

DATE: December 1, 2022

SUBJECT: **Request for Letters of Interest (LOI) – University Park Campus Sustainable Landscape Implementation Plan**, University Park, PA

TO: Landscape Architecture Firms

The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) is excited to begin the selection a landscape consultant to help develop a Sustainable Landscapes Implementation Plan for the University Park Campus, Penn State's flagship location. Penn State is utilizing our standard qualification-based selection process for this project.

Penn State takes great pride in providing a high-quality landscape setting for the approximately 46,000 students and 25,000 faculty and staff who live and work at our 1500-acre University Park campus. These constituents and other members of our university community utilize and revere our heritage trees, iconic lawns, and historic Hort Woods. Considering the growing global climate crisis and shrinking university budgets, we would like to reevaluate and recalibrate our expectations and operations to better meet these demands, while preserving and enhancing the aspects of our campus landscape we value most.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Office of Physical Plant (OPP), in partnership with Eco Action, Penn State's oldest student environmental club, has received a \$75,000 matching grant from the Student Fee Board for a total project budget of \$175,000 to develop a Sustainable Landscapes Implementation Plan and a first phase of implementation.

This funding partnership with the Student Fee Board illustrates student support for a more ecologically healthy campus. This plan will focus and direct the efforts of OPP Landscape Services and University Landscape Architects and provide students with research and service opportunities.

We envision this planning process will include facilitation of a steering committee comprised of students, professors and stakeholders from Penn State's Physical Plant who are responsible for the design, funding, and maintenance of the campus landscape. Strategies that are fiscally responsible, realistically implementable, and operationally sustainable are desired.

Project stakeholders with representation on the steering committee include:

- Eco Action Student Environmental Club (2-4 from the executive group)
- Professors representing allied academic departments (2-3)
- OPP Landscape Services (2-3 incl. Grounds Supervisor, Planner/Estimator, & Manager)
- OPP Planning, Design, + Properties (3 incl. University Planner, & University Landscape Architects)

PROJECT PROGRAM AND GOALS

The completed Sustainable Landscapes Implementation Plan will foster a collective vision and outline a phased strategy for implementation. A first phase, or pilot project, will test ideas and processes for student involvement. It will also include research and evaluation methods to determine if the anticipated benefits are realized.

More specifically, the project goals should focus on realistic and actionable strategies that include:

- Maintaining Penn State's high-quality landscape.
- Improving ecological health of campus landscape for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.
- Improving human health, especially the well-being of students, staff, and faculty.
- Supporting Penn State's climate action goals through increased carbon sequestration along with reductions in energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Increasing awareness and buy-in from students, faculty, staff, university leadership, and the broader community.
- Evaluating economic impacts and payback period/return on investment.

A consultant with expertise in sustainable landscape design and management would lead the development of this implementation plan and facilitate collaboration among all stakeholders. The plan would establish short and long-term strategies. Other recommendations might be focused on the specific design, implementation, and management methods. A pilot project would be implemented in the first year of funding.

We hope to realize both benefits to the environment and to the student experience in ways that include:

- Environmental Benefits
 - Increased biodiversity
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
 - Increased stormwater infiltration and biofiltration
 - Decreased heat island effects
- Student Benefits
 - Living lab opportunities
 - Additional outdoor meeting places
 - Service opportunities for clubs and organizations
 - Support for student health and well-being

PROJECT SCHEDULE AND DELIVERY METHOD

[The Owner's "Form of Agreement 1-S"](#) will be used for this project. The prime firm (contract holder) of the awarded team will sign the 1-S Form of Agreement in eBuilder. By submitting a letter of interest, firms pledge to agree to the Agreement's terms and conditions without exception or modification.

Penn State anticipates executing the consultant's contract in April 2023 with work beginning immediately and to be completed by Fall of 2023 to allow coordination of a student implementation service project.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT TEAM SELECTION PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

Penn State will use a qualifications-based selection process including this Letter of Interest, creating a long-list of firms to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP) and eventually narrowing the applicants to a short-list to conduct remote interviews based on the following timeline:

- Interested Lead/Prime firms must submit an electronic copy of your letter of Interest by Noon, eastern standard time (EST) on January 3, 2023.
- The Screening Committee will review the respondents to this Request for Letters of Interest and determine a long-list of firms which will be posted to this website by the end-of-day on January 13, 2023.
- Proposal responses from the long-listed teams are due in my office at Noon EST on February 8, 2023.
- Three short-listed firms will be chosen from the RFP respondents. The short-list results and interview notice will be posted to this website by the end-of-day on February 17, 2023.
- Online interviews through a video meeting platform will most likely occur during the week of March 13, 2023.

Participation in this process is voluntary and at no cost or obligation to Penn State. The University reserves the right to waive any informality, in any or all submissions, and to reject any submission or portion thereof.

LETTER OF INTEREST SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

If your firm/team is interested in pursuing this project, submit a letter of interest (3-5 pages) that includes the following:

- Brief statement detailing your firm's profile (firm size, characteristics, unique qualifications, etc.). There is no requirement to identify the full team at this stage, but firms that wish to include design partners should describe their anticipated role on the project.
- Outline your firm's experience in the planning/design/execution of similar landscape master plans.
- Your firm's vision of a realistic, implementable sustainable campus landscape that meets Penn State's goals.
- Within your letter of interest, include a sampling of your previous relevant experience with illustrative examples.

As applicable throughout your Letter of Interest, provide professional credit to design partners for all projects discussed within the proposal and for all project images shown.

Please provide a digital copy in PDF format to my email address at dlk153@psu.edu by noon on January 3, 2023. Limit your submission to five (5) total, single sided, 8 ½ x 11-inch pages. If a cover letter is included, it must be within the five (5) page limit. Include the name and email address of your team's main contact person.

Feel free to contact myself (dlk153@psu.edu), or Facilities Project Manager, Kurt Coduti (khc3@psu.edu), with any questions.

Respectfully,
Derek Kalp, RLA
Staff Landscape Architect
Penn State University
Office of Physical Plant
204 Physical Plant Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 571-0152 (mobile)

CC: Screening Committee