



## **Request for Interest**

### **A New and Innovative Water Vessel Operation on The Woodlands Waterway**

in

The Woodlands, Texas

Issuance Date:  
February 21, 2019

Due Date:  
May 31, 2019

# **Request for Interest Water Vessel Operation on The Woodlands Waterway**

## **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION -- THE WOODLANDS WATERWAY**

The Woodlands Convention and Visitors Bureau (The Woodlands CVB) is looking for an innovative approach to boat service on The Woodlands Waterway through this RFI.

Located just 30 minutes north of Houston, Texas and minutes from George Bush Intercontinental Airport, The Woodlands, Texas is a destination for corporate and convention meetings, business travel, leisure travel and extraordinary events and activities.

At the heart of its “downtown” area is The Woodlands Waterway, a 1.4-mile-long transportation corridor that features rubber-wheel trolleys, bike and running paths and a canal for boats.

Visitors to The Woodlands and residents of the community enjoy more than 11 million square feet of world-class shopping, dining and entertainment options with much of this attached to The Woodlands Waterway. Photos of The Woodlands Waterway have been included in this Request for Interest. In addition, The Woodlands has more than 200 miles of hike-and-bike trails, 135 parks, and 115,000 residents and 2,000+ businesses.

As mentioned, The Woodlands Waterway is a centerpiece of the shopping district. The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, which has a capacity of nearly 17,000, is consistently ranked in the Top 5 in the world in ticket sales for all the touring artists like Dave Matthews Band, Jimmy Buffett, Cher, Styx, Kiss and all the rising stars. The Woodlands Waterway is also the home to the Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Texas which is the North American IRONMAN Championship. The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival consistently brings 20,000 attends the second weekend in April. Most weekends in the spring, summer and fall have some type of music festival or event, either at Waterway Square or Town Green Park.

The Woodlands Waterway currently has millions of square feet of Class A office space, numerous restaurants and hotels, and residential living.

The Woodlands CVB is inquiring of interest of experienced firms/professionals in boat operations in destinations like cities, amusement venues and other destinations.

## **II. PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR INTEREST AND WATER VESSEL OPERATION ON THE WOODLANDS WATERWAY**

Brazos Transit District, The Woodlands Development Company and The Woodlands CVB had operated six (6) boats on The Woodlands Waterway in The Woodlands, Texas for the past fifteen (15) years until the custom-made boats reached their estimated useful life. Rather than invest tens of thousands of dollars in these existing boats, The Woodlands CVB is looking for a fresh new alternative that could feature regular passenger trips, entertainment options like catered events, and recreational activities like music or yoga cruises.

A beautiful marina / maintenance facility is conveniently located at the corner of Lake Robbins Drive and the southbound feeder road of Interstate I-45 in The Woodlands Texas, which is owned by Brazos Transit District.

Boat service first began as a private operation by Water Taxi, Inc. of Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 2004. For several years, The Woodlands Development Company owned and operated the boats until the company gifted them, free of charge, to The Woodlands CVB, the organization responsible to position The Woodlands as a regionally, nationally and internationally recognized destination for leisure, convention and business travel. The boats were operated until mid-2017, and after damage by 50+ inches of rain by Hurricane Harvey, the boat operation concluded after 15 years of service. The Waterway Cruisers logged over 434,000 trips along The Woodlands Waterway.

The Woodlands Waterway is still very much in development mode, with numerous tracts of land yet to be developed for residential living, dining, corporate office, hospitality and entertainment. The Woodlands Waterway has two sections (lower and upper) and only the upper section has featured boat service. Much of the development of The Woodlands Waterway will lead to Hughes Landing.

Situated along Lake Woodlands, Hughes Landing is a 66-acre mixed-use development featuring a mixture of five Class A Office Buildings with future Class A space planned; One Lakes Edge, an upscale multifamily residence with a dog park; an all-suite, 205-key Embassy Suites by Hilton for business and leisure travelers; retail including a Whole Foods Market®; and Restaurant Row including a variety of dining options. Hughes Landing also features water sports, pieces of art and an entertainment venue.

The Woodlands CVB believes with the current attraction of The Woodlands and future growth, a boat operation can be sustained, with general rides and catered events. Additionally, there are many who believe a distinctive style of boat is needed for the next operation to launch.

The Woodlands CVB is looking for an innovative approach to boat service on The Woodlands Waterway through this RFI.



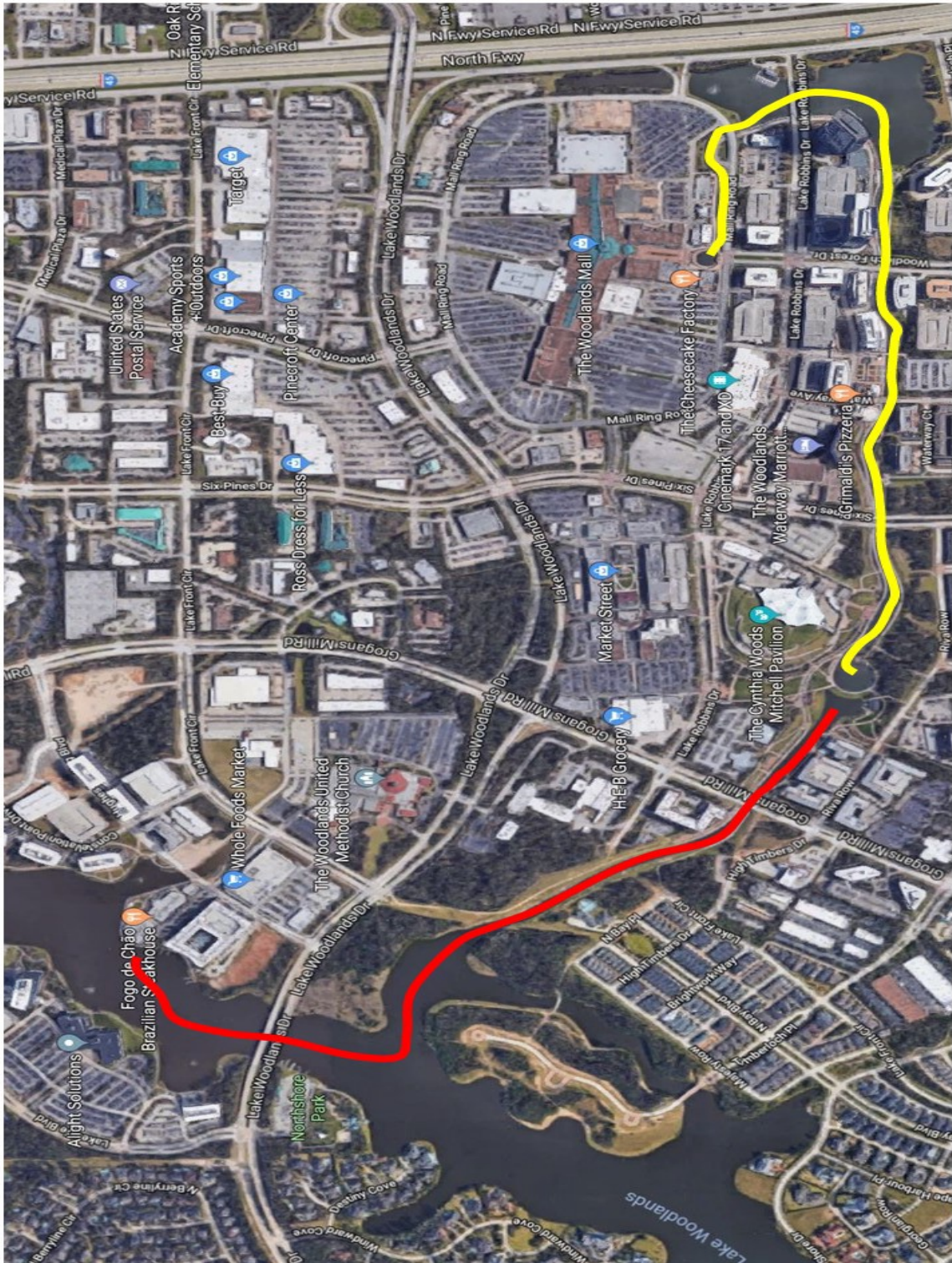
Here are photos of former boats on The Woodlands Waterway



*The yellow line indicates the route of the Waterway Cruisers*

Existing Route

Potential/Future Route



# Trolley and Cruiser Stops



The trolley route is subject to change during special events.



**Trolley rides are FREE seven days a week.\***

**Hours of operation**

**Monday to Thursday**  
 Peak: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., 5 to 9 p.m.  
 Off-peak: 2 to 5 p.m.

**Friday and Saturday**  
 Peak: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 5 to 10 p.m.  
 Off-peak: 2 to 5 p.m.

**Sunday**  
 Peak: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
 Off-peak: 2 to 6 p.m.

**NEW!** A third trolley has been added during peak hours to reduce wait times and extend the hours of operation.  
 Trolleys arrive approximately every 10 minutes during peak hours and approximately every 15 minutes during off-peak hours. Please be patient, trolleys may be delayed by heavy traffic or special events.

\*No trolley service on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

**Contact information**

The Woodlands Township Transportation Department  
 281-210-3800 or WoodlandsTransit.com



**\$5/person**  
**Free, ages 4 and under**  
**Free, ages 80 and up**

**Hours of operation**

**Friday: 4 to 9 p.m.**  
 Cruisers depart on the hour.  
 The last round trip starts at the mall turn at 8 p.m.

**Saturday: Noon to 9 p.m.**  
 Cruisers depart every 30 minutes.  
 The last round trip starts at the mall turn at 8 p.m.

**Sunday: 2 to 9 p.m.**  
 Cruisers depart every 30 minutes.  
 The last round trip starts at the mall turn at 8 p.m.



Find us on Facebook at Woodlands Waterway Cruisers.

**Contact information**

The Woodlands Waterway Cruisers  
 832-458-3006

**In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.**

Effective April 6, 2017

### III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

#### Submission

In order to be a considered response to this RFI, respondents are required to fill out and sign the Request for Interest Tabulation Form (found in last page of this packet) and submit along with it a letter of interest that includes, at minimum, the following information and forms:

- I. General Company/Individual Info/Detailed Audited Financial Report
- II. Detailed Business Plan of proposed water vessel for use on The Woodlands Waterway, including type of vessel, general information about operations, amount of personnel needed for operations, potential customer base, proposed timeline to obtain vessels and commence operations, general operating hours and days (including any details for plans for a public transportation component), marketing and public relations plan, viability of operation within current or proposed infrastructure. Additional consideration in the Detailed Business Plan may be made for areas of expansion of the current water vessel service (upper canal channel), including information on providing service on the lower waterway channel to include areas such as Lake Woodlands or Hughes Landing.
- III. Description and renderings of types of vessels to be used and how many vessels for operations.
- IV. Pricing of said services:
  - a. Full turnkey operation, without any funding from The Woodlands CVB
  - b. Full turnkey operation, with some funding from The Woodlands CVB
  - c. Cost if operated by The Woodlands CVB

#### Due Date

The letter of interest and any attachments should be emailed, delivered or mailed to the individual listed below (under Contact Information) and received no later than 4:00 p.m., on **May 31, 2019**. It is the responsibility of the Respondent to ensure that the letter of interest is received by The Woodlands CVB by the date and time specified above. Late proposals will not be considered. All costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal to this RFI will be the task of the Respondent and will not be reimbursed by The Woodlands CVB. Additionally, The Woodlands CVB shall incur no liability for the preparation and/or submission of any letter of interest incurred by a Respondent. Any conditional submission may be cause for rejection. The Woodlands CVB being funded by tax dollars and staffed by employees of The Woodlands Township operates in compliance with the Texas Open Meeting Act/Texas Open Records Act and therefore all submissions and resulting analysis may be subject to disclosure to the public.

### Contact Information

Please address all correspondence and requests to the following individual:

Nick Wolda  
President  
The Woodlands CVB  
2801 Technology Forest Blvd.  
The Woodlands, Texas 77381

info@visitthewoodlands.com

### Questions

Questions concerning this RFI should be addressed to Nick Wolda by May 17, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. After this time, The Woodlands CVB reserves the right to deny response to submitted inquiries. **Inquiries should be submitted by email only.**

### Post-Submittal

The Woodlands CVB will review RFI submissions and conduct meetings with Respondents if appropriate and at The Woodlands CVB's sole discretion.

### Disclaimer

This RFI in no manner obligates The Woodlands CVB to pursue any contractual relationship with an entity that responds to this RFI. The Woodlands CVB further reserves the right to cancel this RFI at any time if deemed to be in the best interest of The Woodlands CVB. The Woodlands CVB expressly reserves the right to reject any and all submissions, in whole or in part, received in response to this RFI; to accept any submission(s) that it determines shall best meet The Woodlands CVB's goals, objectives, and standards, regardless of whether or not said submission is lowest in cost; to waive any non-material defect, informality, or irregularity in any submission or submission procedure; and/or to negotiate separately the terms and conditions of all or any part of the submissions as determined to be in The Woodlands CVB's best interest and sole discretion. Any contract for the accepted submission will be based upon the factors described in this RFI and may contain additional legal terms and conditions. The Woodlands CVB reserves the right to amend or revise this RFI in whole or in part as it deems necessary and without further notice to the public.

### Important Note

At this time, The Woodlands CVB is not interested in owning boats. The current board of directors and staff also prefer not to be investors in any such operation.



**Water Vessel Operation on the Waterway  
REQUEST FOR INTEREST  
TABULATION FORM**

Service	Points Awarded	Maximum Points
1. Type of vessel to be used		50 Points
2. Business plan		15 Points
3. Financial Benefit to The Woodlands CVB		10 Points
4. References		25 Points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 Points</b>

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that this submission is made without prior understanding, agreement or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a submission for the services and products and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. I agree to abide by all conditions of the RFI Packet and certify that I am authorized to sign this submission for the Respondent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT/TYPER NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
COMPANY