**Advancing Equity and Social Justice through Land Conservation**

***Request for Proposals***

*August 17, 2017*

**BACKGROUND**

King County has a goal to finish the job of protecting all of the remaining unprotected high conservation value lands in the County. King County has identified 66,000 acres of unprotected high conservation value lands in the unincorporated areas, and is actively working with all 39 cities in King County to identify high conservation value lands within their boundaries that should also be protected.

Another primary goal of finishing the job of conservation is to ensure green space is equitably distributed across all communities in King County so that *all* county residents have easy access to green space in their community. We are striving for “open space equity.”

King County and its partners have worked for decades to identify and protect conservation land to advance salmon recovery, protect ecological systems, support forestry and agricultural resource economies, and to provide parks and trails; the scientific and policy support for these efforts is well developed. The work to understand how to conserving land can advance equity and social justice is in earlier stages of development.

Initial analysis by County staff and its partners indicates that there are communities in King County – especially in urban areas – that do not have good access to green space. By analyzing the distribution of green space, demographic measures, and health outcomes related to environmental quality, the County has developed a draft map showing the communities where adding additional green space would result in more equitable distribution of the green space benefits.

In the first phase of Land Conservation Initiative Advisory Group meetings, King County and partners unanimously agreed upon the importance of advancing conservation in ways that also promote equity and social justice, including a working target that all residents should have easy access to publicly-accessible green space by a date certain (to be determined). A subset of Advisory Group representatives have worked to develop an initial framework to define “open space equity” and have developed preliminary ideas for ways to allocate funding to advance equity by acquiring new green space in underserved areas and preliminary targets to measure success in improving equity.

The purpose of this RFP is to assist the County and partners in more clearly defining and articulating the goal of ensuring all residents have easy access to green space, refining the target or performance metrics to tangibly and transparently measure progress towards the goal, and providing feedback on potential tools and approaches to achieving the goal, including refining a method for identifying lands that will eliminate disparities related to open space and related health outcomes and demographic factors. It is essential for any such method to be rooted in community engagement and input. The work done under this RPF will then feed back into the Land Conservation Initiative Advisory Group.

In summary, the main activities under this contract are to

1. Conduct community outreach to refine the concept and definition of open space equity and ensure proposed outcomes will really serve communities;
2. Conduct community outreach to refine a target or performance metrics against which the region can tangibly and transparently measure progress; the target should include both outcome and time components;
3. Provide feedback on methods for allocating funding for land conservation in ways that best ensure open space equity and alignment with community interests; and
4. Recommend implementation steps and communicate the proposed steps both internally and back to the communities we’ve engaged through this process.

More information about [King County’s Land Conservation Initiative](http://kingcounty.gov/services/environment/water-and-land/land-conservation.aspx).
More information about [Open Space Equity](http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/water-and-land/land-conservation/meeting-11-17-16/powerpoint-equity-discussion.pdf) work to date.

**SCOPE OF WORK**

King County has $40,000 to apply to this work. The expectation is that work should be substantially completed by the end of November 2017. The desired tasks are:

**TASK 1 Research and Community Engagement Plan Development**

*Understand work to date and develop a plan to engage the community to refine the goal, target, implementation steps and understand what success looks like.*

* Review relevant work completed to date on the Land Conservation Initiative, including:
	+ Advisory group meeting materials, including the Final Report, draft equity mapping work King County has developed, and a poll conducted for the Advisory Group.
	+ Open Space Equity subgroup work.
* Interview staff from organizational partners (e.g., Forterra, Trust for Public Lands (TPL)) regarding their past and current land conservation equity-related work, as well as their capacity to support future work to advance equity in King County.
* Interview equity advancement organizations about their perspective on “open space equity.”
* Research and identify effective strategies for eliciting proposals from, and allocating funding to, a variety of potential recipients (e.g., city governments, community organizations, regional NGOs).
* Develop an outreach and communication plan to solicit input from communities and stakeholders regarding the Land Conservation Initiative generally, and specifically regarding a way to effectively distribute funding to advance equity (see Task 2).
	+ Stakeholders should include, but not be limited to: city governments, foundations, “Friends of…” groups, and community organizations.

**Potential Deliverables**

* Outreach and community engagement plan

**TASK 2 Implementation – Community engagement and input**

*Implement the community engagement plan.*

* Conduct community meetings and conversations to solicit input on:
* The overall Land Conservation Initiative, including the poll questions used by the Advisory Group in Phase 1.
* The open space equity goal and definition
* The criteria the County has used in the draft equity map
* The proposed method of allocating funding for land conservation projects that advance equity throughout King County.
* Targets and performance metrics to measure progress

**Potential Deliverables**

* Community/stakeholder meetings, including agendas and administration of audience polling (polling questions have already been developed; however, a polling method needs to be developed)
* Report of community reactions and input, polling results

**TASK 3 Recommendations**

*Based on community input, recommend to King County and partners refinements to the definition of open space equity, methods to allocate funding to promote open space equity, and performance metrics.*

**Potential Deliverables:**

* Recommendations on refinements to the definition of open space equity, and what and where it looks like on the ground
* Recommendations regarding a method for allocating funding for land conservation projects that will advance equity throughout King County. This method should:
	+ Be flexible, to accommodate the use of funding to support acquisitions of varying types of land by varying communities
	+ Be simple and user friendly
	+ Have enough rigor to ensure the funding in this category advances equity
	+ Be consistent with allowed uses of likely funding sources
	+ Have transparent criteria and process available to participants.
* Recommendations on targets and performance metrics for advancing equity in the context of the Land Conservation Initiative

**SUBMITTAL GUIDELINES AND SCORING**

***Narrative proposal (30 points)***

Please submit a narrative proposal not exceeding three pages in length. The narrative should:

* Describe your organization’s qualifications and experience with community engagement efforts related to environmental causes, particularly with respect to engaging diverse and historically underserved communities.
* Explain the steps you will take to achieve the desired outcomes in each of the three primary tasks.
* Describe your viewpoint on the relationship between land conservation and equity and social justice.

***Project examples (30 points)***

Please provide at least two and not more than five examples of past projects which are relevant to the type of work to be completed in this project and demonstrate your ability to succeed in this project. Materials provided to describe example projects will not count as part of the three-page narrative limit.

***Résumés (20 points)***

Please provide résumés with experience and qualifications of the staff who will be working on the project. Résumés not count as part of the three-page narrative limit.

***Budget (20 points)***

Please provide a simple budget for completing each of the three tasks. The budget should show hourly or daily rates and estimated amount of staff time for each task, as well as itemized costs and quantities for any materials and/or services. The budget will not count as part of the three-page narrative limit.

***Interviews (optional) (50 points)***

Interviews may be conducted, if a selection is not made on the basis of the written submittals alone. Those consultants selected, if any, to interview with the Selection Board will be notified. Instructions for the interview will be given at the time of notification.

**SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Proposals are due by **5pm on September 8, 2017 and may** be submitted in electronic or hard copy format.

**Please submit proposals to:**

Julie Reardon

201 S Jackson St., Suite 600

Seattle, WA 98104Julie.reardon@kingcounty.gov

**IMPORTANT: All proposers must register as “vendors” in King County’s database. This process takes about 20 minutes and can be initiated at this link:** <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/finance-business-operations/procurement/for-business/register.aspx>

***QUESTIONS?*** *Contact Michael Murphy at 206-477-4781 or* *Michael.murphy@kingcounty.gov**. All questions asked and answers provided will be made available upon request.*