



## **Request for Interest for a New and Innovative Water Vessel Operation on The Woodlands Waterway**

THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS (June 14, 2018) – The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), which markets under the name of Visit The Woodlands, is seeking a new and innovative boat service on its signature feature – The Woodlands Waterway.

The nonprofit organization has issued a Request for Interest - Water Vessel Operation on the Waterway (RFI) that is open from March 29, 2018 until July 31, 2018.

Six Waterway Cruisers had been in operation on The Woodlands Waterway in The Woodlands, Texas for the past 15 years until the excessive amount of rain from Hurricane Harvey shut down the operations. The Woodlands CVB officials have declined to put additional monies into the 15-year old boats, and would rather search for a new and innovative approach to providing transportation by water for the public, combined with catering and event opportunities. The Waterway Cruisers have operated out of a marina 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.

Visit The Woodlands is seeking creative and innovation in the boat service.

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.

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 attendees 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.

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 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, catered events, unique events and creative programming. Additionally, there are many who believe a distinctive style of boat is needed for the next operation to launch.

Submissions for Response for Qualifications and Information must be received by July 31, 2018. Please send questions in email at [info@visitthewoodlands.com](mailto:info@visitthewoodlands.com) to the attention of Sonia Guerrero, or review the Request for Qualifications and Information Valuation online at [www.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/bids](http://www.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/bids). Additional information is attached.

