



# RFP FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTANT

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## INTRODUCTION

Olmsted Parks Conservancy (OPC) is requesting proposals from qualified strategic planning consultants to conduct a far-reaching and inclusive input process that will inform a Strategic Plan to guide the organization's work over the next 5-7 years.

The selected consultant will be responsible for assisting the OPC Board and President with the full scope of developing a Strategic Plan. OPC is soliciting proposals for these services in accordance with the terms, conditions and instructions set forth in this Request for Proposal.

In submitting a proposal, respondents acknowledge OPC has no express or implied obligation to reimburse them for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to the request or for attending any meetings or conferences related to preparing or presenting proposals.

## BACKGROUND

Olmsted Parks Conservancy has a mission to restore, enhance, and forever protect Louisville's Olmsted-designed parks and parkways, connecting nature and neighborhood while strengthening the community's well-being. At Olmsted Parks Conservancy, we value diversity in all its forms for the same reason we value biodiversity in our parks: it makes communities more resilient, sustainable, and vibrant. Our parks are an intrinsic part of Louisville, and, as an organization striving for inclusivity, we commit to fostering diversity and respect both in nature and neighborhoods.

We were founded in 1989 and have overseen over \$50 million worth of investment into our Olmsted Park system in that time. Our team of 15 works closely with our partners at Louisville Parks and Recreation to invest in and care for our parks.

Our three core areas of work focus on capital investment, natural areas management, and community engagement.

We execute capital investments in almost all our parks – things like new playgrounds and spray pads, tennis courts, and pavilions. Our Team for Healthy Parks is in our parks each day planting and caring for trees, managing prairies and meadows, ensuring our woodlands are healthy and free of invasive species, and planting and maintaining formal landscape areas.



Our community engagement work is broad. We have Friends of Parks in many of our parks – neighbors who help program and advocate for better care of their park, and act as the eyes and ears for our organization. We have over 1000 volunteers each year who contribute an extraordinary amount of work maintaining our parks. We are involved in environmental education from early childhood Free Play activities to graduate level research projects.

## EVOLUTION

We began as a fundraising organization that strictly paid for capital investments. We raised money, matched by public funds, and then relied on the public parks department to maintain the parks. We have always worked hard to maintain a strong relationship with our mayor and have advocated for matched funding for our projects. We take our role as advocate seriously and will challenge decisions that we do not feel are in the best interest of our parks or landscapes.

About 17 years ago, we recognized that the woodlands were seriously threatened by invasive honeysuckle and created a campaign to restore them. We created the Team for Healthy Parks, a crew of 5 people who spent years clearing the woodlands. We have always had a strong foundation in science and use data to guide best practices in land management. The woodland restoration work continues to this day and has expanded to also include formal landscaping, tree plantings, and meadow maintenance. Work that used to only be in a handful of parks with natural woodlands has now expanded to each of our 17 parks. Our volunteer program was created at the same time to support this work and has only grown since. As we've acknowledged the city's perennial limited capacity to adequately fund the park system, we've had to take on more responsibility, especially for maintaining areas and projects that our members and supporters have funded.

In the past 5 years, we have also expanded our community engagement work to focus on strengthening relationships with neighbors through our Friends of Olmsted Parks. These neighbors advocate for their parks and are actively involved in caring for and programming. We partner with neighbors and various organizations to ensure the parks are vibrant and accessible and continue to meet the needs of park users.

Our organization continues to evolve. Late last year, we received a historic gift of \$8 million to purchase 25 acres of property that adjoins Cherokee Park, protecting it from a proposed 75 home development. This is the first time in our organizational history that we will own land and be completely responsible for the maintenance and care for the property.

As our capacity grows, we anticipate more parkland will eventually be under our sole management and care. Our relationship with Louisville Parks and Recreation will continue to evolve. Given the continued expansion of our work and ambition, we felt like this was the right time to undergo a comprehensive strategic planning process.



## PROPOSAL

The following information is required for the proposal submission to be considered:

- Firm name, address, contact name, title, phone number & email address
- Scope of Work including an outlined approach and strategy to complete the requested Scope of Work
- Cost estimate for the proposed Scope of Work, and any other project-related costs
- List of 3 references and examples of similar projects

## ELIGIBILITY

Consultants should be experienced in working with organizations in the development of a responsive and a long-term strategic plan. The intent of the Request for Proposal is to garner proposals from qualified strategic planning consultants to work in partnership with the Strategic Planning Committee, the OPC Board, the OPC staff and community stakeholders. The successful proposer will work directly with the Strategic Planning Committee and the President to ensure all activities in this project are completed.

## SCOPE OF WORK REQUESTED

- Conduct a pre-meeting with OPC staff, OPC Strategic Planning Committee, and OPC Board, including at a Board and Staff retreat.
- Review relevant documents identified by the Board and President including previous strategic plans, and new branding and communication pillars.
- Organize and facilitate meetings to encourage participation and gather insight regarding critical issues and priorities for OPC.
- Work with the Strategic Planning Committee to ensure that there is thorough board, staff and community engagement.
- Partner with communication team on all related event notifications
- Provide Strategic Planning Committee with documentation of findings from any public and staff meetings, and preliminary direction for a Strategic Plan.
- Provide a draft Strategic Plan that will guide the organization's work over the next 5-7 years to the staff for feasibility review no later than October 20, 2022.
- Provide a draft Strategic Plan at a Governance Committee meeting by no later than October 27, 2022.
- Attend and present the final report at OPC Board meeting (November 15, 2022).



## PROJECT SCHEDULE

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on June 15, 2022. Proposals received later than the date and time specified will not be considered unless previously arranged. OPC assumes no responsibility or liability for late delivery or receipt of responses. In order to be considered eligible for the project, the consultant who would be assigned to the project, must be available in person or by phone/videoconference to respond to questions the week of July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The project will be awarded and terms finalized by July 31<sup>st</sup>. Selection of a consultant under this Request for Proposal does not commit OPC to procuring any services pursuant to this Request for Proposal. OPC will negotiate contract terms upon selection.

## PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

Cover Letter: Summarize the proposed team and approach. Include the firm name, address, contact person, and all applicable contact information. Qualifications:

- Describe the background, experience and capabilities of your firm as it relates to the Scope of Work outlined above.
- Identify the name and title of the primary consultant and any other key team members who will be assigned to this project. For each, provide a summary of qualifications and experience and bio.
- For each team member, provide the name, telephone number, and email address of at least two references that can attest to the quality and effectiveness of his/her work.

Send Proposals and questions to Layla George, President and CEO of Olmsted Parks Conservancy, at [layla.george@olmstedparks.org](mailto:layla.george@olmstedparks.org) by June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022.