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Development of Master Plan for Trail System in WHIN Region

Request for Proposal

January 2020



ABOUT WHIN and WHIN'S REGIONAL CULTIVATION FUND

Funded through a generous \$38.9 million grant by Lilly Endowment, Inc., WHIN serves 10 counties in North Central Indiana in an effort to develop the region into a global epicenter for digital agriculture and next-generation manufacturing empowered by data-science and Internet-enabled sensors.

\$10 million has been designated to WHIN's Regional Cultivation Fund for investment in innovative place-making projects that increase vitality, education and connectivity throughout the Wabash Heartland Region. Connectivity includes enhancing the engagement and connection of residents in the region via waterways, rural broadband, transportation and trails.

WHIN COUNTIES

The Wabash Heartland Region is comprised of the following ten counties: Benton, Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Pulaski, Tippecanoe, Warren and White. The winning proposal will include strategies and planning of a trail system which connects as many of the WHIN counties as possible, ideally all ten.

LEVERAGED FUNDING

In September 2018, Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb announced the Next Level Trails program which allocated \$90 million for hiking, biking and riding trails to link communities throughout the state. The program, which was billed as the largest infusion of trail funding in Indiana state history, allocated \$70 million to regionally significant projects and \$20 million to locally significant projects. Next Level Trail (NLT) funds will be awarded by Indiana Department of Natural Resources in three grant rounds until the funds are allocated. \$25 million was awarded during round 1; \$30 million is allocated for round two (which closed 11/1/19); details for round three have not yet been announced. (<https://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/9800.htm>)

Project proposals which allow future participation of the Wabash Heartland Region in Governor Holcomb's NLT grant program will be given preference.

Project proposals which leverage additional funding opportunities will be also given preference.

BACKGROUND

Trail initiatives improve opportunities for wellness, recreation, transportation and connectivity for residents. Based on results from WHIN's first and second placemaking surveys (see www.whin.org/resources), residents of the Wabash Heartland Region rank "parks and trails" as the most valuable attribute of their communities. Beyond consumer benefits, trail initiatives represent a potential significant source of economic development. Trails increase quality of place and make communities attractive

relocation destinations for businesses and individuals alike, increasing tax revenue, tourism and population.

Given several counties of the WHIN Region are located along the Wabash River, the largest watershed of the state, trail proposals which incorporate and utilize this regional asset will be given preference.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include organizations that meet the definition of exempt entities as defined by Internal Revenue Code (“Code”) section 501(c)(3) and treated as a public charity described in Code section 170(b)(1)(A).

SCOPE OF WORK

The winning proposal will address planning of the following tasks:

- Assess and describe the local, county, and regional need and benefit of a multi-county trail system.
- Create a plan for garnering public involvement and engagement.
- Trails mapping including analysis of: physical inventory considerations, trail design considerations, trail amenities (including trailheads), flood issues, safety/security/liability issues, roadway crossings, environmental conditions and constraints, legal feasibility, land management/use compatibility (and restrictions/opportunities), economic development/ecotourism opportunities, connectivity to lodging and other destinations, user demand analysis, emergency access/evacuation, maintenance requirements, opportunities for pre-permitting, signing and wayfinding plan and special event feasibility.
- Assess financial feasibility by providing planning level opinions of probable cost including construction and maintenance cost estimates.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan which includes branding, communication to regional residents, video outreach, programmed events, creation of a promotional toolkit, and a social media campaign.
- Identify potential pilot projects within the WHIN counties.
- Identify possibilities for IoT integration.
- Deliver at least 22 color copies (2 per county; 2 for WHIN) of the Master Plan Document highlighting planning results of the aforementioned tasks, public involvement activities and final project recommendations.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

- Master plan for the five river corridor counties of the WHIN region (i.e. Warren, Fountain, Tippecanoe, Carroll, Cass) with connections to WHIN’s five outer counties including Benton, Pulaski, Montgomery, Clinton, and White.

- Completion of the Master Plan written document within 18 months of RFP agreement.

BUDGET

The maximum budget for the Development of Master Plan for WHIN Region Trail System is \$1,000,000.

PROPOSAL CONTENT DELIVERABLES

Please submit the following items electronically to RCF@whin.org, on or before 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 17, 2020.

- A one-page overview of your organization
- A one-page overview of the engineering consultant/firm chosen to do planning
- A one-page executive summary of the proposal that conveys your understanding of the project's purpose and expected outcomes.
- An overview of how you will approach each project task listed under the aforementioned scope-of-work category
- Client references: At least two previous clients for whom your consultant/engineering firm has completed similar work
- Any additional information you feel will assist WHIN in the selection process.

Please direct all questions to RCF@whin.org.