

## REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REI)



A new grant program to activate Philadelphia's riverfronts and transform the city's relationship to the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers.

**Expression of Interest due Friday, June 13, 2008**

**Pre-proposal meeting will be held at DVRPC on Monday, May 12, 2008 at 2:00 PM  
ACP Building • 190 N. Independence Mall West • 8th Floor • Philadelphia, PA 19106**



**Delaware Valley  
Regional Planning  
Commission**



## Take Me to the River – Request for Expression of Interest (REI)

Recent years have seen the completion of numerous planning efforts along the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, aimed at taking advantage of the city's riverfronts as new places for living, recreation, working, and environmental enhancement. Take Me to the River is targeted at funding low-cost, high-impact, catalytic projects to begin to realize the goals of some of this planning work. The intent is to bring new and visible attention to the riverfronts, and increase access between communities and the rivers to allow a greater number of Philadelphians to enjoy these assets.

The Take Me to the River Grant Program, administered by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, is an opportunity to activate the city's riverfronts and transform Philadelphia's relationship to the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. It is intended to:

- Bring people and activity to the river for events, programs, and recreation
- Develop public access to the rivers' edges by enhancing the quality of physical and visual connection between the riverfronts and neighborhoods
- Establish the riverfronts as distinctive places for residents and visitors
- Create livable and walkable communities along the riverfronts by encouraging a mix of public improvements
- Foster civic pride and stewardship of the riverfronts among residents
- Improve the environmental quality of the riverfronts and educate the public about sustainable riverfront development
- Build partnerships amongst a diverse set of stakeholder groups and land holding entities to secure long-term investment in the riverfront

### Who is DVRPC?

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area, defined as the City of Philadelphia and the surrounding counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC was created in 1965 through an agreement between the two states and charged with the "continuing, comprehensive, coordinated transportation and regional planning" of the region.

### Eligible Activities

Take Me to the River Grants support planning, programming and capital projects. The program represents an opportunity for neighborhood groups and nonprofit organizations to further support local revitalization efforts along the riverfronts in Philadelphia, and to seed "small success projects" or "early action items" that offer a big impact from a small investment, and most importantly, bring people to the river.

The major goal of this initiative is to reconnect citizens and neighborhoods with the river. Activities undertaken with Take Me to the River Grants should serve to improve the waterfront and create a sense of place. Projects must demonstrate relation to previous riverfront planning efforts, in terms of realizing or building a connection to projects, goals, and objectives of past plans.

Eligible planning projects should be later stage work that is responsive to efforts from prior plans. For example, eligible activities may include feasibility studies for a project identified in an existing plan, or engineering or design work on a river walk or pocket park. Eligible programming should serve to energize the river and bring people to it, while exhibiting creativity. Examples could include new festivals, ballroom dancing on the river, or community arts projects. Capital projects may either be small scale, high-impact projects, or funds may be used in leverage with other funds to support larger endeavors. Projects could include art installations, park enhancements, recreation amenities, or access trails. Projects need not be permanent, rather they could be temporary installations that demonstrate new ideas for the riverfront (that could one day be permanent).

The list below is illustrative of eligible activities. Other proposed activities, not identified here, that meet the selection criteria, will also be considered.

**Planning (\$100,000 Maximum Grant)**

- Late-state planning, final design
- Feasibility studies
- Site-specific plans stemming from a previous, larger planning effort
- Technical assistance to neighborhoods, such as site plan reviews

**Programming (\$100,000 Maximum Grant)**

- Festivals
- Interpretive programs (around local history, riverfront habitat, conservation, etc)
- Ecotourism
- Performances
- Educational events

**Capital Projects (\$200,000 Maximum Grant)**

- Riverfront trails (or portions of trail projects)
- Bridge/underpass lighting
- Recreation facilities (such as playfields and playgrounds)
- Pedestrian amenities (such as lighting, benches, trail markers)
- Plantings, lighting, street furniture
- New parks or restoration of existing parks
- Gateways, wayfinding or other signage
- Public art (or temporary installations)
- Boat launches
- Environmental remediation
- Leveraged with other funding sources towards larger capital projects



## Geographic Areas of Eligibility

The plan, program, or capital project must take place along the Delaware or Schuylkill Rivers in Philadelphia. Applicant must demonstrate the proximity and/or connection of the project to the riverfront (so for example, a wayfinding or signage project may position signs within adjacent neighborhoods leading to the river, or lighting of an I-95 underpass may make access to the riverfront safer and more pleasant).

## Who May Apply?

Take Me to the River Grants are intended to support the efforts of riverfront, community-based organizations or citywide groups that will locate a project along the riverfront. Applicants may be from any citywide or neighborhood group, civic organization, business improvement district, or arts or cultural organization. If two or more organizations are submitting a multi-neighborhood project, a lead organization must be indicated on the application form.

Organizations do not have to be classified as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; however, they must demonstrate organizational capacity to receive and administer grant funding. In addition, all applicants must demonstrate that they either have site control or permission from the current owner or City of Philadelphia to use the relevant riverfront property.

## Available Funds

For Fiscal Year 2009, up to \$1 million is available for Take Me to the River Grants. Planning grant requests may not exceed \$100,000, while programming grants can not exceed \$100,000 and capital projects not to exceed \$200,000.

## Invitation for Proposals

A committee of state, regional, and city representatives will review the submissions pursuant to this request for expression of interest (REI), and will invite selected respondents to submit a formal proposal. Respondents invited to submit proposals will also be asked to meet with the selection committee. The final selection of grants will be approved by the DVRPC Board. Projects will be selected on a competitive basis.

## Schedule

A Pre-proposal meeting will be held at DVRPC on Monday, May 12, 2008 at 2:00 PM.

All submissions pursuant to this request for expression of interest (REI) must be delivered to DVRPC **no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, June 13, 2008**. Applications received after the due date and time will not be considered. Respondents will be notified by Friday, July 11, 2008 as to whether they will be invited to submit a formal proposal.

Applicants finally selected to receive grants will enter into a contract with DVRPC. All project tasks must be completed no later than 24 months after the start of the contract, with no extensions. Quarterly progress reports must be submitted to DVRPC during the term of the contract.

## Bidding and the Use of Consultants

Proposed project activities may be undertaken by organizational staff, a planning or engineering consultant or some combination of the above as appropriate. If an outside consultant is sought, selection must be on a competitive basis in accordance with all state and federal requirements. DVRPC will assist the applicant by posting Requests for Proposals on the DVRPC website and providing technical assistance in consultant selection.

## Evaluation Criteria

Responses to this request for expression of interest should address the following criteria, upon which final projects will also be selected:

- Demonstrated relationship of proposed project to previous planning efforts
- Degree to which activity will bring people to the riverfront, improve/impact the riverfront, develop access to the waterfront, and/or connect neighborhoods to the riverfront
- Degree of creativity, innovation, design excellence, and/or community engagement
- Implementation strategy including ability to leverage other funding
- Experience and organizational capacity of applicant

## Response Requirements

Responses to this request for expression of interest should include a letter of maximum five (5) pages, briefly including the following information:

- A description of the applying organization, its programs and services, its geographic area and constituency served, and its accomplishments or efforts that relate to the riverfront.
- A description of the proposed project area and the extent of the geographic area served.
- A description of the proposed project, including how it connects to previous riverfront planning efforts; expected impacts; capacity to encourage additional public and private investment along the riverfront; how this will enhance the climate for change on the riverfront; and any other similar or related projects and their results.
- Proposed approach to implement and fund the project, including degree of site control or permission to use the relevant area of riverfront property. (Note: If respondents do not have site control, they are encouraged to include the level of support for the project from property owners and/or the City of Philadelphia, as applicable. Respondents may also address their ownership or capacity to obtain liability insurance, as well as any potential maintenance plan.)
- A rough narrative of the budget and timeline, including any other committed sources of funding for the project and matching funds.

**Note:** Responses should not include any additional pages, maps, plans, or general letters of support. Any material in addition to the five-page letter of interest will immediately be discarded upon receipt.



## Budget Requirements

A maximum of \$100,000 can be awarded for a planning project, \$100,000 maximum for programming, and \$200,000 maximum for capital projects. Applicants must be willing to provide a minimum of 10% of the total project budget as either cash or documented in-kind services.

## Grant Restrictions

Take Me to the River Grants may not be used for general operating costs, acquisition of land or buildings, new staff positions, litigation, lobbying, or scholarships. If selected, project costs will be reimbursed on a monthly basis, based on submittal of invoices documenting costs. DVRPC may be able to disburse some funds upfront if necessary for the project to move forward, with certain conditions. If selected, the applicant will be subject to the Standard Articles of Agreement as part of a contract agreement with DVRPC. The applicant and any consultant utilized will be required to provide detailed budget information during the contraction process.

## Contact

Please direct questions or concerns to Karin Morris at [kmorris@dvrpc.org](mailto:kmorris@dvrpc.org) or 215-238-2858.

A Pre-proposal meeting will be held at DVRPC on Monday, May 12, 2008 at 2:00 PM.

Responses are due by 5:00 PM on Friday, June 13, 2008. All responses must be submitted either by email or mailed on a CD or flash drive. Responses should be in standard PC-compatible text file formats (DOC, TXT, RTF, WPD) or as a PDF.

Responses should be submitted to [kmorris@dvrpc.org](mailto:kmorris@dvrpc.org) or mailed to:

Karin Morris  
Manager, Office of Smart Growth  
DVRPC  
190 N. Independence Mall West, 8th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1520

