com//files/CCF-Baseline-Documentation-Report-Final-5-8-17.pdf>

- The interlocal agreement between the City and CCFPD governs the two entities' relationship: <https://www.chuckanutcommunityforest.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Interlocal-Agreement-signed-1-3-2014.pdf>
- The Conservation Easement between CCFPD and the City. The Conservation Easement specifies the currently-allowed and disallowed uses (note that this may be amended through the Master Plan process). The Conservation Easement contains the following purpose statement:

The intent of the Grantor and Grantee and the purpose of this Conservation Easement are to assure that the natural features, functions and values of the Property are protected in perpetuity including the existing wetlands, forest, wildlife habitat, wildlife habitat corridors, and other features of ecological significance; while also allowing for the recreational, educational, and scientific uses named in Section IV. The uses allowed pursuant to Section IV shall be sited, designed, maintained, and operated so as to minimize the impact to the natural attributes of the Property.

For the Conservation Easement, the CCFPD Board adopted the following additional policy objective at its June 23, 2021 meeting:

To better achieve the purpose of the Park District and the perpetual preservation of the Chuckanut Community Forest, revise section 4.1, subsections a through s of the Conservation Easement to allow only trails, including bridges and boardwalks, signage, benches and plaques. To encourage a review of the existing land trust easement on adjacent property to give the two easements consistency.

<https://www.chuckanutcommunityforest.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Conservation-Easement-RECORDED-1-6-2014.pdf>

- Resolution No. 16 adopted by the CCFPD Board. Resolution No. 16 describes CCFPD’s restoration priorities. Restoration priorities include:
 - remove, realign, narrow trails, and add boardwalks. Remove invasive species and restore vegetation.
 - Benefits:
 - Improve natural conditions, add three-dimensional volume through added vegetation.
 - Increased vegetation filters noise and improves soundscape;
 - Improve wildlife habit by adding vegetation for cover and structure for animals;
 - Restore soil porosity;
 - Increase sense of solitude by filling in open spaces between different trails;
 - Deter visitors from removed trails;
 - Protect wetlands areas by adding boardwalks (preventing people from walking around wet spaces and compacting soils), which also aids hydrologic connection.

https://www.chuckanutcommunityforest.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Resolution_16_Restoration_Priorities_October2020-1.pdf

- Chuckanut Community Forest Master Plan Outline (3-22-21 Draft CCFPD)
- Hundred Acre Woods Master Plan Outline (10-22-21 Draft City of Bellingham). The following link describes the Master Plan process and contains more information:
<https://cob.org/project/chuckanut-comunity-forest-master-plan>

III. Scope of Services and Compensation

A. The Consultant must be familiar or must familiarize themselves with the Chuckanut Community Forest. The Consultant will work with the Board of Commissioners of CCFPD and its attorney to develop and advance CCFPD’s goals for protecting and restoring the natural features and ecological functions and values of the Chuckanut Community Forest, and will meet with staff in the City parks department regularly throughout the Master Plan process. The Consultant will advise the Board through the Master Plan process. The tasks of most concern to the Board at the outset of the Master Plan process are:

1. Utilizing the Baseline Documentation report, identify goals and processes to restore key ecological functions that have been interrupted by prior or current use.
2. Finding a way to resolve conflicts between different users of the Chuckanut Community Forest. Specific conflicts include between walkers/runners and bicycles and motor-powered vehicles, and the impacts of pets on wildlife and other forest users.
3. Planning trails that are respectful of the goals and objectives of the conservation easement and CCFPD's mission, especially for secondary trails and elevated walkways.
4. Considering how to balance the need to protect and restore wetlands with the public's desire to walk to and through them, especially as costs of mitigation, monitoring, and construction of walkways may be significant.
5. Ensuring CCFPD's restoration goals are met. Such restoration goals are described in Resolution No. 16 and include removing and/or realigning narrow trails, adding boardwalks where needed to protect wetlands, removing invasive species, and restoring native vegetation.

B. The Consultant is considered an independent contractor who shall at all times carry out all services as an independent contractor and shall never represent or construe its status to be that of an employee of CCFPD, nor shall the Consultant be eligible for any employee benefits.

C. CCFPD has budgeted up to a maximum not to exceed amount of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) for compensation for the chosen Consultant.

D. The Consultant will begin work immediately upon being selected, and will continue to work until the Master Plan process for Chuckanut Community Forest is complete.

IV. Instructions to Applicants

A. All applicant materials should be sent to:

Chuckanut Community Forest Park District
P.O. Box 4283
Bellingham, WA 98227

B. All materials must be in a sealed envelope and clearly marked in the upper left corner "RFQ – Park Master Plan Consultant."

C. All application materials must be received by **5:00 PM, November 8th, 2021**. An original and six (6) copies of the materials must be presented. No faxed, e-mailed, or telephone will be accepted.

D. Materials should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straight forward, concise description of the Applicant's capability to satisfy the requirements of the request. Response materials are not anticipated to exceed twelve (12) pages including addenda and attachments. Special bindings, color displays, and promotional materials are not desired. Emphasis should be on completeness, conciseness, and clarity of content.

E. The Consultant position will remain open until filled. Applications will be considered at the CCFPD Board meeting on **November 10th, 2021**.

V. Required Application Content

A. A statement of how CCFPD will be billed for the applicant's services, if chosen, and the estimated costs of such services.

B. A resume or curriculum vitae for the applicant who will perform the services or who will supervise the provision of the services by others.

C. Detailed information about each individual's experience in providing similar services, including the information about park planning, conservation management, etc.

D. A concise statement of why the applicant is particularly well suited to perform the scope of work identified herein.

E. A statement regarding whether any person to provide services under contract has ever been disciplined by any professional association. If so, provide more detailed information.

F. A statement regarding whether any applicant or employee thereof has or could reasonably be anticipated to have any conflict of interest with CCFPD and, if so, how the conflict will be addressed.

G. A statement of how the workload of the applicant for providing CCFPD services will be accommodated and what kind of priority it will be given in relationship to other contracts and obligations.

H. A minimum of two (2) references.

V. Selection Criteria

The selection of a consultant will be based upon the ability of the applicant to best meet the requirements of this RFQ. In its evaluation process, CCFPD will consider the reputation(s) and qualifications of the specific individual(s) proposed for assignment to act as Consultant, including the applicant's history of successfully fulfilling contracts of this type, experience in similar work, and ability and history of meeting deadlines. CCFPD will also consider the completeness of the written materials and the competitiveness of any fee structure proposed.

VI. Terms and Conditions of Selection Process

A. CCFPD shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by a firm in preparing, submitting, or presenting its response to the RFQ.

B. Any proposal may be withdrawn up until the date and time set for opening of the applications. Any applicant proposal not timely withdrawn shall constitute an irrevocable offer for a period of sixty (60) days to provide to CCFPD the services described herein or until another applicant has been approved by the CCFPD Board of Commissioners, whichever first occurs.

C. CCFPD reserves the right to reject any and all applications and to waive minor irregularities in any application.

D. CCFPD reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information from any applicant.

E. Time is of the essence. CCFPD reserves the right to award any contract to another applicant, if the successful applicant does not execute a contract acceptable to CCFPD within fifteen (15) business days after selection.

For additional information contact Robyn Albro at ralbro.ccfpd@gmail.com.