

CITY OF CEDAR KEY, FLORIDA
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
RFQ No.: 2026-02

FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR NATURE-BASED FLOOD MITIGATION SOLUTIONS ALONG GULF
BOULEVARD, STATE ROAD 24, AND J STREET

Issue Date: April 22, 2026

Submittal Deadline: May 8, 2026 at 2 PM

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Cedar Key, Florida (“City”) is requesting Statements of Qualifications from qualified firms to provide professional services for a feasibility study to evaluate nature-based solutions that reduce flood risk, improve resilience, and restore hydrologic connectivity along critical transportation and evacuation corridors within the city.

This project is supported through funding partnerships that include The Nature Conservancy and Florida Communities Trust and is intended to advance conservation, resilience, hazard mitigation, and public benefit objectives. The selected firm will be expected to provide technical, environmental, planning, and coordination services necessary to produce an actionable feasibility study that can guide future project development, funding, permitting, and implementation.

The city seeks firms with demonstrated expertise in coastal resilience, hydrologic and hydraulic analysis, environmental restoration, nature-based infrastructure, and grant-funded project delivery in Florida, preferably in rural and coastal communities.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Cedar Key is a low-lying, coastal community that faces recurring flooding impacts from heavy rainfall, tidal influence, storm surge, and changing coastal conditions. Flooding along Gulf Boulevard, State Road 24, and J Street affects public safety, mobility, and the resilience of critical routes relied upon by residents, visitors, and emergency responders.

The purpose of this project is to evaluate nature-based and hydrologically compatible flood mitigation strategies that can reduce risk while preserving and enhancing the natural systems that support Cedar Key’s ecological and community character.

The selected firm shall develop a feasibility study that will:

1. Identify and assess flooding risks affecting Gulf Boulevard, State Road 24, J Street, and related areas of concern.
2. Evaluate existing drainage patterns, infrastructure constraints, and opportunities to restore or improve hydrologic connectivity.
3. Analyze nature-based and green infrastructure solutions that enhance resilience, reduce flood impacts, and support environmental stewardship.
4. Provide an actionable, data-driven feasibility study that identifies preferred alternatives and supports future implementation, funding applications, permitting, and design advancement.

The study must incorporate coastal resilience principles, protect natural resources, and align with local, regional, and statewide priorities for conservation, climate adaptation, hazard mitigation, and public benefit.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected firm shall provide all professional services, labor, materials, travel, technical support, and coordination necessary to complete the feasibility study. Services shall include, but are not limited to, the following tasks.

Task A. Project Initiation and Coordination

The selected firm shall:

- Conduct a kickoff meeting with City staff and relevant stakeholders.
- Prepare a detailed project management plan and schedule.
- Establish communication protocols and coordination procedures.
- Coordinate with the City, funding partners, and other relevant agencies or entities throughout the project.
- Provide regular progress updates and status reports.

Task B. Existing Conditions Assessment and Data Collection

The selected firm shall:

- Review and compile all reasonably available existing data relevant to the study area, including but not limited to FEMA mapping, topographic information, drainage and

infrastructure information, stormwater data, tidal data, sea level rise information, land use data, environmental resources, and prior studies.

- Conduct field verification sufficient to support evaluation of site conditions and flood vulnerabilities.
- Identify vulnerable areas, constraints, and opportunities associated with flooding and hydrologic conditions.
- Document the process and methodology used to collect, review, and assess data.
- Provide the City with copies of all data collected, generated, or compiled for purposes of the feasibility study, subject to applicable licensing restrictions clearly disclosed by the consultant.

Task C. Hydrologic and Hydraulic Analysis

The selected firm shall:

- Perform hydrologic and hydraulic analyses sufficient to understand existing and future flood conditions affecting the study area.
- Evaluate the effects of rainfall, tidal influence, storm surge, and other relevant coastal or watershed conditions.
- Analyze opportunities to restore or improve hydrologic connectivity where such restoration may reduce flooding or improve system performance.
- Assess existing conditions and future scenarios, including changes that may influence resilience over time.
- Clearly identify assumptions, methodologies, limitations, and any data gaps affecting the analysis.

Task D. Development and Evaluation of Nature-Based Alternatives

The selected firm shall identify and evaluate nature-based and green infrastructure alternatives appropriate for Cedar Key's coastal setting. Alternatives may include, but are not limited to:

- Living shorelines
- Wetland, marsh, or coastal habitat restoration
- Oyster reef restoration
- Green stormwater infrastructure

- Drainage improvements that support hydrologic restoration
- Other nature-based or hybrid resilience strategies appropriate to the site

For each alternative considered, the selected firm shall evaluate, as applicable:

- Technical feasibility
- Flood reduction potential
- Environmental and ecological benefits
- Compatibility with site conditions and natural systems
- Constructability and maintenance considerations
- Relative cost and lifecycle considerations
- Regulatory and permitting considerations
- Community benefit and public value

Task E. Benefit-Cost and Impact Analysis

The selected firm shall:

- Develop planning-level cost estimates for alternatives and recommended solutions.
- Evaluate expected benefits, including flood risk reduction, resilience enhancement, ecosystem benefits, and community impacts.
- Consider lifecycle implications, maintenance considerations, and long-term sustainability.
- Describe how proposed alternatives support public safety, natural resource protection, and community resilience.

Task F. Stakeholder and Public Engagement

The selected firm shall:

- Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement approach appropriate to the project.
- Conduct a minimum of two stakeholder/public engagement meetings during the study period, unless otherwise approved in writing by the city.
- Coordinate with City staff regarding outreach, meeting materials, and public communication.

- Document stakeholder and public input received and describe how that input informed the feasibility study.

Task G. Preferred Alternative and Conceptual Recommendations

The selected firm shall:

- Identify and recommend preferred alternative(s) based on the results of the technical evaluation and stakeholder engagement.
- Prepare conceptual-level plans, exhibits, maps, and graphics sufficient to communicate the recommended approach.
- Provide planning-level cost estimates for the recommended solution(s).
- Outline next steps for implementation, including potential permitting, design advancement, grant funding, phasing, and other considerations.

Task H. Final Feasibility Report

The selected firm shall prepare and submit a final feasibility report that includes, at a minimum:

- Executive summary
- Description of study area and project purpose
- Existing conditions and flood risk findings
- Data collection methodology and process
- Summary of data sources and any data gaps
- Description of entities and stakeholders engaged during the process
- Hydrologic and hydraulic analysis summary
- Alternatives considered and evaluation results
- Recommended alternative(s)
- Conceptual exhibits, maps, and graphics
- Planning-level cost estimates
- Implementation strategy and recommended next steps
- Technical appendices and supporting documentation

The final report shall be suitable for use by the City in future planning, grant applications, permitting coordination, project prioritization, and advancement to later phases of work.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

The total project budget associated with this solicitation shall not exceed \$190,000.00 for professional services related to the feasibility study scope described herein.

If the City has a separate administrative budget associated with grant administration, reporting, invoicing, or other owner-side compliance functions, such costs are not included in this RFQ unless it is specifically authorized by the city in writing. Respondents shall base their qualifications and any subsequent scope negotiation on the professional services necessary to complete the feasibility study and associated deliverables described in this RFQ.

The City reserves the right during negotiations to refine the final scope, deliverables, schedule, and compensation consistent with available funding and grant requirements.

5. FUNDING AND PROGRAM ALIGNMENT

This project is intended to support objectives associated with resilience, conservation, public benefit, and sustainable land use. The selected firm must demonstrate an understanding of and ability to support the following priorities:

- Protection and restoration of natural resources and natural hydrology
- Use of nature-based and green infrastructure solutions
- Flood risk reduction and climate resilience
- Public benefit, public safety, and community impact
- Sustainable land use and environmental stewardship
- Actionable outcomes that support future implementation and funding readiness

The selected firm shall also be prepared to coordinate its work and deliverables in a manner consistent with applicable grant requirements, funding conditions, and documentation expectations.

6. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

To be considered responsive, firms must demonstrate the following minimum qualifications:

1. Experience in coastal engineering, environmental planning, resilience planning, water resources, or closely related disciplines.
2. Demonstrated expertise in hydrologic and hydraulic analysis relevant to coastal or flood-prone environments.
3. Experience evaluating or designing nature-based solutions, ecosystem restoration strategies, or green infrastructure approaches.
4. Familiarity with Florida permitting, grant-funded projects, and regulatory coordination.
5. Successful completion of similar feasibility studies or planning efforts of comparable scope and complexity.

Preference may be given to firms with experience in rural, coastal, and Gulf coast communities and those with demonstrated familiarity with resilience projects funded through Florida state, federal, or conservation-related programs.

7. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Respondents shall submit one complete Statement of Qualifications containing the following information in the order listed below:

1. Cover Letter

Include:

- Name of firm
- Address, telephone number, and email
- Name and title of authorized representative
- Brief statement of interest and understanding of the project
- Signature by an authorized representative of the firm

2. Firm Qualifications and Experience

Include:

- Overview of the firm
- Description of the firm's qualifications relevant to this project

- Relevant project experience, including at least three (3) similar projects
- Experience in Florida and in coastal or rural settings, if applicable

3. Project Team and Key Personnel

Include:

- Identification of project manager and key staff
- Roles and responsibilities of team members
- Resumes or qualifications summaries of key personnel
- Identification of subconsultants, if any, and their roles

4. Project Approach and Methodology

Include:

- Understanding of the project and study area
- Proposed approach to completing the scope of work
- Technical methods for data collection, analysis, and alternative evaluation
- Approach to stakeholder and public engagement
- Approach to identifying actionable next steps for implementation

5. Experience with Nature-Based Solutions

Include specific examples of the firm's experience with:

- Living shorelines
- Wetland, marsh, or hydrologic restoration
- Oyster reef restoration
- Green stormwater infrastructure
- Other nature-based resilience strategies

6. Experience with Grant-Funded and Compliance-Driven Projects

Include:

- Experience with Florida Communities Trust, The Nature Conservancy, FDEP, FEMA, or similar funding or compliance frameworks

- Experience managing documentation, reporting, deliverables, and grant-related requirements

7. References

Provide a minimum of three (3) professional references for projects of similar type, scope, or complexity. Include:

- Contact name
- Title
- Organization
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Brief project description

8. Required Forms and Certifications

Include any required certifications, licenses, acknowledgments, or forms identified by the City in the procurement package or requested during the process.

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Statements of Qualifications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relevant Experience and Qualifications – 30%
- Project Approach and Understanding – 25%
- Experience with Nature-Based Solutions – 20%
- Project Team and Capacity – 15%
- Grant Experience and Compliance Capability – 10%

The City reserves the right to request clarifications, additional information, or supplemental materials from any respondent.

9. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process may include the following steps:

1. Review of submittals for responsiveness and minimum qualifications.
2. Evaluation and ranking of qualified firms based on the criteria set forth in this RFQ.
3. Shortlisting of the highest-ranked firms, if determined necessary by the city.
4. Interviews or presentations, if determined necessary by the city.
5. Negotiation of scope, deliverables, schedule, and compensation with the highest-ranked firm.
6. Recommendation for award and approval by the appropriate City authority, if required.

If the City is unable to successfully negotiate an agreement with the highest-ranked firm, the City may terminate negotiations and proceed to the next highest-ranked firm.

10. SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Submittals must be received no later than the deadline identified above and delivered to:

City of Cedar Key

Attn: City Clerk

P.O. Box 339

Cedar Key, FL 32625

Email: cityclerk@cedarkeyfl.us

Late submittals may be rejected and not considered.

Submittals shall be clearly marked with the RFQ title and number.

There is no pre-bid or pre-submittal conference currently scheduled for this solicitation unless later announced by the city.

11. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The City reserves the right to reject any or all submittals, waive minor informalities or irregularities, and accept the submittal deemed to be in the best interest of the City.
2. This RFQ does not commit to the City to award a contract, pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response, or procure or contract for any services.
3. All costs associated with preparation and submission of a response are the sole responsibility of the respondent.

4. The selected firm will be required to enter into a formal written agreement with the City.
 5. The selected firm shall comply with all applicable federal, state, local, and grant-related requirements.
 6. To the extent applicable, the selected firm shall be required to accept and comply with all funding-related provisions, contractual flow-down requirements, reporting obligations, documentation standards, and other grant conditions imposed on the City by the funding source(s).
 7. The city may cancel, revise, or reissue this solicitation at any time.
 8. The City Clerk shall serve as the City's point of contact for this procurement and, if awarded, for contract administration coordination unless otherwise designated by the City.
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12. QUESTIONS AND POINT OF CONTACT

All questions regarding this RFQ shall be directed in writing to:

Brooke Smith, City Clerk
City of Cedar Key
Email: cityclerk@cedarkeyfl.us
Phone: 352-543-5132

Respondents shall not contact elected officials, review committee members, or other City personnel regarding this solicitation except through the designated point of contact unless authorized by the City.