



Philadelphia Urban Forest Strategic Plan – Request for Proposals

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM Q&A SESSION, 2/24/20

(questions submitted over email begin at question #30)

- 1. Does “residential land” in the tree canopy assessment refer to areas where people live, or actual private property?**

Land that is zoned residential.

- 2. What’s your intended timeline for the process? When do you want to have final products and begin implementation?**

We are estimating one year for the project. The contract will be for one year with the possibility of extension.

- 3. Is there a single point of contact for the project team and stakeholders? Who is responsible for collecting stakeholder feedback and compiling or synthesizing responses?**

Erica Smith Fichman, Community Forestry Manager at Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR), is the main point of contact and will be liaising between the consultant and the project team and steering committee. Consultant will be responsible for some synthesis of feedback.

- 4. Is it the project team or consultant’s responsibility to identify stakeholders?**

The project team has already worked on developing a list of stakeholders, but this will ultimately be a collaboration with the consultant. We welcome suggestions.

- 5. Is the Streets Department involved as a stakeholder or partner?**

The Streets Department will have representation on the steering committee but not the project team.

- 6. Besides the feedback from the Tree Summit in December 2019, do you have any other pre-work on the questions of why communities, particularly those that are disadvantaged, don’t want or don’t sign up for trees in their neighborhoods?**

We have not scientifically studied that here in Philly, but our partners at the Philly Field Station of the USDA Forest Service have access to other research into this question. There has also been some recent news coverage of Philly neighborhoods that have low tree canopy that offers great anecdotal answers to this question.

- 7. What type of consultant do you expect to see in the prime role for this project, assuming it’s a team of consultants?**

We are not looking for a specific type of vendor or consultant to play the primary consultant role, nor are we requiring the primary consultant to be based in Philadelphia. This RFP seeks a very broad set of expertise aligned around a single practical set of deliverables. The prime will need to reconcile technical knowledge with the perspective of diverse stakeholders while setting an achievable vision.



Organizations with demonstrated experience managing teams of consultants and synthesizing information are preferred.

- 8. In submitting the project understanding and scope of work, you said applicants could just bid on the specific tasks they want to work on, but you said you'd only issue one contract. Is there an opportunity for multiple contracts for different components?**

No. We will only be issuing one contract for this project. We reserve the right to pair firms and proposals under one contract if necessary.

- 9. Will the presentation shared in the pre-bid meeting be available afterward?**

Yes, the presentation is available at <http://www.mayorsfundphila.org/rfp-urban-forest/>.

- 10. This is a direct submission to the two emails mentioned, not through the City of Philadelphia submission process?**

Yes. The RFP process is administered by the Mayor's Fund for Philadelphia and will result in a Mayor's Fund for Philadelphia contract. Proposals should be submitted directly to the two emails listed in the RFP.

- 11. Could we assume that qualification and experience are more important than cost in the selection process, or will this project be awarded to the lowest bidder?**

The Mayor's Fund does not have requirements to select the lowest bidder. Price will be one of several factors considered in the selection process.

- 12. Do you intend for each phase of the project to run separately, or can they run concurrently (specifically asking regarding the community engagement phase).**

The project team envisioned phases being done in succession, one following the other, specifically because we want all recommendations to be informed by the community engagement process. We do not want any recommendations to be formed before the community engagement phase is complete. However, runover is natural from phase to phase.

- 13. Are there specific MBE/WBE, disadvantaged, etc. business requirement thresholds?**

The Mayor's Fund for Philadelphia is a nonprofit entity external to the City of Philadelphia. Because of this, the Fund cannot set minority participation requirements. However, the Fund and the City support the growth of minority businesses. As such, Applicants whose leadership, workforce, and/or suppliers represent people of color, women, LGBTQIA+ people, gender-oppressed people, veterans, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

- 14. In reference to Phase III, Task IV, regarding data analysis and the data-driven prioritization for street trees: what data is available for the 5,600**



acres of natural lands/forested lands? What is the prioritization to be based on?

PPR currently has management units within the natural lands and has GIS data layers for those areas, plus more specific data for current and past restoration projects. The 2013 Parkland Forest Management Framework (<https://www.phila.gov/media/20171220162100/Parkland-Forest-Management.pdf>) looked at park natural areas and offered recommendations for how they should be maintained. Other data-based reports also exist, like the Natural Lands Restoration Master Plan and the Natural Heritage Inventory of Philadelphia.

The Urban Forest Strategic Plan should not reinvent the wheel for natural lands management, but we'd look for it to offer some new suggestions or possibilities based on reviewing the reports and going through the community feedback process.

15. You mentioned that you will provide a report on everywhere trees are mentioned in city policies. Are you looking for a particular kind of integration in 3-, 5-, and 10-year recommendations with another set of goals or plans, like those for water and climate? Overall, does this plan need to have a broad integration with other plans and policies?

We have the Phila2035 plan that is supposed to guide planning throughout the city through 2035. The most relevant plans to consider for the Urban Forest Strategic Plan are the climate work/sustainability plans. It would also be helpful to fill gaps in existing plans that share priorities but don't have specific canopy goals, like the Green City, Clean Waters plan from Philadelphia Water Department (PWD). The Urban Forest Strategic Plan should be in dialogue with those plans, but not necessarily in lock step with them. It would be helpful to have specific recommendations for agencies that will be responsible for implementing some of the recommendations. We are also looking for recommendations for policies that don't already exist, like tree protection ordinances. We are not looking for a comprehensive plan regarding policy, but rather identification of big gaps.

16. Do you have a budget in mind?

The total budget has not yet been determined. The RFP states that applicants are required to provide an itemized cost proposal with a line item breakdown of the costs per specific task. Additionally, the Fund and PPR are accepting proposals for one, any, or all components of the proposed scope of work. Because of this, the Fund/PPR cannot set a total budget for the project, as the RFP may result in one or multiple contracts. We expect applicants to build budgets that reflect their ability to carry out the scope of work as described in the RFP.

17. Does the available GIS data include tree inventories, including species and age?

Not for the entire city. We have LIDAR showing where tree canopy is but it is not point data. We are in the process of finishing a street tree inventory that does include location, DBH, species. Best resource for natural lands data is the 2016 USDA Forest Service report (<https://www.itreetools.org/resources/reports/PhiladelphiaUrbanForest.pdf>). PWD also has layers for green stormwater infrastructure in streets and parks.



18. Are you anticipating a robust level of data collection on species, etc.?

No. There will be no quantitative data collection (vegetation surveys, tree inventories, etc) required of the consultant.

19. Are you open to innovative ways to use existing data layers to further interpret condition or species?

Yes.

20. Do you anticipate there would be GIS data that would not be available throughout this process?

Not that we know of. We can't think of any layers the City has that we wouldn't be willing to share, especially for in-house work. Some datasets, like underground utilities, might not be able to be released to the public. PWD can usually provide geographic areas rather than the entire city. The City has an open data policy.

21. Do you anticipate or would you appreciate an interactive deliverable, something spatial like a geodatabase, to help track implementation of this plan? Something specific to this plan that could be used for actively tracking components of implementation.

PPR uses Cityworks to manage street and park tree assets, and PWD works with it too. There is also Azavea's Philly Tree Map already available. This sounds interesting but we wouldn't want the consultant to spend too much time on this type of deliverable.

22. Would it be helpful to have a decision-making tool where you can put in certain parameters, etc. to help make decisions, or is that outside the scope?

As part of the scope of work we are asking for prioritization and canopy goals based on current conditions so we can act on them immediately once the plan is complete. The project team needs a defensible rationale for why we're focusing on certain neighborhoods, making certain choices etc during immediate implementation of the plan. It would also be a very useful outcome to have a decision-making tool, but it needs to be adaptable and update-able.

23. You mentioned that most available land for planting is on residential land. Are there existing plans or ongoing maintenance strategies? If all of the planting space is optimized, then the challenge is maintenance. Is this part of the plan or is it just about getting the trees in the ground?

We are very interested in both tree planting and preservation on residential lands and all land uses. We need proactive programming to support and protect large trees. We are absolutely interested in maintenance. We are definitely interested in ideas that address tree pruning, involving youth, and more. We need to educate people on the importance of trees.

24. What about problem trees, net loss of canopy that's part of growth, like with invasive species, alleyway trees, weed trees?



We need to factor invasive management into a long-term plan. The plan does not need to be purely about canopy, but about the stability, health, and diversity of the forest, and that encompasses more than canopy alone. It's about the overall health of the forest.

25. What is the goal for completion for the ongoing street tree inventory?

We predict the street tree inventory should be complete by the end of calendar year 2020. PPR has surveyed 100,000 street trees out of an estimated 118,000 total. The inventory does not include trees in alleys or along roads on private property. The information from the street tree inventory will populate the new asset management system which PPR will be using to manage trees on public property and street trees under its jurisdiction.

26. Do you have anyone identified from the real estate development world as part of the project team or steering committee? Anything born out in the data showing development has affected canopy?

No one from the real estate development world is currently engaged on the project. The real estate development community is one of the groups we want to engage, potentially through the steering committee, or engaging them in a focus group, etc. We need a better process for getting trees integrated into the development process. We need to get people doing development brought into the process.

27. Do you have any thoughts on integrating long-term research together with the implementation of planting and education? Can part of this project be coming up with a research program to evaluate implementation overtime?

That would be welcome. We are interested in long-term monitoring. The challenge is long-term funding.

28. In terms of engagement, you have some insights from stakeholders already. Will that be shared?

Yes. We have a report on the December 2019 Tree Summit that is available here http://treephilly.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Phila_Tree_Summit_Report_draft-2.pdf.

29. Are there other private interests or quasi-governmental interests in the region or city that you're looking to engage? Who's going to be tapped for money and resources to implement the plan?

During the design of the stakeholder engagement process, we expect to work with the consulting team to develop a full list of entities that influence the Urban Tree Canopy in the Philadelphia region. A significant portion of the planning process includes developing a matrix of resources towards the implementation of the effort.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED OVER EMAIL

30. The RFP mentions the establishment of a Steering Committee, but it doesn't say how/who will establish the Committee. Who is responsible for selecting Steering Committee members and inviting them to participate in the process? (Page 6, under Introduction)



Erica Smith Fichman and the project team will be responsible for selecting the steering committee members and engaging them in the process. We plan to assemble that group before the first kickoff meeting for the plan. Erica will be the main contact for that group throughout the process.

31. Is there an anticipated or desired number of interviews that need to take place, or would you like the proposer to determine that number based on experience? (Task 2, Page 8)

We welcome the proposer to suggest a number of interviews with the project team and steering committee that would be needed to develop a common understanding of the world of urban forestry in Philadelphia for Task 2.

32. Is there a list of potential venues where public meetings/engagement efforts may occur? This will inform our costs as noted under Task 3 Deliverables on Page 10.

There is not a list of pre-approved venues for public meetings. There are many potential venues that are city-owned or owned by close partners of the city, which may be used for free. However, it is possible that other venues may be chosen based on location, accessibility, and other considerations. In the proposed budget, please include a line item related to venue cost. At the time of contract conformance, a final budget will be negotiated between the consultant and the Mayor's Fund that takes these factors into account.

33. Task 3 also mentions compensating participants as a way to incentivize public participation. Additionally, it mentions removing other structural barriers such as lack of child care for participants. Who is responsible for these costs?

The consultant will be responsible for these costs and should identify them in the itemized budget they provide with their proposal.

34. Task 5 - Item 1A - Is the Street Tree Strategy for the entire city or each management unit?

The Street Tree Strategy is for the entire city. Most of the management units will have street trees within them, so we have pulled street trees out as a special strategy that needs to be addressed city-wide.

35. The RFP states that a new city-wide inventory and asset management system is in progress. Is the system an internally designed program or is it a commercial software program? When will it be finalized?

The asset management system is Azteca Cityworks Asset Management System (AMS), and it is being configured for PPR-centric workflows. Cityworks is being beta tested by PPR's Street Tree Office now, with full implementation predicted for the fourth quarter of 2020. Please see the answer to question 25 for more information about the street tree inventory.

36. Are there urban forest management units currently established? If so, what are those based on?



There are no citywide management units used by urban forestry partners in Philadelphia. There are management units used by Philadelphia Water Department for their programming across the combined sewer overflow areas of the city, which we will be basing our management units on for this plan. Task 2 (page 9) references the creation of these management units as a collaboration between the project team and the consultant.

- 37. Will the City be able to provide a list/calendar of the other citywide or neighborhood planning and public engagement efforts currently underway and those that will occur during the life of this project?**

Yes, this can be provided at the project kickoff meeting.

- 38. In the description of Task 5, Item #2, what does the phrase "...and an exploration of the role of liability" mean?**

Tree-related liability issues are a huge problem for property owners, non-profit organizations, and almost anyone involved with trees in the City. Residents sometimes cite their fear of liability as a reason why they are resistant to planting new trees. We would like the consultant to examine this problem and propose ways that policies might be changed to reduce the cost of liability, or otherwise lessen the burden of this on individual residents and small non-profit organizations.

- 39. In E. Cost Proposal, it states that rates for travel expenses are reimbursable only at rates approved by the Project Manager. What are the rates allowed?**

We encourage you to base your travel expenses on the federal per diem rates outlined here <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. It is not required that you limit your budget proposal to these rates, but they should not be too far in excess of these figures.

- 40. For this effort, is there a M/W/DSBE set aside for subcontractors to perform a certain percentage of the total amount of work to be performed under the contract?**

No, the Mayor's Fund cannot set Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) requirements. Please see the answer to question #13.

- 41. Beyond William Penn and TD Bank funding from articles, are the other Team agencies (PPR, Philadelphia Office of Sustainability, Philadelphia Water Department, Fairmount Park Conservancy, PHS, Morris Arboretum, PA DCNR, USDA Forest Service, and Penn State) or other agencies contributing funds to the effort?**

The William Penn Foundation is the sole funder of the Urban Forest Strategic Plan process, and there have been no additional funders identified for this purpose at this time. The other team agencies will be engaged in funding implementation of the plan.