



CITY OF DULUTH
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
Development Partner for Solar Photovoltaics and Storage

RFP NUMBER 24-AA14

Issued November 18, 2024

PROPOSALS DUE JANUARY 24, 2025 at 3:00 PM

SUBMIT TO:
City Of Duluth
Attn: Purchasing Division
City Hall, Room 120
411 West 1st Street
Duluth, MN 55802

Development Partner for Solar Photovoltaics and Storage Duluth, Minnesota

Release Date: Monday, November 18, 2024

Proposals Due: 3:00 pm Central Time, Friday, January 24, 2024

1. Overview

The City of Duluth (the “City”), on behalf of and in partnership with the Duluth Economic Development Authority (“DEDA”) and Duluth’s Independent School District 709 (“ISD 709”), is seeking proposals from qualified entities to partner in the development of an approximate 10-Megawatt solar photovoltaic development on multiple sites across the city. The Properties (Appendices B-E) are all located within city limits but are owned by one of the partnering entities. Each property has different development possibilities and possible contract options with the owning entity.

The awarded proposer(s) will collaborate with the City and/or partners to create a solar development plan that can be submitted for the Minnesota Power Request for Proposals (RFP) for Distributed Solar Energy Systems in 2025. The City’s intent is to select one or more team(s) to maximize the amount of solar developed on each site, and to have one of more submissions to the Minnesota Power RFP.

Proposed development scenarios may include one or more sites to maximize the amount of solar generation, not to exceed 10 megawatts on any site. Contract structure will depend on the owning entity of each site, project financials, award from Minnesota Power, and the partnering entity.

Questions regarding this RFP and project scope should be directed to the City of Duluth Purchasing Office: purchasing@duluthmn.gov, who will work with the Sustainability Office to answer any questions.

2. Objectives

The City and partners are seeking to work with a developer, development team, or other qualified entity to develop solar on otherwise undevelopable sites to be submitted for Minnesota Power’s Request for Proposals for Distributed Solar Energy Systems in 2025. The primary purpose of this process is to identify qualified entities that clearly have the experience, vision, and financial capability to design and construct a quality solar development plan or portfolio consistent with the City’s and partners’ objectives. The City and partners are principally interested in developing underutilized and undevelopable land; this includes utilizing multiple sites and contract methods to deploy up to 10 Megawatts of solar and/or storage. The maximum 10 Megawatts of solar and/or storage may utilize one or more sites available. All proposals should strive, to the greatest extent possible, to meet the following objectives:

- Demonstrate expertise of the project team in facilitating site design processes, including the team’s ability to communicate effectively;
- Provide an understanding of how the proposed site or portfolio development will maximize the amount of solar to be constructed, including what contract structure would best suit the site or portfolio;
- Indicate the team’s ability to partner with owning entities to draft a RFP response to be submitted to Minnesota Power in 2025;
- Include qualifications related to solar photovoltaics, storage, site design, and other construction practices; and
- Pledge to work collaboratively with the city and partners to try and connect local jobseekers to employment opportunities related to construction on the site(s).

3. Minnesota Power Distributed Solar Energy Systems (DSES) RFP

In 2025, Minnesota power will be opening a Request for Proposals for new solar energy generation sites to add to their grid capabilities. Renewable energy objectives were handed down by the state legislature via state statute 216B.1691:

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/216B.1691#stat.216B.1691.1> . Due to the new statute, Minnesota power is looking to add 65-85 MW of solar to their portfolio by 2030. In early 2025 they will be accepting proposals for solar and/or storage energy systems throughout their territory that do not exceed 10 MW in size. The forthcoming RFP process by Minnesota Power encourages collaboration between community and development partners. The City, DEDA, and ISD 709 are seeking qualified entities to help develop and submit a solar portfolio for the DSES RFP in 2025. We anticipate projects only moving forward for development if selected by Minnesota Power in 2025.

4. Property Attributes

All properties are located within the Duluth city limits but are owned by different entities. Properties are in low-moderate income communities, on park land, or on ISD 709 parcel(s). The Properties all feature a relatively flat and/or south facing topography located near electrical infrastructure. All properties will need a special use permit for solar photovoltaic installation and the City is willing to partner with any selected entity to work through the special use permit process. No property available has any load or meter available on the property.

5. Zoning & Uses

All properties lie within zoning areas that allow solar production or allow it under a Special Use Permit. The City will work with the awarded proposer(s) to move through the Special Use Permit process for each site that solar is proposed on. More information on the City of Duluth’s Unified Development Chapter (UDC) and Planning Commission Process can be found here: <https://duluthmn.gov/planning-development/land-use-zoning-and-applications/zoning-regulations/>.

6. Contract Options

All contract options are available for the structure of the sites. The Minnesota Power RFP accepts projects structured to include Power Purchase Agreements (PPA), PPA with buyouts, Build-Transfer Agreements, and Portfolio bids. The RFP process encourages community collaboration on applications and any partnership will strengthen that application. The contract structure will be negotiated on a per-site basis with each owning entity, and efforts will be made to make sure contracts are structured to allow for project feasibility.

7. Potential Assistance Provided to Developer

The City, DEDA and ISD 709 all have governmental or non-profit status and are willing to work to utilize Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) direct pay possibilities. If grant opportunities are available, the partnering entity will work to write and pursue grants to help secure the project capital stack.

8. Proposal Format

Proposals should not exceed 20 pages, and should include the following:

1. Proposal Cover Sheet – A completed and signed Proposal Cover Sheet (Appendix A).
2. Development Narrative – A written summary explaining which property or properties will be included in the project or portfolio, which sites (if any) will include storage capabilities, the size of solar and/or storage (in megawatts) of the proposed project or portfolio, and financial competency and resources.
3. Statement of Qualifications – Include descriptions of relevant example projects completed within the past 5 years that are comparable in scope to the project. Include references of previous clients/projects.
4. Resumes – Please submit a one-page resume for each proposed team member, highlighting their experience in development design and execution.

9. Evaluation Criteria

The City will evaluate the Development Proposals based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience and ability to interact with municipalities and utilities relative to solar development [25 points]
- Completed solar PV and storage developments [20 points]
- The quality and quantity of the proposed solar and storage on the identified sites [20 points]
- Knowledge of and experience with relevant regulatory program(s) and development standards [15 points]
- Ability to finance a future development, including demonstrated ability to procure financing and complete projects on schedule [15 points]
- Experience of personnel identified for this project [5 points]

The City encourages and welcomes bids from women and minority owned businesses.

The City of Duluth reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any or all submittals when, in its opinion, it is determined to be in the public interest to do so; to waive minor irregularities and informalities of a submittal; to cancel, revise, or extend this solicitation; and to select the proposal it deems is in the best interests of the City or its partners, even if it does not provide the greatest financial benefit to the City or its partners. The City reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted, to request additional information from any proposer, and to conduct interviews if it will help with the selection process.

This Request for Proposals does not obligate the City of Duluth to pay any costs incurred by any respondent in the submission of qualifications and/or proposals or in making necessary studies or designs for the preparation of any proposal, or for procuring or contracting for the services to be furnished under this Request for Proposals.

The City of Duluth appreciates your consideration of this Request for Proposals and welcomes all responsible Respondents.

10. Questions, Answers, & Addenda

Any questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by e-mail to the Purchasing Office at purchasing@duluthmn.gov **no later than** 12/16/2024, as indicated in the schedule below.

Answers to questions will be posted as an Addendum to the RFP.

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

11. Expected Schedule

The following list summarizes the expected schedule and process to be followed for this RFP:

- Request for Proposals issued – November 18, 2024
- Sites tour – December 5, 2024; 9:00 am starting at site #1 (2302 Commonwealth Ave)
- Deadline for questions –December 16, 2024
- Final written responses/addenda issued – December 30, 2024
- Development proposals due – January 24, 2025
- Notification of selected developer – February 2025

12. Mandatory Disclosures

By submitting a proposal, each Bidder understands, represents, and acknowledges that:

Their proposal has been developed by the Bidder 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 Bidder or its employees or agents to any person not an employee or agent of the Bidder.

There is no conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists if a Bidder 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.

It is not currently under suspension or debarment by the State of Minnesota, any other state or the federal government.

The company is either organized under Minnesota law or has a Certificate of Authority from the Minnesota Secretary of State to do business in Minnesota, in accordance with the requirements in M.S. 303.03.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Proposal Cover Sheet

Appendix B – Site #1

Appendix C – Site #2

Appendix D – Site #3

Appendix E – Site #4

APPENDIX A - PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

RFP 24-AA14

Development Partner for Solar Photovoltaics and Storage

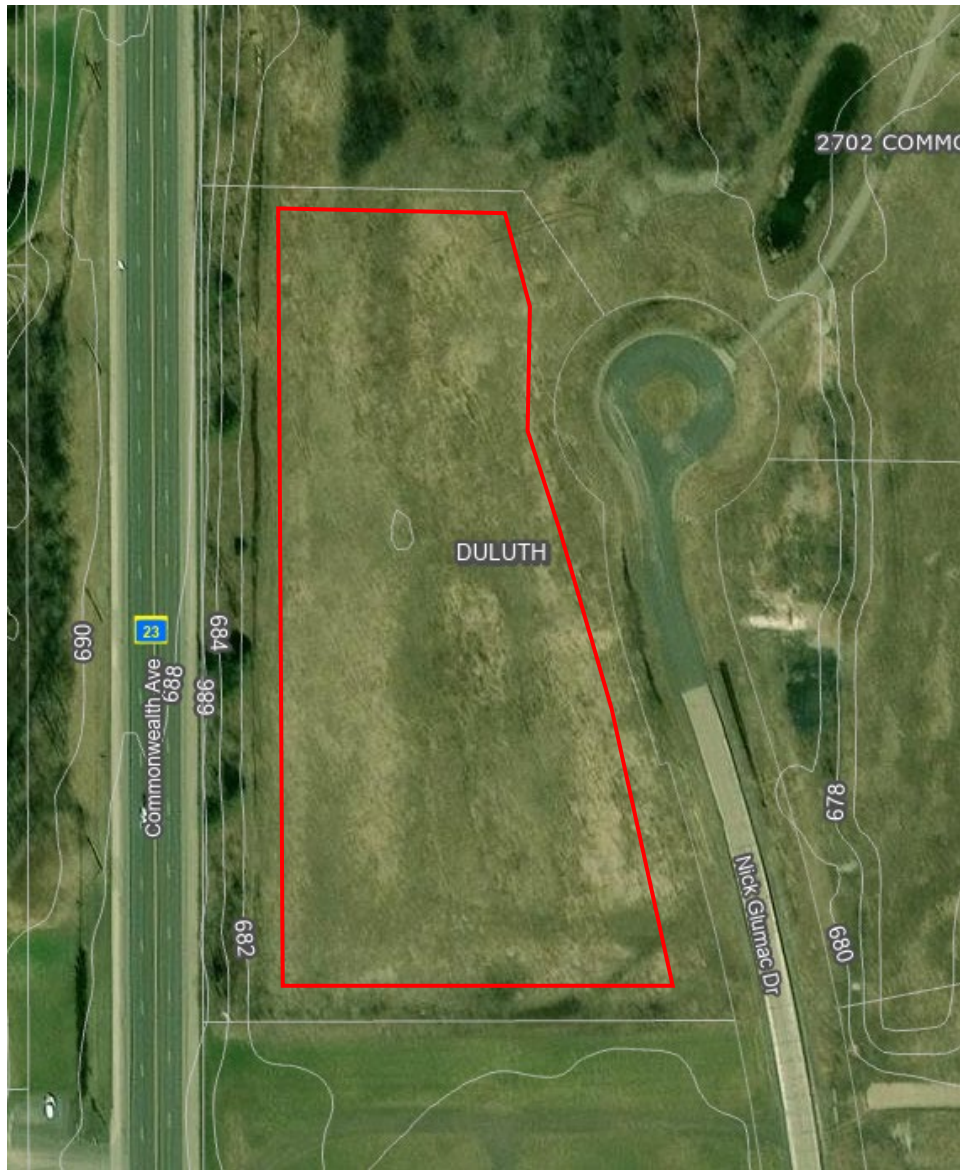
Proposer Information:	
Company Name	
Mailing Address	
Website	
Principal Contact Person	
Contact Person's Phone Number	
Contact Person's E-Mail Address	
Federal ID Number	

<i>Signature</i>	
Signature of authorized official. Signatory consents and agrees to adhere to the terms outlined in this proposal:	
Printed Name	
Title	

FAILURE TO COMPLETE, SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM MAY RESULT IN THE REJECTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The Signatory hereby represents upon all of the penalties of law for the purpose of inducing the City of Duluth to review a proposal for development, that all documentation herein and attached are true and that all work herein described, if selected, will proceed in accordance with the Ordinances of the City of Duluth and the laws of the State of Minnesota. Signatory also understands that all documents provided to the City may be considered public data, per Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

APPENDIX B – SITE #1



Owner: Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA)

Parcel Identification Number (PIN): 010-0019-00100

Zoned: I-G

Area: Approximately 3.5 Acres

Located in Environmental Justice Community

APPENDIX C – SITE #2



Owner: Independent School District #709

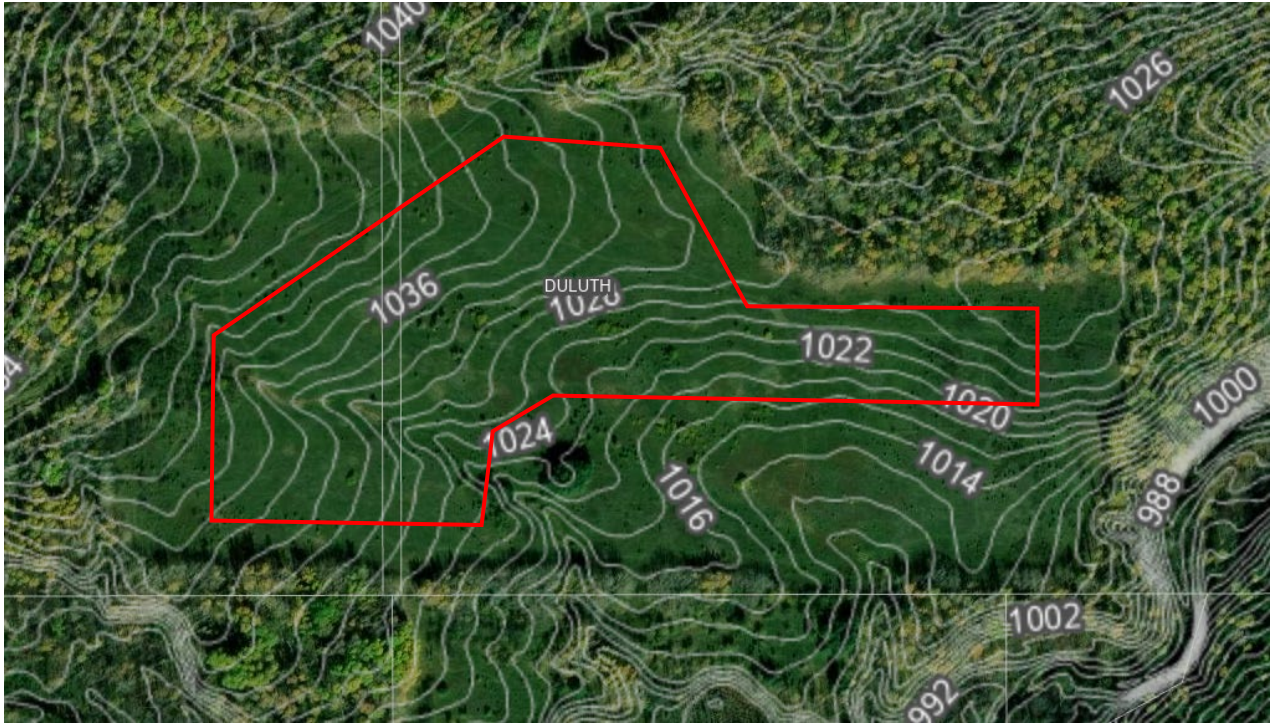
Parcel Identification Numbers (PINs): 010-4750-00010
010-2700-00060

Zoned: RR-1

Area: Approximately 6 Acres

Located in LMI Community

APPENDIX D – SITE #3



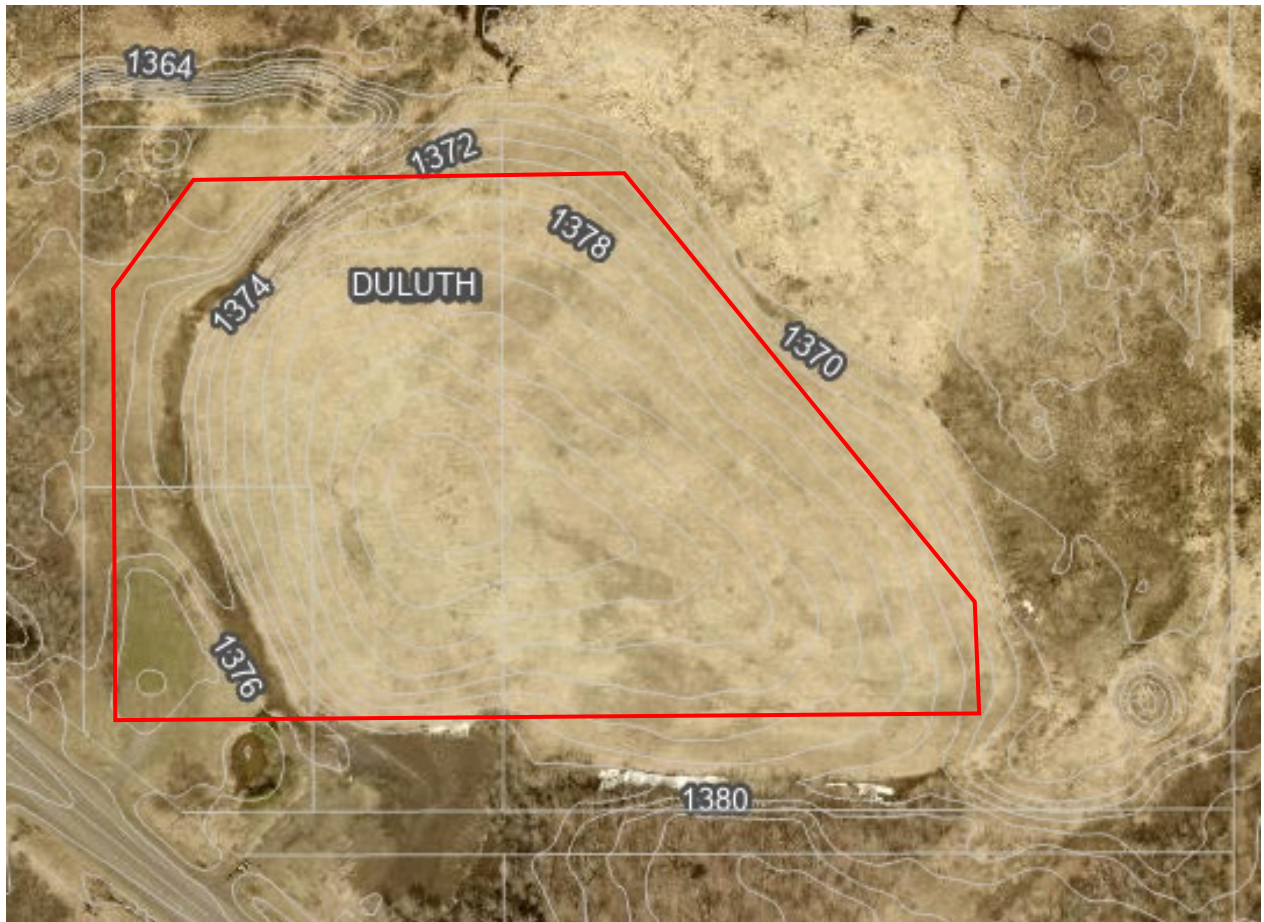
Owner: City of Duluth

Parcel Identification Numbers (PINs): 010-2690-01090
010-2690-00740

Zoned: P-1

Area: Approximately 20 Acres

APPENDIX E – SITE #4



Owner: City of Duluth

Parcel Identification Numbers (PINs): 010-2710-02340
010-2710-02343
010-2710-02345

Zoned: RR-1

Area: Approximately 12 Acres

*Former dumpsite that is being re-capped in 2025 by the MPCA. Any array on this site must be ballasted and is not allowed to puncture new cap