

Request for Proposals



Three Rivers Water Trail Management Plan

RFP issued: 3/29/2023

RFP Returned: 5/03/23



Funded By: Department of Community and Economic Development – Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program & Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnerships Program

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Project Background

Submittable Deadline: 5/03/23

Introduction

Friends of the Riverfront (Friends) requests proposals to create a management plan for Three Rivers Water Trail system. The Three Rivers Water Trail is made up of 31 connecting public nonmotorized boat launches along all three rivers in Allegheny County covering 67 miles going through 73 riverfront municipalities. Friends is looking ahead to the future of our water trail program and is need of a consultant to help us create a water trail management plan. Please see the map included in Appendix A, which details the Study Area.

Background

The Three Rivers Water Trail is a series of 31 river access points along the Allegheny, Ohio, and Monongahela, and Youghiogheny Rivers in Allegheny County. The water trail is managed and maintained by Friends of the Riverfront (Friends) with assistance of various organizations within the county. These access points are places where users can launch non-motorized boats such as kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards. These sites are also a point of access to the river for anglers and wildlife watchers. Most these sites are available for public use, free, and require no registration or launch permit. (Some launches are operated by private marinas and the PA Fish & Boat Commission and require registration, fee, or launch permits.) At our launch sites some basic amenities that are provided include, boat racks, interpretive signage, and basic wayfinding.

In recent years, with the pandemic, there has been an uptick in water trail usage and increase in new novice water trail users. Municipalities along the three rivers are looking at ways to reconnect their communities to the riverfront and the water trail. Our launches and riverfront spaces help to foster that reconnection by creating safe and enjoyable places to enjoy all that the riverfront has to offer. Friends is looking ahead at ways to expand our current work along all three rivers. We are interested in evaluating the amenities at our launches, locations of future launches, the current state of our sites and a maintenance strategy.

We anticipate there will be many facets to this project including community engagement, addressing accessibility issues, working with local partners, and assessing the current system. The water trail is used by the local community and visitors to the region and by a variety of user types. In 2020 Friends completed an initial audit of the existing launches along the trail evaluating the existing condition of the launches and available amenities. Every three years we release a new Three Rivers Water Trail Map & Guide to reflect the growth of the water trail and provide updated information. We have updated our water trail signage standards to communicate increased safety protocol and wayfinding.

Friends and our partners will use the Water Trail Management Plan to guide the future development of the trail, address maintenance of the existing system, and promote this regional asset.

The Study Area

The Three Rivers Water trail includes 31 launches along the Ohio River, Monongahela River, and Allegheny River in Allegheny County. The Three Rivers Water Trail also includes one location along the Youghiogheny River. The Three Rivers Water Trail encompasses 67 river miles and engages with about 73 municipalities. There are 7 dams and locks dispersed throughout the network that directly impact trail usage in these areas. Current

launches are concentrated on the Allegheny River, this is largely due to the heavy and continual industrial use of the Monongahela and Ohio Rivers. See Appendix A.

The launches are primarily used for canoe and kayak access, but over the years have also become a hub for other riverfront activities. These activities include fishing, wildlife watching, general enjoyment. Many of the sites offer basic amenities and some are a part of larger riverfront recreation spaces. There is a need to address the accessibility of these site from both an ADA and transit perspective.

Related Initiatives

- Pennsylvania Water Trails Program (www.pawatertrails.org)
 - Since 2008, The Pennsylvania Environmental Council, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, PA Fish and Boat Commission, and the National Parks Service have worked together to promote and maintain the PA Water Trails Program, which consists of 28 different networks of creeks and rivers. Primary goals are to develop trails that promote sustainable use of Natural Resources, increasing and improve access to PA water trails, and connect water trails to land trails. Three Rivers Heritage trail is one of the 28 water trails included in this program.
- Three Rivers Heritage Trail (www.friendsoftheriverfront.org)
 - The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is a roughly 33-mile riverfront trail system in Allegheny County. This trail has over 8 million trips per year with \$9 million in economic impact. The trail is used locally for recreation purposes and is a large part of the transportation network in the Pittsburgh Region. It is also host to various regional and national trail networks including the Great Allegheny Passage, Great American Rail-Trail, Industrial Heartland Trails, and the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.
- Completing the Loop: [Riverlife \(riverlifepgh.org/loop/\)](http://riverlife.riverlifepgh.org/loop/)
 - Riverlife’s vision for a continuous riverfront park and trail system within the City of Pittsburgh. This project focuses mostly on the development of business and attractions along the “loop”. The Three Rivers Heritage Land and Water Trail intersect with this loop. This plan envisions a riverfront space filled with public art, restaurants, green space and more. “Completing the Loop is our vision for filling those gaps and creating a cohesive riverfront experience that contains thriving spaces and can be accessed and enjoyed by all.”

General Requirements and Scope of Work

Project Overview

Friends of the Riverfront is looking to create a management plan for the Three Rivers Water Trail Network in Allegheny County. This plan will have four major focus areas to improve the water trail system. These areas include Accessibility, Conditions & Maintenance, Expansion, and Promotion. While Developing the Management Plan, Friends of the Riverfront will engage various stakeholder groups across the County, including municipal governments, state and federal agencies, small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and water trail users. We will need to gather public feedback through meetings and other possible engagements.

Allegheny County is fortunate to have three major rivers that are a source of economic development, recreation, and commerce. The goal of this plan is to elevate the Three Rivers Water Trail as a destination in Allegheny County. This includes elevating our launches, attracting new users, and expanding access for all. We want these spaces to serve as a community connection to the rivers and to new adventures.

Friends will work with local partners and community experts to help form the steering committee for this project. The steering committee will work with the selected consultant’s team throughout the process and a

small sub-committee will review proposals and select the consultant team. In addition to the regular steering committee meetings, we require the consultant team to facilitate one larger public meeting, create a community survey, and create a final planning document. Friends will assist with organizing the community meetings, working with community groups, local partners, and promoting the public survey. With the vastness of the region, we anticipate some of these meetings may be held virtually.

Stakeholders

- Friends of the Riverfront
- Allegheny County
- Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council
- PA Fish and Boat Commission
- Army Corps of Engineers
- RiverLife
- Venture Outdoors
- Rivers of Steel
- Port of Pitt
- Visit Pittsburgh
- Regional Council of Governments
- Pittsburgh Safe Boating Commission

Scope of Work

The consultants are to complete a formal Water Trail Management Plan that can be used by FOR and regional partners throughout the county.

The consultants will:

- Review any completed plans related to the study area and the Three Rivers Water Trail
- Create maps to assess the locations of existing launch sites and Fish and Boat access points
 - Identify future areas of focus for expansion broken down into 5-and 10-year strategies
 - Overlay public transit mapping with existing and focus areas
- Create an accessibility assessment of existing launch sites to evaluate physical disabilities
- Access Point Infrastructure
 - Work with Friends of the Riverfront to create guidelines on what amenities and infrastructure are needed to be officially designate a water trail access point
 - Evaluate existing access point amenities and create recommendations for additional amenities
- Create a water trail maintenance plan template that is adaptable for the distinct types of Lunch sites and municipalities within Allegheny County
- Identify ways to best promote the water trail system and water trail map to drive usage and tourism
- Work with the steering committee throughout the process to incorporate feedback
- Conduct one public meeting, likely in digital format
- Create a digital survey for the community and interested parties

Budget

Our budget for this project is \$50,000.00.

Anticipated Project Timeline

- March 29, 2023 – RFP Issued
- May 3, 2023 – RFP Due Date
- May 12, 2023 – Short List Notification
- May 26, 2023 – Interviews Complete
- May 29, 2023 – Notification of Selection
- June 8, 2023 – Executed Contract
- June 12, 2023 – Begin Project
- December 31, 2024 – Project End Date

Organization Qualifications and Required Submittals for Proposal

Submission Instructions

One digital version must be received by Friends of the Riverfront by 4/03/2023 at 3:00 PM. All submissions should be sent to Katie Craig at Katherine@friendsoftheriverfront.org

Conditions of Proposal

All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal responding to this RFP will be the responsibility of the consultant and will not be reimbursed by Friends of the Riverfront.

Notification of Award

Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful consultant, all consultants submitting proposals in response to this RFP will be informed, in writing, of the name of the successful consultant.

Friends of the Riverfront will prepare a written agreement for execution between the consultant and Friends of the Riverfront. The general provisions of this agreement, the final product and requirements placed on the project shall be made a part of this agreement. The consultant shall have authorization to proceed upon a written notice from the Friends of the Riverfront.

Proposal Format

Proposals should not exceed 20 pages in length and should be typed 8.5 x 11-inch pages with margins no smaller than 3/4 inch. Font size should be no smaller than 11 points. (Formatting pages and the non-disclosure agreement will not count towards the page limit.)

Friends of the Riverfront may also require a prospective consultant to attend a meeting and/or participate in a conference call to discuss the proposal.

Proposal Outline

This letter should include:

- A statement indicating your understanding of the work to be performed;
- An affirmation of the firm's qualifications for professionally and expertly conducting the work as understood;
- The firm's contact person concerning the proposal and a telephone number where that person can be reached; and,

- A clear statement of the relationship that the firm and/or principal(s) of the firm have with, or knowledge of, any officials or employees of Friends of the Riverfront and the nature of this relationship or knowledge.

Failure to state and fully disclose any of the information required in the letter of transmittal shall be grounds for Friends of the Riverfront to reject the firm's proposals and will be grounds for immediate cancellation of any contract entered into between Friends of the Riverfront and the firm without payment of work completed.

Profile of Firm

This should be a brief statement indicating the firm's experience in conducting work of the nature sought by this RFP. Advertising brochures or website addresses on the firm may be submitted as a part of this profile as long as they specifically address the experience of the firm related to the work to be performed. Additionally, this profile should include:

- The location of the firm's office that will provide the proposed service;
- Resumes of individual consultants or key employees proposed to conduct the work and the specific duties of each consultant or employee relative to the work;
- A brief reference list of other municipalities, county or state agencies served by the firm with contact names and telephone numbers;
- Any other information describing the office may be included if it relates to the capabilities and expertise of the firm in doing comparable work.
- MBE/WBE participation and subcontracting including ownership of the firm, employment levels of minorities and women in the firm, use of minorities and women on this project, and use of minority or women-owned businesses as subcontractors.

Explanation of Work to be Performed

The proposal must include a detailed description of the procedures and methods you propose to use to complete the work requested by Friends of the Riverfront. This is important because the methods and procedures proposed will receive primary consideration in evaluating your proposal. Examples of similar work will be helpful and may be included

Work Schedule

Provide a project work schedule that includes time frames for each major work element, target dates for public meetings, and dates for completion of draft and final documents

Cost

Full cost information should be provided that shows the minimum number of hours to be provided by each person assigned to the proposed work by the firm's organizational levels. The proposed hourly rate for billing shall be included for each person. The hours of work and cost shall be itemized for each major work element of the proposal. An itemized estimate of reimbursable expenses must be included. The total amount of maximum payment must be stated.

The cost shall be based on the hours of work provided and "out-of-pocket expenses" and shall not exceed the maximum cost proposed unless an amendment to the contract is negotiated and approved by the proper authority of Friends of the Riverfront.

Billing

Your method of billing must be indicated. The preferred practice of Friends of the Riverfront is to pay for this type of consulting service upon completion of the work and receipt of the required report.

Consultant Questions

All prospective bidders must provide an email address to which responses to questions may be sent.

Should the consultant have questions concerning the RFP they must be in writing and received by Friends of the Riverfront via [Water Trail Management Plan Questions Form](#). All responses to questions will be in writing.

Friends of the Riverfront will make every effort to provide the written responses in a timely fashion, but failure to do so will not affect the sole authority of Friends of the Riverfront to complete the RFP process.

Other Submittals

Additionally, documents attached as appendices to this RFP shall be fully executed and returned with the proposal as follows:

- Nondiscrimination Certification (from proposing firm). Appendix B

Evaluation Criteria

Submittal Evaluation Criteria

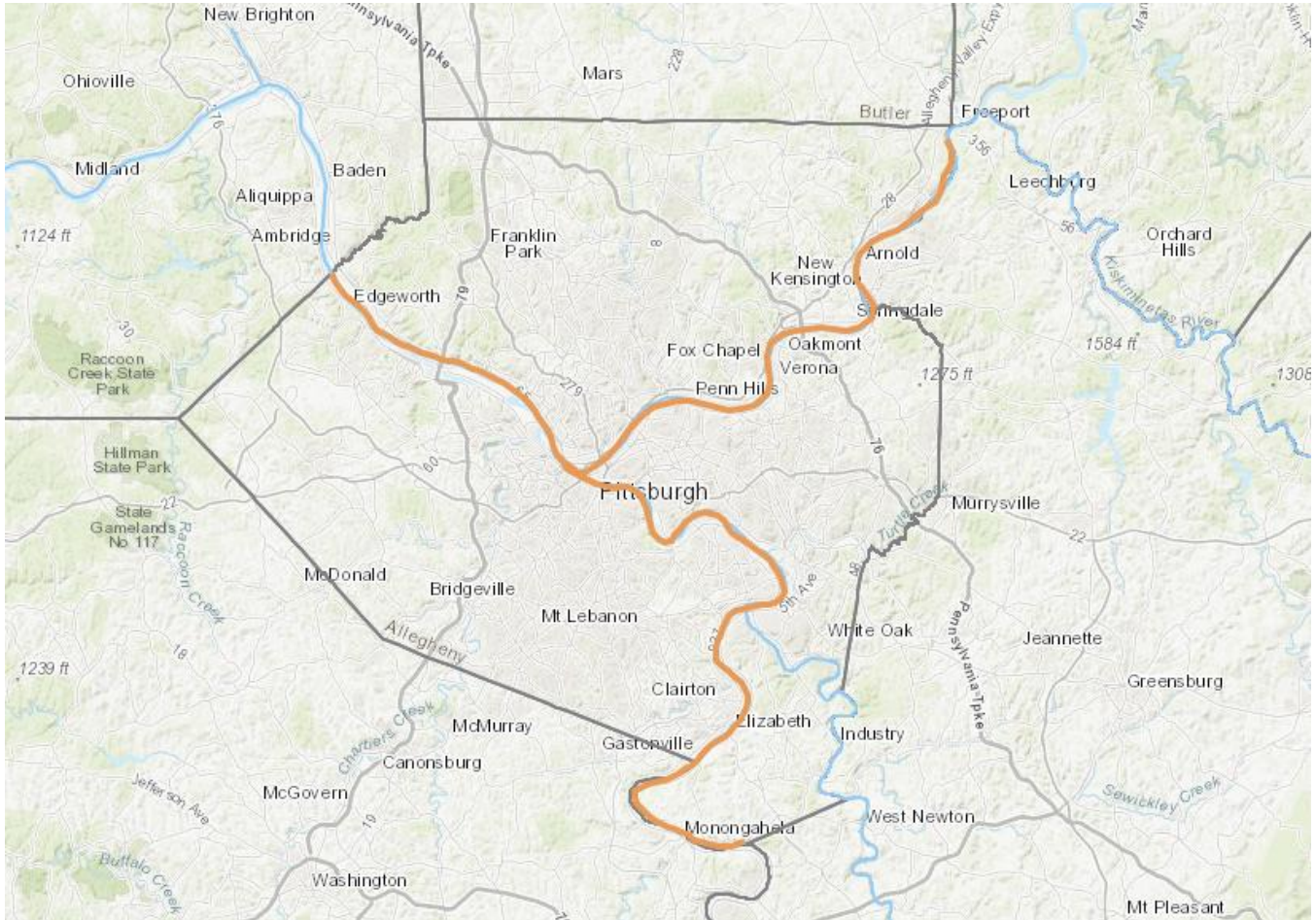
Submittals received by Friends of the Riverfront will be evaluated according to the criteria listed below:

1. Specialized experience and competence of the consultant, including principal firms, joint venture partners, and sub-consultants, considering the types of service required; and the strength of the key personnel who will be dedicated to this contract;
2. Appropriateness of approach;
3. The organization, presentation, and content of the submittal;
4. Proposed methods and overall strategic plan to provide the services in a timely and competent manner;
5. Knowledge and understanding of the local environment and a local presence for interfacing with Friends of the Riverfront;
6. A willingness to make meaningful wide-range subcontracting and employment opportunities available to all interested and qualified firms and individuals in the marketplace.

Appendix

If you would like a copy of the Launch audit Friends of the Riverfront completed in 2021, it is available upon request.

Appendix A. Study Area



Appendix B. **Nondiscrimination Certification**

Nondiscrimination Certification for Friends of the Riverfront – Three Rivers Water Trail Strategic Plan.

NONDISCRIMINATION

Nondiscrimination and equal opportunity are the policy of the Commonwealth/Friends of the Riverfront in all its decisions, programs, and activities. The purpose is to achieve the aims of the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions. Executive Order 1972-1, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, Act of October 27, 1955 (PL. 744), as amended, (43 P.S. & 951, et. seq.), and (43 P.S. & 153), by assuring that all persons are accorded equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.

During the term of this contract, the Contractor agrees as follows:

- A. Contractor shall not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, or any other person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, or handicap. The contractor shall take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees or agents are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, or handicap. Such affirmative action shall include but is not limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training. The contractor shall post in conspicuous places, available to employees, agents, applicants for employment, and other persons, a notice to be provided by the contracting agency setting forth the provision of this nondiscrimination certification.
- B. Contractor shall, in advertisements or requests for employment placed by it or on its behalf, state all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age, or sex.
- C. The contractor shall send each labor union or workers' representative with whom it has a collective bargaining agreement or other contract or understanding, a notice advising said labor union or worker's representative of its commitment to this nondiscrimination certification. Similar notice shall be sent to every other source of recruitment regularly utilized by the bidder.
- D. It shall be no defense to a finding of noncompliance with this nondiscrimination certification that the contractor has delegated some of its employment practices to any union, training program, or other sources of recruitment that prevents it from meeting its obligations. However, if the evidence indicates that the contractor was not on notice of the third-party discrimination or made a good faith effort to correct it, such factor shall be considered in mitigation in determining appropriate sanctions.
- E. Where the practices of a union or any training program or other source of recruitment will result in the exclusion of minority group persons, so that contractor will be unable to meet its obligations under this nondiscrimination certification, the contractor shall then employ and fill vacancies through other nondiscriminatory employment procedures.

- F. The contractor shall comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination in hiring or employment opportunities. In the event of the contractor’s noncompliance with the nondiscrimination certification or with any such laws, this contract may be terminated or suspended, in whole or part, and the contractor may be declared temporarily ineligible for further Friends of the Riverfront contracts, and other sanctions may be imposed, and remedies invoked.

- G. The contractor shall furnish all necessary employment documents and records to, and permit access to its books, records, and accounts by Friends of the Riverfront for purposes of investigation to ascertain compliance with the provisions of this certification if requested. If the contractor does not possess documents or records reflecting the necessary information requested, it shall furnish such information on reporting forms supplied by Friends of the Riverfront.

- H. The contractor shall actively recruit minority and women subcontractors or subcontractors with substantial minority and women representation among their employees.

- I. The contractor shall include the provisions of this nondiscrimination certification in every subcontract so that such provisions will be binding upon each subcontractor.

- J. The contractor’s obligations under this clause are limited to the contractor’s facilities within Pennsylvania or, where the contract is for the purchase of goods manufactured outside of Pennsylvania, the facilities at which such goods are produced.

Name of Contractor	
Name of Authorized Official	
Title	
Date	