

PVDTreePlan

Community Climate Health
A Community Plan for Providence's Urban Forest



Equity and Engagement Consultants Request for Proposals

The Rhode Island Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Steering Committee for the PVD Tree Plan are seeking proposals from a qualified consultant or group of consultants to assist in developing a strategic, comprehensive and equity-focused master plan for Providence, Rhode Island's urban forest. The selected consultant(s) will begin in early 2020 and will be expected to participate as a member of the Steering Committee and work collaboratively with all project partners through the duration of the project in winter 2021. The consultant(s) will provide expertise in inclusive engagement, racial and environmental justice, and youth leadership, and help design and implement a transparent and participatory process that elevates the voices of low-income communities and communities of color, and all those traditionally excluded from planning processes.

All administration of the RFP process and any resulting contracts will be managed by TNC. The Steering Committee will oversee all project implementation, and selected consultant(s) will be expected to collaborate with and report to the other members of the Steering Committee regarding all project work.

Concurrently with this RFP, the PVD Tree Plan Steering Committee is releasing a separate RFP for an Urban Forest Planning (UFP) Consultant. This UFP Consultant will also work collaboratively with all members of the project team via the Steering Committee. They will provide baseline assessment, analysis and recommendations and bring an urban forestry best practices lens to the overall process.

RFP Process Schedule and Communications

Please submit all questions, bids and response to Sheila Dormody at TNC via email at sheila.dormody@tnc.org.

- There will be a mandatory pre-bid conference (in-person or by web conference) on Wednesday January 22, 2020 to be scheduled between 12:00-1:30pm, at The Nature Conservancy, 159 Waterman Street, Providence. As a courtesy, please send a brief email to Sheila Dormody stating your intent to submit a bid so that details of the pre-bid conference and updates can be sent to your team as you prepare your materials. Please RSVP by email with the subject "PVD Tree Plan RFP RSVP" to sheila.dormody@tnc.org.
- All questions are due by Tuesday, January 28, 2020. Please send by email with the subject "PVD Tree Plan RFP Question" to sheila.dormody@tnc.org.
- Answers will be provided via email by Friday, January 31, 2020.
- All bids are due to Sheila Dormody via email by 5:00pm on Friday, February 14, 2020. Please send by email with the subject "PVD Tree Plan Equity & Engagement Consultant RFP [Company Name]" to sheila.dormody@tnc.org.

- Final candidates will be invited to participate in an in-person interview process with an evaluation committee to be scheduled on or about the week of February 24, 2020, as needed. TNC will confirm a specific interview date and time with those short-listed teams.
- TNC reserves the right to award all or part of this project to one or more firms.
- Award announcements will be made by March 6, 2020.

This is not an exclusive bid process so if you are not able to bid please feel free to forward to others that may be interested in bidding.

Responses must include:

1. Name of project lead and sub-consultants or proposal partners if any, including the primary point of contact (name, title, and phone number) at lead firm or organization.
2. List of key project personnel/organizations, including their proposed role in the project scope, their geographic location, and their qualifications and experience. If the applicant is a consortium of more than one entity, describe any previous history of working together.
3. Summary of team’s proposed approach to the work described in Exhibit A.
4. Overall fee for services proposed, including an estimated fee per phase as described in Exhibit B.
5. Description of team experience on similar projects.
6. Detailed description of the team’s proposed approach to the work described in Exhibit A.
7. Proposed schedule and workplan.
8. List of references with current contact information.
9. Any other pertinent information.

Consultant Role, Qualifications, and Evaluation

Role of the Equity & Engagement Consultants

The Equity & Engagement Consultant(s) will play a number of roles throughout the planning process, and we welcome and anticipate contracting with multiple consultants or with a team of consultants and partners to assemble all of the expertise and representation necessary to develop a collaborative, dynamic and equitable process.

With this in mind, we encourage respondents to collaborate on proposal submissions and there is a preference for proposals consisting of partnerships among multiple consultants and/or community-based organizations to best address the needs and goals laid out in this RFP. (For collaboratively-developed submissions, only one proposal needs to be submitted, as long as the project roles within it are clearly defined.)

We welcome proposals that engage with either one, some, or all aspects of the work laid out here.

Please provide separate cost estimates for the separate phases of work scoped below in Exhibit A, and/or for separate initiatives or elements of your proposal including and beyond the tasks described below.

Upon approval of initial proposals, final definition of roles and deliverables will be negotiated prior to contracting.

Qualifications and Requirements

Expertise and/or participation on the Consultant Team must include:

- Experience structuring and managing a multi-phased, multi-stakeholder, community engagement process.
- Leadership from organization(s) rooted in Providence communities that have been historically marginalized, and that are led by representatives of communities most likely to be adversely impacted by environmental justice concerns.
- Knowledge of and familiarity with Providence's diverse communities and networks.
- Ability to reach, involve and engage diverse audiences.
- Ability to facilitate creation of written outreach materials in both English and Spanish, and to facilitate English-Spanish interpretation during community engagement activities.
- Experience with youth-focused or youth-led programs.
- Experience with community-based creative and cultural equity programming.
- Ability to deliver quality written materials and reports, by mutually agreed-on deadlines.
- Commitment to working collaboratively with multiple project partners.

Evaluation

Evaluation of written proposals will be based on the following criteria, with the relative weights in parentheses:

1. Experience and qualifications of key personnel and composition and appropriateness of team to scope (40%)
 - Lived experience and representation from frontline communities
 - Experience and demonstrated success facilitating grassroots and community engagement
 - Existing relationships with focus communities
2. Proposed approach (25%)
 - Innovation and creativity
 - Collaboration and partnerships
 - Equity focus
3. Proposed schedule and workplan (25%)
 - Ability and capacity to execute work
4. Total cost and appropriateness of budget proposal (10%)
 - Reasonable and efficient planned use of funds

Exhibit A

Purpose, Background and Scope of Work

Purpose and Vision

The urban forest plays a critical role in every area of Providence’s sustainability, as well as in its health, resilience, equity, and quality of life. When strategically placed and maintained, our trees reduce polluted stormwater run-off, provide cooling on high heat days, reduce electricity costs and urban heat island effect, sequester carbon, and create comfortable community gathering places.

However, like many cities, Providence’s canopy coverage is not equitably distributed across neighborhoods. Our low-income neighborhoods have lower tree canopy coverage, and some of the highest asthma rates in the state. Despite a robust street tree planting program, the inequitable distribution of trees across neighborhoods has persisted through the decades.

The PVD Tree Plan will serve as a roadmap to lay out a shared community vision for Providence’s urban forest. This requires a strong commitment to stewardship, consistent and strategic planting of new trees, a community and constituency that values and engages with the urban forest and trees, and a network of public and private stakeholders who share a vision for a vibrant urban tree canopy. The plan will combine meaningful community-led decision making, an equitable and inclusive engagement process, and multi-stakeholder dialogue to develop long-term sustainable approaches to health, resilience, equity, and quality of life.

A successful project will:

- Establish Providence’s urban forest as a valuable asset, cultivate an ecosystem of public and private partners to fund, plant, care for trees, and foster broad commitment to the equitable distribution across all Providence neighborhoods of the urban tree canopy’s benefits, as well as the resources required to sustain it.
- Foster multi-stakeholder dialogue, prioritize equitable and inclusive engagement, center frontline communities of color (and particularly youth in those communities) in a process of community-led planning and decision making, and seek to build out models of collaborative governance.
- Conceive broadly of the possible uses, implications, impacts, and outputs of an urban forest plan and engage with other critical elements of community resilience and equity. These elements include public health and wellbeing, industrial hazard and energy burden, climate mitigation and adaptation, anti-displacement and housing security, economic opportunity and community wealth building, and cultural expression and creative placemaking.
- Incorporate rigorous analysis of relevant tree canopy, environmental, social and public health data, and map community assets, vulnerabilities and opportunities for maximizing benefits of a healthy urban forest.
- Identify the strategies, tools, partners, and plans necessary to achieve identified goals; and establish metrics by which to measure progress and accountability.

Background

The Providence Parks Department’s Division of Forestry and the Providence Neighborhood Planting Program (PNPP) have been working closely together to plant and steward trees in Providence for almost 30 years. In 2017, a small task force convened to discuss long term strategies for enhancing and strengthening the City’s urban forest. The task force determined that substantial community engagement would be required to define both community priorities for the tree canopy goals and the appropriate strategies to achieve it. It became clear to the group that creating a comprehensive urban forest master plan, encompassing trees on both public and private land, was the necessary next step.

The PVD Tree Plan *Steering Committee* was formed, and over the last year-and-a-half has been conducting research and preliminary planning and identifying funding for an urban forest planning process. The *Steering Committee* currently includes representatives from the City’s Forestry Division and Office of Sustainability, PNPP, The Nature Conservancy, RI’s State Division of Forest Environment, the RI Department of Health’s Climate Change and Health Program, and Groundwork Rhode Island.

The PVD Tree Plan Steering Committee recognizes that authentic community-driven planning takes time, strong relationships, and collaborative work. Having all of the core stakeholders, consultants, and community partners at the table and aligned around a shared vision and framework before the specifics and deliverables of the planning process are developed is essential to crafting a genuinely participatory, equity-based and inclusive process. Accordingly, while this RFP contains an outline of the scope of work and core activities we are looking for from the Equity & Engagement Consultant(s), we invite respondents to include alternative proposals for effectively shaping the process and to suggest alternative phasing, structures or procedural approaches based on their experience and capacity.

Scope of Work

Phase 1. Alignment (March-May 2020)

Work with the Steering Committee to align partners and consultants around a shared vision and framework for the planning process, and help ensure (through mutual-learning sessions, trainings, discussions, etc.) that all project partners develop a common understanding of the fundamentals of equitable engagement, collaborative governance, and racial and environmental justice in Providence.

Phase 1 Deliverables:

- Establish and implement training program for project partners to create a shared understanding and approach to equitable engagement, collaborative governance, and racial and environmental justice.

Phase 2. Design and Development (June-August 2020)

Collaborate with the Steering Committee and Community Engagement Team to define and develop an equity-centered strategy for public, community and stakeholder engagement and involvement in the overall planning process, which:

- Ensures that all engagement strategies are equity-centered and designed to address disparities in participation and capacity burdens, to foster involvement by those who do not readily or easily participate in planning processes.
- Uses a collaborative governance model that shifts decision-making to those who are most impacted in the process.
- Uses innovative programming designed to reach new and traditionally underrepresented audiences and to engage the focus-area community in new, creative ways. This will include, but not be limited to communities of color, low-income communities, renters, persons with disabilities, persons with limited English proficiency, youth, etc.)
- Values and appropriately compensates community members for sharing their community expertise and lived experiences in order to develop an equitable and just PVD Tree Plan.
- Establishes goals and benchmarks for the process, including criteria for a successful process and outcomes, and identifying how public input will be used in decision-making.
- Identifies methods and metrics to measure equitable community participation and representation in the process.
- Uses creative placemaking or tactical urbanism (e.g., working with community artists or cultural equity facilitators to engage the public on the topic of urban trees, equity, health, and resilience.)

- Pilots on-the-ground outreach and “quick-win” interventions to solve relevant community needs related to the urban forest (e.g., youth tree care ambassador program)

Phase 2 Deliverables:

- Team workplan and schedule.
- Comprehensive list of community groups and stakeholders for broader engagement approach.
- Identify cultural, geographic, or identity-based groups for focused engagement.
- Provide advice on the development of print and digital materials for sharing information with the public about the planning process and its goals, and the importance of the urban tree canopy to health and climate resilience outcomes.
- Design the format and schedule for public and sector-specific forums, meetings, workshops, trainings, summits or interviews.
- Develop the structure and format for an urban forest community advisory body.
- Provide advice on the design of accessible public surveys and an online public portal for the project.

Phase 3. Implementation (September 2020-June 2021)

Execute the community engagement strategy to gather input on stakeholder priorities for Providence’s urban forest.

Phase 3 Deliverables:

- Prepare for, lead, and facilitate forums, meetings, workshops, trainings, summits or interviews (e.g., with neighborhood leaders, religious institutions, local businesses and organizations, specific cultural or identity-based groups).
- Disseminate materials to the public through both print and digital platforms (such as door-to-door canvassing in focus areas, targeted distribution via in person and online community events and networks).
- Implement the creative strategies developed in Phase 2.
- Convene urban forest community-led advisory body.
- Assist in planning and promoting a public event or symposium to foster cross-sector dialogue and promote the role and importance of a healthy and equitable urban forest in Providence.
- Assist in implementing priority “quick-win” pilot projects identified in input process.
- Provide project updates to key stakeholders (elected officials, government agencies, etc.).

Phase 4. Synthesis, Incorporation, Accountability (July-Dec 2021)

Help ensure that the product of the community engagement process is reflected in the plan’s iterative development and final product in meaningful ways, and that ongoing accountability is built into the project’s outputs and action plans.

Phase 4 Deliverables:

- Report, update and inform the public on the project’s status and outcomes via equitable and culturally relevant methods.
- Document and report on engagement events and activities.
- Create a summary of outreach strategies.
- Advise in the preparation of the plan’s final format, to ensure that the design and the mechanism for ongoing public interface are relevant and accessible to all residents and communities.
- Develop mechanisms for ongoing community collaboration, oversight, accountability, and ownership of/with the plan and its outcomes.

Exhibit B Budget

Total Budget. The total budget for phases 1-4 is \$52,000.

Budget by Phase. A billing schedule will be determined during contract negotiations with the selected consultants. We anticipate the general scope of work to be as described below but are open to alternative proposals.

Phase 1. Alignment

This phase represents roughly 5% of scope.

Phase 2. Design and Development

This phase represents roughly 20% of scope.

Phase 3. Implementation

This phase represents roughly 60% of scope.

Phase 4. Synthesis, Incorporation, Accountability

This phase represents roughly 15% of scope.

Note on Additional Project Budget. In addition to the scope and budget of the two consultant RFPs being issued (for the Equity & Community Engagement Consultant and the Urban Forest Planning Consultant) the PVD Tree Plan project has additional budget allocations for potential pilot initiatives, services or consultants to be determined and incorporated as the planning process unfolds.

- \$15,000: Youth and Community-Based Planting and Stewardship Pilot Projects.
- \$27,000: Supplemental translation and interpretation services (for final plan product, and for large-format events and presentations); stipends and rewards for survey participants and focus group members; large-format event/symposium costs (space rental, food costs, etc.); graphic design; web/communications or marketing consultants; creative or cultural equity pilot projects or initiatives.
- Dedicated staff time has also been allocated by TNC and PNPP for project management and coordination throughout the planning process.

Exhibit C

Project Team and Resources

Below is outlined a proposed project group structure. As the planning process unfolds, this structure may be adjusted based on the needs and recommendations of the project team, and early stakeholder and community input.

Project Roles

- The *Steering Committee* will oversee the overall PVD Tree Plan process. This group (which includes staff time dedicated to management/coordination of the process) is responsible for meeting regularly over the course of the project, keeping abreast of all aspects of its implementation, and ensuring that momentum and scope are appropriately maintained. Equity & Engagement Consultants will be expected to participate as members of the Steering Committee.
- The separately contracted *Urban Forest Planning Consultant* will provide baseline assessment, analysis and recommendations regarding Providence’s urban forest and its management, bring a technical best-practices lens to the overall process, work collaboratively with other members of the Steering Committee, and help guide the development of the plan’s final output and product.
- A *Community Engagement Team* (consisting of Equity & Engagement Consultants, other members of the Steering Committee, and local nonprofit and community partners with guidance and input from the Urban Forest Planning Consultant) will be primarily responsible for developing and implementing the public and community engagement process.
- A *Data Working Group* (including members of the Steering Committee, partners in the State “Urban Forests for Climate and Health” initiative, GIS specialists from TNC and American Forests, academic and research partners, and others) is currently aggregating and analyzing a broad range of local environmental, social, and public health datasets in relation to urban tree canopy. Their work will support and inform the Urban Forest Planning Consultant’s assessment of the physical, social, and management indicators of a sustainable urban forest, as well as the process overall.



Steering Committee Support

The Steering Committee can assist the Consultant in the following ways:

1. **Knowledge Management.** Develop a folder to share and store essential project materials.
2. **Orientation Materials.** Gather and organize project materials to provide a package of project background.
3. **Orientation.** Provide an orientation to the project geography and discuss various past and ongoing efforts in the area.
4. **Relationships.** Conduct early outreach with known local stakeholders to invite them to participate and to introduce the consultant.
5. **Stakeholder Analysis.** Provide equity consultant with a list of stakeholders
6. **Planning.** Co-develop a work plan.
7. **Relationship Building.** Provide relevant introductions to community members.
8. **Networking.** Foster learning and encourage regular communication in a way that builds networks and increases exposure for local efforts.
9. **Collaboration.** Provide opportunities for partners to collectively shape the process.
10. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Co-develop and manage a process to track and share progress and impacts.

Data Sets and Additional Resources

- The City of Providence has recently completed a citywide Street Tree Inventory as an update to its 2007 inventory and is currently incorporating that data into i-Tree Streets to enable further analysis of the results and build off of an iTree-Eco study was done in 2014.
- An Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessment is to be completed by the University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Lab by January 2020, to update a similar UTC Assessment conducted in 2008.
- In 2015 the City of Providence adopted a Sustainability Plan, and in 2019 released a [Climate Justice Plan](#), which built off of the [Framework for a Racially Equitable and Just Providence](#), developed by the [Racial and Environmental Justice Committee, through an initiative of the Office of Sustainability](#). The strategy in the Providence Climate Justice Plan to prioritize tree plantings in low-canopy areas was highlighted as a priority by frontline communities. The PVD Tree Plan will build from that work and analysis, developing urban greening strategies that promote climate resiliency in Providence's most vulnerable communities and mitigate climate impacts to public health without contributing to displacement and green gentrification.
- With internship support from PhD candidates in [Boston University's URBAN Program](#), the Steering Committee has assembled a list of existing and desired data layers of both baseline metrics as well as relevant environmental, social and public health datasets outlining the scale, source and status of each.
- In partnership with [American Forests](#), the State of Rhode Island has recently embarked on a two year [Urban Forests for Climate and Health](#) initiative, using the existing framework of the State's [Health Equity Zones](#), to develop and test a suite of policy, planning, decision-support and financing tools that can be used by urban forestry programs to prioritize and maximize their climate mitigation, public health and environmental justice impacts. Coordination and cross-participation between these state and city level efforts are already underway and will continue as both processes unfold.

Attachments

Please see the attachments document for these additional resources.

- PVD Tree Plan Fact Sheet
- TNC Standard Contract (to be finalized in negotiation with chosen consultants)
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure (to be submitted by chosen consultants with the final contract)