



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING SERVICES
FOR STRATEGIC AND MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT
FOR

PROPOSED TYGER RIVER CONFLUENCE PARK AND BLUEWAY INITIATIVE (SC)

REQUESTED BY:

UPSTATE FOREVER
IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE TYGER RIVER FOUNDATION

FEBRUARY 17, 2023

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Strategic and Master Planning for Tyger River Confluence Park and Blueway Initiative

Upstate Forever in partnership with other local organizations, is requesting proposals from a consultant firm or team of consultants to develop a strategic and master plan for the Tyger River Confluence Park and Blueway Initiative. This transformative recreational project will provide local communities with much needed public access to river sites and trails along the Tyger River system in southern Spartanburg County in South Carolina. The strategic and master plan will establish a course of action as well as conceptual plans and marketing materials to create an interconnected system of properties and recreational facilities that will promote public recreation opportunities for the community.

All submissions must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on March 24, 2023.

Submissions should be labeled “Tyger River Confluence Park and Blueway Initiative” and emailed or mailed to Erika Hollis at the contact information listed below. Late proposals will not be considered:

Erika Hollis
Clean Water Director
Upstate Forever
507 Pettigru St.
Greenville, SC 29601
ehollis@upstateforever.org

Questions and clarifications regarding this RFP may be made by contacting Erika Hollis at: ehollis@upstateforever.org. Upstate Forever cannot provide individual feedback on proposals.

A virtual online meeting will be held on **February 24, 2023**, to provide applicants the opportunity to ask questions about the RFP. For login information please contact Erika Hollis at the email address mentioned previously.

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1. Background

The Tyger River Confluence Park and Blueway Initiative is a coalition of public, private, and nonprofit partners working together in Spartanburg County to create a recreation and eco-tourism corridor in one of the nation's fastest growing regions. It is modeled after the new Black River Water Trail and Park Network in the Pee Dee River Basin, an emerging new state park that is unlike any other experience currently offered in South Carolina's 47 state parks. The initiative builds upon the work of The Tyger River Foundation, including the restoration of the historic Anderson Mill for public access and multiple river access sites developed in partnership with the Tyger River Blueways Coalition and Spartanburg County Parks and Recreation.

As proposed, the Tyger River Confluence Park and Blueway Initiative will:

- Encompass 10 public park spaces with trails,
- Cover 20 river miles,
- Provide 10 hours of class I-IV paddling,
- Include The Tyger River Nature Center, located on the Foundation's property at the confluence of the North and South Tyger Rivers, which will serve as a regional destination for education, recreation, and event-based eco-tourism modeled after the Chattahoochee Nature Center near Atlanta.

The new park and blueway trail system will leverage the area's natural and historic resources to generate significant economic benefits to local communities. Multiple layers of impact include the nature center's eco-tourism and event revenue, the purchase of land within the blueway corridors for greenway development and water trail access, the potential for eco-friendly residential development along these greenway corridors, and expenditures at and by new businesses and their patrons along the trail corridor.

2. Efforts to Date

In August 2021, Upstate Forever partnered with a local consultant to host an introductory virtual brainstorming meeting with local stakeholders to assess partner interest and feasibility of this project. Stakeholders in attendance included The Tyger River Foundation, Spartanburg County Foundation, Spartanburg Historical Association, Spartanburg County Parks and Recreation, Partners for Active Living (PAL), Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE), Spartanburg School District 6, SC Dept of Parks, Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT), SC Dept of Natural Resources (SCDNR), and SC Conservation Bank (SCCB). The overall feedback from this session was positive. Upstate Forever then followed up individually with stakeholders to affirm a level a commitment to the project.

Upstate Forever also contracted with the local consultant firm, Openfields, to conduct a preliminary economic analysis of the proposed project. The results of this analysis show that the \$16 million-dollar initial investment would generate a one-time impact of \$9.2 million from construction

activities and an additional \$1 million to \$4 million annually in new economic activity in the region from visitors to the park. Assuming an annual impact in the middle of that range (\$2.5 million), the economic impact of the Tyger River Confluence Park and Blueway Initiative would constitute a 100% return on the initial investment after just three years in operation.

3. Project Goals

The goals of the strategic and master planning effort are:

1. To establish a diverse steering committee and solidify partner commitment to the project.
2. To facilitate a process with stakeholders to identify project goals, objectives, and milestones for the project.
3. To develop and execute a comprehensive and inclusive community engagement process to collect input from a broad and diverse group of community members in discussions regarding the development of the trail system, including river access points, park amenities, recreation activities of interest, and community concerns.
4. To develop an effective messaging and branding strategy, including a regional illustration of the trail system and conceptual designs of two sites, to be used for educating elected leaders and key decision makers as well as garnering political and financial support for the project.

4. Scope Of Work

To develop a course of action (informed by community feedback), conceptual designs, and branding materials for the Tyger River Confluence Park and Blueway Initiative along the North and South Tyger Rivers below I-85 in southern Spartanburg County (see attached map). As proposed, this park system will be made up of a series of interconnected properties with river access points and other recreational amenities connected by the North and South Tyger Rivers. This park and blueway trail system will promote increased health and wellness by providing public river access and additional recreational opportunities to local communities.

5. Anticipated Process

Upstate Forever will seek advice and direction from the successful consultant(s) regarding the proposed process for the project. However, Upstate Forever currently envisions the following actions as related to the anticipated process:

1. **Develop a strategic plan**
 - The consultant(s) will work with Upstate Forever and the Tyger River Foundation to coordinate the formation of a steering committee and technical committee.
 - The consultant(s) will lead the Steering Committee in developing short-term and long-term goals, objectives, and activities for the project including identifying politically viable strategies to advance the project's vision, clarify funding needs, and identify funding sources.

- The consultant(s) will coordinate site visits to predetermined sites with steering and technical committee members.
- The consultant(s) will work with Upstate Forever and project partners to develop and execute a comprehensive and inclusive community engagement process. This community engagement process should provide the public with multiple opportunities for input with an emphasis placed on gathering feedback from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic communities within the project area. For example, community engagement activities could consist of involvement on steering committees, participation in community meetings, online surveys, social media, etc. The information obtained through this process will help shape the development of the trail network and associated recreational amenities. The consultant(s) shall also present the findings of the study at a public meeting at the conclusion of the process.

2. **Create a master plan, to include:**

- The consultants(s) will work with the technical committee develop an environmental, ecological, and historical overview of the entire project area.
- The consultant(s) will collaborate with the technical committee to create a conceptual design of the project from a regional scope that will include analysis and mapping of the river corridors, existing and potential access points, and existing and potential parcels included in the park network.
- The consultant(s) will create example artistic renderings of different site amenities including one river access with paddle launch, and two conceptual designs of a property/parcel within the park network.
- The consultant(s) will design a marketing and branding strategy for the entire project.

6. **Statements Of Qualification**

All proposals should include, but not be limited to, information on the following evaluation criteria and should be arranged to the following outline:

1. A title sheet providing the name(s) of the consultant team submitting with the name of the primary contact and contact information clearly identified.
2. A cover letter indicating the composition of the team including the Principal in Charge and support team.
3. A Table of Contents.
4. Background information for each firm included on the team. For each firm, please list three to five examples of projects comparable in scale, process, and function to this project. For each project listed, include the following: location, client, date of involvement, project description, cost and scope of project, and specific services provided by the firm.
5. For each participating firm, provide names, titles and qualifications of individuals who will be assigned to the project and the roles each will play in the project.

6. List a minimum of three professional references for each firm, including at least two of which correspond with the projects identified above. For each reference list the contact's name, address, phone number and relationship to firm.
7. Provide a concise statement (no more than one page) outlining the team's philosophy in approaching projects of this type.
8. Include a compelling demonstration of the team's grasp of project goals and suggested deliverables associated with each goal listed under the Project Goals section of this RFP.
9. Include a proposed scope of services, cost and timeline that addresses the Upstate Forever's envisioned process outlined in this RFP. As reference, Upstate Forever envisions that the cost for services will not exceed \$50,000.

7. Projected Project Timeline

May 2023	Project Kick off and Committee Establishment
May - June 2023	Strategic Plan Development
July – September 2023	Development and Implementation of Public Engagement Strategy
October 2023	Conceptual Design Development (Regional and Site)
November 2023	Brand Development and Marketing Strategy
December 2023	Final design , Branding, and Marketing Strategy

8. Fee Structure

Fee proposal shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Fees required, as listed in this RFP and in accordance with the anticipated Scope of Work and consultant(s) approach to complete the project.
- Hourly rates for team members.
- Any and all reimbursable expenses and/or any other costs to complete this project.

9. Criteria for Selection

- Technical Expertise including the firm's experience, the expertise of individuals, and clarity and completeness of the RFP.
- Ability to address the goals and needs outlined in this RFP.
- Ability to identify an effective, consistent messaging strategy that resonates with key decision makers and stakeholders related to the project.
- Ability to complete the project within the given timeframe and the envisioned budget.
- Ability to involve partners, stakeholders, and community members in the process in meaningful ways.

10. Selection Process and Timeline

Upstate Forever will conduct the selection process as follows:

- February 17th – RFP issued.
- February 24th – Optional pre-proposal conference call for applicants with questions.
- March 24th – All responses to the RFP due by 5 p.m.
- March 31st – The top candidate(s) will be invited to present to the selection committee.
- April 14th – Presentations will be complete, and the consultant(s) will be selected.
- May 1st – Estimated project start.

11. Conditions and Limitations

Upstate Forever reserves the right to reject any and all responses to the RFP, advertise for new responses, or to accept any response deemed to be in the best interest of Upstate Forever's goals. Upstate Forever does not commit to pay for costs incurred in the submission of a response to this request or for any cost incurred prior to the execution of a final contract. Upon selection an official contract shall be prepared, negotiated, and fully executed before work is initiated.

Appendix:
Tyger River Confluence Park and Blueway Initiative Project

