



PAL: Play. Advocate. Live Well.
Request for Qualifications
August 29, 2025

1. General

PAL: Play. Advocate. Live Well. (PAL) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization in Spartanburg, South Carolina that creates opportunities for active living and healthy eating in and around Spartanburg County, SC.

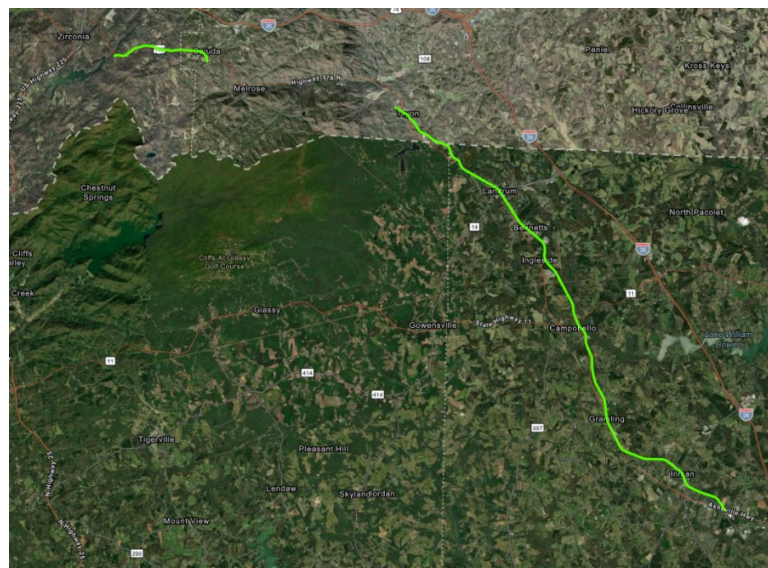
PAL is seeking qualifications from licensed civil engineering firms to engineer, design, and permit the former W-Line (Saluda Grade) railroad between Inman, South Carolina and the North Carolina/South Carolina State border for the purpose of restoring and transforming the corridor into an ADA accessible Shared Use Path.

Engineering design services for the South Carolina portion of the Saluda Grade Trail are fully funded by a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development in the amount of \$6 million, which also covers additional project elements, such as community engagement, environmental review, and a first phase of construction. At this time, there is no funding allocated for design services for the NC segments; however, our North Carolina partners are identifying potential sources of funding.

PAL is currently exploring a Construction Manager at Risk hybrid model, where the firm selected under this RFQ would become part of the CMAR team.

2. Description of Project

The distance of the railroad line is approximately 15.4 miles, beginning at milepost 57.3 in Inman, South Carolina and traversing west and north to the North Carolina state border. The work to be performed under this contract shall be completed on or before the Final Completion date of May 30, 2027.





3. Scope of Work

- a. Budget and Schedule:
 - i. Establish an accurate budget and agree upon schedule for design services.
 - ii. Maintain the project within the established budget and schedule.
 - iii. Update PAL on the progress of the budget and schedule.
 - iv. Prepare documentation and present information whenever necessary.
- b. Evaluate existing conditions, perform, and incorporate into design the following elements: environmental, hydrological, geotechnical, structural, rights of way, property, traffic, and available surveys and as-builts.
- c. Develop approved design: horizontal and vertical alignment, grading plan, drainage, pavement section, bridges, support facilities, traffic control, information signage, landscaping:
 - i. Additionally, for efficient maintenance after construction, the design needs to include innovative compliance for ADA, support low-cost maintenance, maintenance vehicle access and multi-use.
 - ii. Design submittals will be reviewed at 30%, 60% and 90% with presentations to the Saluda Grade Engineering Committee & Design Team with feedback incorporated into design.
 - iii. PAL and Conserving Carolina will be working on community engagement, economic development, and placemaking plans in partnership with a firm under contract with funds from an ARISE grant. The selected engineering firm will receive reports about the development of said plans and will be expected to incorporate potential trail connections as recommended by those plans.
- d. Acquire necessary permits and incorporate approved permit conditions into the design including encroachment permits. Coordinate with all utilities and government bodies needing approval.
- e. Assist in construction bidding process:
 - i. Prepare construction plans for incorporation into bid documents.
 - ii. Be available to respond to requests for information from contractors as needed by the PAL team.
- f. Supplemental Tasks: Design services for two segments of the trail in North Carolina contingent on securing funding.
 - i. Supplemental Task 1: Engineering Services as outlined in the scope of work for the portion of the trail from the North Carolina state line to Lockhart Rd. in Tryon.
 - ii. Supplemental Task 2: Engineering Services as outlined in the scope of work for the portion of the trail from Saluda to the Bell Park Trailhead in Henderson County.



4. Submission Requirements

- a. Submissions shall include:
 - i. Introduction - The Introduction should demonstrate the consultant's overall qualifications to fulfill the requirements of the scope of work and should contain the following elements of information:
 - Expression of firm's interest in the work;
 - Statement of whether firm is registered with the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR);
 - Date of most recent private engineering firm qualification;
 - Statement regarding firm(s) possible conflict of interest for the work; and
 - Summation of information contained in the letter of interest.
 - ii. Team Qualifications & Experience - This chapter should elaborate on the general information presented in the introduction, to establish the credentials and experience of the consultant to undertake this type of effort. The following must be included:
 - Identify recent, similar projects the firm, acting as the prime contractor, has conducted which demonstrates its ability to conduct and manage the project. Provide a synopsis of each project and include the date completed, budget, final cost, and contact person. We are encouraging examples to be projects that have completed construction.
 - Names, classifications, and location of the firm's employees and resources to be assigned to the advertised work; and the professional credentials and experience of the persons assigned to the project, along with any unique qualifications of key personnel. Although standard personnel resumes may be included, identify pertinent team experience to be applied to this project. Specifically, PAL is interested in the experience, expertise, and total quality of the consultant's proposed team. If principals of the firm will not be actively involved in the study/contract/project, do not list them. The submittal shall clearly indicate the Consultant's Project Manager, other key Team Members and his/her qualifications for the proposed work. Also, include the team's organization chart for the Project / Plan. A Capacity Chart / Graph (available work force) should also be included, along with any anticipated subcontractors along with their qualifications (ex. Surveyors, Wetland Delineators, Geotechnical Engineers, Structural Engineers, Traffic Engineers). Any other pertinent information should also be listed in this section.
 - iii. Technical Approach - The consultant shall provide information on its understanding of, and approach to accomplish, this project, including their envisioned scope for the work and any innovative ideas/approaches, and a schedule. Provide statement of understanding how this project would adhere to design guidelines in the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.
 - iv. Complete summary of pricing information, including:
 - Estimated cost for each phase of the project.



- Billable hours and reimbursables, detailing a breakdown of the proposed budget by task, employee classification, billing rate, and estimated hours per task.
 - Anticipated cost of any subcontractors that will be used.
 - Hourly rate for any work added outside the scope as outlined above.
 - Note: The final budget will be negotiated with the selected firm.
- v. Complete description of the proposed process to clearly demonstrate that the process will meet the requirements in the scope of work.
- vi. Timeframe for each phase of the project, completion of the work, and delivery of the final report.
- vii. Contact information from at least three (3) references that have used Contractor's civil engineering services in the past (5) years.
- b. Requirements of the Contractor:
 - i. Have the professional qualifications, experience, expertise, and personnel to timely perform the Project;
 - ii. Have the requisite licenses, certifications, and permits from all public entities having jurisdiction over Contractor or the Project and shall maintain such licenses, certifications, and permits during the term of the Project;
 - iii. Become familiar with the Project site and the local conditions under the Project is to be performed;
 - iv. Comply with all instructions and shall perform services in a manner commensurate with the highest professional standards by qualified and experienced personnel performing the same or similar services in the same or similar location, and;
 - v. Assume full responsibility for the improper acts and omissions of its contractors, consultants, or others, if any, employed or retained by Contractor in connection with the Project.
 - viii. In the performance of work under the Contract, fully comply with all federal, state, county, or municipal laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, including if applicable, the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), Equal Opportunity Employment, and Employment Discrimination, and hold PAL harmless from any liability resulting from failure of such compliance.
 - ix. Certification Regarding Lobbying: Firm shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.
 - x. The firm must have the financial ability to undertake the work and assume the liability.
 - xi. The selected firm(s) will be required to furnish proof of:



- Workers' Compensation providing statutory coverages required by state where services are provided;
- Employer's Liability with limits of \$1,000,000 each accident;
- Commercial General Liability with limits of \$1,000,000 each occurrence / \$2,000,000 aggregate;
- Commercial Automobile with limits of \$1,000,000 each accident;
- Umbrella Excess Liability with limits of \$5,000,000 each occurrence; and
- Professional Liability insurance coverage in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000.00.

5. Time, Date, and Location of Proposal

- a. Submissions must be delivered to PAL's Office at 226 S. Spring St., Spartanburg, SC 29306 not later than September 30, 2025. Submissions can also be emailed to lmacdonald@palspartanburg.org.

6. Selection Process

PAL intends to use a qualifications-based selection process that weights experience, timeliness, and performance. PAL will follow these steps:

- a. Prospective contractors will submit Qualifications and Pricing Information as described above.
- b. PAL, in collaboration with the Saluda Grade Engineering Committee, will review and score qualifications to determine the submission with the best value. Determination of best value shall be at the sole discretion of PAL.
- c. Selection Criteria:
 - a. Project Team & Experience, 30% - Qualifications, relevant experience with similar projects, and registration of key project team members who will remain actively involved throughout the entire project. Experience with funding and regulatory organizations relevant to this project.
 - b. Project Approach & Methodology, 25% - Detail the routine and unique conditions of this project and how the firm's design and administration will lead to success.
 - c. Workload & Resources, 20% - The sufficiency of the financial resources & workload capacity of the firm to provide the service.
 - d. Value, 15% - Demonstrated understanding of project objectives, requirements, and potential impacts to the community. Clear articulation of return on investment and how proposal provides long-term value, cost efficiencies, and measurable benefits.
 - e. Geographic Location, 10% - Location of key personnel assigned to the project and their familiarity with the project area.
- d. Following approval by PAL, the most qualified firm will then be invited to negotiate a draft contract for the completion of all design services.



7. Submission Schedule and Key Dates

- RFQ Release – August 29, 2025
- Deadline for Submission of Questions – September 19, 2025
- Deadline for Submission of Qualifications – September 30, 2025
- Interviews with Firms – October 2025
- Firm Selection and Notification – November 2025
- Anticipated Notice to Proceed – November 2025
- Flexible Timeline for Planning & Feasibility

Questions should be directed to Leigh MacDonald, Trails Development Director
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lmacdonald@palspartanburg.org