



Amelia Street School Accessible Trail Design

Request for Proposals

Purpose: *The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is seeking proposals for the planning and design of a concept plan for an outdoor trail at Amelia Street School in Richmond, VA, located at 1821 Amelia Street, Richmond, VA, 23220. The concept plan is part of a project that will connect the school building to landscaped outdoor spaces built around the back of the school property. The trail will be designed to enable students with limitations (intellectual, behavioral, emotional and mobility) to access the outdoor landscape features at their school. The proposed design will incorporate educational and recreational amenities along the trail and include sustainable stormwater management practices.*

Background: The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (Alliance) is a regional nonprofit organization, founded in 1971 and has offices in Annapolis, MD, Lancaster, PA, Washington, D.C., and Richmond, VA. The Alliance restores the lands and waters of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Our collaborative and action-oriented approach delivers on-the-ground solutions, technical assistance, and builds capacity to achieve healthier lands and cleaner water. We envision clean water and resilient landscapes, cared for by all the people who live, work, and play in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Amelia Street School is a public school located in Richmond, Virginia that serves students ages 5 to 21 years with significant intellectual disabilities, behavioral issues, or complex health needs. Principal Mark Phillips has a goal of creating partnerships within the community who can bring expertise and resources to his school. His staff specifically is seeking partnerships that support hands-on activities related to functional life skills, and movement exploration using gross motor skills.

Beginning in March 2020, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Office of Sustainability converted 8,500 square feet of previously mowed lawn to group

plantings. These areas are native, conservation landscapes containing a combination of 122 trees, 84 shrubs and 1,500 grasses and/or perennials. One of the plantings was enhanced with a natural bench and walkway through an Eagle Scout project. In June 2021, VCU reached out to the Alliance for their expertise in environmental education since they knew Principal Phillips was seeking ways to connect his students to this new outdoor asset. Despite being an asset, the location of these five plantings is problematic. One sits downhill from the school building, over 100 feet away with no accessible pathway. The other four are located outside of the school's fenced-in playground and recreational space.

Project Scope:

The selected contractor will be responsible for the following:

- Developing a trail concept plan that aligns with the project goals, addresses user needs, and integrates with site's natural surroundings
- Site assessment, surveying and data gathering
- Consideration of trail amenities
- Consideration of stormwater features and any planting palettes
- Drafting of trail alignment or alignment options
- Attendance at a minimum of 5 project meetings

The selected contractor will develop a concept plan for a trail or trail system that connects the school building to the group plantings in order to encourage their use as educational tools. Developing a concept plan that considers ADA compliance and stormwater practices is a priority to this project. The selected contractor will work with Alliance staff, school staff members, students and key project partners and stakeholders. Together the partnership will brainstorm ideas and collaborate on a concept plan that puts students' needs first, and stormwater runoff as a high priority. The contractor will advise the team on creative solutions to green infrastructure (GI) best management practices to integrate into the trail design.

Design Objectives:

1. Accessible Trail Design: the concept plan will be used to guide engineering construction of a trail designed with the special needs of the student population as identified by the Principal and staff of Amelia Street School as top priority (ie. physical, behavioral, intellectual needs, etc.)

2. Stormwater Management: the concept plan will incorporate sustainable stormwater management and conservation landscaping techniques.

Timeline:

- RFP opens on November 1, 2023
- Last date for questions: December 1st, 2023
- Deadline for proposals: December 8th, 2023
- On site pre-bid meetings can be scheduled from November 1st through December 2023.

Site Conditions:



VCU Original Planting Plan from March 2020

Situated just north of the James River, Amelia Street is bordered by the urban neighborhoods of Randolph and Maymont, with cemeteries to the east and Maymont Foundation's grounds to the west. Nested on almost 10 acres of a City block, in the Shockoe Creek/Cannon's Branch watershed, stormwater drains to the James River, three quarters of a mile away, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. The front of the school building is level with the street, mostly flat and faces northeast. The back of the school building contains two

playgrounds, a basketball court, but is mainly a large field that slopes downward on an angle to the southwest with a fenced area surrounding the main recreational space. Community members from the surrounding neighborhoods make use of the amenities such as the basketball court, the playground, and the open green space during out of school time.



View of group plantings facing away from the Amelia Street school building.

Project Deliverables:

- Presentations and participation in stakeholder engagement meetings and visioning sessions (assume 3)
- Data analysis of survey results with key themes or actions
- Concept plan and map of accessible trail including amenities, layout and trail design
- Cost estimate of implementation of concept plan

Submission Requirements: The preferred project team will have trail design and stormwater management experience as well as a local presence in the Richmond region. Applicants are required to submit

- Names of proposal lead and staff
- Relevant experience: Provide experience of your firm or staff's trail design and stormwater management expertise
- Schedule for deliverables of project
- Cost proposal: Provide a breakdown of your fees and expenses, including design, site visits/travel, and any other applicable costs
- References: Include two references and at least one case study of a similar trail project you have completed

Evaluation: Evaluation of proposals will be performed by a small team of dedicated staff from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and project partners and will be based on the qualifications and experience of the bidding company in design of prior projects that include accessible trail layout, experience designing sustainable stormwater practices, quality of amenities and incorporation of input from the school community.

Communications: Proposals should be submitted in electronic format (PDF or download link, ie. Dropbox) to mdash@allianceforthebay.org no later than 11:59 pm on December 8th, 2023. Subject line heading should include "Amelia Street Trail Proposal." The Alliance anticipates contractor selection to occur by January 5th, 2024.