

Watershed Alliance of York (WAY) Request for Proposals (RFP) Strategic Planning: If There's a Will, There's a WAY Questions & Answers

Q: Will contractors outside of York County be considered for this work?

A: We welcome any consultant to submit a proposal, including those outside of York County.

Q: If so, can this work be primarily performed virtually? What are the in-person expectations and capabilities? Is there an existing board meeting or strategic meeting that would house this as part of their agenda? Or would this consultant be able to bring the group together.

A: We foresee that much of the work could be performed virtually, with a few in-person meetings as needed. We do have bi-monthly board meetings that could facilitate some of the conversations, but the board is also willing to meet separately if more time is needed.

Q: If selected, should travel and accommodations for a strategic planning sessions be included in the \$20,000. Or is the \$20,000 budget just for time?

A: Travel can be included in the budget. There are no restrictions on what the budget should or should not entail – it just can't exceed \$20,000.

Q: How would you describe the board's current alignment regarding mission, priorities, and decision-making? Are there specific dynamics or capacity considerations a consultant should be aware of?

A: Two years ago, we went through a capacity building evaluation where we reevaluated our mission and priorities. The board members who were present during that process have a good grasp, we feel, of where we're headed as an organization. However, just last month, we had a few new board members join who have varying familiarity with the organization. We're in a season of growth, which has been good, but has also brought some growing pains.

Q: Are there existing partners or internal resources available for technical components such as water quality metrics, load reduction calculations, or GIS analysis?

A: Yes, we can provide information via reports for the technical components.

Q: What communication rhythm and decision-making structure do you anticipate between the consultant, yourself, and the board?

A: All main communication will run through the Executive Director and our Executive Committee (President, Vice-President, and Secretary).

Q: What level of detail do you envision for the final plan? Are there specific examples you have found particularly inspiring?

A: The biggest thing the board wants to see is a Strategic Plan that has specific and actionable goals – they don't want a paperwork exercise that then sits on a shelf. They've seen some of the Strategic Plans our local partners have developed, such as Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County, Horn Farm, and Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, so that's their frame of reference.

Q: Are there specific qualities, approaches, or values you are looking for in a partner?

A: A partner with the expertise to help guide our organization through this process (especially with several board members who have never gone through a strategic planning process) would be very helpful.

Q: Are there major events, grant cycles, or seasonal constraints that should shape the project pacing between March and October?

A: Sept. 12th – 20th is our annual Watershed Week, but outside of those dates there's not really any other constraints that would impact this project.

Q: When are the board meetings (as in the months that they take place)?

A: Board meetings take place in March (when the board will select the consultant to complete the work), May, July, August, October on the 3rd Monday of each month.

Q: How many board members are involved?

A: We have 11 board members, though the Executive Committee (President, Vice-President, and Secretary) will be the board members most involved in the process.

Q: Are you the only staff member?

A: WAY has only one staff member.

Q: Outside of the board and staff, are there any other stakeholders that will be mandatory to include from your perspective? (I have a few ideas but wanted to check)

A: A few local organizations who aren't captured as members on the board (i.e. Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County, York County Conservation District, Muddy Creek Trout Unlimited, a municipal representative or two, and potentially even some local foundation representatives.

Q: Under the Scope of Services, Evaluation Measures section, are a., b., and c. areas for which you already have processes for gathering that information or would the consultant be supporting WAY in building the mechanisms to gather this data for the first time?

A: The processes for gathering this info are already in place for a and c, and WAY can provide what data we do currently have to the selected consultant. We'd need assistance developing the survey referenced in b, though.

Q: Is there something in particular you are looking to see with the samples that I can be sure to include?

A: As long as there are references listed showing that you have completed previous strategic plans, I think the board would be comfortable with that. The biggest thing the board wants to see (and would be looking for in any of the samples provided) is a Strategic Plan that has specific and actionable goals- they don't want to go through a paperwork exercise that then sits on a shelf.

Q: Do you have a sense of the approximate number of stakeholders or partners you'd like included?

A: We easily came up with a list of 9 stakeholders, so we'd say between 10-15.

Q: When technical reports are provided, will they come with synthesized summaries, or would you prefer that the raw data is integrated into the strategic plan?

A: Integrating the raw data into the plan will be fine. The Evaluation Measures are to be included as a



condition of the grant funding.

Q: Of the plans you referenced (FNLT, Horn Farm, LSRK), is there one that best reflects the level of detail and tone the board is hoping for?

A: There were no strong feelings from the board as to which of those three examples resonated the most with them.

Q: When decisions or approvals are needed during the process, will the Executive Committee be empowered to make those decisions, or will they require full board approval?

A: The Executive Committee will be able to provide those approvals/decisions throughout the process, though the final Strategic Plan will go before the full board for ultimate approval.

Q: Are you requesting the consultant conduct the data collections as part of the scope?

A: For the data collection part of the scope of services, we can provide information via reports, specifically as it relates to bullet points “a” and “c” to include in the strategic plan. However, we’d need assistance to develop the survey referenced in “b”.

Q: How do you envision the consultants supporting the collection of evaluation measures outlined in 2a and 2c?

A: The processes for gathering this info are already in place for a and c, and WAY can provide what data we do currently have to the selected consultant.

Q: Do you have a baseline for this information already? If so, how was it measured or collected previously?

A: Yes, the information has been collected via project reports.

Q: Do you have an initial list of stakeholders and partners to be surveyed?

A: Yes, we just came up with a list of 9 stakeholders, so we’d say plan to reach out between 10-15.

Q: Would the survey be open to the public in addition to key stakeholders and partners?

A: It makes sense to open up the survey to those subscribed to our email list, as they have a vested interest in the happenings of WAY.

Q: Will you share any other questions and responses from other potential vendors? Will this information be posted to your website or circulated via email, if applicable?

A: Yes, after the question period ends on March 4th, the list of questions and answers will be posted on our website.

Q: Our interpretation of subtask 2 is that WAY would like us to use the “evaluation measures” to develop supporting data for the development of the Plan. That is, we would research WAY’s programs and compile data on the number of impacts (2a) and the watershed quality improvements (2c) and conduct the survey (2b) as part of the scope of work. The other interpretation is that elements 2a, 2b, 2c are included as “evaluation measures” to be included in the Plan but used in the future to evaluate the effectiveness of WAY’s efforts and implementation of the Plan. Our interpretation is it’s the former, please confirm.

A: The latter would be the case – the Evaluation Measures will be used as we implement the Strategic Plan to evaluate our efforts. At this time, we don’t need assistance with the gathering of the data, we’d just need assistance incorporating what data we do have into the Plan.

Q: Does WAY have any existing database, lists, maps, reports, etc. with data on WAY's current and former stakeholders, groups, programs, and projects to facilitate the compilation of data and survey development?

A: The processes for gathering the Evaluation Measures information are already in place for a and c, and WAY can provide what data we do currently have to the selected consultant. We'd need assistance developing the survey referenced in b, though we do have a list of stakeholders to share the survey with.

Q: With the proposed budget of \$20,000.00, this would provide little flexibility in a firm's ability to pivot should unforeseen information present itself in the outreach and discovery phase of this effort. To that point, in the desire to not pigeonhole the vision of WAY and the abilities of KCI. Is this ceiling able to be raised to the awarded firm?

A: Unfortunately, at this time the budget is capped at \$20,000.

Q: Can you share a little more about this data gathering process and the time it takes to update this data? With this being a limited budget project, we want to make sure we understand this scope of work and are able to complete it within the budget. Additionally, we would like to make sure we have the tools and the proper qualifications as well.

A: There shouldn't be too much time needed on the consultant's end for the data gathering – we'll take care of getting the info together to provide to the consultant to incorporate into the plan.

Q: Is the most recent data/conclusions currently available in a report or on your website for reference? Could you share that?

A: A copy of our 2025 Summary Report is attached

Q: Is this the first time WAY has conducted strategic planning, or just the first time since having an ED in place? And if there were prior strategic plans, when was the last one? Also, when were the mission, vision, values, and guiding principles developed?

A: This isn't the first time WAY has completed a strategic plan (the last time, according to my records would have been in 2014, though we're not sure it was ever finalized), but it is the first time since having my position in place. Our mission, vision, etc. were last updated in 2021.