

**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Linda F. Hill, Director  
**Subject:** Delaware County Open Space and Trail Consultant  
**Date:** August 10, 2020

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The County of Delaware is seeking proposals from qualified vendors who will provide guidance to County officials on current and long-term open space and trail development, policy and initiatives.

The successful professional(s) must demonstrate skills and experience in the areas of local government open space, greenways and trails planning and program development. The consultant should also be familiar with potential funding sources to support and develop new programs.

The contract will be for a period of 12 months and will commence upon consultant selection and subsequent execution of a contract. Attached is the information necessary for the submission of the bid proposal, the organization of the proposal, and the proposal evaluation.

Proposals are requested no later than 4:00 p.m., EDT, Friday, September 18, 2020, and They should be submitted as a digital submission consisting of a single pdf file; as an email attachment sent to each of the following two addresses:

1. [beckleys@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:beckleys@co.delaware.pa.us)
2. [proposals@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:proposals@co.delaware.pa.us)

Any questions concerning this request should be directed to Steven Beckley at [Beckleys@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:Beckleys@co.delaware.pa.us) no later than 4:00 p.m., EDT Thursday, August 27, 2020.

## Request for Proposals

# Open Space Program Staff Consultant

## County of Delaware

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### Section I: Background

Delaware County is located in the southeast corner of Pennsylvania, just southwest of the City of Philadelphia. It is bordered by Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Gloucester County, New Jersey; and New Castle County, Delaware. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Delaware County has roughly 560,000 people. Delaware County is comprised of 49 local municipalities. Delaware County encompasses roughly 191 square miles (122,256 acres) with 186 square miles of land and 5 square miles of water. It is the second smallest county in the Philadelphia region after Philadelphia County. With more than 66% of its land area developed, however, it is the second most densely developed county in the region and is the 5th most populous county in the state.

Delaware County's landscape has undergone enormous change over the last century. Open land, which once constituted much of the County, has given way to significant development, particularly over the last fifty years, as a result of social, economic, technological, and industrial shifts. What remains of this important resource, so crucial to our quality of life, is in short supply and under development pressure. Open space and recreational facilities are a priority to citizens Countywide. The public has expressed interest in recreational parks, trails, open spaces, and the re-greening of urban areas, all with a heightened sensitivity for natural resources.

In January 2020, Delaware County Council brought together Working Groups of stakeholders to develop a Transition Plan for County Government that set forth goals for the new County Administration. To meet these goals, Council is requesting professional services to refine, improve, and expand Open Space, Park, and Recreation operations and initiatives; establish a Delaware County Trail Alliance; and develop an overall framework to guide County Open Space, Park, and Recreation infrastructure that recognizes the unique needs of the County and communicate these initiatives to stakeholders and the public.

The County recognizes that, due to current staffing limitations, professional services are needed to assist in the delivery of current initiatives and provide expert advice on developing, funding and staffing future initiatives.

### Section 2: History of Open Space, Park and Recreation Initiatives in Delaware County

While the County has a history of recognizing the importance of open space and recreation, it did not provide a dedicated source of significant funding to protect land from development until 2018. As a result, our efforts are significantly behind neighboring counties in terms of open space planning and protection, trail construction, and sustainability planning.

Open space planning in Delaware County began in earnest in the 1960s, and since then there have been several actions to preserve the County's open space. Unfortunately, because these initiatives have had a start-and-stop pattern through the decades, the resulting preservation efforts have been patchwork and often reactionary.

In the 1960s The Citizens Council of Delaware County published guides to mobilize municipal governments and citizens to preserve valuable open space tracts. Preservation of Open Space in Delaware County (1961) identified a range of preservation tools including planning and zoning, subdivision controls, gifts, matching funds, and acquisition of tax-delinquent land. Operation Open Space: A Proposal to All Delaware County Residents (1962 and 1964) was an inventory of prioritized suggestions for acquisition directed at municipalities for to help them pursue open space preservation programs.

Until 1964, most of the land in the Delaware County Parks system had been acquired as gifts from estates or individuals. That changed when Pennsylvania announced Project 70 – a state program with a goal to acquire \$70 million worth of open space by 1970. When Project 70 was activated, Delaware County initiated land acquisition projects to enlarge two existing County parks and create five new County parks. In a five-year period, over 250 acres of open space were acquired as the County reacted to the state’s program and the resources made available.

The next significant push for open space preservation occurred in 1978 when County Council adopted the Delaware County Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Study. That study would be the only comprehensive County plan for parks, recreation, and open space until 2015. The plan defined the role of the recently reorganized County Parks Department, setting its current internal management structure. The document contained recommendations for future actions and policy and objective statements but did not sufficiently consider greenways or trails since they were not yet in vogue. However, the importance of stream valley open space conservation and acquisition was addressed for each creek valley.

This study was the basis for County and municipal stream valley acquisitions in the 1980’s, with County acquisitions in subsequent years primarily at Darby Creek to protect the stream from increased stormwater runoff and pollution. Unfortunately, the study did not convey a sense of urgency for conserving open space for public use. The study also did not foresee the increase in development and changing land use patterns that has occurred in the years since it was written.

In 1994 County Council instituted the Delaware County Open Space Leadership Group to develop “a long term strategy for the preservation of open space and natural amenities, to explore the potential of the County Park System, promote the development of greenways and/or stream corridors, stimulate open space municipal planning and acquisition efforts, and explore open space restoration and preservation efforts in developed areas.” That group produced the Delaware County Open Space Project – Recommended Strategy which set forth a 10-year, \$100 million program to facilitate County and municipal efforts to preserve and acquire land. County Council put this proposal before voters in a referendum, however, the issue was defeated at the polls by a 3-1 margin with residents of western and northern communities generally supporting the program and the residents of the more built out eastern and southern part of the County voting against. The defeat of the referendum unfortunately stalled the 1994 long-term strategy to preserve open space.

A new opportunity arose in 1999 when Pennsylvania established the \$547.7 M Growing Greener Program, the largest single investment of state funds in state history. The fund was established to protect open space; eliminate maintenance backlog in state parks; restore watersheds; and provide funds for trails and parks, among other priorities. In response, County Council formed the Growing Greener Committee with a mission to promote sound land use and intergovernmental cooperation, and County Council established the Revitalization Program (formerly Renaissance Program) to encourage smart growth and economic development in all 49 municipalities. Noting the varied needs of diverse communities, the Program included two distinct, but related, initiatives: Regional Action Plans for eastern and southern municipalities and a Mapping Program to identify potential large parcels for acquisition in western and northern communities.

The Program had a limited but positive impact on land conservation and recreation. In Concord Township, the identification of strategic parcels contributed to approval of a \$6 million open space bond. Funds were also granted directly to municipalities for land acquisition projects. The County contributed \$100,000 each to three major municipal open space acquisitions: the 33-acre Green Bank Farm in Marple Township, the 36-acre Lavin Tract in Upper Providence Township, and a 22-acre portion of the Sleighton School property in Middletown Township. Southern and eastern

municipalities used Revitalization money for recreation and community improvements identified in the regional Action Plans.

In later years of the program, when the effects of the great recession were being felt by local government (2006 through 2008), the County offered a limited open space funding program which contributed a flat 5 percent of the cost of municipal land purchases, until the program ceased to exist in 2009.

In the last decade, the County has effectively used available state matching funds to acquire two sizeable tracts of open space. In 2014, the County acquired 41 acres of open space in the middle of the County that would become Mineral Hill County Park and preserved an additional six acres via a conservation easement. In 2016, the County acquired the 34-acre Little Flower Manor parcel for development as the newest County Park in the heavily developed eastern portion of the County where open space is scarce.

In the same time period that the County acquired these new parks, County Council adopted the [Delaware County Open Space, Recreation, and Greenway Plan \(2015\)](#), its first comprehensive plan for open space. The plan identifies a slate of goals and actions that direct the County's open space and trails work priorities, staffing, and infrastructure. It is comprised of [Volume I: Open Space and Recreation Plan](#); [Volume II: Countywide Greenway Plan](#); and [Volume III: County Parks and Recreation](#).

The following year, the County convened an Open Space Task Force to recommend a strategy for implementing the plan and adopted its Implementation Strategy in 2017. One recommendation of this strategy is to provide funds for local municipalities for open space and recreation projects. In 2018, County Council authorized an initial borrowing of \$10 million to fund the program, titled "Delco Green Ways," and to fund initiatives that forward open space goals of the County. In November 2019, 26 municipalities were awarded 38 grants, totaling \$4.5 million. The program leveraged \$20 million in matching funds. In this first round, the County will assist in the preservation of 102 acres of open space land, approximately 7.3 miles of trail development, 18 parks and recreation improvement projects, and 8 professional services projects (planning, engineering, or design). The program was instituted without sufficient infrastructure to carry out projects and the implementation of activities have not occurred in a timely manner.

### **Section 3: Terms and Submission**

#### **3.1. Open Space Planning Team**

The "Open Space Planning Team" will consist of staff from the Delaware County Planning Department, including its Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff, and liaisons from our elected leaders on Delaware County Council. Staff from the project Consultant will join this team, which often works regularly with staff from other County departments such as Public Works and Parks & Recreation. The Planning Department Director and the Open Space and Trails Manager are the staff who will have regular oversight over the Consultant's tasks and duties.

#### **3.2. Proposals**

- 3.2.a. Proposals shall be submitted prior to the deadline established in this RFP and be clearly marked "Open Space Program Staff Consultant"
- 3.2.b. All bidders are bound by the deadline and location requirements of this RFP. Late proposals will not be considered.
- 3.2.c. Bidders electing to respond to this RFP are responsible for all costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposal; demonstrations; interviews; preparation of responses to questions and requests for additional information; for contract discussions; or for anything in any related to this RFP. The County is not liable for any costs incurred by a bidder in response to this RFP and the bidder (including all related parties) disclaims and voluntarily and knowingly waives any and all rights to reimbursement for any such costs.

- 3.2.d. All proposals shall first be examined for completeness in meeting the terms and conditions of this RFP. Bids that are determined to meet said requirements will be given further consideration.
- 3.2.e. The County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or any portion thereof and to select the bid proposal that it judges to be in the best interest of the County.
- 3.2.f. The County reserves the right to award no contract for any project for which no proposal is evaluated as satisfactory.
- 3.2.g. The County reserves the right to cancel or modify this RFP. There is no guarantee that the County will place the requested services under contract.
- 3.2.h. If only one proposal is received, the County may initiate negotiations with the firm submitting the proposal or seek additional proposals on an informal or formal basis during the sixty (60) day period that proposals must remain effective.
- 3.2.i. The contract is subject to the approval of County Council and is effective only upon their approval.

### 3.3. Submittal of Proposals

- 3.3.a. Proposal must be received via email no later than 4:00 p.m., EDT, Friday, September 18, 2020. They should be submitted as a digital submission consisting of a single pdf file, as an email attachment sent to each of the following two addresses:

- 1. [beckleys@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:beckleys@co.delaware.pa.us)
- 2. [proposals@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:proposals@co.delaware.pa.us)

### 3.4. Questions and Addenda

- 3.4.a. Questions or request for clarification regarding this Request for Proposal should be directed to Steven Beckley at [BeckleyS@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:BeckleyS@co.delaware.pa.us) no later than 4:00 p.m., EDT Thursday, August 27, 2020. If necessary, an addendum will be posted at the Central Purchasing website within one week, with answers to the questions.

### 3.5. Work Schedule

- 3.5.a. The Consultant will be expected to conform to a project work schedule of 12 months beginning with execution of the contract.

### 3.6. Copyright

- 3.6.a. All copyright interests in work created under this Contract are solely and exclusively the property of Delaware County. The work shall be considered work made for hire under copyright law; alternatively, if the work cannot be considered work made for hire, the Consulting Firm agrees to assign and, upon the creation of the work, expressly and automatically assigns, all copyright interests in the work to Delaware County.
- 3.6.b. In the performance of services under this Contract, there shall be no violation of the right of privacy or infringement upon the copyright or any other proprietary right of any person or entity.

## **Section 4: Section 4: Scope of Work**

The scope of work includes, but is not limited to the following:

- 4.1. Refine current Open Space, Park and Recreation operations and initiatives
  - 4.1.a. Re-establish the Delaware County Open Space Task Force.
  - 4.1.b. Act as Administrator for current Round 1 Greenways Grant Program.
  - 4.1.c. Identify and provide analysis on creative sustainable funding sources for future activity.
  - 4.1.d. Develop program guidelines and operating procedures for a Round 2 Greenways Grant Program.
  - 4.1.e. Communicating current initiatives and accomplishments to the public.

- 4.2. Establish a Delaware County Trail Alliance
  - 4.2.a. Identify potential membership from existing advisory groups and stakeholders.
  - 4.2.b. Develop a structure for operation that ensures collaboration with municipalities, adjoining Counties and the Regional Circuit.
  - 4.2.c. Provide leadership in convening and establishing a viable Alliance that furthers the development and promotion of the Countywide Primary Trail Network.
- 4.3. Develop a framework to guide County Open Space, Park and Recreation infrastructure that recognizes the unique needs of the County
  - 4.3.a. Assist with plan for hiring needs within Planning Department in line with increased investment and administration of open space and trails program
  - 4.3.b. Seek to obtain in-house expertise in engineering and landscape architecture to minimize spending on outside consultants and increase value of technical services available to municipalities.
- 4.4. Provide content for the Return on Environment – Economic Value of Open Space report potentially being developed for Delaware County by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.
  - 4.4.a. Prepare an Introduction to the document
  - 4.4.b. Outline the History of Open Space in Delaware County and the County's vision for the future.
  - 4.4.c. Author 4 Case Studies demonstrating the economic value of open space in the County, using data provided through the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

## **Section 5: Consultant Qualifications and Requirements**

- 5.1. Experience or competence in land use planning on the following topics:
  - 5.1.a. Open space, greenways, and trails,
  - 5.1.b. Recreation and parks,
  - 5.1.c. Economic impact analysis,
  - 5.1.d. Program funding and fundraising,
  - 5.1.e. Grant program administration.
- 5.2. Expertise in finding and organizing local stakeholders, champions, and people of influence essential to forwarding the goals in the topics of open space, greenways, trails, recreation and parks.
- 5.3. Expertise in meeting coordination and facilitation, communication, preparation and presentation of technical materials to the public, government officials, and other stakeholders.
- 5.4. The consultant staff team shall be between one and three individuals.
  - 5.4.a. The main person shall be a senior (experienced) staff person.
  - 5.4.b. Any one or two additional staff may be junior staff (i.e. comparatively lower hourly rates).
- 5.5. The Consultant staff shall be from one firm or company. No sub-consultants are permitted.
- 5.6. AICP certification is desired but not required.

## **Section 6: Required Submittals**

- 6.1. Letter of Transmittal  
Must include the following:

- 6.1.a. Name of the company submitting the proposal.
- 6.1.b. Statement demonstrating your understanding of the work to be performed.
- 6.1.c. Statement confirming that the firm meets the Consultant Qualifications (see Section 4 above).
- 6.1.d. The firm's contact person and telephone number.

6.2. Title Page

Must include the following:

- 6.2.a. Name of this RFP.
- 6.2.b. Name, address, telephone number, and email of the bidder.
- 6.2.c. Name and title of person authorized to commit the bidder to contractual arrangements.

6.3. Table of Contents

- 6.3.a. Broken into section and sub-section

6.4. Profile of Firm

Must include the following:

- 6.4.a. Cover Letter providing summary of proposal, along with primary contact information (phone number and email address).
- 6.4.b. Statement of the firm's expertise and experience in conducting work of the nature sought by this RFP.
- 6.4.c. Location of the firm's office, that will perform the work.
- 6.4.d. Organization chart for firm.
- 6.4.e. Resumes of individuals (consultants, employees) proposed to conduct the work and the specific duties of each individual in relations to the work.

The proposal should contain a statement assuring that once management and technical staff have been assigned to the project they will not be replaced by other personnel unless they leave the company. A statement should also be included which states that if any person originally assigned to the project is replaced, the new person, to be equally qualified, will be subject to the approval of the County Project Manager.

- 6.4.f. Minimum of three (3) references of other municipal clients of the firm with contact information.
- 6.4.g. Any other information relating to the capabilities and expertise of the firm in performing comparable work.

6.5. Methods and Procedures

- 6.5.a. The Consultant is encouraged to add to, modify or clarify any of the scope of work items it deems appropriate to illustrate that it will prepare high quality work products at the lowest possible cost. All changes should be listed and explained in the proposal.

6.6. Cost

Must include the following items itemized for each major task:

- 6.6.a. For each person assigned to the staffing team, work, the title/rank (organizational level) of the person in the organization, and the hourly rate.
- 6.6.b. List of reimbursable expenses (direct costs-materials, mileage, etc.) to be claimed.
- 6.6.c. **There is no stated maximum budget for this staffing contract.** However, the proposal must justify the total cost based on hourly rates and the time that can be committed per week by each staff person involved.

## Section 7: Evaluation Criteria and Consultant Selection

- 7.1. All proposals will be reviewed and evaluated. If oral presentations are required, they will tentatively be scheduled for the week of October 5, 2020. The proposals and oral presentations will be reviewed by a committee composed of representatives from Delaware County government. The committee's selection of one applicant will be based up several weighted criteria, including:
  - 7.1.a. Demonstrated experience of the firm and identified staff in land use planning on the following topics: open space, greenways, trails, recreation and parks, economic impact analysis, program funding and fundraising, grant program administration.
  - 7.1.b. Demonstrated expertise in finding and organizing local stakeholders, champions, and people of influence essential to forwarding the goals in the above topics.
  - 7.1.c. Demonstrated expertise in meeting coordination and facilitation, preparation and presentation of technical materials to the public, government officials, and other stakeholders.
  - 7.1.d. Familiarity with the physical, political, and legal planning environment of Delaware County.
  - 7.1.e. Feasibility of the cost (hourly rates) to the work at hand.
  - 7.1.f. Ability and willingness to establish a local presence alongside and within the Delaware County Planning staff or to otherwise assure constant availability.
  - 7.1.g. Woman or minority-owned firms are encouraged to apply and will be given heightened consideration.
- 7.2. The final selected applicant, or in the case of a tie, applicants, will be requested to participate in contract negotiations. If for any reason it shall not be possible to reach agreement with the chosen applicant/s, negotiations shall be undertaken with other applicants in order of their final ranking. A contract shall be proposed for award to the highest ranked applicant with whom agreement can be negotiated in accordance with the terms and conditions offered. The contract is subject to the approval of County Council and is effective only upon their approval.

### Questions and Request for Clarification

Any questions or request for clarification regarding the above Request for Proposal should be directed to Steven Beckley at [Beckleys@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:Beckleys@co.delaware.pa.us) no later than 4:00 p.m., EDT Tuesday, September 1, 2020.

### Appendix: Links to Online Resources

1. Delaware County Open Space Program - Page at the Delaware County Planning Department  
<https://www.delcopa.gov/planning/currentprojects/OpenSpaceProgram.html>
2. Delaware County Open Space Task Force - Page at the Delaware County Planning Department  
<https://www.delcopa.gov/planning/currentprojects/OpenSpaceTaskForce.html>
3. Delco Green Ways Grant Program - Page at the Delaware County Planning Department  
<https://www.delcopa.gov/planning/currentprojects/DelcoGreenWays.html>
4. Delaware County 2035 Open Space, Recreation, and Greenway Plan  
<https://www.delcopa.gov/planning/pubs/delco2035/OpenSpaceandRecreationPlan.html>

Many relevant sections, but in particular, see:

- Volume I, Chapter I: Introduction and Background
- The Action Plan in each volume, followed by Prioritization Criteria in Volume I.
- "Needs and Opportunities of the County Parks System" section in Chapter I of Volume III.
- The Countywide Primary Trail Network in Volume II.
- Implementation Chapters in Volumes I & II.



5. Countywide Trails Update - Presentation from February 1, 2020  
<https://www.delcopa.gov/planning/pdf/CountywideTrailsUpdate.pdf>
6. Mapping and Data Portal - at the Delaware County Planning Department  
<https://portal-dcpd.opendata.arcgis.com/>
7. Return on Environment – Economic Value of Open Space
  - a. Greenspace Alliance & DVRPC’s original 5-County regional report (2011)  
<https://www.dvrpc.org/reports/11033A.pdf>
  - b. Chester County’s update report (2019)  
<https://chescoplanning.org/openspace/roe.cfm>