



POTTSTOWN OUTDOOR RECREATION HUB

Proposal to the Borough of Pottstown & Pottstown Parks & Recreation

PROPOSAL SUMMARY and PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area along with nonprofit partner Take It Outdoors wishes to pursue a partnership with the Borough of Pottstown and Pottstown Park and Rec and is seeking permission to create a Pottstown Outdoor Recreation Hub in Riverfront Park.

The mission of the Schuylkill River Greenways is to connect residents, visitors and communities to the Schuylkill River and the Schuylkill River Trail by serving as a catalyst for civic engagement and economic development in order to foster stewardship of the watershed and its heritage.

Over the last 5 years, the Borough has partnered with Take It Outdoors through the placement and use of the storage shed that is currently located at the top of the amphitheater in Riverfront Park. This shed has been used to store bicycles and kayaks and in 2018 and 2019, served as the location for several weekend "Pop up" kayak rentals throughout the summer season. This partnership has gone very well and has proven to be a benefit to the community.

In 2020, SRG purchased Take It Outdoors and made it an official 501c3 nonprofit, designed to support our organization's mission. In 2020 and 2021, Take It Outdoors has operated across the river in North Coventry Township. This location has served our needs well but has several drawbacks that have us looking for a potential new site. One of the major drawbacks is that our current location does not have a direct connection to the Schuylkill River Trail. Our mission is to connect residents and communities to the river and the trail, and having the headquarters of Take It Outdoors directly on the trail would be a significant boost to our ability to deliver on that goal.

Over the past two years Take It Outdoors has brought over 2,500 people from all over the region to the Pottstown Area and introduced them to all that downtown Pottstown has to offer. Many of our participants end their outing in one of Pottstown's wonderful restaurants or cafes, and we actively market the thriving downtown to our clients".

SRG and TIO propose to create the Pottstown Outdoor Recreation Hub to be located in Riverfront Park. This recreation hub will provide the award-winning Bike Pottstown free bike share, available to the public aged 16 years and older. This has been a long-standing successful program in the community of Pottstown for almost 15 years. However, the program is severely underutilized given the current location of Take It Outdoors. Relocating to Riverfront Park would reinvigorate this successful and well-received free asset in our community.

In addition to biking, the Hub will have kayaks and canoes available for rent. Take It Outdoors also offers full service guiding on the river, local trails and throughout the region. Further, our partnership with the Borough would include several annual free "Borough Days" designed to provide community

members the opportunity to enjoy the river by kayak or canoe, and would expand programming to our schools, churches and other community organizations.

We propose the use of three shipping containers to store bikes, kayaks and other outdoor recreation equipment for use along the Schuylkill River Trail and on the Schuylkill River. A portion of one of the containers would be used for customer service needs and participant registration and check in. The containers will be tastefully decorated and maintained 12 months a year.

We envision the Hub as bringing many benefits to the community of Pottstown including partnership with the Pottstown Dragon Boat Club, added value to community events like the Pow Wow, the July 4th celebration, and many other events. The Recreation Hub would also strive to offer no cost programs to the Pottstown School District, and free events for Pottstown residents on selected days throughout the year. This collaboration will enable the Borough to offer truly unique services and recreational amenities to Pottstown residents and other community groups, at no cost to the Borough.

Additionally, the Hub would be a draw to the community where visitors could also partake in other downtown amenities like restaurants and shopping before or after participating in outdoor recreation. The recreation hub would serve as a gateway to Pottstown for trail users coming from the west as well as those coming from the east as the SRT trail gap connection to Chester County is set to be completed in 2022.

SRG is seeking approval from the Borough for the above stated purposes and to enter into agreement with the Borough to operate the Recreation Hub in Riverfront Park

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Schuylkill River Greenways and Take It Outdoors will:

- Provide a full site plan and layout of proposal
- Meet all requirements of the Borough and L&I related to planning, flood mitigation, structural certifications, etc

If approved by the Borough, the Schuylkill River Greenways and Take It Outdoors will:

- Level the ground at the agreed upon location and install appropriate water drainage as needed
- Purchase (3) shipping containers and customize them to store bicycles, kayaks and other outdoor recreation equipment and place the containers at the agreed upon location in Riverfront Park
- Place the containers on a 4" base of modified stone/gravel.
- Anchor the containers as specified on site plan
- Use battery or solar based power for basic electrical needs. We will potentially seek grant funding for solar panels to allow the Recreation Hub to function off the grid and to be self-sufficient regarding electrical utility.
- Provide dedicated porta johns for recreation hub participant use and ensure they are serviced and cleaned regularly.
- Maintain the Borough property within the vicinity of the outfitter including:
 - Mowing of grass and edging
 - Annual upkeep of mulched walkways and picnic area

- Nearby tree and bush pruning and limbing
- Offer annually - (2) "Free Borough Days" of biking and kayaking for Pottstown residents and support the Parks and Recreation Department of other recreation related needs as

If approved the Borough of Pottstown and Pottstown Parks and Recreation will:

- Move the (2) Borough provided porta johns currently residing in Riverfront Park approximately 30' to the east to improve curb appeal and visibility of the recreation hub.
- Remove (2) dead trees as noted on site plan
- Allow TIO to park (2) vans and (2) trailers in agreed upon parking spaces in Riverfront Park

Should Take It Outdoors, at any future point and for any future reason, no longer operate in Riverfront Park, SRG and TIO will return the site to its previous condition or an agreed upon condition with the Borough at no cost to the Borough.

Timeline

Take It Outdoors currently has a lease through next spring however we would like to be up and running in a new location by April of 2022.

Below are some photographs of how shipping containers are utilized in efficient and attractive ways for bike shares and other recreation based programming.

