

# Thurston Conservation District Request for Proposal (#2022-5) Property to Accommodate Conservation & Education Center



## INTRODUCTION

The Thurston Conservation District (TCD) invites the submission of proposals for property to accommodate our new Conservation and Education Center in Thurston County.

TCD is a local non-regulatory subdivision of state government, which matches local natural resource concerns and needs with applicable technical assistance and financial resources to solve on-the-ground conservation issues with proven effective conservation practices.

**Project Title:** Property to Accommodate Conservation & Education Center

**Questions concerning this RFP must be submitted by 5:00 P.M., Tuesday, May 24, 2022.**

Questions may only be submitted by email to Susan Shelton at [sshelton@thurstoncd.com](mailto:sshelton@thurstoncd.com). All questions must be clearly marked "Questions for CEC Property RFP #2022-5" in the subject line of the email. All interested parties must register with Susan to be informed of any question responses.

**All proposals must be received by 5:00 P.M., Tuesday, May 31, 2022.**

Please submit a digital copy of your proposal to Susan Shelton at [sshelton@thurstoncd.com](mailto:sshelton@thurstoncd.com). All proposals must be clearly marked "Proposals for CEC Property RFP #2022-5" in the subject line of the email. Proposals must be received by Susan before the deadline. Mailed, faxed and in-person proposal submission is not available. Late proposals will not be accepted.

All responses and accompanying documentation will become the property of the District and will not be returned. Vendors accept all risks of late delivery of mailed response regardless of fault. Costs for developing the RFP response are entirely the obligation of the vendor.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.



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**1. DISTRICT BACKGROUND**

The Thurston Conservation District (TCD) was founded in 1947 and operates as a special purpose district under the authority of the State of Washington (Revised Code of Washington 89.08). The mission of the Thurston Conservation District, a non-regulatory agency, is to conserve and sustain the beneficial use and protection of local natural resources through partnerships with the County’s rural, agricultural, and urban communities, as well as, local, state, federal, and tribal agencies.

TCD is governed by a 5-member Board, 3 elected at large by the citizens of Thurston County, and 2 appointed by the State Conservation Commission. They are volunteer public officials who determine matters of policy and oversee the budget and management of the Executive Director. The Board hires a full-time Executive Director who is the lead administrator coordinating day-to-day activities.

TCD provides a range of natural resource and food security protection and improvement services to residents to support the following:

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation

- Local food production and consumption
- Preservation and expansion of working lands
- Protection and restoration of ecosystems
- Soil conservation and health
- Water Quality and Quantity

## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

As part of its five-year Strategic Plan, TCD has committed to locating and securing land by 2024 for the development of a Conservation Education Center (CEC).

The District plans to use the site to:

- Support beginning farmers, including urban and backyard farmers, with education and resources with which to manage their farmland and agricultural businesses.
- Serve existing producers with resources and support to manage and develop their farm operations.
- Provide site-specific education opportunities with classes and workshops for children and adults.
- Operate as a ‘Conservation Hub’ where other partners may meet, network, work, host events, share resources, and collaborate. And to serve as a one-stop-shop for Thurston County producers.

The final CEC development will include:

- A “Conservation Hub” facility of at least 14,000 SF for:
  - TCD office space for a minimum of 20 employees, including offices, reception area, restrooms, mudroom with shower, conference rooms, staff work areas, kitchen, and storage.
  - Partner spaces with offices for long- and short-term use and conference rooms.
- Outbuildings to store and maintain farm tools and equipment.
- Indoor public spaces for interpretive displays, demonstrations, trainings, and cooking/food processing.
- Outdoor public spaces for recreation, interpretive, and farming demonstration areas.
- Outdoor meeting and event spaces with possible outdoor restroom access.
- Adequate parking for staff and event attendees, with ADA, public transit, and school bus accessibility.

## 3. PROPERTY REQUIREMENTS

Thurston Conservation District solicits proposals from private, nonprofit, or public organizations interested in selling, leasing to own, or leasing property for the development of a Conservation & Education Center (CEC).

The property must be located in Thurston County.

### Spatial Requirements

- 5-10 or more acres – depending on the landscape features of the site.
- Must accommodate a ‘Conservation Hub’ facility of at least 14,000 SF.

### Ideal Location

- Adjacent to working farms, including those with small gardens, row crops, livestock, or working forests.
- Located within or adjacent to the Urban Growth Areas of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater.
- Accessible by various public transportation methods and/or close to I-5.

### Optional Features

- Site opportunities for habitat restoration.
- Access to a stream for water quality education/

## 4. RFP COORDINATOR

The RFQ Coordinator is the sole point of contact in the District for this procurement. All communication between the consultant and the District upon the release of this RFQ shall be with the RFQ Coordinator, as follows:

Name	Susan Shelton, Finance and Administration Manager
Email Address	<a href="mailto:accounting@thurstoncd.com">accounting@thurstoncd.com</a>
Mailing Address	Thurston Conservation District 2918 Ferguson St, Suite A Tumwater, WA 98512
Phone Number	360.742.2313

All other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the District. Consultants are to rely on written statements issued by the RFQ coordinator. Communication directed to parties other than the RFQ coordinator may result in disqualification of the Consultant.

## 5. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

**Proposals must meet all of the following RFP requirements.** Failure to do so may result in a proposal’s disqualification, as will be determined by TCD at the TCD’s sole discretion.

**1. Cover letter** - including contact person, company name, address, telephone, email, and all particulars including the proposer’s understanding and acceptance of the terms and conditions presented in this RFP including the terms and conditions of the selection process.

**2. Proposer’s organization** - including method of ownership, management structure, years in business, list of properties and businesses, capital assets, financial capabilities, Dun and Bradstreet credit rating, and identification of any past or pending civil or criminal complaints or litigations.

**3. Proposer’s team** – including resumes and responsibilities of the owners, project manager, and other staff who will be responsible for ensuring the proposer adheres to the implementation of the property offering, potential use and development, and financial proposals.

**4. Property proposal** – including descriptions and illustrations of the property being offered including location, assessor’s parcel identification number, size, topography, environmental features, soils, vegetation, improvements, structures (including floor plans), utilities, assessed value, zoning, any restrictive covenants, conditions, or agreements.

**5. Financial proposal** – including the proposer’s terms for a sale, lease with option to buy, or lease of all or a portion of the property. The proposal must include a signed Option Agreement if the proposal includes the acquisition of additional property to complete the proposal.

**6. Use agreements** – including any proposed terms if the owner intends to make the property available for sale, lease with the option to buy, or lease, and/or if the owner intends to retain a portion of the overall property for the owner’s continue use or sale, or lease with option to buy, or lease to other parties.

**7. References** – of at least 3 parties who are financially and operationally involved, affected by, or have been impacted by current or previous proposer properties and/or business operations.

**8. Assurances** – including time schedules and calendar dates for completing financial packages, additional property acquisitions, zoning, and development code approvals necessary to implement the proposal.

**9. Voiding a proposal selection** - the TCD reserves the right to void the proposal selection and award the project to another proposing party or to cancel the RFP altogether if the selected proposal is not implemented within the assured or a reasonable time schedule or calendar date.

## 6. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL FORMAT

The proposal must be submitted electronically and organized in the order listed in the submittal requirements listed above in at least an 11-point font.

The proposal may embed images or photos of the property or structures within the text or in separate attachments.

## 7. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION METHOD

A digital copy (pdf) of the proposal is to be submitted by email attachment to Susan Shelton, TCD Finance and Administration Manager at [sshelton@thurstoncd.com](mailto:sshelton@thurstoncd.com) by the date and time listed on the front cover of this RFP.

Mailed, faxed and in-person proposal submission is not available. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Responses to this RFP shall be prepared at the sole cost of the proposer and do not obligate TCD in any form.

## 8. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be judged by the TCD Board based on the extent to which a proposal meets the following criteria:

**1. Property proposal** – equals or exceeds the location, size, or other particulars described in this RFP.

- 2. Financial proposal** – provides TCD reasonable purchase, lease with option to buy, or lease terms.
- 3. Property use proposal** – allows TCD to develop the CEC with the use, improvements, size, and other particulars outlined in this RFP.
- 4. Proposal quality** – including the characteristics of the property, buildings, or other features of interest in implementing a high-quality and responsive CEC development.
- 5. Synergies** – including the extent to which the proposal implements TCD’s CEC development, supports beginning farmers, existing producers, child, and adult educational opportunities, and ‘Conservation Hub’ interests, buffers, or compliments adjacent property uses, and otherwise realizes sufficient public benefits.

## **9. SELECTION PROCESS**

TCD will conduct an evaluation of the proposals and may include representatives from potential CEC partners, and other qualified parties to review all proposals for conformance with the requirements outlined in this RFP.

Based on the results of the review of the proposal materials that are submitted, the TCD Board, at their sole discretion, will decide if and who satisfies RFP requirements.

The TCD reserves the right to reject all proposals if in the TCD’s opinion none of the proposals meet RFP requirements and/or promote the public benefits envisioned for CEC’s development.

## **10. ELIGIBILITY**

This RFP is available to all private, nonprofit, or public parties that demonstrate, in accordance with the RFP requirements, that the party has the experience and ability to implement their proposal.

TCD Board, staff, and advisory members and their immediate families are not eligible.

## **11. CONTACT AND QUESTIONS**

To be kept informed of any addendums or questions, proposers should register their interest in this RFP with Susan Shelton, TCD Finance and Administration Manager.

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No communication shall occur regarding this RFP, including requests for information, with any TCD representative **other than the party named above**. Failure to comply with this provision may result in the proposer’s submittal being removed from consideration.

## **12. TCD FACILITIES TOUR**

Proposers must email a request to Susan Shelton, TCD Finance and Administration Manager if they want to physically tour the TCD's existing facilities. A virtual tour of the property may also be arranged care of Susan Shelton, TCD Finance and Administration Manager.

## **13. PUBLIC RECORDS**

Washington State Law (RCW42.56 – Public Records Act) requires public agencies in Washington to promptly make public records available for inspection and copying unless they fall within the specified exemptions in the Act. Proposals made to this RFP are considered public records. Subject to the following paragraph, submittals will be available for inspection and copying by the public at the conclusion of TCD's selection.

If a proposer considers any portion of their proposal to be protected under the law, the proposer shall clearly identify on the page(s) affected such words as "confidential" "proprietary" or "business secret". The proposer shall identify the affected page number(s) and location of any material to be considered confidential.

If a request is made for the disclosure of such material, TCD will determine whether the material to be considered is confidential under the law. If the material is not exempt from public records law, TCD will notify the proposer of the request and allow the proposer 10 days to take whatever action it deems necessary to protect its interests. If the proposer fails or neglects to take such action within the 10 days, TCD will release the portion of the proposal deemed subject to disclosure.

By submitting a proposal, the proposer assents to the procedure outlined above and shall have no claim against TCD on account of action taken under this procedure.