



September 12, 2024

Mrs. Julie Harris
Mayor
Town of Irvington
4203 Irvington Road
Irvington, Virginia 22480

cc: Judy Penniman

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Deputy Director

Mrs. Harris,

Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR) is pleased to offer this letter and associated information associated with resources and opportunities for partnership in support of the Irvington Town Commons project.

Our organization is a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 1985. Our mission is to be the voice and active force for a healthy and scenic Rappahannock River. We serve the entire Rappahannock River watershed which spans 18 counties and 184 miles from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay. This includes offices in Culpeper, Fredericksburg, and Tappahannock.



One of our many conservation programs is the Clean Carters Creek Initiative. Originally focused on oyster reef restoration in Carters Creek, the community focused program now works to promote and support a wide range of opportunities that improve water quality, habitat for fish and wildlife, and resilient communities.

As a part of this and related regional programs, we support the use of native landscapes, especially urban tree canopy projects. Each year we work with community partners and private landowners to plant thousands of trees. Small baby trees and large 15 foot tall trees. We can write grants and fundraise, support project designs, source all the materials, and can assist with site preparation, planting, and maintenance activities. We have our own native plant nursery, a forester and green infrastructure specialist on staff, which helps support these activities across our watershed.

We have and are currently working with a number of public and private partners on similar opportunities. We have included an attachment with a summary of recent urban and community forestry project partners.

I would like to highlight a few public-private partnerships.

Belle Isle State Park: In 2021 we provided funding, labor, and materials to plant 1,500 trees at Belle Isle State Park.

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MIDDLE | 3219 Fall Hill Ave • Fredericksburg, VA 22401 • 540.373.3448

LOWER | 444 S Water Lane • Tappahannock, VA 22560 • 540.373.3448

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Tides Inn: We supported the Tides Inn with grant funding support, volunteer labor, and donated plants for their shoreline restoration project. Additionally, we are working with them to support their tree planting goals. This includes us writing and administering grant funding for their projects.

Lancaster County: We are excited to announce that we have secured \$100,000 in grant funding to support a living shoreline and community project with Lancaster County and continue to work closely with the County, local businesses, and conservation partners to support conservation projects.

Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge: Over the past five years, we have secured hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant local, state, and federal grants to support tree planting projects at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Richmond County, including Fones Cliffs.

Spotsylvania County: Working in partnership with Spotsylvania County parks and recreation department, we have collaboratively designed tree planting and green infrastructure projects for County owned property. We then secured grant funding which was awarded directly to Friends of the Rappahannock, and was administered to support County projects. We are currently working on several large projects with Spotsylvania County.

Northern Neck Planning District Commission: We have a long and successful relationship working with the Northern Neck Planning District Commission to collaboratively secure grant funding to support local government conservation projects. This has included living shorelines, oyster reef restoration, environmental education programs, and most recently in 2024 they supported a grant application for urban and community forestry funding which has brought \$239,000 of federal funding to eligible projects in the Northern Neck and Rappahannock River watershed.

Town of Irvington: Friends of the Rappahannock is pleased to offer our technical assistance and resources to the Town of Irvington in support of your Irvington Town Commons project. Specifically, we are offering to include the project in our fall grant writing and fundraising efforts which we are working on with numerous public and private partners across our region. This would include Friends of the Rappahannock developing and submitting an application to the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF)'s Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) grant program. This program uses federal funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provided to DOF by the United States Forest Service (USFS). We would be available to provide the Town Council with more information in a presentation at your next meeting on October 10, 2024.

Below is additional information and FAQ for your consideration.

- The grant application deadline is October 25, 2024
- Awards are announced in December 2024
- Grants of up to \$50,000 are available.
- Grants require 50% non-federal matching funds
- Project performance period is January 2025 - December 2025
- Friends of the Rappahannock would be the applicant, administer the funding for the project, and hold the contract with DOF.
- Friends of the Rappahannock has limited additional funding currently available and would continue to fundraise in partnership with the Town and other conservation partners to support the match requirements of the grant and additional project costs

- There is no cost to the Town of Irvington for this technical assistance provided by Friends of the Rappahannock
- There is no contractual obligation to the Town of Irvington until the grant award is approved and accepted, which would not happen without approval from the Town Council when conditional awards are announced in December.
- The grant application would require a letter of support from the Town of Irvington (Town Clerk, Zoning Administrator, or any council member). This letter would not commit the Town to any financial or other obligations. It would simply be a statement that the Town has approved the master plan, is very supportive of seeing the project completed, and is committed to the long term success of the project. We would need this letter no later than October 17, 2024.
- The Town would have full, flexible, approval of all trees purchased and planted as a part of the project. This would not need to be finalized at the time of the grant application.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information about grant funding and partnership opportunities with the Town of Irvington. If you have any additional questions or would like us to provide a presentation to a committee or the Town Council, we would be happy to be of assistance.

Best wishes,



Bryan Hofmann
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Additional information and support:

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