

West Kentucky Regional Riverport Authority (WKRRA)
Riverport Public-Private Partnership (P3)
Predevelopment Services
Request for Proposal



Proposal Due Date
February 20, 2026, 4 p.m. Central Time

Proposal Delivery Address
WKRRA
297 Kentucky Avenue
Kevil, Kentucky 42053

RFP Point of Contact
Jerry Pace
270-559-1487
jppace@brtc.net

<https://wkrra.com/>

Executive Summary

The West Kentucky Regional Riverport Authority (“WKRRA” or the “Authority”) invites proposals (“Proposals”) from qualified firms or teams to provide comprehensive pre-development services (the “Scope”) related to the design, construction, financing, operations, and maintenance of a new multimodal riverport located in West Kentucky near the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers (the “Project”). The purpose of this Scope is to assist WKRRA with making informed decisions on the Project and pave the way to publishing a future RFP to deliver the Project as a public-private partnership (“P3”).

This RFP’s Scope includes, but is not limited to, (1) identify and evaluate potential Project sites within Ballard, Carlisle, Hickman, and Fulton Counties, to include consideration of a previously identified site, (2) assess customer demand, (3) prepare conceptual layout for shortlisted site(s), (4) identify required regulatory approvals and processes, (5) evaluate potential rail and highway connections and identify necessary improvements, (6) recommend deal structure, and (7) develop stakeholder engagement and community outreach plan. WKRRA will give preference to proposals that incorporate port operator expertise and experience.



Figure 1: Project Location

I. Project Overview

A. Background

The County Judge/Executives from Ballard, Carlisle, Fulton, and Hickman Counties recognized the need to cooperate in order to mitigate the economic impact following the loss of over 700 high-paying jobs in rural western Kentucky due to the closure of the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant in 2013, the loss of the Verso Paper Mill in 2016, and the completion of Olmstead Dam in 2019. Fortunately, a robust maritime industry currently exists and operates in the area from Cairo, IL to Wickliffe, KY (Ballard County), with active companies including Traylor Bros., James Marine, ADM, and PTL Marine on the Kentucky side of the rivers and Bunge, Waterfront Services, and American Commercial Barge Line (ACBL) on the Illinois side. The Judge/Executives identified inland waterway transportation as a priority project for economic redevelopment efforts, and along with the City of Wickliffe, formed WKRRRA to lead the development of a port along the Mississippi River.

A 2021 Feasibility Study by Commonwealth Economics concluded that the Project would be economically feasible. The study found that the Project has several unique advantages, including room for growth following the initial development, an above-average existing workforce in the local area, and a climate that would allow the riverport to operate year-round. The study also found that there is significant business interest in the Project, as surveys indicate that up to nine companies were highly motivated to establish or grow operations at the new riverport. Once operational, the Project was projected to create approximately 43 jobs at the riverport itself, as well as 6 additional jobs for WKRRRA.

The riverport Project has received letters of support from Governor Andy Beshear and officials from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet. The Alexander County-Cairo Port District of Illinois and the Mississippi County Port Authority of Missouri also signed a letter of support, recognizing the regional impact of such developments.

WKRRRA has received multiple grants and a state appropriation to support the planning and development of the Project over the years. Most recently, WKRRRA received \$500,000 from the Kentucky General Assembly to complete predevelopment archaeological activities at a proposed Project site. A Cleaner Commonwealth Grant provided funds for the installation of water lines to a potential Project site for fire protection and potable water. WKRRRA also received a \$300,000 Kentucky Product Development Initiative (KPDI) grant and other grants for due diligence and pre-construction activities. WKRRRA is continuing to apply for grants to secure more funding for the Project.

B. Riverport Project Overview

The Feasibility Study found there is strong market demand for a riverport along the Mississippi River in Ballard County, Kentucky.

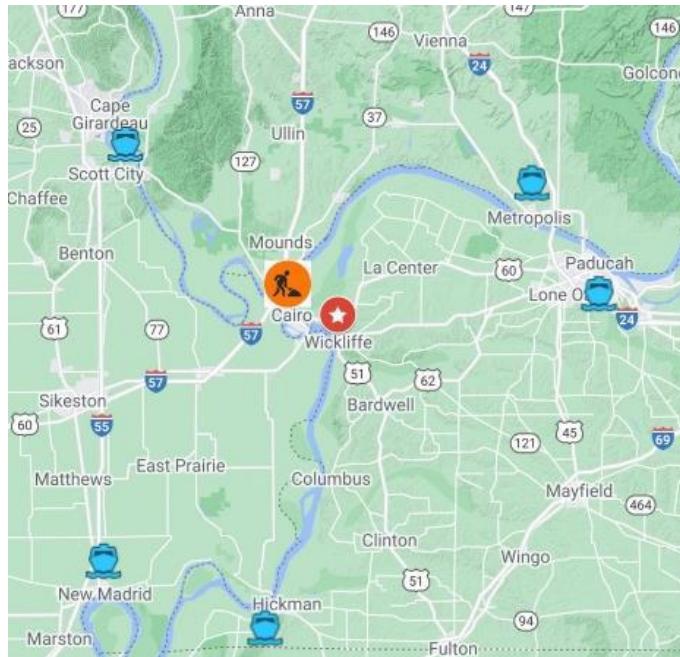


Figure 2: Regional Riverport Market. Public riverports are located in Fulton and McCracken Counties in Kentucky, New Madrid and Scott Counties in Missouri, and Alexander and Massac Counties in Illinois.

Multiple potential project sites were examined in the Feasibility Study, including sites at Mayfield Creek and Willow Creek. The Mayfield Creek Site was recommended for further study and development because of its unique advantages, including the 69 acres available for development, the 2,000 feet of Mississippi River frontage available at the site, and nearby rail access.

Following a survey of potential business partners, the Feasibility Study determined there is significant business interest in the Project. The survey's results indicated that at least nine companies are highly motivated to establish or grow operations at the riverport. These companies primarily deal with salt, grain, fertilizer, and scrap metal. All of these commodities could be shipped through a riverport at the Project Site or an alternative riverport location in WKRRRA's footprint.

In addition to the businesses surveyed in the Feasibility Study, two new major electric vehicle battery manufacturing plants will be opening in Central and Western Kentucky. The proximity of the proposed riverport to the Envision AESC and Ascend Elements battery plants means the Project will be an attractive logistical position for many suppliers. Integration into this supply chain would secure further demand for WKRRRA's proposed riverport's facilities and services.

II. Scope of Work

WKRRRA would like to enter into an agreement with a capable partner who can provide comprehensive pre-development services related to the development, financing, and operations and maintenance of a multimodal riverport at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The Scope is intended to assist WKRRRA with making informed decisions on the Project. It does not include actual development or financing of the

Project; WKRRRA anticipates publishing a future RFP to deliver the Project as P3 after solidifying its plans. WKRRRA will give preference to proposals that incorporate port operations expertise and experience. The Scope includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Task 1: Site Identification & Ranking

Identify, screen, and rank candidate sites within Ballard, Carlisle, Hickman, and Fulton Counties, to include consideration of the Mayfield Creek site. WKRRRA will make available conceptual engineering drawings and other due diligence documents for the Mayfield Creek site. Preferred deliverables include a site matrix, maps, narrative comparing strengths/weaknesses, and a recommended shortlist.

Task 2: Market & Trade Analysis

Identify target tenants and customers, volumes, pricing, and revenue potential. Preferred deliverables include a market narrative, demand projections, and implications for facility features.

Task 3: Engineering Concept Design

Prepare a narrative for engineering and design to develop the recommended site(s). Address dock/mooring concepts, storage/laydown areas, utilities, traffic circulation, and initial grading concepts. Coordinate with rail/highway concepts. Preferred deliverables include concept drawing of recommended site(s) and order-of-magnitude costs.

Task 4: Environmental & Regulatory Roadmap

Outline environmental due diligence and compliance pathway (e.g., NEPA where applicable, wetlands/streams, cultural/historic resources, endangered species, floodplain). Identify required permits/approvals and durations; propose sequencing and responsibilities. Preferred Deliverables include a permitting matrix and schedule.

Task 5: Rail & Highway Access

Document existing and potential rail connections and highway access. Evaluate capacity, required upgrades, and interface with regional plans. Preferred deliverables include preliminary concepts and alternatives, cost ranges, and implementation considerations.

Task 6: Deal Structure

Working with WKRRRA's legal counsel, evaluate benefits and risks of P3 structures and governance models. Preferred deliverables include comparative P3 options and recommended structure.

Task 7: Stakeholder & Community Engagement

Prepare a plan for outreach to stakeholders including regulatory agencies, government officials, community groups, industry associations, impacted businesses, prospective customers, and local citizens. Preferred deliverables include an engagement plan.

WKRRRA reserves the right to accept some components of a Proposal while rejecting others and negotiate an agreement within the full scope of this RFP.

III. Instructions for Submitting Responses

A. Proposal Contents

Proposals should be prepared in such a way as to provide a straightforward, concise presentation adequate to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Emphasis should be concentrated on completeness and clarity. Proposers must sign and submit complete packages including the following, numbered in the same order for ease of review and comparison:

1. Cover Letter

Submissions should include a cover letter that summarizes the overall capability of the Proposer, including any partnerships, and a succinct summary of their collective ability to provide the predevelopment services.

2. Proposer Information

- a. Include a summary statement highlighting the Proposer's respective key qualifications and experience.
- b. Include an organization chart that identifies the companies involved, their respective roles and responsibilities, and the individual representing each company.
- c. Names, roles, and resumes for key personnel who will be assigned to this Project, to include their relevant experience with similar projects.
- d. Identify a single contact person for all future communications and that person's full contact information.
- e. Identify professional consultants, to the extent they are known at the time of submission, collaborating with the Proposer.

3. Experience and References

Provide a description of at least three (3) projects that highlight the Proposer's experience in comparable or analogous projects. For teams, indicate which members of the team worked together on those example projects.

Provide at least three (3) references, within the past five (5) years or seasons, of clients for whom services have been performed that are comparable in quality and scope to that specified in this RFP. The references shall include names and telephone numbers of the clients for whom the prior work was performed and include an explanation of the services provided to these clients.

4. Proposal Description

Describe how the Proposer would approach the Scope. **Alternative Proposals may be submitted.**

5. Budget

Provide a budget that clearly identifies the costs associated with the Proposal and any alternative Proposals. Proposals may include a narrative to clarify any parts of the budget.

6. Timeline

Provide an estimated timeline for completing the Scope.

7. Eligibility for Preferences

Proposers should indicate whether they are eligible for the Reciprocal Resident Bidder, and Qualified Bidder preferences and include any required affidavits as outlined in Section IV.C.

B. Proposal Distribution

In order to be considered for selection, Proposers should submit a complete response to the RFP. Five (5) copies and one (1) electronic copy of each Proposal must be submitted. Proposals must be formatted as an 8.5" x 11" document and arranged/divided in the sequence as indicated in Section III.A above to facilitate evaluation. The Proposer shall make no other distribution of the responses.

The Proposals should be placed in a sealed envelope or package for submittal marked "WKRRA Predevelopment Services RFP." All responses shall be received and time-stamped at the location and by the date and time indicated on the Cover Sheet. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted.

1. Proprietary or Confidential Documents or Trade Secrets

If a Proposal contains documents the Proposer believes are proprietary, confidential or trade secrets under the Kentucky Open Records Act (KRS 61.870 to KRS 61.884), Proposers should **clearly mark each page** containing the exempt information and submit an additional copy of the Proposal with the confidential or proprietary information redacted. Proposers should be prepared to explain the basis for such exemptions.

2. Disposition of Proposals

All Proposals become the property of WKRRA. WKRRA reserves the right to use any and all of the ideas presented in any reply to this RFP. Disposal of unsuccessful Proposals shall be at the discretion of WKRRA.

C. Communications and Schedule

1. Restrictions on Communications

The RFP Point of Contact named on the Cover Sheet shall be the sole point of contact throughout the procurement process. All communications, oral and written (regular, express, or electronic mail, or fax), concerning this procurement shall be addressed to the RFP Point of Contact. For violation of this provision, WKRRA shall reserve the right to disqualify the Proposer's Proposal.

2. Written Questions Regarding this RFP

Proposers are encouraged to submit written questions to the RFP Point of Contact via email. No questions shall be accepted after the date listed on the Cover Sheet unless the question(s) is considered material to the procurement.

WKRRA shall respond to salient questions in writing on a rolling basis by issuing an addendum to the solicitation. Addenda shall be posted to WKRRA's website at <https://wkrra.com/>. By submitting a Proposal, Proposer agrees that WKRRA will not be responsible for any oral responses.

3. Access to Solicitation, RFP, and Addenda

WKRRA wants each prospective Proposer to have full and complete information on which to base a response. Proposers should only rely on the written information in this RFP, attachments, and addenda and not on any oral responses. The solicitation, addenda, and attachments shall be posted to WKRRA's website at <https://wkrra.com/>. In the event of any conflict or variation between the solicitation or modification as issued by WKRRA and the Proposer's response, the version as issued shall prevail.

4. Acknowledgment of Addenda

It is the Proposer's responsibility to check the web site for any modifications to this solicitation. Proposers are encouraged to acknowledge each addendum by signing and submitting the latest addendum with their response. However, signing the face of the solicitation constitutes the Proposer's acknowledgement of, and agreement to be bound by, the terms of all addenda issued.

Failure to specifically acknowledge addenda will not excuse the Proposer from adhering to all changes to the requirements of the solicitation set forth therein nor provide justification for any pricing changes.

5. Anticipated Schedule

The anticipated dates for this Project are as outlined herein. WKRRA may revise these dates as it deems necessary or appropriate.

Written Questions Deadline:	February 6, 2026
Final Response to Written Questions:	February 13, 2026
Proposals Due:	February 20, 2026

IV. Evaluation and Selection

A. Selection Process

Proposers are asked to submit a detailed response to the RFP. It is anticipated that upon receiving the Proposals, WKRRA's Selection Committee will review submissions and select a Proposer(s) for competitive negotiations based upon best value, determined by the extent to which the submissions meet the standards and qualifications contained in

the Evaluation Criteria. At the conclusion of that process, the Selection Committee will recommend a finalist(s) for award of the contract(s).

1. Initial Review

The Selection Committee will conduct an initial review of Proposals received for completeness. Proposals shall be completed in all respects as required by this RFP. A Proposal may be rejected if it is incomplete, contains any alterations or other irregularities of any kind, and will be rejected if any such defect or irregularity can materially affect the quality of the information. A Proposal which contains false or misleading statements may be rejected. If, in the opinion of WKRRRA and the Selection Committee, such information was intended to mislead the Selection Committee in its evaluation of the Proposal, and the attribute, condition, or capability is a requirement of this RFP, the Proposal will be rejected. The Selection Committee also reserves the right to waive minor technicalities or irregularities in Proposals if such action is in WKRRRA's best interest. Such waiver shall in no way modify the RFP requirements or excuse the Proposer(s) from full compliance with the RFP and applicable law. Statements made by a Proposer shall also be without ambiguity, and with adequate elaboration, where necessary, for clear understanding.

The Proposer, in responding to this RFP, must submit Proposals in the format identified in this RFP. Costs for developing Proposals or in connection with any interview or negotiation related to this RFP are entirely the responsibility of the Proposer and shall not be chargeable to WKRRRA.

2. Evaluation

WKRRRA's Selection Committee will evaluate complete Proposals based on the evaluation criteria, the reciprocal preference for resident bidders (if applicable), and the qualified bidder preference, as outlined below.

WKRRRA reserves the right to request additional information from Proposers and may elect to visit Proposers' completed projects. WKRRRA reserves the right to require Oral Presentations/Demonstrations to verify or expand on the Proposal. WKRRRA reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals in whole or in part based on the oral presentations/demonstrations. If required, the highest-ranking Proposers will be invited. WKRRRA reserves the right to not conduct oral presentations/demonstrations if they do not affect the final rankings.

3. Selection

Following any interviews, the Selection Committee will recommend to WKRRRA's Board a shortlist of Proposers for competitive negotiations.

B. Evaluation Criteria

WKRRA will rely on the following criteria and corresponding weights to evaluate Proposals:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Maximum Points Possible</u>
Qualifications	350
Technical Solution	350
Cost Proposal	300
Maximum Points Possible	1000

C. Preferences and Conditions

1. Reciprocal Resident Bidder Preference

If required by law, the Selection Committee will apply the reciprocal preference under KRS 65.027. Any Proposer claiming resident bidder status shall submit along with its response a notarized affidavit that affirms that it meets the criteria to be considered a resident bidder as set forth in KRS 45A.494(2), available at the following link: <https://finance.ky.gov/office-of-the-secretary/FinanceForms/Affidavit%20for%20Claiming%20Resident%20Bidder%20Status.pdf>. Proposers not claiming eligibility for resident bidder status shall indicate their state of residence.

2. Qualified Bidder Preference

Preference shall be given to qualified bidders, as required under KRS 45A.470. Any Proposer claiming qualified bidder status shall submit a notarized affidavit that affirms that it meets the criteria, available at the following link: <https://finance.ky.gov/office-of-the-secretary/FinanceForms/Affidavit%20for%20Bidders%20Offerors%20and%20Contractors%20Claiming%20Qualified%20Bidder%20Status.pdf>.

3. No Contract Guaranteed

WKRRA reserves the right to request necessary modifications, reject any or all Proposals, reject any Proposals that do not meet any mandatory requirements under this RFP or applicable law, award multiple or split contracts, or cancel this process at any time prior to execution of a contract, according to the best interests of WKRRA.

Conclusion

The West Kentucky Regional Riverport Authority is grateful for your interest in this Project and is excited to move forward in a collaborative partnership with a qualified partner.