

## **Community Visioning for Vacant Land following Managed Retreat in New York – Request for Proposals**

RFP opens **November 2, 2020**

Pre-proposals due **December 2, 2020**

Full proposals due: **January 8, 2021** (if pre-proposal is selected)

**Budget:** The Nature Conservancy has a total funding allocation of \$100,000 and seeks to distribute at least two awards with this allocation.

### **1. Introduction and General Information**

#### **Invitation**

It is the intention of The Nature Conservancy (“the Conservancy”) to solicit Proposals from eligible Respondents interested in executing a community visioning process for vacant lands in New York communities where managed retreat – the relocation of people and infrastructure from coasts or floodplains – has occurred.. The goal is to build consensus around a community-created vision for socially and ecologically beneficial use of the undeveloped, flood prone lands. Those responding to this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) are referred to as “Respondent.”

#### **About The Nature Conservancy**

The Nature Conservancy (the Conservancy) is a District of Columbia, USA, non-profit corporation with its principal place of business in Arlington, Virginia, USA. The Conservancy is the world’s largest conservation organization, working in all 50 states and 79 countries and territories. Our mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

Climate change is shifting weather patterns across the globe and New York is no exception. Across the state, we are experiencing increased average annual precipitation, more year-to-year variability, more intense rainfall events, accelerated sea level rise, and more threatening storm surges. A growing list of weather-related events continue to provide examples of what a future with more water is likely to be. The people and places getting flooded now will certainly experience more flooding in the future and many areas currently thought to be “high and dry” will too.

The Conservancy’s New York Climate Adaptation Team is working to change how people think about the role of nature in the context of a climate changing world. The Climate Adaptation Team strives for a future that makes way for water, rather than trying to control it. Without a paradigm shift in water management and flood response, the impacts of future flood events are expected to increase, which will only enhance the disproportional vulnerability of at-risk communities, habitats, and species. The Conservancy’s perspective is that we need to make

more room for water in a way that ensures people are safe from flooding, new and existing infrastructure systems are resilient, and nature can adapt to changing environmental conditions. A paradigm shift will take time and require very difficult decisions from the individual property owners to municipal, county, and state governments. To support communities in this important transition, the Conservancy is seeking to find better ways to make room for water that acknowledge changing social and environmental conditions, the importance of place, and the needs of local economies.

## **2. Project Description**

### **Background**

In the United States, flooding has caused \$8 billion in damages annually since 2000, with more than 100 lives lost to flooding each year since 2015. Flooding is one of the great climate adaptation challenges facing New York. New York ranks third in the US for most homes at risk from flooding from sea level rise and every single county in New York has experienced severe storms and flood related disaster in the last decade.

Some communities in New York have already engaged or are engaging in the process of moving people and infrastructure out of flood prone areas in order to restore open space, halt the cycle of rebuilding and defending after disasters, and gain risk reduction benefits of nature. This process is often referred to as “managed retreat” and in most cases it is achieved through voluntary buyouts by which willing home or property owners receive pre-storm market value for their home or business, so buildings and infrastructure can be removed, and residents and businesses can relocate to the safety of higher ground. In New York, more than 1,000 property owners from over 125 zip codes have participated in managed retreat in the last three decades.

Beyond flood risk reduction, restoring open space and natural areas to lands vacated by managed retreat can provide benefits to people and nature (e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, recreational access, scenic value, and public health benefits). Public parks, recreational areas, pollinator gardens, stormwater retention ponds, or ecosystem restoration (e.g., wetlands) are all potential uses of land that was bought out, which would yield social and ecological benefits to the surrounding community. Unfortunately, resources and capacity to convert the land into something more than a vacant lot with grass is often limited. This is an additional burden for communities who have already experienced the trauma of a flood disaster and grappled with the difficult decision to relocate portions of their community to outside the floodplain.

Some communities across the United States have begun the important work of creating a vision for reusing land following buyouts and managed retreat, including:

- Woodbridge, NJ – [Woodbridge Township Open Space and Flood Plain Restoration Plan](#)
- Austin, TX – [Central Williamson Creek Greenway](#)

- Greenville, NC – [City of Greenville Flood Land Reuse Plan](#)
- Sidney, NY – [Village of Sidney Greenplain](#)

## **The Objective**

The objective of this award is to support a community visioning process for land in New York communities where managed retreat from coasts or floodplains has occurred and vacated or undeveloped land remains. The goal of this process is to initiate the co-creation of a community vision for socially and ecologically beneficial use of the vacated and/or undeveloped, flood prone lands. The emphasis of this award is on relationship-building and providing a forum for a wide variety of voices in the community to generate a vision of how the land could be repurposed.

The Nature Conservancy views this award as the first phase in implementing on-the-ground solutions. We don't expect that this project will produce "shovel-ready" projects, but should build the relationships and capacity to pursue steps towards project design and implementation. The Conservancy does not commit to provide funding beyond the scope of this award; the Conservancy may assist award Recipients with identifying and/or applying for funding to move forward with the subsequent project phase(s).

## **Guiding Principles**

We anticipate that the selected Respondents will work according to the following Guiding Principles:

- Ensure that resources are shared equitably among organizations that are involved in the partnership; partnerships should demonstrate reciprocal resource sharing
- Ensure that any Indigenous communities, Environmental Justice and frontline populations in the area are equitably represented
- Must include a plan for engagement beyond partner organizations to ensure individuals, not just co-providers, are part of the planning and implementation
- Work to change unequal power structures and dynamics that may prevent marginalized communities or individual voices from participating in the process
- Whenever possible, hire from within in the community or the people who will be specifically affected by the project
- Balance current needs of the community with solutions that can adapt to changing conditions over the long term (e.g., future flood projections)
- Adhere to any local, state, or federal public health guidance regarding COVID-19 health and safety

### **Eligible Respondents**

Nongovernmental organizations, municipal governments, regional councils and entities, academic institutions, and private for-profit corporations are eligible respondents. Individuals are not eligible respondents.

### **Eligible Communities**

The community visioning must be done in and with communities in New York State where managed retreat from flood prone areas has already occurred. It is not necessary for all structure demolition to be completed, but the real estate transaction must be underway (e.g., in contract) or complete at the time of application. This award is not intended for communities where managed retreat has not been implemented or is only expected to occur in the future.

### **Total Budget**

The Nature Conservancy has a total funding allocation of \$100,000 and seeks to distribute at least two awards with this allocation.

### **Period of Performance**

The period of performance is approximately 10 months, from February 2021 through November 2021.

## **3. Proposal Elements**

We are instituting a two-phase application process for this award. The first step is the submission of a pre-proposal that identifies the project team, identifies the location and ownership status of target properties and other high-level information as described below. From this pool of pre-proposals, we will then select up to 5 respondents to prepare and submit a more robust and detailed proposal.

### **Pre-Proposal Elements**

The project pre-proposal should not exceed two pages and should include the following elements:

- **Respondent Information**
  - Point of Contact, Description of Organization, Proposed Team

- **Community Description**
  - Name of town or city
  - The nature and extent of past, present, and future projections of flooding in the community
  - Managed retreat that has occurred to date or is in process and anticipated to be complete at a future date
  - Current ownership status and use of buyout sites
- **Partnerships**
  - Names and brief descriptions of partner organizations, entities, and/or individuals
  - Current status of Respondent's relationship with the organization(s)
  - Plan for identifying, engaging, and recruiting additional partners, participants, and community champions
- **Community Visioning Approach**
  - Activities and forums by which participants will be convened and a community vision will be co-created
  - Approach for ensuring compliance with any local, state, or federal public health guidance regarding COVID-19
- **Budget**
  - Estimate of total budget requested
  - In-kind match opportunities (not required)

## **Full Proposal Elements**

The full project proposal narrative should not exceed six pages (maps, budget tables and other figures are not included in this page count) and should include the following elements:

- **Respondent Information**
  - Point of Contact, Description of Organization, Proposed Team
  - Brief description of up to three recent, relevant projects that the Respondent has completed that demonstrate its ability to achieve the objective of this RFP.
- **Community Description**
  - Name of town or city
  - The nature and extent of past, present, and future projections of flooding in the community
  - Managed retreat that has occurred to date or anticipated to occur at a future date
  - Current ownership status and use of buyout sites
  - Aerial photographs and/or maps of buyout sites, indicating parcel ownership (required)
  - Anecdotes of community perceptions of the buyout sites (optional)

- Photos of current land use and activities on buyout sites (optional)
- Identification of additional properties nearby considering or in the process of buyouts (if applicable)
- **Partnership**
  - Names and brief descriptions of partner organizations, entities, and/or individuals
  - Current status of Respondent's relationship with the organization(s)
  - Plan for identifying, engaging, and recruiting additional partners, participants, and community champions
  - Explicit identification of roles and responsibilities.
  - Letters of Support
- **Project Management**
  - Overall project schedule, planned activities and meetings, outreach and communications plan, and deliverables of this project over the course of the period of performance.
  - Approach for ensuring compliance with any local, state, or federal public health guidance regarding COVID-19
- **Metrics**
  - Qualitative and/or quantitative metrics that will be used to measure impact (e.g., number of community members and community-based organization participating in visioning sessions; number of surveys, workshops, or other community visioning tools used)
- **Budget**
  - Follow the budget template provided below

### **Full Proposal Project Budget Template**

*Funds Requested*

<b>Description of Activity/Services</b>	<b>Entity</b> (name of organization & job title, if applicable)	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
	<b>TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST</b>	

*In-kind Match (not required)*

Description of Activity/Services	Entity (name of organization & job title, if applicable)	Estimated Match Value
	<b>TOTAL MATCH</b>	

#### 4. General Administrative Provisions

##### Anticipated Schedule

The Conservancy (TNC) anticipates the following schedule of activities:

RFP Activities	Due Date
TNC Issues RFP	11/2/2020
Informational Session #1 for Respondents	11/10/2020
Informational Session #2 for Respondents	11/13/2020
Respondent Submits Clarification Questions – Pre-proposal	11/16/2020
TNC Issues Responses to Clarification Questions – Pre-proposal	11/20/2020
Respondent Written Pre-Proposals Due	12/2/2020
TNC Invites Selected Respondents to Submit Full Proposals	12/9/2020
Respondent Submits Clarification Questions – Full proposal	12/19/2020
TNC Issues Responses to Clarification Questions – Full proposal	12/23/2020
Respondent Written Full Proposals Due	1/8/2021
Respondent Interviews, if required	1/11 – 1/22/2021
Final Respondent(s) Selected & Notified	Late-January
Award and Contract Execution	Early- to mid-February

##### Informational Sessions

Two virtual informational sessions have been scheduled to answer questions from prospective Respondents about this funding opportunity and provide technical assistance. Participation is not required but is highly encouraged. Session dates are as follows:

###### Information Session #1

Date: Tuesday 11/10/2020

Time: 2:00 PM

<https://tnc.zoom.us/j/95707338544?pwd=MjAyck1HYlc0WnZkekNGVTR3cm13dz09>

**Meeting ID:** 957 0733 8544

**Passcode:** climate

**Join via phone:** 646-876-9923

**Information Session #2**

Date: Friday 11/13/2020

Time: 10:00 AM

<https://tnc.zoom.us/j/98201646839?pwd=L044cGdBenoxZm85YzFJK1gyYlJPUT09>

**Meeting ID:** 982 0164 6839

**Passcode:** climate

**Join via phone:** 646-876-9923

The Conservancy will collect questions in advance to answer during this webinar. Please submit questions to [lisa.fascilla@TNC.ORG](mailto:lisa.fascilla@TNC.ORG) by Monday November 9, 2020 12:00 PM.

**Clarification Questions**

In addition to Informational Sessions, prospective Respondents requiring additional information or desiring clarifications regarding this RFP can present a written request for clarification to the Conservancy via email. In e-mail communications, please reference “Community Visioning following Managed Retreat RFP” in the subject line to Lisa Fascilla, at [lisa.fascilla@TNC.ORG](mailto:lisa.fascilla@TNC.ORG).

Questions about the pre-proposal must be submitted by November 16, 2020 3:00 PM.

Questions about the full proposal must be submitted by December 19, 2020 3:00 PM.

**5. Submission Requirements****Submission of the Proposal**

Respondents will send responses to this RFP via email to Lisa Fascilla at [lisa.fascilla@TNC.ORG](mailto:lisa.fascilla@TNC.ORG)

The subject line should include: “Community Visioning following Managed Retreat – [Respondent Name] Submission”

**Conflict of Interest Disclosures**

It is the policy of The Nature Conservancy (“TNC”) to identify actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in any situation in which TNC has a significant business interest. To assist TNC in complying with this policy, we request that all individuals and/or organizations that will be involved in a proposed transaction with TNC complete our Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form. This relates to people who will be working, directly or indirectly, to respond to this RFP, as well as may be doing the resultant work if the Contractor receives the contract.

Respondents should complete the attached Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form and send with your RFP response.



**Format and Page Limit**

Respondents must format their proposals using the following:

- **Font:** 11 point, Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman
- **Spacing:** Single line
- **Page size:** 8.5 x 11"
- **File format:** PDF
- **Page limit:** 2 pages for pre-proposals; 6 pages for full proposals (maps, budget tables, and other figures are not included in this page count)

**6. Attachment:**

The Nature Conservancy's Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form