

RFP Addendum:

Bellefonte to Milesburg Trail Feasibility Study & Pre-Construction Analysis

Optional Pre-Bid Meeting Notes

Questions & Answers



Compiled on 2/22/2017 by Andrew Artz, Active Transportation Intern, Centre Regional Planning Agency

Final review on 3/6/2017 by Mike Bloom, Senior Transportation Planner, Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Project Background:

The Centre County Board of Commissioners, in collaboration with Bellefonte Borough and a number of community organizations have decided to pursue the development of a new, approximately 2.5 mile, multi-purpose trail (or other facility type) connecting Bellefonte and Milesburg Boroughs in Centre County. It is envisioned to follow the internationally acclaimed Spring Creek and the historic alignment of the Bald Eagle and Spring Creek Canal.

The first step of this process is the completion of a comprehensive feasibility study & pre-construction analysis. The resulting document will define a facility type (multi-purpose trail, shared use path, on/off road, etc.), a preferred alignment and outline required permitting, easements, right-of-way acquisitions and any environmental/historic/prehistoric impacts requiring study. It will also provide specific and very detailed cost estimates for engineering, acquisition, environmental clearance, utility relocation, permitting and construction.

Obtaining a "Request for Proposals"

A copy of the "Request for Proposals" may be obtained, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm, from:

Centre County Planning and Community Development Office
Willowbank Office Building – Third Floor
420 Holmes Street
Bellefonte, PA 16823.

An electronic copy may also be obtained by phone or email request to:

Mike Bloom, Senior Planner
Phone: 814-355-6791
Email: dmbloom@centrecountypa.gov

Sealed proposals must be received no later than 4:00 pm EST on Monday, March 13, 2017.

The optional pre-bid meeting to discuss the project scope of work was held at 10:00 am EST on Wednesday, February 22, 2017.

Further information related to Additional Project Information or Key Reference Documents may be found at:
<http://centrecountypa.gov/index.aspx?nid=860>

Anticipated Key Dates:

Task	Date
Advertised Publicly	February 10
Optional Pre-Bid Meeting	February 22 (10:00 am EST)
Proposals Due	March 13 (4:00 pm EST)
Proposals Announced	March 14 (Commissioner Meeting)
Proposal Evaluations	March 14 - March 22
Consultant Interviews (If needed)	March 29 & March 30
Selection by Commissioners	April 4 (Commissioner Meeting)
Contract Negotiations	April 5 – April 11
CFA Review of Contract	April 11 – April 25
Contract Execution by Commissioners	May 2 (Commissioner Meeting)
Notice to Proceed	May 3
Completion of Service	January 31, 2018 (or before)

Presentation:

At the Optional Pre-Bid meeting on Tuesday, February 22nd, Senior Transportation Planner for Centre County Mike Bloom presented a short introduction to the project and fielded questions presented by prospective consultants. Also in attendance from the project team were Bellefonte Borough Mayor Tom Wilson, Bellefonte resident Dr. Jack Schuster, and Active Transportation Intern Andrew Artz.

The presentation lasted just over 30 minutes and included the following key pieces of information:

1. The proposed trail is a non-motorized trail, not intended for snowmobile or ATV use.
2. Consultant Proposals should highlight experiences with projects that have used TAP funding.
3. Centre County would contribute “in-kind” services to the project including GIS data sets and the time of County staff.
4. Community engagement and sharing information with the public is important to the county.
5. There are four municipalities within the study area.
 - a. Milesburg Borough
 - b. Boggs Township
 - c. Spring Township
 - d. Bellefonte Borough
6. There are around 100 parcels within the entire study area.
7. SEDA-COG operates the railroad within the study area.
8. PA Fish and Boat Commission operates a boat launch within the study area.
9. Harmony Forge Inn is a historic place within the study area.
10. The former Bald Eagle & Spring Creek Navigation Canal Company canal is another historic resource in this study area.
11. West Penn Power (First Energy) operates the electrical utilities within the study area.
12. The feasibility study & pre-construction analysis should include detailed cost estimates required to move the project into the design phase.
13. The feasibility study & pre-construction analysis must identify all permitting, right-of-way and easements required to move the project into the design phase.
14. A suggested northern terminus for the trail may be Church Street or Wingate Little League Softball Field.
15. A suggested southern terminus for the trail may be Krauss Park or the Gamble Mill parking lot, owned by SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority.

NOTE:

Per PennDOT Publication 93:

- Your findings will likely be used in a future grant application for State or Federal Funds for the design stage
- As consultant on this study, your firm will likely not be eligible to bid on the future engineering/design phase

A copy of the presentation is available at the following link:

<http://centrecountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4142>

Prospective consultants should direct all further questions to Mike Bloom at:

Phone: 814-355-6791

Email: dmbloom@centrecountypa.gov

Questions:

Question 1: Clarification of RFP Section 2.1.1 – what type of electronic copies would be acceptable?

In addition to the required hard copies, consultants are asked to submit 3 electronic copies of their proposal to the county. Consultants may submit these electronic copies of the sealed bid proposal on either a Compact Disk or USB thumb drive.

The document should be saved as a PDF.

Question 2: Clarification of RFP Section 3.3.1 (Perform a title search to determine the ownership status of the ROW.)

Consultants should identify in the feasibility study & pre-construction analysis the owner of all parcels related to the proposed trail alignment. The County needs the accurate information necessary to move the project into the design phase.

Question 3: Clarification of RFP Section 3.3.4 (Provide an overview of the Federal Right-of-Way acquisition process.)

Centre County does not own land within the study area. Local governments may need to acquire ROW to accommodate any proposed alignments. Consultants should show in their proposals that they are familiar with and understand the Federal Right-of-Way acquisition process. Examples of past experience with the Federal Right-of-Way acquisition process should also be shared.

Question 4: Clarification of RFP Section 3.5.4 (c) (Identify any species of concern or sensitive habitat areas in the project area and/or the existence of aggressive, weedy species/major invasive plants)

Consultants are advised to run a PNDI search as your starting point for this effort. The PNDI and other available resources should be utilized to help in the development of the proposed trail alignment. Consultants should identify in the feasibility study & pre-construction analysis any species of concern or sensitive habitat areas in the proposed trail alignment and/or those in the surrounding area that may be impacted by construction and the area's future use as a trail. This information may include research into the presence of Indiana Brown Bat, Spade Foot Toad, or Didymo.

As part of this discussion, a question was asked about the McCoy Dam project of 2008.

From PFBC site: The McCoy-Linn Dam Removal, Habitat Restoration, and Access Improvement Project - McCoy-Linn Dam was a ~12 ft high dam that impounded about a half-mile reach of Spring Creek between the towns of Bellefonte and Milesburg. A dam existed at this site since the late 1700's in conjunction with iron forges, furnaces, and canals. The dam was rebuilt after the 1936 flood to generate hydroelectric power for West Penn Power. This operation ceased in 1950 and the dam had been idle and non-functional ever since, posing a liability and safety hazard, preventing the passage of fish and other aquatic life, and altering water temperatures and aquatic habitat. The dam and surrounding property, including remnants of the canal, were purchased by the PFBC in the early 1980s. After exploring the feasibility of refurbishing the infrastructure for hydropower operations, it was determined that the best

long-term management of the site included removal of the dam and follow-up habitat restoration. From 1980 - 2007, the site provided limited and unimproved angler access. After several years of planning, coordination, and fund- raising the dam was removed in September 2007 and the stream was returned to a free-flowing state for the first time in over 200 years. In addition to removal of the dam and associated habitat restoration, a public access and parking area were created at the site in 2008 along with the addition of several instream habitat improvement devices in the former impoundment. Work for 2009 included riparian plantings, bank stabilization, additional instream habitat structures, and the official opening of the public access area. As a result of the project, over 2,000 feet of this high quality trout fishery has been restored, public access for fishing, boating, and other recreation has been greatly improved, and portions of the historic canal system have been preserved with improved visibility of this unique artifact.”

We are working with Clearwater Conservancy to access an electronic copy of the McCoy Dam Removal study. If that is available, it will be posted to the county website.

Below are some addition websites for your consideration:

http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_20026634.pdf

<http://www.pgc.pa.gov/WILDLIFE/ENDANGEREDANDTHREATENED/Pages/default.aspx>

Question 5: Clarification of RFP Section 3.6.6 (Prepare a phased implementation plan for future trail development)

The feasibility study & pre-construction analysis should include suggestions as to how to “phase” construction of the trail. This may be necessary in the event that construction funding or other factors impact the ability of this to be let as a single project.

Consultants are advised to consider utility of the trail phases and logical termini when developing a phasing plan.

Question 6: Clarification of RFP Section 4.7 (At least one member of the consulting team should have experience as a practitioner with recreation trail development and management.)

Firms should identify any project team members with previous experience related to recreation trail development and management in their selection proposals. This may include previous experience related to trail building, bicycle facilities, or another multi-modal improvement.

It is important to note that this study includes a pre-construction analysis. The County is looking for significant pre-construction details to prepare this alignment for submission for design and construction most likely using federal TAP funds or perhaps multi-modal funding. The County is asking for very detailed information on permitting, engineering costs and construction costs.

Question 7: Clarification of RFP Section 5.1.6 (i) (Conditions of Offer)

This section is looking for any conditions that the consultant firm/team places on the proposal as it may pertain to schedule, abilities to deliver services and any recommended revisions that the firm/team would suggest be made to the project scope of work.

Question 8: Where is there expected opposition or support from property owners?

At this time, we are unaware of opposition to the project. However, it should be noted that SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, West Penn Power, Bellefonte Borough and other individual property owners may have restrictions, limitations or objections to use of their respective properties that may impact potential alignment and /or project feasibility.

During past studies and project team evaluations of the study corridor, it was noted that there are particular areas that present potential “choke points” within possible alignments. Most notably the properties along Sunnyside Blvd, properties along the SEDA-COG rail line, the Bellefonte Waste Water Treatment facility and the business district near the midpoint of the study.

*Additional documents have been added to the county website under Key Reference Documents:
<http://centrecountypa.gov/index.aspx?nid=860>*

Question 9: What is the “international acclaim” of Spring Creek?

Surveys conducted by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission have consistently shown Spring Creek to be one of the most densely populated wild brown trout streams in the Keystone State. The health of the stream is a draw to sportsmen from across North America. <http://springcreekmonitoring.org/index.html> & <http://www.springcreekwatershed.org/>

Question 10: What is the Mach 1 Slalom Course? Where is it located?

The Mach 1 Team is a sport and recreational organization that competes nationally and teaches locally. They maintain the “Sunnyside Paddling Park” just north of Tussey Mountain Outfitters, accessible from the western shore of Spring Creek. <http://www.mach1team.org/Contact.shtml>

The County is aware of interest from the Mach 1 Team in constructing improved access and a possible new building within the study corridor. Outreach to the Mach 1 Team ownership will be an important part of the study.

Question 11: What is PennDOT’s involvement as a project partner?

At this time, PennDOT is not involved in the project. However, they are anticipated to be a future funding partner for possibly design and construction.

It is important to note: *Based on clarification from PennDOT District 2-0 and Central Office, consultants with ties to a construction contractor can be selected to perform the Bellefonte to Milesburg Feasibility Study & Pre-Construction Analysis, without precluding the construction contractor from bidding on any future construction phase of the trail.*

If a consultant is involved with a PennDOT feasibility study there are no restrictions regarding other design phases.

However, PennDOT Publication 93 notes (section attached): *If a consultant (either lead or sub-contractor) is involved or provides information used in preparation of an application/grant for state or federal funds to be used for the design stage of a project that consultant will not be eligible to bid on the design of the project.*

Note: Your findings will likely be used to prepare a grant application for state and/or federal funding. As such, your firm/team will likely not be eligible to bid on the future design phase of this project.

Question 12: To what extent should consultants identify the cost of easements?

Consultants should identify in the feasibility study & pre-construction analysis all easements related to the proposed trail alignment. Consultants are not required to assess each individual easement within the feasibility study, but should provide an approximate cost, and supporting data, for all easement acquisitions anticipated to be needed along the proposed trail alignment.

Question 13: Would the County explore the use of Eminent Domain?

It is unlikely that the County Commissioners would consider the use of Eminent Domain. The municipalities along the corridor could conceivably utilize Eminent Domain, but again it is considered unlikely.

Question 14: Why is the proposed completion of service on or before January 31, 2018?

Centre County planners have proposed an aggressive timeline based upon the anticipated use of federal Transportation Alternatives Program funding for construction. The County would plan to apply to DCNR for design funding in Early 2018 and it is anticipated that the next TAP funding round will also open in early 2018. Completion of the feasibility study & pre-construction analysis is a prerequisite to applying for these funds.

Question 15: Who owns the canal?

From our research, it appears that the majority of the canal is owned by the PA Fish and Boat Commission. However, consultants are expected to determine ownership based upon their own research.

We've discovered a historic map of the canal and a 1979 article from Town & Gown Magazine that details some of the canal history. These documents have been added to the county website under Key Reference Documents: <http://centrecountypa.gov/index.aspx?nid=860>

Question 16: Under 5.6.6” Demonstration that one individual on the project team is capable of sealing the final plan as a licensed landscape architect or professional engineer registered to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania”, is an architect’s seal acceptable as well?

The County used DCNR’s format for this RFP and as such, will defer to DCNR’s guidance.

Section 5.6.6 inadvertently left out architect as one of the eligible disciplines to prepare the plans.

DCNR’s policy for consultant qualifications for trail feasibility studies states:

“If the project requires any conceptual trail design work, the Bureau requires that the final report be sealed by a licensed landscape architect, architect or engineer licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A consultant or consulting team with documented expertise in greenway and trail planning is required”

Question 17: In regards to the Physical Inventory and Assessment Section, can you define the extent of the wildlife survey? Is your team looking for a fully marked up analysis report?

Consultants are advised to run a PNDI search as their starting point for this effort. The PNDI and other available resources should be utilized to help in the development of the proposed trail alignment. The intent of the pre-construction analysis report is to identify any species of concern or sensitive habitat areas in the proposed trail alignment and/or those in the surrounding area that may be impacted by construction and the area's future use as a trail.

Question 18: Could you also define the extent of the historical features inventory? Is the project scope looking for a historical report or key locations of historical features along the trail to consider for concept plans?

The intent of the pre-construction analysis report is to identify the "Areas of Potential Effects" (APE) based upon the proposed / recommended trail alignment. In addition to visually illustrating the boundaries of the APEs, please also submit shapefiles for your recommendation. Potential effects include traffic, visual, construction and other as may be identified for the project. Likewise, if no potential effects are identified, please provide the basis for that determination. At this level of analysis key locations of historic features are not as important as the identification of "historic themes" and their potential location, such as transportation, canal, iron industry, mining industry, et al. Please be advised that the PA State Historic Preservation Officer should have additional information relative to the removal of the McCoy Dam. That documentation may address some but not all of the potential historic resources in this corridor.

Below is the language included in the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended:

According to Section 106 regulations, the "Area of potential effects means the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of the historic properties, if any such properties exist. The area of potential effects is influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking". (36 CFR Part 800.16[d])

Question 19: What format works best for the final documents?

As noted in section 3.11.2, please submit fifteen (15) bound and five (5) electronic copy of the final report to the Centre County Planning and Community Development.

Given some of the documentation required as part of the pre-construction analysis, the County may recommend that the consultant provide GIS shapefiles. These GIS shapefiles would be particularly important as part of your documentation of the preferred trail alignment and identification of environmental and historic features within that alignment (Areas of Potential Effects).

Question 20: Are there any conflicts of interest for lead firms or subcontractors to the lead firm if PennDOT funding is to be used for future phases of development?

Based on clarification from PennDOT District 2-0 and Central Office, consultants with ties to a construction contractor can be selected to perform the Bellefonte to Milesburg Feasibility Study & Pre-Construction Analysis, without precluding the construction contractor from bidding on any future construction phase of the trail.

If a consultant is involved with a PennDOT feasibility study there are no restrictions regarding other design phases.

However, PennDOT Publication 93 notes (section attached): *If a consultant (either lead or sub-contractor) is involved or provides information used in preparation of an application/grant for state or federal funds to be used for the design stage of a project that consultant will not be eligible to bid on the design of the project.*

Please note: *Your findings will likely be used to prepare a grant application for state and/or federal funding. As such, your firm/team will likely not be eligible to bid on the future design phase for this project.*

1.5 – Engineering Involvement Restrictions

A consultant cannot be given the opportunity to provide work and services which may result in the consultant's reviewing or having contractual control over the review of its own work and services. A consultant, also, cannot be given the opportunity to shield and/or protect its work and services from evaluation and potential liabilities.

The **Engineering Involvement Restrictions Matrix** summarizes the guidelines to determine if a potential conflict of interest exists. The "Project Involvement" column of the Matrix indicates the activity a consultant is or was involved with and the "Restrictions" column lists activities that cannot be performed by that consultant.

Any questionable consultant involvements regarding the application of these guidelines must be presented to the CMS Chief on Appendix 1A Request for Consideration for Engineering Involvement Restrictions form for coordination with the Office of Chief Counsel, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Any exceptions to these guidelines must be approved prior to Shortlisting under standard selection procedures or Final Ranking under modified/enhanced modified selection procedures or submission of bid package or technical proposal for design-build projects.

In addition to the matrix, the following guidelines should be considered when determining if there is a potential conflict of interest:

1. Any consultant that provided or is providing any work and services to PennDOT for a design-build project will **not** be eligible to provide any work and services to the contractor design-build team for that project. Engineering Districts may use the Department Consultant that developed the conceptual design for Consultation During Construction, Department Review, or Construction Inspection.
2. Any consultant providing work or services for the contractor design-build team, such as Final Design or Peer Review, is not eligible for any involvement under a Department Agreement on that project.
3. Any consultant providing any work and services to PennDOT for a design project would not be eligible to provide any work and services as a prime consultant on a Consultant Management Project Manager (CMPM) agreement involving that project. A consultant would not be restricted from serving as a subconsultant on a CMPM agreement provided that its involvement on the CMPM agreement would have no affiliation respective to its design effort.
4. A consultant providing work or services to a developer, where the work or services directly or indirectly affect PennDOT's project (including the review of a Highway Occupancy Permit), will be restricted from any involvement under a Department Agreement on that project.
5. A consultant providing work and services to a local government agency as its Municipal Engineer will not be restricted from project involvement under a Department Agreement, provided that the Municipal Engineer's involvement with the Municipality does not require that it advise the Municipality in the Municipality's review of PennDOT's project.
6. A consultant under Agreement to a Municipality, or to a Municipal authority, to provide work or services for a Municipal project will not be restricted from project involvement under a Department Agreement, provided that the consultant's involvement with the Municipality does not require that it advise the Municipality in the Municipality's review of PennDOT's project and the projects are not related and no conflicts of interest exist between projects.
7. A consultant that is involved with a grant application or preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a particular project is not eligible to perform preliminary engineering or final design on that project.