



Town of Winchester

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Board of Selectmen Meeting
Monday, July 25, 2016

BUSINESS

Docket Item G-5 Town Center Street Scapes Concept
Town Planner Brian Szekely

Supporting Documents:

G - 5:

RFP document:

"Conceptual Streetscape Plans for the
public streets, sidewalks and spaces between
Skillings Road at Shore Road and Waterfield
Road at the MBTA Commuter Rail Station in
Winchester, Massachusetts"

Action Required:

G - 5:

TOWN OF WINCHESTER
WINCHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WINCHESTER PLANNING BOARD

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

for

CONCEPTUAL STREETScape PLANS

for the public streets, sidewalks and spaces between

SKILLINGS ROAD at SHORE ROAD

and

WATERFIELD ROAD at the MBTA COMMUTER RAIL STATION

in

WINCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

April 14, 2015

TOWN MANAGER
TOWN HALL
71 MT. VERNON STREET
WINCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01890

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General. The Town of Winchester (the Town), acting through the Board of Selectmen and the Winchester Planning Board, is seeking consultants to develop conceptual streetscape plans for the public streets, sidewalks and spaces between Skillings Road at Shore Road and Waterfield Road at the MBTA Commuter Rail Station.

The approximate study area is shown in Figure 1. The areas of primary concern are Skillings Road at Winchester High School, Shore Road, Quill Rotary, Laraway Road, Thompson Street, Waterfield Road and the Aberjona and Waterfield parking lots abutting the MBTA Winchester Center Commuter Rail Station.

The Town intends to use the conceptual plans to develop proposals and projects that will:

- Improve pedestrian access throughout the town center;
- Ensure safe vehicle movement and parking; and
- Enhance the economic and social vitality of the Center Business District while maintaining the aesthetic quality of the downtown historic village.

Services. The professional services required to perform this contract include, but are not limited to: architecture, urban design, placemaking, landscape architecture, lighting design, street furniture design, wayfinding and public street art.

Background. The Town Center Streetscape project is part of the Town Center Initiative, a coordinated effort to revitalize the town center. The Town and state and local partners have:

- Rezoned the town center business district to allow for mixed-used residential and commercial development;¹

¹ Technical and financial assistance provided by the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance's Great Neighborhoods Program.

- Commissioned conceptual designs for redevelopment of the Waterfield block and the North Core (Main Street area between Skillings Road and Quill Rotary);
- Begun planning for the reconstruction of the MBTA's Winchester Center Commuter Rail Station;
- Implemented a comprehensive parking management program;
- Designed and installed wayfinding signs throughout the center;²
- Invested in flood mitigation projects (Skillings Field culvert, Mt. Vernon Street Bridge culvert, Center Falls Dam bypass valves, and the Waterfield-to-Bacon channel realignment); and
- Commissioned plans for re-landscaping of the Aberjona River greenway.³

Information on these projects, including publicly available plans, presentations and reports relevant to this RFP can be found at <http://www.winchester.us/366/Public-Hearings-and-Bids>

There is, however, no current vision or general plan for streetscape improvements to complement these actions. The objective of this project is to develop conceptual streetscape plans for the public streets, sidewalks and spaces in the town center—visions of what the town center streetscape could be.

For the purposes of this project, the terms “streetscape plans” or “streetscape designs” or “streetscape design visions” are intended to cover: 1) the sketch-plan-level layout and design of streets, sidewalks, pedestrian ways and crossings, on-street parking spaces, bus stops, commuter rail station drop-off and pick-up spaces, Zipcar and electric vehicle recharge stations, etc.; and 2) general placement and design of street furniture, such as street lights, traffic signs and bollards, benches, trash and recycling receptacles, benches and tables, bike and stroller parking racks, public art, etc.

The Town is not asking for detailed planning, construction or procurement documents nor for cost estimates.

Scope of Work. The work will include:

1. Analysis of the public streets, sidewalks and spaces in the town center;
2. Development of a conceptual streetscape design vocabulary;
3. Sketch plans, sections and elevations illustrating the conceptual design vocabulary applied to the general area shown in Figure 1;
4. Attendance at two (2) meetings: an initial working meeting with Town officials, and a public workshop/charrette meeting to present and discuss the concept design.

The Town will provide copies of relevant and publicly available studies, plans, maps, GIS databases, etc., and will organize the meetings.

² Grant provided by the Griffin Foundation.

³ Commissioned and funded by the Griffin Foundation.

Plan Elements. The conceptual plans should take into consideration the following elements, but need not address each in detail:

- ***Skillings Road.*** The Town is reconstructing the Winchester High School. Construction will be completed in late 2017. Concurrently, the Town will be reconstructing the adjacent Skillings/Ciacia Field to install a fourth culvert for flood mitigation, recap the field for environmental remediation, improve the sports fields and accommodate displaced high school parking lots. The Jenks Center, across Skillings Road from the high school, is also being reconstructed to support an expanding program for senior citizens. The high school, field and Jenks projects each have plans dealing with on-site pedestrian and vehicle movement, but there is no plan for ensuring safe pedestrian movement among these three major town facilities or providing a coherent and attractive streetscape.
- ***Shore Road.*** Shore Road links the high school to the town center and provides access to the Arthur Griffin Museum and professional offices and residences in the East Core and Museum districts. The parking lot at the north end of the road is used to capacity by employees of town center businesses. There is a single, narrow sidewalk on the east side of Shore Road that is difficult to navigate, especially in the winter. The Griffin Foundation has commissioned a study to re-landscape the banks of the Aberjona River and revitalize the 1928 Herbert J. Kellaway-designed greenway through the town center. The Griffin Foundation also has purposed construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Aberjona River at Judkins Pond. The bridge would connect the museum to the Jenks Center and parking lot. There is an opportunity to coordinate the streetscape concept plan with the riverbank study and create a more attractive and walkable corridor between the high school, the museum, the Jenks Center and town center businesses. Shore Road is also lined with some of the oldest structures in the town center, many of which are in good condition. Proposed improvement for Shore Road should take into account the importance of these historic structures.
- ***Quill Rotary.*** The Town is working with the MBTA on plans to reconstruct the Winchester Center Commuter Rail Station. Current plans call for a new elevated walkway that would parallel the rail bridge and connect the outbound (east side) platform to a new pedestrian ramp that would land on the north side of Quill Rotary at the foot of Shore Road. The inbound (west side) platform will be served by the reconstruction of the existing ramp, which lands on the south side of the rotary at Laraway Road. All the ramp plans will require commuters to cross several streets using the sidewalks around the rotary. Today, these sidewalks are narrow and the areas under the railroad viaduct are poorly lighted and maintained. Many commuters also use the rotary area as a “kiss-n-ride” drop-off and pick-up location. The streetscape concept plans should provide for wider public sidewalks and spaces around the Quill Rotary while maintaining safe through movement for cars, delivery trucks and emergency vehicles. It should be stressed that the Town Center is part of a National Register Historic District and attention should be given to this unique historic resource. Design-related elements throughout the Town Center should relate to other features in the National Historic District to a large extent.

- Laraway Road.** Laraway Road is a one-way street running between Waterfield Road and Quill Rotary. It is bordered by the Town Common on the west and rail viaduct wall on the east. The town center's only MBTA bus stop is on Laraway near the Quill Rotary. Laraway parking lot area is one of three parking lots within the center (the others being the Cullen lot off Shore Road and the Aberjona North lot opposite the Post Office) that provide longer-term parking with pay-by-space parking stations at the north and south ends of the lot. The roadway is also used as a staging area for various town events and for farmers' markets on Saturdays during the summer, but the area along the railroad viaduct is generally seen as an uninviting "dead" space. There have been proposals to create a new pedestrian tunnel connecting the retail area on Thompson to Laraway Road and the Town Common, and proposals to add lite-construction retail stalls on the east side of Laraway Road against the rail viaduct wall to support three-season crafts, flower and vegetable markets.⁴ Regional sewer lines running under Laraway preclude any substantial development along the roadway. The streetscape concept plans should consider how different treatments (including relocation of the bus stop) might enliven the area and complement the historic Town Common.⁵ (Concept plans may include suggestions for treatment of the Town Common, but concept plans for the Common are not requested or required as part of the scope of this RFP.)
- Waterfield Road/Waterfield Block.** In parallel with the reconstruction of the commuter rail station, the Town is exploring options for redevelopment of the Town-owned parking lots in the Waterfield block (the area bounded by Church Street, Waterfield Road and the commuter rail station). The current plans for the commuter rail station call for the demolition of the 1950s station building and removal of the existing pedestrian ramps. The ramps will be replaced by stairs and elevators on both sides of the viaduct with their entrances placed toward Waterfield Road. There are no specific plans in place for redevelopment of the Waterfield block, but the intent is to encourage mixed-use commercial development (e.g., structured underground parking, street-level retail shops and restaurants, and upper-level offices and residential units). Conceptual plans for the Waterfield block have suggested construction of a new vehicle tunnel under the railroad tracks immediately beyond the south end of the platforms to provide access between the Aberjona parking lot and new retail and housing development within the Waterfield block. The MBTA station reconstruction project includes cleaning and lighting of the existing Aberjona/Waterfield pedestrian passageway under the railroad viaduct, but does not include construction of a new vehicle tunnel. The Town will consider construction of a new vehicle tunnel as part of the redevelopment of the Waterfield block. The streetscape concept plans should provide for adequate sidewalks and public spaces, safe movement of cars and delivery vehicles to future development on the Waterfield block and commuter drop-off and pick-up locations near the station ramps.
- Waterfield Road/Aberjona Parking Lot.** The Aberjona parking lot, which is on the east side of the rail viaduct and opposite the Post Office, is largest parking lot in the center. It

⁴ See Figure 2 below. A Thompson Street/Town Common tunnel is not planned or funded as part of the MBTA station reconstruction.

⁵ As a general note, parking is at a premium in the town center. The Town is open to relocating parking, but not to substantially reducing parking capacity.

is used to capacity by commuters, town center business customers and employees. The roadway through the parking lot provides access to Ginn Field to the south. Lighting has been added the parking lot, but pedestrian safety is a concern during dark winter evenings. The Town will be constructing a bikeway/greenway between the parking lot and the Aberjona River, part of a long-planned Tri-Community bikeway linking Stoneham, Woburn and Winchester to the DCR's Mystic Lakes recreation areas. The streetscape concept plans should consider reorganization of the areas near Waterfield Road and the Post Office to accommodate pedestrian access the station, the parking lot and town center businesses; commuter pick-up and drop-off; perhaps a relocated MBTA bus stop; and possibly a Zipcar station. Ideas for the main lot should consider how to enhance safety, increase parking capacity and improve the attractiveness of the area, especially as seen from Mystic Valley Parkway and the bikeway/greenway.

Pre-Submission Briefing and Submittal Procedures. An optional, pre-submission briefing and site walk are scheduled for April 27, 2016 at 9am. The briefing and site walk will start from the Waterfield Room, located on the lower level of Town Hall, 71 Mt. Vernon Street, Winchester, MA.

Proposals Due. Proposals are due in the Office of the Town Manager no later than **10:00 AM on May 4, 2016**. Proposals shall consist of –

- Letter of interest;
- Firm and staff qualifications; and
- Examples of relevant prior work.

Proposals shall be addressed to Mr. Brian Szekely, Town Planner, and submitted to the Office of the Town Manager, 71 Mt. Vernon Street, Winchester, MA. 01890.

Selection Process. The Town intends to select **three (3) firms** based on the criteria set forth in this RFP. **Fixed-price contracts for \$9,900 will be issued to each firm.** The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, waive any requirements of this RFP, request additional or clarifying information and modify or amend (with the consent of the consultant) any proposal including, but not limited to, team members, as deemed by the Town to be in its best interest.

Selection Criteria. Selection and award will be based on the following criteria:

- Conceptual design experience of lead architect, planner or landscape architect;
- Quality and appropriateness of prior and relevant projects of comparable scope and scale; and
- Proposed process for conducting and presenting the work.

Contract Deliverables. The following documents, submissions and reports shall be considered as deliverables and provided to the Town as part of this contract. Paper and electronic copies shall be provided of the following work:

- One copy of the conceptual drawings;

- One copy of all working notes, analyses, presentations, and other supporting documents; and
- One copy of summary graphics and text suitable for posting to the Town's website.

Schedule. The schedule for the project is as follows:

- April 20, 2016 Issuance of the RFP
- April 20, 2016 Posting in Central Register
- April 27, 2016 Optional site walk
- May 4, 2016 Proposal deadline- at 10:00 am
- May 11, 2016 Review and Selection of firms
- May 16, 2016 Contract issuance
- June 16, 2016 Submission of contract deliverables
- June 27, 2016 Presentation of conceptual designs to Planning Board and others

Insurance Requirements. Before contracting, the consultant must provide proof of insurance sufficient to meet the Town's requirements for:

- General Liability, naming the Town of Winchester as an additional insured;
- Automotive Liability;
- Worker's Compensation Insurance;
- Architects and Engineers Professional Liability;
- Property Coverage; and
- Umbrella Liability.

Ownership of Information Provided. All information provided by the Town and all material developed for this project shall be returned to or become the property of the Town before final payment is made to the consultant. The delivered work products shall not be used by the consultant for other purposes or released to others without written permission of the Town.

Town's Representative. The Town's representative for this solicitation is: **Mr. Brian Szekely, Town Planner**, 71 Mt. Vernon Street, Winchester, MA. Questions and comments regarding this RFP may be directed to him at (tel): (781) 721-7162 or to his email address at: bszekely@winchester.us.

Figure 1. Approximate Study Area for Town Center Streetscape Project

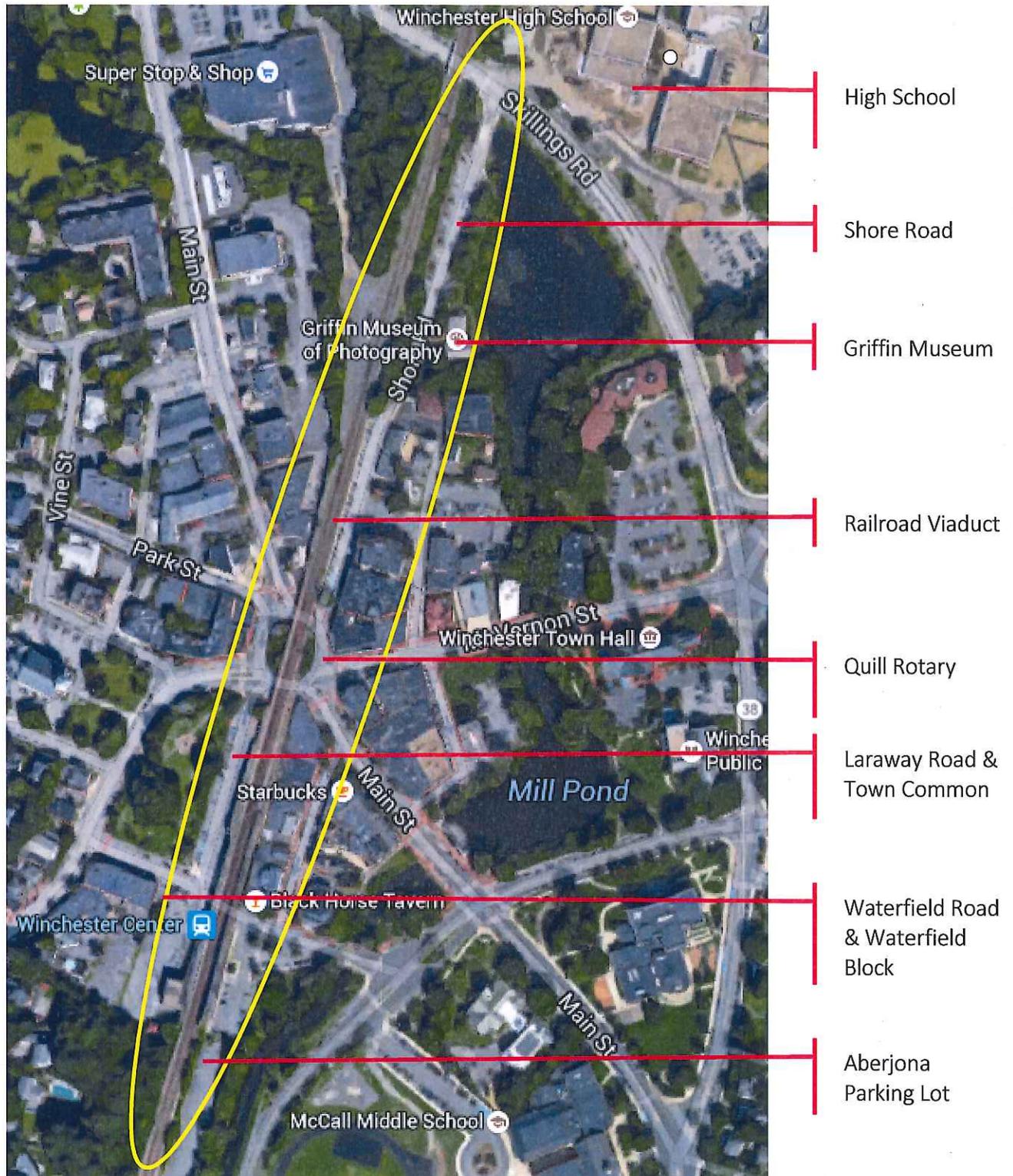


Figure 2. Concept for Town Center Streetscape Project

Discussion Paper – Not Adopted Policy

Neighborhood 2. The Town Common/ Laraway

- Locate a year-round, farmer's and crafts market along Laraway Street with areas to sit, eat, drink and enjoy the Common, enhancing its role as the town center's outdoor living room

- Build high-ceiling market stalls with retractable glass fronts (e.g., overhead garage-style doors) to ensure emergency access to the MWRA lines



- Create a view-corridor framing the great oak tree on the Common by opening up a new pedestrian passageway through the rail viaduct and creating a pedestrian path linking the Aberjona River, the Locatelli Building courtyard, and the Common

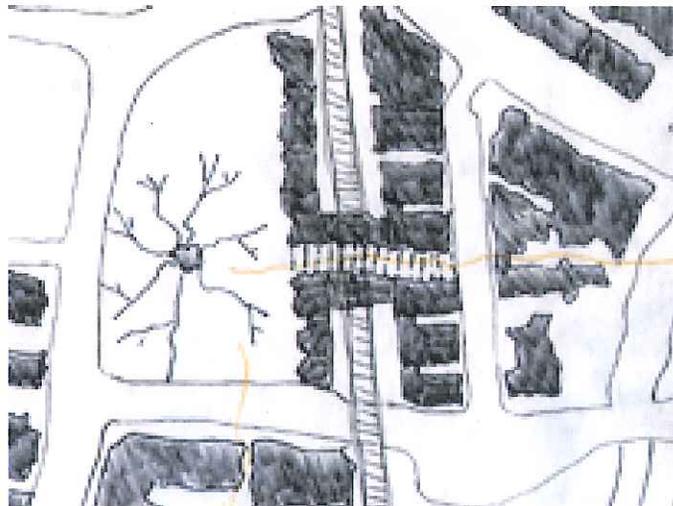


Figure 3. Existing Conditions Photographs (see next page)