

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE COCKE COUNTY PARTNERSHIP



The Cocke County Partnership (CCP) is seeking qualifications from consulting firms to prepare and provide Mountain Bike Trail Designs, Conceptual Future and Complimentary Trail System Plans and a Market and Cost/Benefit Analysis to be formulated into a Final Plan that strategizes the development of 50-75 miles of trails in the Hall's Top-Mill Creek and Cosby-Green Mountain-area in Cocke County, Tennessee.

Firms shall carefully examine the entire RFQ and any addenda thereto, and all related materials and data referenced in products and services. Consultants are advised to read all sections of this RFQ before submitting qualifications.

Qualifications will be accepted by the CCP, 433 Prospect Ave, Newport, TN 37821 until Tuesday, September 1st at 2:00 PM EDT. All sealed qualifications must bear the title "Cocke County Partnership Conceptual Trail Designs and Market and Cost/Benefit Analysis" along with the Firm's name and address. Submit four (4) complete copies of the qualifications. Facsimile qualifications will not be accepted. Late qualifications will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the firm to ensure that the qualifications arrive at the correct location by the correct time. Contact Lucas Graham at 423-623-3008 if you have any questions regarding the qualifications process.

The Cocke County Partnership (CCP) is seeking qualifications from qualified consultants to prepare and provide Mountain Bike Trail Designs, Conceptual Future and Complimentary Trail System Plans, a Market Analysis, and Cost/Benefit Analysis to be formulated into a Final Plan that strategizes the

development of 50-75 miles of trails in the Hall's Top-Mill Creek and Cosby-Green Mountain area in Cocke County, Tennessee.

The project builds on multiple convenings of the collaborating entities, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Cherokee National Forest, The Conservation Fund, Cocke County, Cocke County Partnership, and International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). These convenings resulted in the identification of the area described above as the optimal area to develop 50 – 75 miles of outdoor recreational trails and associated assets to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities and associated tourism development.

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Cocke County Partnership
Description of Requirements

Consultant

Conceptual Trail Designs and Market and Cost/Benefit Analysis

I. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

The Cocke County Partnership (CCP) is seeking qualifications from qualified consultants to prepare and provide Mountain Bike Trail Designs, Conceptual Future and Complimentary Trail System Plans, Market Analysis, and a Cost/Benefit Analysis to be formulated into a Final Plan that strategizes the development of 50-75 miles of trails in the Hall's Top-Mill Creek and Cosby-Green Mountain area in Cocke County, Tennessee.

Cocke County boasts tremendous natural assets, comprised of 40% State and Federally protected lands. The community serves as the eastern gateway into Tennessee and Smoky Mountains for Interstate-40 travelers but is also one of the fifteen most impoverished counties in Tennessee and is considered economically distressed. With direct access to recommended travel routes into neighboring Sevier County, which hosts approximately 15 million visitors per year, adventure and nature-based tourism revenues offer the greatest opportunity for economic growth.

The Foothills Parkway, I-40 exit #443, is the recommended travel route to visitors traveling from the east into Gatlinburg and the most visited National Park in the United States, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The proposed project would further optimize federal land assets to increase economic growth, preservation, outdoor recreation, regional health, and quality of life, by offering additional outdoor recreation opportunities to the new and existing 10 million Park visitors annually. In addition, Cocke County Economic Development highly anticipates the Hall's Top-Mill Creek and Cosby-Green Mountain project will create new and enhanced opportunities for private sector development being forecasted in the Hartford and Cosby area.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

It is anticipated that this project will be carried out in two (2) phases in an effort to produce the final Plan that will be used to attract biking and outdoor adventure enthusiasts, while creating a tourism attraction for this distressed County. The Plan will also be used as a tool to recruit corporate sponsorships and complimentary private development to help fund construction and maintenance costs.

Phase I: Market Analysis

A Market Analysis to include Cost/Benefit Analysis and Demand Analysis to support the development, use, and maintenance of a 50-75-mile trail system in the Cosby-Green Mountain-Mill Creek area of Cocke County.

Phase II: Engineering and Design

Engineering and Design activities included in this Phase should incorporate the following elements:

Existing conditions in the target area should be evaluated, including assessment of the topography and composition of the existing landscape and the identification of any major barriers or opportunities. Land uses, zoning, and economic conditions in the surrounding area should also be assessed and policies impacting trails and economic development should be documented.

One of the first steps should be the establishment of guiding principles for trail design. A public engagement strategy should be developed and carried out to provide information to support the project team throughout the planning and design process. Stakeholders should include local and regional industries impacted by the trails, potential collaborating entities, local decision makers, and the general public. Based on the technical knowledge of the design team, the evaluation of existing conditions, the guiding principles for trail design, and public input, the feasibility of various trail concepts and renderings should be

vetted. Detailed designs should be developed for preferred concept(s), including the routing, layout, cross-section typical drawings, percent of slope and right-of-way requirements. A Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) will be required from a licensed engineer in the State of Tennessee. All structural elements such as retaining walls, bridges, etc. will also require a stamp by a licensed structural engineer in the State of Tennessee.

Implementation activities should be carried out to support the development of the preferred trail design. A full NEPA and cultural impact study should be carried out for implementation of the preferred trail design. Cost estimates should be assessed for the development and maintenance of preferred trails. Funding sources for implementation should be investigated and recommended funding strategies should be generated. Timelines for trail building should be provided based on funding requirements, regulatory requirements, and availability of resources for implementation.

All elements described above should be documented in a draft trail master plan which will be presented for review by CCP. Based on the CCP review and input, a final plan will be generated.

The Final outcome of these elements will be a Final Mountain Bike Master Plan, at least 50 Miles to be 'shovel ready' for bidding and a Strategy for developing 50-75 miles of trails in the Halls Top-Mill Creek and Cosby-Green Mountain area of Cocke County. All narratives, maps, and drawings will become the property of the CCP.

III. SCHEDULE

The proposed scope of work must be completed **no later than June 30, 2023.**

IV. QUALIFICATIONS OF FIRM

The CCP recognizes this project requires a qualified firm (or team) that is both experienced and a leader in this specific industry. It is the intent to select a firm (team) that has a specialization in this type of project. Although participation by local firms is always desirable, it is more important that the specialty qualifications of the firm (team) and the specific individuals assigned to the project be available.

To demonstrate the specialty experience of the proposing firm (team) the following are minimum requirements for consideration:

- A minimum of 3 plans and/or studies with similar scopes in the last 5 years.
- A minimum of 3 design projects in the last 5 years for which the design firm (lead firm or teaming partner) had substantial responsibility.
- A minimum of 3 projects in the last 5 years where the proposed project manager was the project manager and/or engineer of record for the proposing firm.
- Experience working with Gateway Communities adjacent to National Forest or National Parks.

V. PROJECT DURATION

Qualifications submitted in response to this RFQ must be valid for a period of 120 days from qualifications submission deadline and must be so marked.

VI. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Each submittal must include information addressing the following areas:

- All questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted by email no later than **Wednesday, August 12** to Jennifer Brown at: jbrown@cockecountypartnership.com. All questions and

responses will be posted the CCP website by **Wednesday, August 19**

- Cover Letter – Submit a cover letter including a description of the services you will provide, the approach you will implement to the project and your particular interest to work on this specific project with the Cocke County Partnership
- Team – Identify the project manager. Provide an organizational chart and describe relevant firm (team) and team members. List the key personnel who will be responsible for this project and each task identified in the scope of work. Attach resumes of key personnel as an appendix.
- Experience and References – Submit information and descriptions of similar projects. These can be in the form of Project Pages and each should not exceed 3 pages in length. They must include the name of the client and project, location, services provided, date completed, contact and telephone number. Pictures may be included.
- Submit 4 copies to the following address by **Tuesday, September 1st at 2:00 PM EST. Cocke County Partnership, 433 Prospect Ave, Newport, TN 37821.**

All sealed qualifications must bear the title “Cocke County Partnership Conceptual Trail Designs and Market and Cost/Benefit Analysis” along with the Firm’s name and address.

Cocke County Partnership reserves the right to reject any or all qualifications or to waive any specific technicalities or formalities in order to accept any qualifications deemed to be in the best interest of the CCP and Cocke County. The CCP reserves the right to accept the qualifications which appear, in its judgment, to be the best suited to the interest of the CCP and Cocke County.

Qualifications will not be considered complete unless they contain all the required contents as described. Qualifications that lack any

portion will not be evaluated and will not be eligible for contract award.

VII. EVALUATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

- All complete qualifications will be evaluated according to the guidelines set forth in this RFQ. Following this evaluation process, qualifications will be labeled as "responsive" or "non-responsive".
- All non-responsive qualifications will be removed from further consideration.
- Qualifications will be evaluated by a panel of reviewers. Points will be awarded based upon criteria set by the CCP. Video interviews will then be scheduled with the top three selected firms
- After qualification evaluations and interviews have been completed, negotiations will then begin with the firm, who has been judged most appropriate, with regard to all factors.

VIII. Contract Award

It is anticipated that, following the evaluation and negotiation process, a contract will be awarded to the successful firm. However, no work is to begin, nor is the CCP liable for any costs whatsoever, until the contract has been duly signed and certified by the appropriate parties.

The successful firm will enter into a contract with the CCP on a form agreeable to the CCP.