

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**Boston and Albany Rail Trail Feasibility Study**

**2017 Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley Trail Grant Program**

Columbia Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) is accepting proposals for a one-time contract to perform consulting work relating to the preparation of a study relating to the feasibility of developing a Rail Trail from Hudson to Philmont in Columbia County, New York. Attached is the information necessary for the submission of the proposal, including specific requirements, the organization of the proposal and proposal evaluation criteria.

Proposals labeled “Boston and Albany Rail Trail Feasibility Study” must be received by email no later than 4:00 pm, Friday, August 10, 2018.

The proposal should be emailed to:

F. Michael Tucker, President and CEO

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

[mtucker@columbiaedc.com](mailto:mtucker@columbiaedc.com)

**SECTION 1: BACKGROUND**

**1.1 General Background**

The focus of this proposed trail study is an approximately 7.5-mile east-west connecting trail from the Empire State Trail at the City of Hudson to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, a recognized Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail and National Recreation Trail. The former Boston & Albany (B&A) rail bed is a logical focus for planning this connection, due to its location and the fact that approximately 2.5 miles of the old rail bed is owned by Columbia County.

A feasibility study was conducted in 1999, examining the old B& A rail bed between the Claverack Creek in the Town of Claverack and the Town of Ghent. The current proposal is a multi-use path from the City of Hudson to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail in or near the Village of Philmont, accommodating walking, biking, and possibly equestrian use, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The prior study and images of the associated map (1999) are attached to this RFP as is an up-to-date context map.

From west to east, the trail would cross through the following municipalities and hamlets: City of Hudson, Town of Greenport, Town of Claverack, Hamlet of Claverack, Hamlet of Mellenville, and the Village of Philmont. Part of the rail bed is owned by Columbia County, purchased on the closure of the railroad in the 1960s. Several years ago, the Town of Claverack and Columbia County opened an approximately 1.5-mile section of the rail bed between New York State Route 9H and Courts Lane as a trail with an unimproved surface for walking and equestrian use by local residents.

From the City of Hudson to the Claverack Creek, the rail line is in active use, as a spur; the street and open space network offer alternatives to be explored in this study. Between the Claverack Creek and the hamlet of Claverack, almost all of the old railbed is in private ownership. State bicycle Route 23B is roughly parallel to the old rail bed between Hudson and Claverack, however, state bicycle routes are intended for experienced adult riders. Quieter rural roads might be utilized in the short term, but identifying an entirely off-road route is desirable.

The consultant will prepare a feasibility study identifying analyzing alternative routes for a trail, utilizing in part the B&A rail bed owned by Columbia County, connecting the City of Hudson to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail at the Village of Philmont.

**1.2 Project Goals**

Goal 1: Determine the feasibility of constructing a multi-use trail connecting Hudson and

Philmont - economic, environmental, political and social feasibility.

**1.3 Project Funding**

1.3.1 Consulting work will be funded by CEDC with support from a 2017 Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail Grant Program, with a budget of $18,000.00 available to the consultant. The project will be monitored by the Columbia Land Conservancy and the Greenway and certain documents and drafts of documents will be subject to their review.

**SECTION 2: REQUIREMENTS**

**2.1 General Requirement**

2.1.1 The proposal shall be submitted prior to the deadline established in this RFP and be clearly marked “Boston and Albany Rail Trail Feasibility Study.”

2.1.2 All proposers are bound by the deadline and location requirements of this RFP. Late proposals will not be considered.

2.1.3 Proposers electing to respond to this RFP are responsible for all costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals; demonstrations; preparation of responses to questions and requests for additional information.

2.1.4 If CEDC receives only one proposal, the CEDC may initiate negotiations with the proposer submitting the proposal or seek additional proposals on an informal or formal basis during the thirty (30) day period that proposals must in effective.

2.1.5 The proposer may add to, modify or clarify any of the scope of work items it deems appropriate to obtain the best possible plan. All changes should be clearly listed and explained. However, the scope of work proposed, at minimum, must accomplish the goals and work outlined in this RFP.

**2.2 Information Provided by Columbia Economic Development Corporation**

2.2.1 Proposers shall be solely responsible for conducting their own independent research, due diligence, or other work necessary for the preparation of proposals, negotiation of contracts, and the subsequent delivery of services pursuant to any contract. CEDC takes no responsibility for the completeness or the accuracy of any information presented in this RFP or otherwise distributed or made available during this procurement process or during the term of any subsequent contract.

2.2.2 Proposers shall not rely on any oral statement made by CEDC or its agents, consultants, or advisors in the preparation of a response to this RFP.

2.2.3 Should a proposer find discrepancies in, or omissions from, this RFP and related documents, or should a proposer be in doubt as to meaning, the proposer shall immediately notify CEDC and, if the point in question is not clearly set forth, a written addendum or bulletin of instructions will be mailed or delivered to each person obtaining this RFP. Each person requesting an interpretation will be responsible for the delivery of such requests to the CEDC in writing. CEDC will not be bound by, or be responsible for, any explanation or interpretation of the proposed documents other than those given in writing as set forth herein.

2.2.4 Prior to submitting a proposal, proposers are encouraged to visit the project area to ascertain by inspection pertinent local conditions and any other items that may be pertinent to a proposer's submission.

**2.3 Procurement Schedule: CEDC anticipates the following schedule:**

* RFP Available – July 16, 2018
* RFP Questions or Clarification Deadline – August 3, 2018
* Proposal Due Date – August 10, 2018 – 4:00 pm
* Complete Evaluations – August 17, 2018
* Interviews (If necessary) – Week of August 24, 2018
* Notice of Selection – August 27, 2018
* Contact Completion – September 15, 2018
* Initiation of Study – September 15, 2018
* Project Completion – November 15 2018

**2.4 Submittal of Proposals**

2.4.1 Proposals must be received by CEDC by 4:00 pm Friday, August 10, 2018.

2.4.2 The proposals will be opened Monday, August 13, 2018

2.4.3 After opening of the proposals, a proposer may not correct, modify, or withdraw the price or any other provision of its proposal in a manner prejudicial to the interests of CEDC or fair competition. CEDC may waive minor informalities or allow the proposer to correct them.

**2.5 Questions and Addenda**

2.5.1 All questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted by email to:

F. Michael Tucker

President and CEO

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

[mtucker@columbiaedc.com](mailto:mtucker@columbiaedc.com)

2.5.2 The deadline for the receipt of questions on this RFP is August 3, 2018

2.5.3 All questions and responses will be posted a weekly basis by noon on Monday, July 23, July 30 and August 6th on CEDC website [www.columbiaedc.com](http://www.columbiaedc.com)

**2.6 Basis of Procurement**

2.6.1 This RFP and any contract(s) that may result shall be in accordance with CEDC’s Procurement Policy.

**SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK**

**3.1** The study will identify the feasibility for an approximately 7.5-mile trail, utilizing in part the old B&A rail bed owned by Columbia County, from the Empire State Trail in the City of Hudson to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail at the Village of Philmont and analyze alternate routes.

**3.2 Legal Feasibility**

3.2.1 CEDC will provide the consultant with tax data relating to the ownership status of the Right of Way (ROW) and adjacent properties.

**3.3 Project Coordination**

CEDC is collaborating with the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC) in the development of this feasibility study. CLC and CEDC will carry out the public outreach plan, which will be coordinated with the consultants’ work developing the feasibility study. The consultant will communicate with a small team organized by CEDC, consisting of staff of CLC and CEDC.

3.3.1 Project Orientation – The consultant will review with CEDC and CLC project goals, public outreach plan, data and identify informational needs.

3.3.2 Four (4) meetings with CEDC and CLC (remote or in person) to discuss the scope of the study and review of the outreach plan, review of the proposed alignment and alternatives and the review of the draft study.

3.3.3 The consultant will provide content developed for the study such as images or maps for outreach materials to be developed and disseminated by CLC.

3.3.4 The consultant will be responsible for the preparation of the draft feasibility study in the form of a report and a series of maps and images that describes the information assembled and analysis performed in 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 below and described a proposed route and trailheads, including one or more alternatives where current conditions warrant. ). Consultant will revise based on review by CLC and CEDC.

3.3.5 The consultant will complete the final feasibility study, publishable on line and in print form.

**3.4 Spatial Data** – The following spatial data will be developed for the study area to support the feasibility study. CEDC will provide the following GIS data as a starting point for the project:

* A preliminary linear feature depicting the location of the former B&A railroad bed with a proposed connection to Hudson City limits along Route 23A
  + This initial route is expected to be altered by the consultant as the project progresses
  + Tax parcel boundaries and ownership information for properties within ½ mile of the initial route -This can be expanded if other proposed routes deviate significantly from the initial route
* The proposed Empire State Trail route through the city of Hudson
* The proposed route for the Harlem Valley Rail Trail through the village of Philmont
* Municipal boundaries for involved towns, city, and village
* Roads within the involved municipalities
* Active Railroads within the involved municipalities
* An initial list of recreational areas and other public properties within reasonable connection distance to the proposed rail trail
* An initial list of businesses within reasonable connection distance to the proposed rail trail that might benefit from such a connection
* Known historic structures and districts near the proposed rail trail
* A list of properties within an agricultural district, receiving an agricultural tax exemption, or otherwise identified as being in active agricultural use.
* Water features and streams
* State and federal wetlands
* Hydric soils and soils with high water table
* Flood hazards and soils identified as frequently flooding
* Elevation, slope, and contours derived from high resolution DEMs (1-meter digital elevation model)
* Other pertinent data that can be gleaned from the nearly completed Columbia County Natural Resource Inventory
* List of Protected Parcels

**3.5 Demand for and Potential Use of Trail**

3.5.1 The consultant will provide general demographics of potential users of the Rail Trail as listed below. The Columbia Economic Development Corp and/or another entity will assist the consultant as needed.

a) Describe practical project service area and identify affected communities

b) Describe the community character (rural, urban centers, suburbs, industrial areas, etc.)

c) Define project area population information and demographic patterns (current and projected)

d) Develop a profile of potential trail users (bikers, hikers, birders, cross country skiers, equestrian, etc.)

3.5.2 The consultant will analyze the potential demand and use of the B&A Rail Trail in Columbia County as listed below:

a) Estimate initial usage levels

b) Project future usage levels

c) Estimate seasonal demand of trail versus year-round

d) Estimate demand of tourists to the area

e) Estimate the economic benefits for the communities surrounding the project corridor

3.5.3 The consultant will identify and evaluate potential trail linkages/connectors, including:

a) Possible connections to neighboring developments for both recreational and commuter use by residents and employees

b) Possible connections with other existing or proposed recreational trails

c) Possible connections to nearby schools, existing parks, waterfront areas, attractions, and local business which can bring economic value to the area

3.5.4 The consultant will look at the compatibility of trail development with adjacent land uses listed below identify and address potential impacts on adjacent land uses (public, agricultural, industrial, school facilities, businesses, residences, etc.)

**3.5 Physical Inventory and Assessment of ROW**

3.5.1 The consultant will work with CEDC to prepare detailed mapping of the Physical Inventory of the

B & A trail alignment at an appropriate scale.

3.5.2 The following list details the physiographic analyses that shall be identified and mapped

in coordination with CEDC.

a) The length, dimensions and ROW boundaries

b) Steep slopes

c) Topography

d) The composition of the railroad bed (materials and integrity)

e) Surrounding land use, and

f) Erosion and drainage problems along the trail

3.5.3 Natural Features Inventory to be identified and mapped and are listed below

a) The adjacent or intersecting streams

b) Significant natural features (lakes, ponds, rock outcroppings, wetlands,

floodplains, etc) and

c) Existing vegetation and wildlife analysis including any species of concern or sensitive habitat areas in the project area and/or the existence of aggressive, weedy species/major invasive plants

3.5.4 Structures within the corridor

a) Provide a general assessment of existing bridges, canals, culverts and/or tunnels within the corridor

c) Identify and map old train stations, and historic structures along the trail.

d) Identify potential and/or obvious trail encroachments

3.5.5 Infrastructure and Utilities within the corridor

a) Identify and map the location of all utilities in relationship to the trail and alternative trail locations (water, sanitary sewers, electrical and gas lines, telephone, etc.)

b) Address the capacity of these utilities to serve trail development

c) Determine instances where the physical location of utilities may be an impediment to trail development

3.5.6 Intersections and Access Points

a) Identify and map in detail all existing road crossings, active rail lines, and driveways

b) Inventory access points located within the corridor for possible vehicular and pedestrian access to and through the corridor

3.5.7 Environmental Hazards

a) Based on preliminary assessments, determine the need for environmental assessment studies relative to toxic waste disposal or other environmental hazards

b) Identify potential hazards to trail users due to physical conditions, such as embankments

**3.6 Financial Feasibility**

3.6.2 The consultant will prepare cost estimates for developing the trail and for proposed facilities.

3.6.3 The consultant will compare the costs of alternative alignments and facilities.

3.6.4 The consultant will identify the trail section (s) with the least complications.

**3.7 Final Products**

3.7.1 Draft Feasibility Study. Consultant will prepare a draft report that describes the study methodology, study finding, and recommendations and provides required mapping. The draft must be approved by CEDC.

3.7.2 Executive Summary. Once the participating parties have concurred on the findings of the study, an executive summary will be developed that can be widely disseminated. The executive summary will be designed so that it can serve as a stand-alone document and be the basis of on-going public education and citizen involvement efforts. Consultant will be responsible for preparing the Executive Summary.

3.7.3 Final Study. The final study will record findings as text, illustration, and maps in a format convenient for public dissemination. CEDC will assume ownership of the final study when provided by the consultant.

3.7.4 Data files. All spatial data collected or used to produce maps or illustrations for the study will be provided in ESRI file geodatabase format or as a set of shapefiles.

* All spatial data should accurately depict the locations of features when viewed at a scale of 1:1,000 and overlaying the 2017 New York State High Resolution Digital Orthoimagery and the tax parcel data supplied by Columbia County.
* Point features collected for the study using GPS should have an accuracy of at least 5 meters, or should be edited so they accurately visually depict the intended real world feature when viewed overlaying the 2017 New York State High Resolution Digital Orthoimagery and the tax parcel data supplied by Columbia County at a scale of 1:1,000.
* Line features within and between datasets should have their end points snapped together where the ends of those features are intended to be depicted as coincident.
* Polygon features within and between data sets should not include any overlapping areas or gaps unless those overlaps or gaps intentionally depict real world conditions.

Metadata describing the spatial data will at minimum include:

* The original source and date acquired, if it was derived from an existing source.
* The person or entity that produced the data and the date it was developed if it was generated specifically for this study.
* The geographic coordinate system used to develop and display the spatial data.

A data dictionary that fully describes all the fields and associated values that have been added to any existing dataset or developed for a new dataset.

**SECTION 4: PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS**

4.1 General Format and Organization

4.1.1 To facilitate comparison and evaluation of proposal proposals, all proposers are requested to

follow the format outlined in this section.

4.1.2 Proposals shall contain concise written material and illustrations that enable a clear understanding and evaluation of both the capabilities of the proposer, and the characteristics and benefits of the services being proposed.

4.1.3 Legibility, clarity, and completeness are essential.

4.1.4 An 8 ½” x 11” format is required for submissions. Illustrations, maps, or graphics from prior work may be larger.

f. Legal structure of company; e.g. corporation, joint venture, etc.

g. A clear statement indicating that the attached proposal constitutes a firm and binding offer by the proposer to CEDC considering the terms and conditions outlined in this RFP

FAILURE TO CLEARLY STATE AND FULLY DISCLOSE ANY OF THE INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL SHALL BE GROUNDS FOR THE CEDC TO REJECT THE PROPOSER’S PROPOSAL AND WILL BE GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION OF ANY CONTRACT ENTERED INTO BETWEEN THE CEDC AND THE FIRM WIHTOUT PAYMENT OF WORK COMPLETED.

**4.2 Title Page**

4.2.1 The Title page shall contain the following:

a. Name of this RFP

b. Name, address, telephone number, email and facsimile number of the proposer

c. Name and title of person authorized to commit the proposer to contractual arrangements

**4.3 Table of Contents**

4.3.1 Proposals shall contain a detailed table of contents listing major sections and subsections that correspond to the requirements of this RFP.

4.3.2 Table of contents shall also list all tables, figures, exhibits, and appendices contained in the proposal.

**4.4 Confidentiality Statement**

4.4.1 Proposals submitted in response to this RFP may contain technical, financial, or other data of which public disclosure may cause injury to the proposer’s competitive position or constitute a trade secret. To protect this data from disclosure to the extent allowed by statute, proposers shall specifically identify the pages of the proposal that contain such information by properly marking the applicable pages and inserting the following notice in front of its proposal:

“The data on pages \_\_\_\_ of this proposal stamped “confidential” contain technical or financial information which are trade secrets, and/or disclosure may cause injury to the proposer’s competitive position. The proposer requests that such data be used only for the evaluation of its proposal, but understands that nondisclosure will be limited only to the extent that the CEDC determines is proper under applicable laws."

4.4.2 CEDC, its staff, and its consultants/professional advisors assume no responsibility for disclosure or use of unmarked data for any purpose. In the event properly marked data are requested to be disclosed, the proposer will be advised of the request and may expeditiously submit to CEDC a detailed statement indicating the reasons it has for believing the information is exempt from disclosure under applicable laws. CEDC, its staff, and its consultants/professional advisors will exercise care in applying this confidentiality standard, but will not be held liable for any damage or injury which may result from any disclosure, accidental or otherwise, that may occur.

**4.5 Profile of Firm**

4.5.1 Location of the firm's office and that of all sub consultants providing the proposed

services.

4.5.2 Organization chart for firm, including all sub consultants.

4.5.3 Information illustrating special experience or techniques which are directly relevant to this project, maximum of three (3) pages for lead firm and one (1) page for each sub consultant.

4.5.4 Resumes of individual consultants or employees, including sub consultants, proposed to conduct the work, and the specific duties of each consultant, employee, or sub consultant relative to the project. Resumes should be limited to no more than two (2) pages for each individual.

4.5.5 Brief reference list of other organizations served by the firm and sub consultants for similar projects, include telephone numbers and names of contact persons.

**4.6 Consulting Team Qualifications**

4.6.1 At least one member of the consulting team shall have prior experience conducting trail feasibility studies and master planning projects, preferably rails to trails projects.

4.6.2 Experience developing and recommending policies and procedures related to feasibility studies, recreation master planning, trail planning and design, planning, and land acquisition expertise.

4.6.3 Experience setting goals, analyzing complex problems, generating alternative solutions, and providing recommendations and implementation strategies.

4.6.4 Documented expertise in trail design and construction.

4.6.5 Familiarity with railroad operations and the legal aspects of rail corridor use.

**4.7 Explanation of Methods and Approach for Work to be Performed**

4.7.1 The proposal must include a detailed description of the procedures and methods the proposer proposes to use to complete the work requested by CEDC in this RFP. This is important because the methods and procedures proposed will receive consideration in evaluating your proposal. Examples of similar work may be included.

**4.8 Work Schedule**

4.8.1 A project work schedule should be provided that includes time frames for the completion of each major work element, target dates for client meetings, and dates for completion of draft and final documents.

**4.9 Cost**

4.9.1 Full cost information should be provided that shows the minimum number of hours to be provided by each person assigned to the proposed work by the firm’s organizational levels.

4.9.2 The proposed hourly rate for billing shall be included for each person.

4.90.3 The hours of work and cost shall be itemized for each major work element of the proposal.

4.9.4 An itemized estimate of reimbursable expenses must be included.

4.9.5 The total amount of maximum payment must be stated.

4.9.6 The cost shall be based on the hours of work provided and “out-of-pocket expenses” and shall not exceed the maximum cost proposed.

4.9.7 Your method of billing must be indicated. The preferred practice of CEDC is to pay for this type of consulting service upon completion of the work and receipt of the required report; however, CEDC will consider paying on a periodic basis as substantial portions of the work are performed, but no more than one time per month.

4.9.8 Regardless of the billing method used, ten (10%) percent of the total contract price will be withheld until CEDC approve the final product.

4.9.9 A cost summary form shall be completed and submitted.

**SECTION 5: EVALUATION CRITERIA**

**5.1 Evaluation Criteria**

5.1.1 Proposals shall first be examined for completeness in meeting the terms and conditions of this RFP. Proposals that are determined to meet said requirements will be given further consideration.

5.1.2 All proposals will be evaluated based on the technical and professional expertise and the experience of the firm, the proposed method and the procedures for completion of the work, cost of the proposal, and the distribution of work elements among the project team members.

5.1.3 While cost will be weighed in relation to the other proposals received, the evaluation will focus on the extent to which the consultant addresses the scope and depth of the proposed study, along with and the overall level of expertise of the specific proposer’s personnel proposed to do the work.

5.1.4 Information derived from reference checks and reviews of other documents completed by the consultant will be considered in the evaluation.

5.1.5 All or a short list of proposers submitting proposals may be invited to attend a screening interview and to provide an oral presentation explaining their proposal.

5.1.6 All analyses undertaken by or on behalf of the CEDC in connection with this procurement shall be so undertaken and made pursuant to the exercise by CEDC of its sole and absolute discretion.

5.1.7 CEDC shall retain all evaluation data as confidential information. CEDC will not honor any request for information relative to the evaluated data or procedures for the same.

**SECTION 6: SELECTION AND CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

**6.1 Selection**

6.1.1 Once CEDC has reviewed all proposals, selection of the successful proposer will be made.

6.1.2 A notice from the CEDC will be sent to the successful proposer notifying him/her/it that they have been selected for contract negotiation. Unsuccessful proposers will also be notified.

**6.2 Contract Negotiations**

6.2.1 In negotiation of the contract, the successful proposer shall have the following obligations:

a. negotiate the contract in good faith

b. provide in a timely manner all clarifications and/or additional information requested by CEDC during negotiations

c. supply CEDC any required current insurance certificates as may be required by the contract

6.2.2 In negotiation of the contract, CEDC may require the proposer to certify the following:

a. nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity

b. affirmative action

c. non-segregated facilities

6.2.3 If contract negotiations are not proceeding in a manner that is satisfactory to CEDC, CEDC may end negotiations and initiate negotiations with other proposers or reject all remaining proposals at its discretion.

**6.3 Draft Contract**

6.3.1 The proposer will be expected to enter into a contract with a format utilized by the CEDC; if a contract is awarded resulting from this RFP, the successful proposer would be expected to enter into a similar agreement. If the proposer feels an alternative agreement is more suitable, you may submit such as part of your proposal for consideration; however, CEDC reserves the right to enter into the enclosed agreement with the successful proposer or to negotiate the exact terms and conditions of a professional services contract.

**Helpful Resources:**

[Boston & Albany Rail Trail Feasibility Study (Nov. 1999)](https://www.columbiaedc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/BA-Study.pdf)

[Boston & Albany Rail Trail Feasibility Study Map 1](https://www.columbiaedc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Map-Legend-1999-Study.jpg)

[Boston & Albany Rail Trail Feasibility Study Map 2](https://www.columbiaedc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Map-1999-Study-2.jpg)

[Map of Study Area Prepared for Application to Greenway 2017](https://www.columbiaedc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Map-of-Study-Area-prepared-for-Application-to-Greenway-2017.pdf)

Thank you for your interest in this Request for Proposal.

