

# Park District of Ottawa County

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### Park District Strategic Plan



**Responses Due: March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Call (419)707-4051 with questions

posted on [www.ottawacountyparksoh.org](http://www.ottawacountyparksoh.org)

Submit to [jwilson@ottawacountyparksoh.org](mailto:jwilson@ottawacountyparksoh.org)

#### **Park District Mission Statement:**

**The mission of the Park District of Ottawa County is to connect, enhance, and protect the natural, scenic, environmental and cultural resources of Ottawa County for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.**

#### **Park District Vision Statement:**

**Connecting people, places, and parks.**

#### **Introduction:**

The Park District of Ottawa County (PDOC) is seeking to hire a consultant or team of consultants to prepare a Park District Strategic Plan. PDOC seeks a Plan that clarifies the mission and vision, engages the community, provides internal assessment, and includes a road map for long term success and sustainability through actionable short-term steps. The plan will include research, public involvement, and the development of recommendations for all aspects of PDOC activities with a focus on the current and future recreational, programming, and conservation needs of the community. The selected consultant/consultant team will have proven experience and knowledge in parks and recreation planning, project management, and effective public involvement processes.

#### **Background:**

The Park District of Ottawa County is an ORC 1545 Park District located in Northwest Ohio. The Park District serves 17,995 households within Ottawa County. The Park District also serves a growing population of seasonal residents with the population of the County increasing from 42,000 year-round residents to over 250,000 visitors and seasonal residents during the summer months.

The Park District was established in 1992 but did not have funding until the passage of a .6 mill 10-year property tax levy in 2020. Since the passage of the levy the Park District has targeted a variety of trail projects including the extension of the North Coast Inland Trail and conceptual development of the Catawba Islander Trail and Greenway. The Park District has also hired a consultant to facilitate the Marblehead Peninsula Trail Feasibility Study to be completed in 2024.

The Park District owns a 5-mile stretch of the North Coast Inland Trail between Elmore and Genoa and has recently acquired a 12-acre parcel in Catawba Island Township. Several additional acquisition projects are currently underway.

#### **Goals and Objectives:**

The Park District does not have a formal strategic plan. An 18-month strategic plan was created internally in 2022. Park District project goals have also been established and provided to the Board of Park Commissioners.

The Park District wishes to engage in a formal strategic planning process in order to address the current and future needs of the community. This project should address the following goals.

- A plan that engages in a thoughtful, long-term assessment of the Park District's role in the community;
- A plan that provides a roadmap towards long-term success and sustainability through actionable short-term steps;
- A plan that reviews internal systems and compares existing structure with similarly sized organizations and best practices with a consideration for efficiency, effectiveness and what's coming next in public parks and recreation;
- A plan that is clear, concise, and easy to read and understand;
- A plan that can be fully implemented over the next 5-10 years.

The consultant(s) will be expected to review and evaluate existing reports and information including, but not limited to:

- The Park District of Ottawa County 18-month Strategic Plan adopted July 2022
- 2024 Park District Projects and Goals
- Ottawa County Active Transportation Plan
- Catawba Islander Trail and Greenway Phase One Master Plan and Public Surveys
- Strategic Plans from similarly sized and funded Ohio 1545 Park Districts

#### **Scope of Work:**

Tasks identified below are suggested as a starting point for work on the Strategic Plan. The Consultant should confirm or modify these tasks as necessary to address the RFP goals, as well as determine the best sequence for tasks. The Consultant's proposal should also identify the deliverables for each task.

#### **TASK ONE – PROJECT SCOPE DEVELOPMENT**

Project Kick-Off – The Consultant will conduct an initial meeting with staff to confirm the project requirements and clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations. The Consultant will, at a minimum:

- Confirm project goals, objectives, scope, and expectations;
- Clarify Park District mission and vision statement;
- Establish a schedule for meetings and progress reports;
- Determine participating stakeholders.

#### **TASK TWO – ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE**

Project Data Collection – The Consultant will conduct a thorough data review to establish context for the Plan, including:

- Review all relevant documents, demographics, comparable or similar agencies, and practices;
- Identify key metrics and provide a benchmark analysis of similarly-sized agencies.

#### **TASK THREE – COMMUNITY PROFILE**

Community Engagement – The Consultant will aggressively engage stakeholders in a community needs assessment study that incorporates substantive and diverse public involvement in a discussion of their current and future recreation, education and conservation needs from the Park District of Ottawa County. The Consultant should employ a range of methods to maximize stakeholder input and participation, including but not limited to conducting:

- Key leader interviews with PDOC Board and Executive Director;
- Focus groups/engagement discussions with staff, Advisory Board members, and partner agencies;
- Online electronic survey;
- Statistically Valid Needs and Analysis Survey administered by mail/phone;
- All results should be summarized in the Final Plan.

#### **TASK FOUR – MARKETING AND PROGRAMMING PLANS**

Utilize community profile in order to develop a marketing strategy.

- Develop a plan to promote the positive contributions the Park District is making throughout the County;
- Identify other ways the Park District could utilize marketing tools in order to build a strong brand presence;
- Develop a marketing plan that incorporates public education and programming components

#### **TASK FIVE – STRATEGIC ACTION PLANS**

Strategic Planning - The Consultant will prepare a 5-year short-term and 10-year long-term strategic plan.

- Plan should develop and prioritize goals and objectives;
- Plan should provide protocol or set of criteria that would ensure that the projects the Park District undertakes meet our Mission and Vision as well as budgetary plan.
- Plan should include a prioritized Action Plan that addresses key elements identified in this RFP as well as any relevant ones that evolve from the planning process. It should identify costs, strategies, and timelines for implementation;
- Plan should include the development of a short-term and long-term funding strategy for the Park District;
- Long-term strategic planning should provide a vision and framework for updating and evolving action.

#### **TASK SIX – IMPLEMENTATION AND FINAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

- Prepare a DRAFT version of the Strategic Plan for review by PDOC Executive Director and Board.
- Prepare a FINAL version of the Strategic and Business Development Plan for approval by the Executive Director and Board.
- Present Strategic Plan to the PDOC Board.
- Provide an electronic version of the Plan for distribution. Create an executive summary for publication and use on website and promotional opportunities.

#### **Proposal Format:**

A brief description of the consultant's philosophy and/or approach to the project should demonstrate the team's understanding of the project and other relevant issues. If the consultant is unable to determine the extent of work required based on the information provided in the RFP, this should be stated as well.

#### **Meetings and Presentations:**

The consultant team must be available to participate in meetings with staff, park board members, and other stakeholders. The proposal cost estimate should be based on up to five (5) meetings, at least two of which are anticipated to be with key community stakeholders. Please note in the fee schedule a per meeting unit cost for any additional meetings.

#### **Work Program Timeline:**

Include a timeline showing the estimated length of time for completion of the Strategic Plan process. Time estimates should be expressed in the number of days/weeks without reference to a specific starting date. The timeline should identify when draft and final work products will be submitted to the PDOC Executive Director.

#### **Statement of Qualifications and Relevant Experience:**

Include any related supplemental information concerning key personnel or team experience, which may be relevant. Please identify the project manager and principal contact to be assigned to the project.

#### **References:**

List no less than three reference clients for whom similar or comparable services have been performed. Include the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the primary contact person.

**Cost Summary:**

All costs should reflect “not to exceed” figures. Fee schedules, including hourly rates for the prime consultant and all sub-consultants, meetings, and reproduction costs, should accompany the cost summary. Itemize all costs. Contact the Park District with budgetary information regarding the project.

**Selection Process:**

The Park District of Ottawa County will use a combination of objective and subjective criteria to determine each consultant’s suitability to perform this work. Evaluation criteria for the proposals are as follows:

1. Successful experience with similar types of projects;
2. Previous project references;
3. Quality of the proposal and understanding of the work to be completed;
4. Project team and key personnel qualifications;
5. Proposed time schedule, budget, and cost.

**Proposal Submittal:**

The Park District invites qualified professional planning and design firms to submit proposals to undertake a strategic plan for the Park District. Proposals are due by 10am on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

A digital copy of the proposal, including the itemized cost estimate and fee schedules, must be received by [jwilson@ottawacountyparksoh.org](mailto:jwilson@ottawacountyparksoh.org) no later than 10am, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024. PDOC will not pay any cost incurred by any consultant resulting from preparation or submittal of a proposal in response to this RFP. PDOC reserves the right to modify or cancel in part, or in its entirety, this RFP. PDOC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any defects and/or informalities.

Final deliverables will be discussed during the Scope of Services negotiations with the selected firm. The selected firm must develop and adhere to an implementation schedule.

The Park District of Ottawa County will evaluate and score qualified consultants, and the Board of Park Commissioners will approve the final selection.

Based on the qualifications submitted, the Park District may conduct interviews of firms that best demonstrate an understanding of the project objectives and adequately addressed all elements of the RFP. Whether interviews are performed or not, the Park District shall enter into contract negotiations with the preferred firm to determine the final scope of services and project budget.

All qualifications shall be considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental and physical disabilities.

Please contact Executive Director Jannah Wilson at (419) 707-4051 or [jwilson@ottawacountyparksoh.org](mailto:jwilson@ottawacountyparksoh.org) for more information regarding the proposals.