



**CITY OF DULUTH
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR**

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

RFP NUMBER 21-AA18

ISSUED APRIL 7, 2021

PROPOSALS DUE APRIL 28, 2021

SUBMIT TO

**CITY OF DULUTH
ATTN: PURCHASING DIVISION
CITY HALL, ROOM 100
411 WEST 1ST STREET
DULUTH, MN 55802**

PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION

I-1. Project Overview

The City of Duluth Parks & Recreation Division is soliciting qualified professional consulting services in Park and Recreation Master Planning and community engagement. The Master Plan will serve as a guiding document for park system infrastructure and programming for the next decade.

Duluth, a four-season city with 11,000+ acres of green space alongside the great Lake Superior, provides a suitable back drop for a multitude of recreation activities.

Current Mission Statement:

To promote the health and well-being of our community, environment and economy by facilitating recreational opportunities and coordinating the enhancement of our parks, facilities and natural resources now and into the future.

Current Vision Statement:

To be the central driving force in strengthening the heritage of a healthy, active community for future generations by continuing on the path of improving and enhancing our parks and facilities; protecting our natural resources; and developing partnerships to deliver recreation programs and services.

Duluth residents and visitors alike value the importance of parks and recreational opportunities as an essential public service. Duluth's Parks and Recreation system currently consists of:

- 129 Parks
- 11,000+ acres of public open space
- 6,834 acres of City parkland
- 10 miles of horseback trail
- 30 miles paved, and 16 miles gravel accessible trail
- 38 miles (61k) of cross-country ski trail
- 95 miles of multi-use mountain bike trail
- 150+ miles of natural surface hiking trail
- 8 outdoor skating rinks

The 2010 Master Plan <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/parks-planning-library/> has guided the planning, investment and development of many projects over the last 11 years. A major focus during this time period has been the implementation of park and trail improvements in association with the St. Louis River Corridor Initiative.

The City is now embarking on a new Parks and Recreation Master Planning process to guide decision making and investment for the next decade.

Additional detail is provided in **Part IV** of this RFP.

I-2. Calendar of Events. The City will make every effort to adhere to the following schedule:

Activity	Date
Deadline to submit Questions via email to purchasing@duluthmn.gov	APRIL 16, 2021
Answers to questions will be posted to the City website no later than this date.	APRIL 21, 2021
Proposals must be received in the Purchasing Office by 2:00 PM on this date.	APRIL 28, 2021

I-3. Rejection of Proposals. The City reserves the right, in its sole and complete discretion, to reject any and all proposals or cancel the request for proposals, at any time prior to the time a contract is fully executed, when it is in its best interests. The City is not liable for any costs the Proposer incurs in preparation and submission of its proposal, in participating in the RFP process or in anticipation of award of the contract.

I-4. Questions & Answers. Any questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by e-mail to the Purchasing Office at purchasing@duluthmn.gov **no later than** the date indicated on the Calendar of Events. Answers to the questions will be posted as an Addendum to the RFP.

I-5. Addenda to the RFP. If the City deems it necessary to revise any part of this RFP before the proposal response date, the City will post an addendum to its website <https://www.duluthmn.gov/purchasing/bids-request-for-proposals/>. Although an e-mail notification will be sent, it is the Proposer's responsibility to periodically check the website for any new information

I-6. Proposals. To be considered, hard copies of proposals must arrive at the City on or before the time and date specified in the RFP Calendar of Events. The City will not accept proposals via email or facsimile transmission. **Due to the closure of City Hall as a result of the pandemic, proposals cannot be dropped off in the Purchasing office. There is a black drop box on the 2nd Street side of City Hall near the parking spaces with an opening that is 11in x 3in. If your proposal is larger than the opening, you must submit it via a delivery or carrier service such as USPS, FedEx or UPS. It is recommended that you have proposals delivered the day before the deadline to ensure they are delivered on time.** The City reserves the right to reject or to deduct evaluation points for late proposals.

Proposals must be signed by an official authorized to bind the Proposer to its provisions. If the official signs the Proposal Cover Sheet attached as Appendix B, this requirement will be met. Proposals must remain valid for 60 days or until a contract is fully executed.

Please submit one (1) paper copy of the Technical Submittal and one (1) paper copy of the Cost Submittal. In addition, Proposers shall submit one copy of the entire proposal (Technical and Cost submittals, along with all requested documents) on CD-ROM or Flash drive in Microsoft Office-compatible or pdf format.

All materials submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the City and will become public record after the evaluation process is completed and an award decision made.

I-7. Small Diverse Business Information. The City encourages participation by minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses as prime contractors, and encourages all prime contractors to make a significant commitment to use minority, women, veteran-owned and other disadvantaged business entities as subcontractors and suppliers. A list of certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises is maintained by the Minnesota Unified Certification Program at <http://mnucp.metc.state.mn.us/> .

I-8. Term of Contract. The term of the contract will begin once the contract is fully executed and is anticipated to end by June 30, 2022. The selected Proposer shall not start the performance of any work nor shall the City be liable to pay the selected Proposer for any service or work performed or expenses incurred before the contract is executed.

I-9. Mandatory Disclosures. By submitting a proposal, each Proposer understands, represents, and acknowledges that:

- A. Their proposal has been developed by the Proposer independently and has been submitted without collusion with and without agreement, understanding, or planned common course of action with any other vendor or suppliers of materials, supplies, equipment, or services described in the Request for Proposals, designed to limit independent bidding or competition, and that the contents of the proposal have not been communicated by the Proposer or its employees or agents to any person not an employee or agent of the Proposer.
- B. There is no conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists if a Proposer has any interest that would actually conflict, or has the appearance of conflicting, in any manner or degree with the performance of work on the project. If there are potential conflicts, identify the municipalities, developers, and other public or private entities with whom your company is currently, or have been, employed and which may be affected.
- C. It is not currently under suspension or debarment by the State of Minnesota, any other state or the federal government.

I-10. Notification of Selection. The City reserves the right to interview the top scoring firms in-person or via WebEx between May 4-8. Proposers whose proposals are

not selected will be notified in writing when contract negotiations have been successfully completed and the City has received the final negotiated contract signed by the selected Proposer.

PART II - PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Submittal of the Request for Proposals should include the following criteria and be structured accordingly:

1. Cover Letter
2. Firm Information
 - A. Name of Firm/Discipline
 - B. Contact Information
 - C. Staff Size
3. A description of your firm's experience in completing work of this type including three (3) specific examples and project references (include reference name, phone number and email).
4. Provide an overview and description of the firm's total qualifications including any special or unique services it may provide.
5. Specific name and qualifications of the lead member of the project team who will be the primary contact and have full responsibility for the project. Also, complete qualifications must be submitted for other members of the project team.
6. List whether or not your agency is the sole consultant for the entire project. Include any sub-contractors who will be working with your firm on this project, what their responsibilities will be, and a summary of applicable experience and qualifications.
7. A summary of your firm's understanding of the project including your firm's scope of services necessary to perform and fulfill the objectives and methods of how your firm plans to fulfill those objectives.
8. Cost of your services, in detail, including hours dedicated to each area defined within the scope of services. Technical proposals will be evaluated first. Cost will be a factor after the technical evaluation process is completed.
9. Detail meetings and community outreach with Parks and Recreation staff, Parks and Recreation Commission, City officials, stakeholder interviews and public forums.
10. Proposed schedule for the project.

11. Please indicate if your company has a Diversity and Inclusion policy or program. If so, briefly describe the policy or program and how your company directly integrates this into your services.

12. Please answer the following questions in a narrative format:

- A. How will you design and implement an “equity-driven” planning process to ensure a dissemination and gathering of information from a broad community spectrum, and how will you develop an equity-driven Master Plan and plan recommendations (programs, services, facilities, amenities, partnerships)?
- B. Protection from climate change and resiliency are a priority of the City. How will that priority be identified throughout the planning process and be incorporated into the plan and recommendations?
- C. The City of Duluth has a significant amount of Park and Recreation related assets, and we operate our premier parks system with limited staffing and financial capacity. How will you incorporate those factors into the planning process and recommendations while still striving for the highest quality parks system and programming possible?
- D. When looking at the varied condition of our park and trail facilities how will you develop a sustainable model for the ongoing maintenance and renewal of our built assets?

PART III - CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The proposals will be reviewed by City Staff. The intent of the selection process is to review proposals submitted by at least three qualified consultants and make an award based upon qualifications as described therein. A 100-point scale will be used to create the final evaluation recommendations. The factors and weighting on which proposals will be judged are:

- 1. Qualifications and Similar Project Experience, Including References (20%)
- 2. Effectiveness of Proposed Work Plan and Project Understanding (20%)
- 3. Innovative Engagement Strategy (20%)
- 4. Strength of Consultant's Team (20%)
- 5. Timeline and previous demonstrated ability to stay on schedule (5%)
- 6. Cost to complete the project (15%)

The consultant team should have expertise in comprehensive long-range park system planning of communities of similar size and scope. Each proposal will be evaluated based on qualifications. The City has the right to refuse any and all RFP's in whole or in part and select the proposal deemed by the governing body to be in the best interest of the City. Firms that are not selected will be notified in writing.

PART IV – PROJECT DETAIL

IV-1 Guiding Principles.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Planning process will be guided by a set of Guiding Principles that set the stage for planning process design, citizen engagement, prioritization of plan elements/programming and implementation/decision making. The following Guiding Principles will help guide the Mission and Vision of Duluth Parks and Recreation:

1. *Indigenous Acknowledgement:* Anishinaabe and other Tribal Nations first settled here, including the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and maintained a balanced relationship with the land and the lake for over 10,000 years.
2. *Inclusion and Equity:*
 - A. Provide multi-generational opportunities
 - B. Implement community outreach and participation to ensure multi-cultural opportunities
 - C. Ensure equitable access to park facilities, programs, and events
 - D. Design and implement park projects and programming to include access by people with disabilities.
 - E. Geographic diversity of projects and programs
 - F. Respond to changing recreational needs and priorities
3. *Quality over Quantity:* A necessary balance between the quality of parks and community recreation facilities with the overall quantity of facilities.
4. *Resiliency and Sustainability:* Adhere to climate change adaptation strategies and approaches for recreation. Ensure long-term adaptability and provide recreational opportunities that will not compromise environmental quality over time. Other considerations include:
 - A. Cost reasonableness
 - B. Operational and maintenance costs, including energy efficiency and energy reduction strategies
 - C. Use durable, low-maintenance, and natural/native materials
 - D. Balance of naturalized and maintained landscapes from a user, ecological, and maintenance perspective
 - E. Place-appropriate use of the land
 - F. Create high quality, timeless design
 - G. Follow best practices in the management and maintenance of our built assets
5. *Natural Resource Management:* Protect, restore and preserve natural resources and ecological systems.
 - A. Native and Invasive Species – promote the removal of invasive species and incorporate the use of native plantings.
 - a. Phase out the use of non-native nursery species that are not appropriate for our region.

- B. Follow Bee-Safe policies and procedures previously adopted by the City.
- 6. *Community Partnerships*: Cultivate strategic use of volunteers and community groups to perform mission critical work that would otherwise go undone due to staffing and funding limitations.
- 7. *Healthy Community*: Supporting health and well-being is a priority. The City will actively promote access for all to recreation in a clean, safe environment. Investments and policies will advance and maximize health and healthy equity.
- 8. *Safety*: Provide a safe, secure and welcoming park and recreational experience.
 - A. Ensure adequate and appropriate lighting when applicable
 - B. Provide trail wayfinding and trail length and character information, through on-site signage, online platforms, or other means
 - C. Signage and wayfinding placement is done in collaboration with emergency response teams
 - D. Apply crime prevention principles in planning and design of individual parks, trails and facilities
- 9. *Cost Recovery*: Apply a cost recovery and financial performance model to sustain programs, built assets/facilities and lands over a 10 year period.
- 10. *Land Management*: Designate land that requires protection as open space, including ecologically valuable areas or natural areas.

IV-2 GENERAL PROJECT SCOPE

Deliverables

The City of Duluth Parks & Recreation Division is soliciting qualified professional consulting services in Park and Recreation Master Planning and community engagement. The Master Plan will serve as a guiding document for park system infrastructure and programming for the next decade. Deliverables of the Master Planning process must include:

1. A **professional team** of staff that adheres to the guiding principles in the previous section.
2. Community and stakeholder **engagement plan**. Develop and conduct a public engagement strategy to gather public opinion regarding the adequacy of existing parks, recreation, and facilities and future/proposed investments. To include in-person and virtual meetings, surveys, and open houses. Strategy should address disparities and engage a diversity of people including (but not limited to) geographic, generational, racial, socio-economic and accessibility.
3. Regular **communication** with Parks and Recreation leadership team and internal staff steering committee. Provide presentations to policy makers, including: Parks and Recreation Commission, Natural Resource Commission, City Council, and other commissions or stakeholder groups as needed.
4. Internal **steering committee meetings**: develop agendas, materials, and lead or assist with meeting facilitation.
5. **Maintain documentation** from all meetings, correspondences, site visits and workshops.

6. **Conduct research** pertaining to plan components listed in section IV-3.
7. Submit **Draft Plan** for Parks and Recreation Commission review
8. **Develop, propose, and present plan amendments** to achieve project purpose.
Use illustrations and figures to convey design concepts for final product and required presentations.
9. Submit **Final Plan** to include executive summary, introduction, planning process, appendices, recommendations, implementation plan, probable cost estimate, funding source recommendations.
 - A. All parent files of graphics, tables, maps and illustrations shall be provided to the City in digital format for future use.
 - B. Final Plan in PDF and editable formats.
 - C. All workshop related exhibits and documents compiled and delivered in editable format, to include format(s) that are sharable to the public and web-friendly.
10. **Implementation** tools and schedules.

IV-3 ANTICIPATED PLAN COMPONENTS

The 2022 Parks and Recreation Master Plan should incorporate/highlight the Imagine Duluth 2035 Plan. <https://imagineduluth.com/>

Components of the 2022 Parks and Recreation Master Plan may include, but are not limited to:

1. Background Information Collection

- A. Review and affirm or revise mission and vision statements
 - a. Include Indigenous Relationship Acknowledgement
- B. Review demographic information and projected community needs

2. Asset Quality and Management

- A. Inventory and analysis of existing facilities, parks, trails, open space.
The City has an asset management system that has detailed facility, system and condition data. City will provide detailed condition assessments of individual assets.

Consultant will:

- a. Assess the quality and significance of assets, regardless of current condition
- b. Assess the functionality of assets compared to community needs and the Parks and Recreation Mission and Vision
- c. Prioritize future investment based on qualitative assessment and City-provided conditions of park assets, including:
 - i. Park-specific buildings and community centers
 - ii. Dog parks
 - iii. Trail heads – usage, maintenance, gaps/placement
 - iv. Trail system – review 2011 Trail and Bikeway Plan

- v. Boat launches and water access
 - vi. Park/Trail/Natural Area/Open Space categories and priority levels
 - vii. Considerations for future use of Lester Park golf course
 - viii. Designated camping facilities
 - ix. Athletic facilities – Indoors and Outdoors
 - x. Natural Areas and management
- A concurrent Natural Resources Management Program Plan is in progress, estimated to be completed in 2022.*
- d. Review existing built infrastructure and make recommend for improved accessibility and universal access measured against national park and trail standards.
 - e. Review our maintenance standards and schedule of identified and unidentified deferred infrastructure maintenance and provide recommendations on what to prioritize.

3. Governance and Funding Systems

- A. Review current and recommend future funding strategies related to the staffing, operations, programming, enhancement, and maintenance of the parks and recreation system:
 - a. Levies
 - b. General fund
 - c. Grant funding
 - d. Fees (permits, reservations, commercial users, program fees, etc.)
- B. Benchmark Duluth's Parks and Recreation finances against other comparable park agencies
- C. What strategic actions must Duluth take in order to meet the financial needs of the Parks and Recreation system in the future as defined in this new Master Plan?

4. Administrative and Operations Systems

- A. How are major priorities set and performance and progress toward goals tracked?
- B. Review and analyze current and historic staffing models
 - a. Benchmark against comparable park agencies
 - b. Review and analyze volunteer initiatives and partnerships with user groups for strategic programming, facilities management, operations, and maintenance opportunities.

Because of historically limited staffing levels and financial capacity, Duluth Parks and Recreation has relied on user and community groups to assist in operating and maintaining built assets, and delivering programs and services.
- C. Evaluate current marketing and public information efforts.
- D. Review and analyze effectiveness of applicable parks-related ordinances, rules, and policies
 - a. Evaluate effectiveness of enforcement

- b. Recommend best practices from peer communities and organizations
- c. Propose policies for resource-conscious foraging and gathering on public lands

5. Parks Programming and Operations Review and Analysis

- A. Review of Parks and Recreation-delivered programming
- B. Identify strategic opportunities to leverage community and non-profit organizations to deliver operational and programming services
Reference final page of Duluth Parks and Recreation Annual Report for listing of community partners
- C. Evaluate potential for a Parks and Recreation Equipment Rental Service
- D. Propose cost-effective, meaningful options for Memorial program elements
- E. Review of Parks and Recreation Permitting
 - a. Types: Commercial uses of parks, trails, facilities
 - b. Process and Policies
 - c. Locations
 - d. Benchmark against similar park agencies

6. Prioritization of Park Development and Capital Investment

- A. Prioritize existing parks, trails, facilities, and natural areas for improvement by neighborhood, region, natural area, etc.
- B. Prioritize of new or expanded parks, trails, facilities, and natural areas for development by neighborhood, region, natural area, etc.
 - a. Fill in neighborhood or geographical gaps

7. Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation

- A. Establish goals and objectives of the Master Plan based upon the Guiding Principles included in this RFP
- B. Develop and propose a strategic financial plan to achieve the recommendations for system improvements
- C. Develop an implementation plan and evaluation mechanism to monitor plan progress

Reference Materials:

Imagine Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Plan: <https://imagineduluth.com/>

Duluth Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010:
<https://duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/parks-planning-library/>

Duluth Trail and Bikeway Plan. Existing 2011 plan found here:
https://duluthmn.gov/media/6774/duluth_bike_report_edited_october_2011.pdf

Duluth Online Parks and Trails Map:
<https://duluthmn.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=858a94c6007f4bafbe45afa08e47e054>

Duluth Cross-Country Ski Trail Master Plan (2015):
<https://duluthmn.gov/media/6781/final-report-15-06-09.pdf>

Duluth Natural Areas Program Plans: <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/parks-planning-library/>

Past and present mini-master plans for specific parks and trails:

Completed: <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/parks-planning-library/>

In Progress: <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/progress-in-the-park/>

**APPENDIX A - PROPOSAL COVER SHEET
CITY OF DULUTH
RFP# 21-AA18
Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

Proposer Information:	
Proposer Name	
Mailing Address	
Website	
Contact Person	
Contact Person's Phone Number	
Contact Person's Facsimile Number	
Contact Person's E-Mail Address	
Federal ID Number	

Submittals Enclosed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Submittal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost Submittal sealed separately
<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital Copy of both Technical and Cost Submittals

<i>Signature</i>	
Signature of an official authorized to bind the Proposer to the provisions contained in the proposal:	
Printed Name	
Title	