REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PLAN FOR A PILOT
CANALWAY RECREATIONAL HUB
Revised May 8, 2020

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, through its nonprofit partner the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. (Erie Canalway), seeks proposals for a Conceptual Design Plan (CDP) of a pilot Canalway Recreational Hub (Hub). The Hub will be a distinctive, environmentally- and visitor-friendly immersion point with amenities for varied recreational enthusiasts to enjoy a day or multi-day journey along the New York State Canal System and its land- and water-based trail network. The purpose of this RFP is to enable Erie Canalway to identify a feasible Hub site and work with a “Sponsor” in planning, funding, and developing the pilot Hub.

Users of the Hub will include boaters, paddlers, cyclists, hikers and others using the New York State Canal System, the Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail and the New York State Canalway Water Trail. A Sponsor can be one or more municipalities, public and quasi-public agencies or authorities, and/or private for-profit or not-for-profit entities.

The CDP should build upon significant investments made to date by New York State, Erie Canalway and others to develop and promote the Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails/Empire State Trails and the New York State Canalway Water Trail/Empire State Water Trail. In addition, the CDP should capitalize on the unique heritage and recreational assets of the Canalway Corridor to provide visitors a transformative encounter with the canal environment. The ultimate goal of the Hub is to bring together public and private entities to generate healthy trail use, fuel new locally-based economic development and create a positive long-term community impact along the trail network, within the Canalway Corridor.

BACKGROUND:

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, designated by Congress in 2000, spans more than 500 miles across upstate New York. The New York State Canal System, including the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego canals, forms the spine of the National Heritage Corridor, providing a focus for water-based recreation and connecting more than 200 communities and historic sites across the region. The Canalway Corridor also includes the 365-mile Erie Canalway Trail (and 62-mile Champlain Canalway Trail), which receives traffic volume of more than 1.58 million visits per year (source: “Visitor Research: Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor,” February 2018)

The same study, conducted for Erie Canalway about current and prospective visitors to the 500-mile Canalway Corridor, helped tourism promoters, businesses and heritage sites understand how to better attract and serve visitors, including boaters, cyclists, sightseers and vacationers. The study revealed that the Erie Canal is a tourism crown jewel for New York State, providing countless opportunities for residents and visitors alike to discover its history, enjoy its water activities and explore its attractions in surrounding towns and villages. One study finding in particular noted that those who rated their visit below seven out of 10 (10 being the best on the scale) remarked on the need for more facilities (showers, bathrooms, drinking water) and were worried about in-between amenities.
PROPOSALS:

Proposals may be submitted by municipalities, public and quasi-public agencies and authorities, and private for-profit and not-for-profit entities. Public/private partnerships are encouraged.

The proposal should include the following:

1. Site Description

   ▪ A map or maps clearly defining the proposed site, parcel boundaries, neighboring sites and land uses, roadways, etc.;
   ▪ Acreage, zoning, existing buildings, and other site encumbrances and opportunities;
   ▪ Ownership of all parcels that would comprise the site;
   ▪ Existing site infrastructure including water, sewer, utilities, etc.;
   ▪ A narrative description of the site addressing such factors as topography, vegetation, environmental issues, site history, and any other relevant issues; and
   ▪ Site photos.

2. Site Amenities

Address the current availability or potential for providing the following amenities, services and facilities on or near the proposed site:

   ▪ Access to the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca and/or Oswego canals — as well as both the Canalway Trail and the New York State Canalway Water Trail — to provide maximum usage, visibility and convenience to users;
   ▪ Dockage and launches for boats, kayaks, canoes, and other watercraft;
   ▪ Parking for vehicles, trailers, RVs, etc.;
   ▪ Parks and other passive recreation areas;
   ▪ Lodging of all types (B&Bs, hostels, hotels, motels, etc.) – creative lodging opportunities, such as stationary canal boats docked on water, also will be considered;
   ▪ Camping;
   ▪ Restrooms and showers;
   ▪ Potable water;
   ▪ Food, supplies, and other provisions for hikers, bikers, paddlers, and boaters;
   ▪ Restaurants and other eating establishments;
   ▪ Seasonal events such as festivals, concerts, farmers markets, etc.;
   ▪ Secure storage for kayaks, canoes, bicycles, etc.;
   ▪ Wi-fi;
   ▪ Public transportation, taxi, and ride-sharing services;
   ▪ Boat, kayak, canoe, and bicycle repairs and parts;
   ▪ Fuel for motorized watercraft; and
   ▪ ADA-compliant handicapped accessibility.

3. Project Feasibility

Address the following feasibility factors:

   ▪ Site control – explain the project Sponsor’s current site control or ability to obtain site control of the property required for the project;
- Budget and funding – provide a general outline of capital improvements and other costs necessary to produce a working Hub site. Identify likely and other potential funding sources. Development in phases should be considered, with costs for the initial phase being the most important to detail. Erie Canalway anticipates collaborating with the selected Sponsor in producing a final development plan and in applying for funding of the project;

- For municipal and other public entities, the commitment or likelihood of private sector participation; and

- Any other factors that could impact the development of the pilot Hub site including, but not limited to environmental conditions, municipal approvals, easements, permits, etc.

4. **Sponsor Management**

Identify the project Sponsor (either a sole proponent or a lead Sponsor acting on behalf of two or more cooperating entities), and appropriate contact person. If the proposal involves participation by multiple entities, identify and explain the anticipated role of each additional party. If applicable, identify additional potential partners and stakeholders including businesses (such as lodging/accommodations, bike shops, restaurants, etc.), municipalities, federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, business groups, local media, etc.

**PROPOSAL SELECTION:**

Erie Canalway intends to select a single proposal that represents a feasible conceptual design plan for the development of a Canalway Recreational Hub and plans to collaborate with the Sponsor in further developing the plan, seeking funding and implementing the Hub. Erie Canalway reserves the right to reject any and all proposals to this RFP.

**PROJECT CONTACT/SEND SUBMISSION VIA E-MAIL TO:**

Bob Radliff, Executive Director, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor  
E-mail: Bob_Radliff@partner.nps.gov  
Phone: (518) 237-7000 ext. 203

Project submissions should be emailed and provided in PDF format. Please combine multiple files (proposal, sample materials and references) into a single PDF document. Files should not exceed 10MB. If submissions exceed this e-mail limit, an FTP site will be provided upon request.

**SCHEDULE OF KEY EVENTS AND DATES:**

April 15, 2020: Release of RFP  
June 5, 2020: RFPs must be received by Erie Canalway by 4:00 pm  
June 26, 2020: Anticipated proposal selection

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND:**

Websites: [www.eriecanalway.org](http://www.eriecanalway.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/eriecanalway](http://www.facebook.com/eriecanalway)  
Instagram: [@eriecanalway](http://@eriecanalway)

Canalway Challenge: [https://eriecanalway.org/explore/challenge](https://eriecanalway.org/explore/challenge)  
New York State Canalway Water Trail: [https://eriecanalway.org/explore/watertrail](https://eriecanalway.org/explore/watertrail)