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Friends of the Columbia Gorge Accessibility Project

Visioning and Design Process Meeting Facilitator

Request for Proposal

September 3rd 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – PROCUREMENT INFORMATION	2
SECTION 2 – PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK	2
SECTION 3 – DELIVERABLES	6
SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL FORMAT	6
SECTION 5 – PROPOSAL REVIEW, EVALUATION, AND SELECTION	7
SECTION 6 – CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS	7

SECTION 1 – PROCUREMENT INFORMATION

Procurement Schedule

Schedule of Events	Date
RFP Release	9/03/2021
Notification of Interest (Optional)	9/19/2021
Deadline for Questions	9/19/2021
Questions & Answers Session (Optional)	9/21/2021 @ 11:30 a.m. - Noon
Proposals Due	9/26/2021
Prescreen of Proposals	9/28/2021
Interview of RFP Finalists	9/30/2021 – 10/07/2021
Announcement of Successful Proposal	10/8/2021
Anticipated Contract Execution	10/15/2021

Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust (Friends) reserves the right to modify this schedule at the organization’s discretion. Notification of changes will be posted to the organization’s website (www.gorgefriends.org) and shared with those that have notified Friends of their interest. Inquiries shall be directed to Mika Barrett, Accessibility Project Manager, by email (mika@gorgefriends.org).

Electronic Submittal.

One (1) copy of the proposal must be emailed to Mika Barrett (mika@gorgefriends.org) no later than 7:00 p.m., on Sunday, September 26th, 2021. Please title the e-mail very clearly with the RFP Title and your company name.

SECTION 2 – PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to select a contractor to act as facilitator during the visioning and design process for two new outdoor recreation spaces with Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust (Friends) and the steering committee.

ABOUT FRIENDS: Friends of the Columbia Gorge is the only conservation organization dedicated entirely to protecting the Columbia Gorge. Friends works to protect, preserve, and steward the Columbia Gorge. For millennia, communities living around the Columbia Gorge have served as active stewards of its unique landscape. Based out of Hood River, Oregon, Friends Land Trust aims to preserve scenic Gorge landscapes, safeguard sensitive habitats, steward vital Gorge lands, provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and strengthen Gorge community connections. For more information about Friends of the Columbia Gorge and its Land Trust, please visit: www.gorgefriends.org.

ABOUT THE STEERING COMMITTEE: The steering committee is engaged in a visioning and planning process to create design plans for Friends' two new land trust properties, Catherine Creek and Cape Horn Preserve. The steering committee participates as co-leaders and visionaries on this project to help improve access and inclusion in the Gorge. The steering committee includes:

- Access for All, Georgena Moran – Co-Founder
- Adventures Without Limits, Jennifer Wilde – Director of Outreach and Development
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Mika Barrett – Accessibility Project Manager
- Hike It Baby, Jessica Carrillo Alatorre – Executive Director
- Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection, West Livaudais – Executive Director
- People of Color Outdoors, Pamela Slaughter – Founder
- TriMet Committee on Accessible Transportation, Jan Campbell – Chair

ABOUT THE PROJECT: Friends purchased two new properties in 2020 and is initiating a stakeholder-driven planning process to design them as universally accessible sites. Universally accessible recreation spaces are designed to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, regardless of their ability level. Today, we need to address accessibility in the Gorge with fresh eyes, and start the work of focusing not just on more access, but on more equitable access. The planning process aims to provide opportunities for underserved communities, such as people of color and people of all abilities, to experience the wonder of the Gorge.

Friends have assembled a steering committee to play a leadership role in designing plans for these outdoor recreation spaces. The steering committee is comprised of leaders with diverse expertise and lived-experiences whom are shaping the project designs. In addition to the steering committee, the project will also engage key stakeholders to contribute to the project design. Key stakeholders will participate with steering committee members during targeted visioning sessions on particular topics, such as universal access design, transit, gathering spaces, and inclusion in the outdoors.

- The visioning process will take place between fall 2021 through spring 2022. It will be completed through a series of monthly meetings (virtual) and multiple, half-day visioning and planning sessions (virtual and/or in-person). Steering committee members will participate in the monthly meetings and the half-day visioning and planning sessions. Key stakeholders will participate during the half-day visioning and planning sessions with steering committee members, but not during the monthly meetings.
- For more details pertaining to the facilitator, please see section below titled as Scope of Work.

ABOUT THE LAND TRUST PROPERTIES:

CATHERINE CREEK LAND TRUST: Located in Lyle, Washington, this property is surrounded by 4,000-acres of the public lands and neighbors the Catherine Creek Universal Access Loop Trail. Prior to its acquisition by Friends Land Trust in 2020, the four-acre parcel had a long history of National Scenic Area violations. Unpermitted buildings and structures, in addition to piles of personal property, were scattered throughout the lot. As one of the last private parcels within the Catherine Creek Recreation Area, its permanent protection is now ensured.

The Catherine Creek Recreation Area encompasses one of the most visible landscapes in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, easily viewed from iconic places such as the Memaloose Overlook and the Historic Columbia River Highway. And after the previous landowners had moved the last of their equipment and material off the land, Catherine Creek’s full potential started to show. It was no longer a personal enclave tucked within one of the Gorge’s premier scenic treasures. Now it was a blank canvas for conservation and recreation.

The Catherine Creek land trust property provides a unique opportunity to enhance access to one of the Columbia Gorge’s most popular and scenic recreation areas. As just one example, there are opportunities to improve connections to the adjacent U.S. Forest Service Universal Access Loop Trail. With rugged, steep terrain in much of the Gorge, spaces where people of all abilities can



enjoy the majestic scenery or spring wildflowers are too rare. Catherine Creek provides an opportunity to learn from underrepresented communities in outdoor recreation spaces, and to include new voices in the decision-making process to enhance recreation experiences in the Columbia Gorge. With new insights and diverse perspectives shaping this property’s design, Catherine Creek can become a community resources to benefit all.

Photo: Catherine Creek Land Trust (bottom right) and the Universal Access Loop Trail (upper left):

CAPE HORN PRESERVE: Located on a majestic bluff outside Washougal, Washington, the Cape Horn Preserve lies along the upper Cape Horn trail system leading to the Nancy Russell Overlook. The 50-acre preserve is nestled amid a coniferous forest, deciduous stands, spectacular wildflowers and views. Unlike many recreational sites in the Gorge, the opportunity to experience awe here doesn't require people to hike straight uphill or climb narrow switchbacks. Cape Horn Preserve is generally level and open, offering real possibilities for increasing accessibility to serve residents and visitors beyond the customary Gorge hikers.

In the 1980s, The Cape Horn bluff was platted by developers as a subdivision - a place where only a few with significant resources would have the privilege of connecting to the land and taking in its stunning views. Even after the passage of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, the proposed development they called Rimview Estates threatened to change Cape Horn forever. However, in the



1980s and over the next two decades, most of the land moved into public ownership thanks to conservation buyers. And in December 2020, the one of the last private parcels was purchased by Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust.

Cape Horn Preserve provides a timely opportunity to expand access to the wonders of the Gorge by engaging with new voices and perspectives that have long been left out of recreation planning processes. It creates an opportunity to partner with underrepresented communities to build a shared vision of this iconic area. And includes a deliberate effort to serve a broader population, so the Gorge can be shared with all.

SCOPE OF WORK: The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to select a contractor to act as the facilitator for the visioning and planning process led by Friends. They will be a meeting organizer who facilitates six to eight, half-day visioning and planning sessions with the steering committee, key stakeholders, and a landscape architect advisor. They will also facilitate eight, one and a half hour monthly reconvening meetings with the steering committee and develop a rapport with the group. The facilitator will also develop meeting agendas, manage meeting logistics, and take/share notes from each of monthly steering committee meetings and visioning and planning sessions.

EXPERIENCE AND STYLE: This work requires a facilitator that understands diverse communities. The facilitator will need to foster a welcoming and inclusive experience for steering committee members and key stakeholders that encourages hearing all voices. The ability to build rapport amongst a diverse group of participants is crucial. The selected contractor will also advise on best practices for virtual, in-person, and blended virtual/in-person meetings to ensure strong engagement of the participants.

The accessibility project is adopting consensus decision making for the planning process and ultimately, the conceptual designs. Using consensus provides an opportunity to do things differently by replacing hierarchy with shared power. It is based on the values of equality, co-operation, and respect for everyone's needs. The ideal facilitator will have demonstrated experience and exceptional skills in guiding groups and decisions towards consensus.

The ideal facilitator will possess keen organizational skills to manage the meeting logistics and information sharing with Friends, the steering committee, and the landscape architect advisor. They will also be a reliable and responsive communicator when coordinating the work with Friends' Accessibility Project Manager.

SECTION 3 – DELIVERABLES

In addition, the facilitator will provide deliverables throughout the design process. These include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Facilitates work with Friends and the steering committee to determine the project's guiding principles (values and themes), cultural influences, and emerging trends;
- Prepare, organize, and facilitate eight monthly steering committee meetings (virtual);
- Prepare, organize, and facilitate six to eight half-day visioning and planning sessions (virtual, in-person, and/or blend of virtual and in-person);
- And provides summary of notes of each visioning session and monthly steering committee meeting.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL FORMAT

PROJECT UNDERSTANDING/PROJECT APPROACH: Please describe your understanding of the project and what creative approaches you may have for facilitating the visioning sessions and monthly reconvening meetings and building rapport with the steering committee. Please also include your professional expertise, or personal lived-experiences, in facilitation and managing group dynamics with diverse participants.

The facilitator shall include an estimated fee for services and costs to accomplish the scope of work and deliverables as outlined in the RFP. Bids should be presented based on an hourly rate, and include the estimated number of hours proposed per deliverable. The fee estimate will not be used as the primary evaluation criterion.

QUALIFICATIONS: Experience leading diverse groups in an outdoor recreation planning and design process; guiding groups towards consensus; a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; and facilitating planning sessions in a virtual, in-person, and blended virtual/in-person forums.

SUPPORT INFORMATION: Support information must be limited to that which is pertinent to the proposal. Material must include references and may include resumes, certificates, examples of similar projects, etc.

SECTION 5 – PROPOSAL REVIEW, EVALUATION, AND SELECTION REVIEW

Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust and the steering committee will award a contract to the bidder whose proposal would best further the project and group consensus. Friends' staff and steering committee representatives will evaluate proposals and decide on those people to be interviewed.

SECTION 6 – CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

The successful contractor shall enter into a contractual agreement with Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust. Please see the contract terms included as an Addendum to this RFP.