

## **Request for Proposals for River Valley Charter School Grounds Comprehensive Site Plan**

### **Contact:**

Jonnie Lyn Evans  
Executive Director  
River Valley Charter School  
2 Perry Way, Newburyport, MA

**Site Visit:** February 6, 2024 12-1:30pm

**Proposals Due:** February 16, 2024 at 3:30pm

### **This Request for Proposals consists of the following parts:**

- Proposal Procedures
- Proposal Submission Requirements
- Site Visit
- General Description of River Valley Charter School Grounds
- Design Scope of Work
- Scope of Services
- Schedule
- Evaluation Process
- Submission of the Proposal
- Technical Proposal Certificate of Non-Collusion, Tax Compliance Certificate, Certificate of Vote

### ***Proposal Procedures***

Any questions pertaining to the Scope of Services for this RFP should be directed to: Lydia Sisson, Project Manager for River Valley Charter School, [lysisson@gmail.com](mailto:lysisson@gmail.com)

Proposals will be held open for a period of thirty (30) days after the proposal submission date unless an award is made sooner or the time for awards is extended by consent of all parties concerned. Award, payment, and performance obligations shall depend on the availability and appropriation of funds. Award and execution of contract is subject to the approval of the River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees and the River Valley Foundation Board.

### ***Proposal Submission Requirements***

Proposal may be submitted until Friday, February 16th, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. electronically to Jonnie Lyn Evans, Executive Director at [JLEvans@RiverValleyCharter.org](mailto:JLEvans@RiverValleyCharter.org) or in paper format to:

River Valley Charter School  
Attn: Jonnie Lyn Evans  
Executive Director  
2 Perry Way  
Newburyport, MA 01950

### ***Site Visit***

A site visit is preferred prior to submitting a proposal. We will host a site visit on February 6, 2024 at 12:00pm. If this time does not work for you, please arrange an alternative time by contacting Lydia Sisson at 978-726-5746 or by e-mail at [lysisson@gmail.com](mailto:lysisson@gmail.com).

### ***General Description of River Valley Charter School Grounds***

River Valley Charter School (RVCS), a grade K-8 public Montessori school, provides students with a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. RVCS opened its doors 25 years ago and has expanded enrollment over the years. While the inside of our school has changed to support our growth and evolution, the outside of our school has remained primarily the same and our playground equipment is 25 years old. While MA charter schools accept any student who resides in Massachusetts to enter the enrollment lottery, RVCS is regional and the majority of students reside in our four surrounding public school districts. Our 288 students come from fourteen different towns. Students arrive and leave the school by bus (Newburyport residents only), car, bike, and on foot. RVCS sits on 3.94 acres in an industrial park area in Newburyport that is characterized by extensive wetlands. There is an interconnected drainage easement running throughout the park. We have two large detention ponds on our site; both in need of maintenance to ensure they are functioning. We also have a drainage easement on our site that links with the rest of the industrial park and drainage ditches, swales, ponds, and wetlands on all four sides.

Currently our car pick-up line goes around our school and parking for staff is both onsite and offsite along Perry Way. Our playground equipment is very old and outdated, we have a gaga pit, and our students use a small open field space for playing sports games. We have a school garden that is supported by a Garden Club of parents and is used regularly by classes. This year we added a mud kitchen and some natural elements that students have really enjoyed.

### ***Design Scope of Work***

RVCS is seeking a Landscape Architect and/or Firm (referred to as Architect) to design our School Grounds Comprehensive Plan including outdoor education space, athletic and play spaces, school garden, traffic flow, and parking. The Architect will work with the school administration, planning team, and community to design a Comprehensive Site Plan that creates an outdoor space that utilizes the surrounding natural opportunities giving students the ability to play creatively, collaborate, take healthy risks and explore their interests. We would also like to see the space be used by classrooms, families, and overall school communities as a place to gather, connect and learn together.

RVCS has been laying the groundwork for this project by meeting with the City of Newburyport, meeting with neighbors and abutters, exploring opportunities to maximize our space through off site parking options, hiring Hancock Associates to conduct an existing conditions survey, building staff, student, and community support for the project, meeting with landscape contractors to address our detention pond maintenance needs, and engaging with Safe Routes to Schools for an audit. We have also created an internal committee to shape this project and have hired a Project Manager to support the school in project logistics.

The Internal Comprehensive Site Plan Committee has been meeting over the past six months and has identified the following values as core to our space:

- Nature: engaging with the natural landscape, connecting with the environment to ground ourselves, natural and real structures, and promoting peace
- Sustainability: fostering engagement in sustainability including the materials we choose and the ways students are engaging in sustainable stewardship, design, and problem solving
- Integration: the design will flow with the school building so that the transition from indoor to outdoors can be seamless, classes and learning can be in or out and there is flow between the two
- Versatility: for all ages (K-8), for diverse activities, and for all types of weather
- Community: space that welcomes and facilitates community building for students, families, and staff

Our desire is to have a Comprehensive Site Plan that maximizes outdoor space for learning, playing, and growing and we seek creative solutions for traffic flow and parking - including exploring options beyond our property.

### ***Scope of Services***

The Scope of Services for this project includes:

- Site observations and review of existing documents provided by RVCS - we will have an up to date existing condition site survey prepared by Hancock Associates available before the start of the project.
- Preparation of illustrative site plans of potential site improvements and alternatives during design including: Play Spaces, Athletic Spaces, Outdoor Learning Spaces, Gardens, Traffic Flow and a Parking Plan. Site improvements may be recommended in phased based on budget and funding opportunities, site capacity, and school year schedule limitations around construction.
- Narrative description of proposed improvements describing the anticipated design and construction, including details about play equipment.
- Site master/comprehensive plan to be followed with permit site plans and construction documents for proposed improvements.
- Detailed cost estimate from preliminary design to final design (each phase);
- Estimated construction schedule for final project - can be phased schedule and can be created in collaboration with the construction team selected.
- Regular meetings with representatives of RVCS, one community visioning and design session, and meetings with all permitting agencies
- Preparation and presentation of the final design phase to the RVCS Board of Trustees and Foundation for approval, including 3-D renderings.
- Preparation of construction documents, bid documents and supporting bid materials and services, including assistance with the bid opening and bidder evaluations/selection.
- Construction oversight and final inspection.

## ***Schedule***

### **Proposed Schedule**

Issue RFP for Design Services - January 24, 2024  
Site Visit - February 6, 2024 12pm  
Questions/Requests for Clarification - February 12, 2024 3:30pm  
Design Services Proposals Due – February 16, 2024 3:30pm  
Notice to Proceed – February 29, 2024  
Community Visioning Session - by end of March 2024  
Final Design Options Reviewed and Final Design Selected - end of April 2024  
Comprehensive Site Plan Complete – May 2024  
Municipal Review with the Planning Board & Notice of Intent Filing with Conservation Commission - May 2024  
Permitted Site Plans and Construction Documents Finalized - May/June 2024  
Construction Bids RVCS Project – May/June 2024  
Construction Administration – as dictated by individual project schedule

While we realize that this is a very condensed schedule, our hope is to begin the first phase of the project during the summer months when the school is quieter and construction will not disrupt the day to day flow of school as much. We are open to suggestions if this timeline feels too rushed and if we need to extend it we will take your feedback into consideration.

## ***Proposal Submission Requirements***

The response to this RFP can be in letter form (which can be submitted electronically) and should include the following information:

- An executive summary or cover letter detailing the reason why River Valley Charter School should engage you/your firm to create a School Grounds Comprehensive Plan. Please include your proposed fee for the Design Phase in the executive summary.
- Relevant Experience: Provide a background of you/your firm including years in business, resume/key staff resumes, and industry specialties. Detail you/your firm's experience in working with schools, playground design, natural place spaces, and working within wetland limitations.
- Project Team
- Approach – Project and Community Input: Describe your/your firm's approach to contracting with clients.
- Proposed Detailed Schedule for each aspect of the project.
- Provide references for three recent clients and examples of work
- Fee Proposal
- Signed Certificate of Non-Collusion and Tax Compliance Certification (attached)

## ***Evaluation Process***

The Proposals will be reviewed by River Valley Charter School staff, our Project Manager and our internal Design Committee. The team will complete the proposal evaluation and will share the rankings and recommendations with the RVCS Board of Trustees and RVCS Foundation.

Ultimately the RVCS Board of Trustees, RVCS Foundation, and Executive Director will select the Architect.

The selection process will include the following:

- Proposal Evaluations
- Interview(s) as warranted
- Recommendation

The staff will evaluate Proposals and conduct interviews, as warranted, in accordance with the following criteria:

A. Minimum Evaluation Criteria

The proposal includes all of the items listed under Submission of the Proposal. The Architect shall be deemed unacceptable if the listed components are not included.

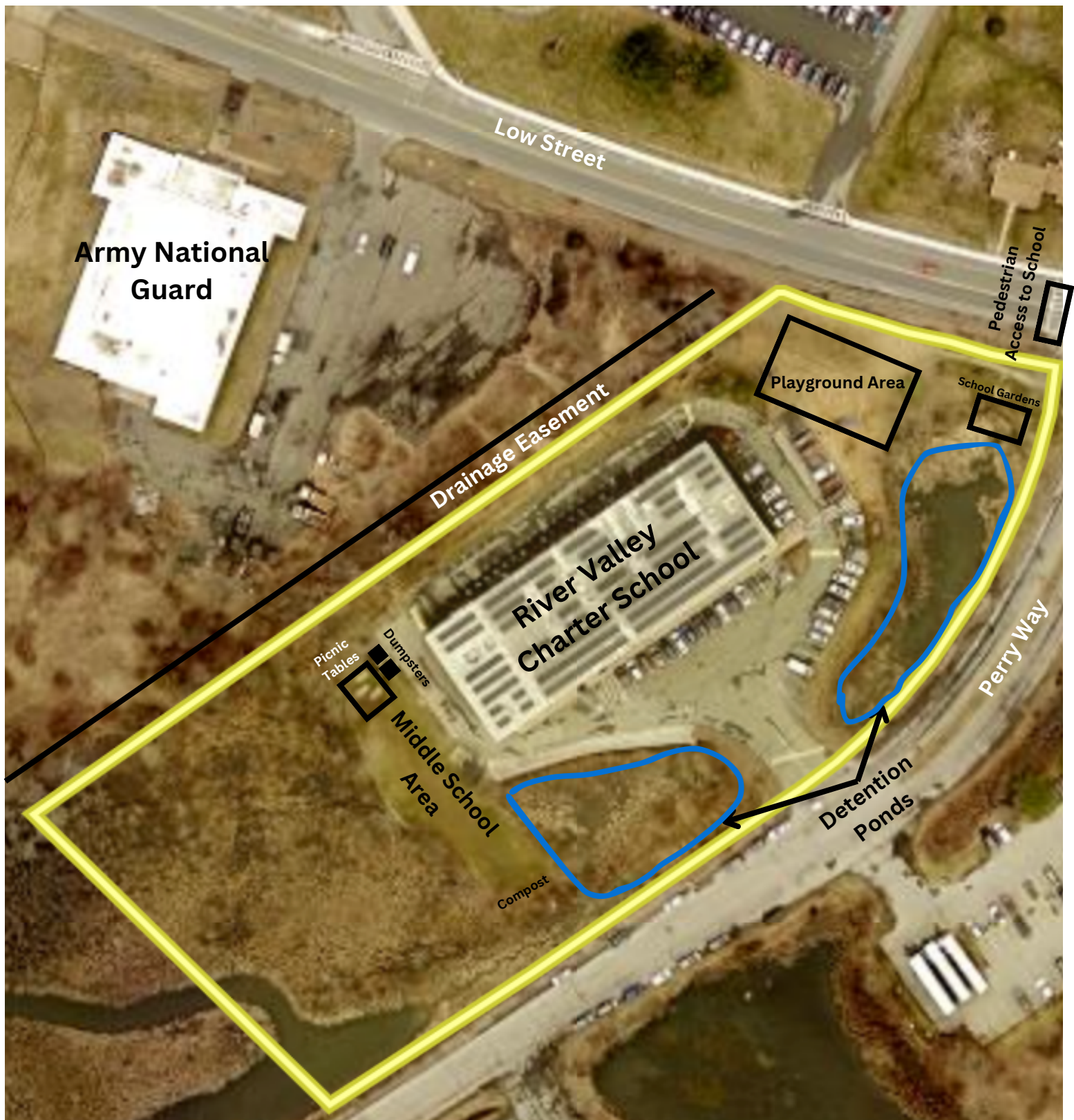
B. Comparative Evaluation Criteria

Each Technical Proposal meeting the Minimum Evaluation Criteria will be rated according to the following Comparative Evaluation Criteria:

1. Evidence of substantial experience with planning and site improvement projects of comparable scope and complexity.
2. Evidence of success in preparing and presenting the written and graphic results of comparable projects in clear, coherent and comprehensible formats.
3. Evidence in working collaboratively with communities for design visioning. Evidence of success in facilitating diverse and equitable citizen participation in design projects.
4. Evidence in meeting scope, schedule and budget on former design projects.

After the review of the Proposals, the committee may, at its discretion, schedule interviews with any or all of the proposers for the purpose of further evaluation of the proposer's qualifications and ability to provide the required services.

# Comprehensive Site Design RFP: Site Description



The above image is not to scale but is a representation of our current site and site uses. We have 44 parking spaces on site and the traffic flows around the building for arrival and dismissal.

## **CERTIFICATE OF NON-COLLUSION**

The undersigned certifies under penalties of perjury that this bid or proposal has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word “person” shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club, or other organization, entity, or group of individuals.

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Signature of individual submitting bid or proposal

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Name of business

**THIS NON-COLLUSION FORM MUST BE SIGNED AND  
SUBMITTED WITH THE BID OR PROPOSAL**

## **TAX COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 62C, §49A, the undersigned, acting on behalf of the Contractor, certifies under the penalties of perjury that the Contractor is in compliance with all laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts relating to taxes, reporting of employees and contractors, and withholding and remitting child support.

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Signature of individual submitting bid or proposal

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Name of business