

PVDTreePlan

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



Urban Forest Planning Consultant 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 an experienced and 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 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 will provide baseline assessment, analysis and recommendations, bring technical urban forest planning and management expertise to the overall process, and guide the development of the plan's final output and product.

All administration of the RFP process and any resulting contracts will be managed by TNC. The Steering Committee will be overseeing all project implementation, and the selected consultants 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 community-based Equity & Engagement Consultants(s). These consultants will also work collaboratively with all members of the project team via the Steering Committee. They will provide expertise in inclusive engagement, racial and environmental justice, and youth leadership, and will 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.

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 Planning 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, if any, including the primary point of contact (name, title, and phone number) at lead firm.
2. List of key project personnel including their proposed role in the project scope, their geographic location, and their qualifications.
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 task 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

Qualifications and Requirements

Respondents must:

- Have experience leading similar multi-stakeholder planning processes, and experience planning strategically for urban forests in the environmental and community context.
- Have technical expertise in urban forestry management and arboriculture, and understanding of relevant city, state, and federal laws and programs.

We are seeking respondents who:

- Are motivated to center racial justice and social equity in the urban forest planning process.
- Have experience designing and/or implementing inclusive engagement and outreach processes, and working with diverse communities and partners.
- Are willing and able to think in an innovative, holistic, and dynamic way about the urban forest ecosystem: how it fits into the broader social, environmental and cultural landscape of the city, and how to plan with a focus on these broader outcomes and impacts.
- Have expertise and experience on their Project Team with environmental and climate justice, GIS, urban planning, civil engineering, professional writing, and graphic arts.

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%)
 - Sustainable urban forest management
 - Prior engagements of similar scope and scale
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 tree canopy coverage is not equitably distributed across neighborhoods. Our low-income neighborhoods have lower 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.

Scope of Work and Process:

Authentic community-driven planning takes time 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 below is an outline of the scope of work, core tasks, and general timeline we are looking for the Consultant to engage in, we invite respondents to share any relevant ideas for effectively shaping the process and identifying what their or others role in it might be, or proposals for alternative phasing or benchmarking.

OVERALL PROJECT TIMELINE:	
March – August 2020	Project Orientation and Alignment; Review of Urban Forest Framework; Development of Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.
September 2020 – June 2021	Implementation of Community and Stakeholder Engagement; Analysis and Recommendations for Urban Forest Framework (Benefits, Threats, Challenges, Opportunities)
July – November 2021	Synthesis and Incorporation; Development of Recommendations and Action Plans; Presentation and Distribution

Task 1. Review and assess the three core categories of a complete urban forest framework: physical, community/social, and management.

Conduct interviews with relevant urban forest stakeholders, and assess stakeholder network, regulatory environment, and management strategies. Coordinate with the Data Working Group and provide technical expertise and guidance on how to best incorporate equity, health, and climate data into the planning process and use it to inform the development of the PVD Tree Plan.

Task 1 Deliverables:

- Written analysis of the distribution of Providence’s urban forest as well as distribution of threats and challenges related to it in the context of environmental justice and equity and based on predictors such as geographic neighborhood or demographics.
- Written analysis of the legal and regulatory environment relative to Providence’s urban forest including the city’s tree ordinance and any other relevant laws or policies.

- Written analysis of the roles of existing stakeholders and players who interact with the urban forest and trees in Providence, and their relationships to and coordination with each other including but not limited to: environmental or other nonprofits, community or neighborhood organizations, businesses, large institutions, state and city agencies, owners and maintainers of infrastructure and land, and the general public (both broadly as well as by relevant categories e.g., geographic location, current level of engagement with trees, demographics).
- Written analysis of relevant existing plans as they relate to Providence's urban forest (Sustainable Providence Plan, Climate Justice Plan, Comprehensive Plan, etc.).
- Written analysis of current methods and mechanisms for tree planting and management.
- Written analysis of existing outlets and channels for education and dissemination of information and resources on the benefits of trees and the value of the urban forest to citizens and the public (either generally or through educational/structured program opportunities).

Task 2. Develop content for public engagement and coordinate with Community Engagement Team.

The Urban Forest Planning Consultant will coordinate with the Community Engagement Team to integrate appropriate data and analysis in outreach materials and strategies.

Task 2 Deliverables:

- A. Provide technical and process guidance on how to incorporate relevant and compelling urban forest data, criteria and indicators into the engagement and outreach process.
- B. Assist and advise in developing the strategy for public, community and stakeholder engagement and involvement in the process which may include but not be limited to:
 - An online public portal for the PVD Tree Plan process and final product.
 - Piloting "quick win" outreach initiatives (e.g., youth bike watering or ambassadorships)
 - Creative placemaking mechanisms with community artists or cultural equity facilitators to engage the public on the topic of urban trees, equity, health, and resilience.
 - Public surveys.
 - Community discussions and focus groups.
 - An Urban Forest Symposium.
 - Sector or role-specific stakeholder meetings or interviews.
 - Convening of an Urban Forest Community Advisory Group.
- C. Develop appropriate strategies for reporting on progress of the Urban Forest Plan process to key stakeholders (City Council, relevant government agencies, the public, etc.) and assist in presenting to those stakeholders.

Task 3. Identify and recommend strategies to strengthen Providence's urban forest.

The consultant will report all findings to the Steering Committee and make recommendations for a wide range of strategies to strengthen Providence's urban forest. The consultant will also support the Steering Committee and Community Engagement Team in communicating findings and potential strategies to the public, in synthesizing feedback, and in co-creating strategy recommendations with community members.

Task 3 Deliverables:

- Description of the benefits offered by Providence's existing urban forest and tree canopy (environmental, public health, social, economic, etc.)
- Written analysis of the gaps in existing research and data relevant to Providence's urban forest.
- Written description of the primary specific threats (climate change, pest/disease pressure, development, etc.)

- Analysis of the opportunities, based on evaluation of the roles/relationships of the network, for increased partnership or coordination among stakeholders in relation to the urban forest or for new or expanded programs.
- Recommendations of specific actions, organizational or network structures, and policies to strengthen the urban forest and achieve desired outcomes articulated in the planning process.
- Description of potential funding models and budget estimates to achieve the goals and recommendations identified.

Task 4. Prepare and present materials to illustrate analysis and recommendations.

The consultant will develop appropriate materials including written reports, maps and graphics for the final report and recommendations for implementing the plan.

Task 4 Deliverables:

- Metrics, maps and data related to the size, health and distribution and stewardship of the existing urban forest and its impacts.
- Recommendations and guidance on the method for sharing the data and analysis with the public.
- Final PVD Tree Plan report document, with graphics and metrics, outlining analysis and recommendations.

Exhibit B Budget

Total Budget. The total budget for tasks 1-4 is **\$34,000**.

Budget by Task. A billing schedule will be determined during contract negotiations with the selected Consultant(s).

Task 1. Review and assess existing data, regulatory environment, and strategies.

This task represents roughly 20% of scope.

Task 2. Develop content for public engagement and coordinate with community engagement team.

This task represents roughly 30% of scope.

Task 3. Identify and recommend strategies to strengthen Providence's urban forest.

This task represents roughly 30% of scope.

Task 4. Prepare and present materials to illustrate analysis and recommendations.

This task represents roughly 20% of scope.

Note on Additional Project Budget. In addition to the scope and budget of the two 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. The Urban Forest Planning Consultant will be expected to participate on the Steering Committee.
- The separately contracted local *Equity & Community Engagement Consultants* will provide expertise in inclusive engagement, racial and environmental justice, and youth leadership. They will work collaboratively with the rest of the Steering Committee to guide the development and implementation of an intentional community engagement process.
- A *Community Engagement Team* (consisting of Equity & Engagement Consultants, other members of the Steering Committee, and local nonprofit and community partners) will be primarily responsible for developing and implementing the public and community engagement process, with input and guidance from the Urban Forest Planning Consultant.
- 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 partners from [Boston University’s URBAN Program](#), 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)