

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
ROSS TOWNSHIP
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION, PARK
AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE
February 2021



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SECTION I. BACKGROUND

Ross Township is a community with a population of approximately 32,500 residents. The township is primarily a residential community with a well-developed commercial corridor contributing to a solid economic base. The township is approximately 14.4 square miles.

The township offers its residents over 200 total acres of park land in 22 separate parks and open spaces. There are 12 play areas in and several neighborhood parklets. There are 15 ball fields throughout the township, including Herb Field which is qualified for play up to and including American Legion League play.

Following construction of the Ross Community Center in 2003, Ross Township created and staffed its first full-time Parks and Recreation Department. The newly-created department was tasked with programming the indoor space and creating policies for building and pavilion rentals throughout the parks. The Parks & Rec Department also created the township's first Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (CRPOSP) which was approved by the Board of Commissioners in 2012.

The purpose of this plan is to update the 2012 CRPOSP. Many of the major projects and action items delineated in the CRPOSP have been accomplished, a complete accounting of which will be created by the Ross Parks & Recreation Director and will be presented to the public at the onset of the planning process. A thorough evaluation of current programs and projects will be completed as part of the update. A comprehensive resident survey will also be performed as part of the public input process, which will contain many of the original public survey questions. Performing this type of repeated-measure survey provides the township with a comparative analysis for future programming needs.

The 2012 CRPOSP received 50% funding from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), for a total cost of \$50,000.00. Many of the plan items that will be included in the CRPOSP Update (such as physical inventory of land and equipment) are already documented, therefore those consulting services will not be included in the Request for Proposal (RFP) for this project. Therefore, we expect the scope of services for this update to be in cost range that will not necessitate grant funding, and the Parks and Recreation Department will be the sole funding source for the project.

However, the Updated CRPOSP technical requirements will retain the original DCNR requirements and standards, and this RFP will be sent to the DCNR regional representative for review and comment prior to public issuance of the RFP.

SECTION II. REQUIREMENTS

A. General

The township reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to select the proposal that it judges to be in the best interest of the township.

The contract is subject to the approval of the Board of Commissioners and is effective only upon its approval. All proposals are bound by the deadline and location requirements of this RFP as previously stated in the Announcement.

All proposals shall remain effective to township review and approval for a period of sixty (60) days from the deadline of submitting the proposals.

If only one proposal is received by the township, the township may initiate negotiations with the firm submitting the proposal or seek additional proposals on an informal basis during the sixty (60) day period that proposals remain effective.

The proposer is encouraged to add to, modify or clarify any of the scope of work items it deems appropriate to obtain a high-quality plan at the lowest possible cost. All changes should be listed and explained. However, the scope of work proposed, at minimum, must accomplish the goals of the work outlined below.

Consultants that anticipate submitting a proposal are encouraged to contact Eloise Peet, Director, Ross Township Parks & Recreation Department by email at epeet@ross.pa.us. This will be used if an addendum to the RFP is issued by Ross Township.

B. Scope of Work

I. Plan Purpose and Goals

- a. Provide Ross Township with an update to the 2012 CRPOSP to encompass the following:
 1. Develop a plan to assess the need for further upgrades to the parks and prioritize the work that needs to be done.
 2. Re-evaluate all recreation assets to determine compliance with the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 3. Study ways to enhance usability and sustainability, with a focus on improving landscaping and hardscaping to address storm water management.
 4. Estimate future needs, including current trends for parks, open spaces and recreation services throughout the township.
 5. Evaluate how existing programming is meeting the needs of the residents as well as assess future programming needs, including current trends appropriate for our township.
 6. Evaluate the level of maintenance and the necessary future resources to be committed by the township to provide structured and scheduled maintenance for the park system.
 7. Recommend an appropriate level of funding for recreation and park services.

- b. Develop a time-line for implementation of the Plan, to serve as a guideline for operational and capital budgeting.
- c. Physical Data (update to be provided by Gateway Engineers).
 - 1. Updated version of municipal land use map.
 - 2. Inventory of the following features (to include comprehensive map):
 - a. Water resources - flood plains, wetlands, waterways, canals and stream corridors.
 - b. Significant history and cultural sites.
 - c. Unique natural areas, woodlands, and geological features.
 - d. Steep slopes (15% or greater).
 - e. Man-made corridors.

II. General Information and Community Background

Update the 2012 CRPOSP general and community information to include: community character; setting; history; geographic information. This section will also include updated 2020 census information, with estimated availability in 2021-2022.

III. Public Participation – Community involvement and engagement must prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure feedback and recommendations that are comprehensive, appropriate and accountable.

- a. Work with the Parks & Recreation Director to develop a well-rounded and representative study/review committee to evaluate the plan throughout its process. The consultant will be expected to attend one study committee meeting per month (7-10 meetings in total) to update the committee on progress, answer questions, and gather needed data and information that the committee members can supply.
- b. Conduct key person interviews with a minimum of 10 individuals. These will compliment the public survey data that is collected by the Parks and Recreation Department.
- c. Work with the Parks & Recreation Director to perform data analysis of the Community Survey.
- d. Conduct four public meetings related to the Plan.
 - i. The first public meeting will be for public education of the comprehensive plan update process, and to collect public input.
 - ii. The second public meeting will be to discuss the results of the surveys, key interviews, and public input from the initial meeting. Additional public input will be taken at this time.
 - iii. The third public meeting will be to present the draft plan and obtain additional public comment.
 - iv. The final public meeting will be to present the findings, recommendations, and final plans.
- e. Additional public meetings may be scheduled, to collect additional public comment on the draft plan.
- f. The consultant will include details of the public participation process in the draft and final products.

IV. Department Mission Statement and Goals

Outcome - Discuss, evaluate and make recommendations concerning the existing mission state, goals, and objectives.

V. Administration

Outcome – Analysis of effective administration of recreation and park services. Analyzed practices include the township’s ability to involve the public with long-range planning efforts, to work cooperatively with other public agencies, communities, school districts and community groups and businesses. Also includes an analysis of existing office procedures and policies.

- a. Describe and analyze these conditions:
 - i. The legal document under which the township receives its authority.
 - ii. Relationships between the department and community organizations and its involvement with regional initiatives.
 - iii. Public relations and marketing efforts to promote department functions, services, and programs.
 - iv. Municipal-school cooperative efforts.
 - v. Cooperative efforts with other recreation providers, support groups, etc.
 - vi. Policies and procedures that govern the general operation of the Department’s recreation and park functions (use of facilities, non-resident participation, policy manuals, risk management program, record keeping, etc.)
 - vii. Opportunities for the public to get involved with planning efforts. Involvement could include the Department’s use of program evaluation forms, distribution of surveys, public meetings, etc.
 - viii. Record keeping procedures.
- b. Discuss any administrative problems which will be examined more thoroughly as part of this planning effort.

VI. Township/Departmental Personnel

Outcome – This component describes who is responsible for providing the township’s recreation and park services and analyzes the effectiveness of each involved entity. It should also evaluate the level of staffing needed to adequately service the defined or recommended parks and recreation needs of the community while taking into consideration national and state standards.

- a. Provide a breakdown of the number and type of personnel involved with providing services.
- b. Update existing job descriptions, roles, and responsibility of personnel.
- c. Document the number of volunteers assisting with special events and programs.

VII. Update Facility and Open Space Inventory, including public agencies, schools, major non-profits and quasi-public organizations (athletic associations, conservancies, etc.), private health-related businesses, and surrounding communities. This should include an inventory map.

- a. For areas owned and managed by the township, each facility should be rated for: condition; ADA compliance; CPSC compliance; current viability or obsolescence; walkability; diversity factors.

- b. Compare existing numbers and types of facilities with developed standards either from the NRPA or a county agency.
- c. Discuss and analyze the preservation of existing Riparian Forest Buffers and the development of additional Buffers in coordination with statewide initiatives and goals.
- d. Discuss and analyze existing township public and private owned forest for general health and invasive species.
- e. Discuss and analyze the feasibility of intergovernmental cooperation in providing large-scale facilities such as skate park, deck hockey, etc.

VIII. Facilities and Equipment Maintenance

Outcome – Establish the best and most effective overall maintenance management program/plan. Work with the Public Works Department on identifying current maintenance practices.

- a. Detail the current maintenance program (record keeping, preventative maintenance, use of maintenance management plan, etc.) and analyze its effectiveness.
- b. List the major maintenance equipment including age and purpose.
- c. Describe any existing risk management efforts including inspection of park facilities, particularly playground equipment.
- d. Analyze the adequacy of maintenance in relation to the condition of the recreation and park facilities and open space areas.

IX. Recreation Programs

Outcome – Determine the effectiveness of existing programs by comparing them to other public and non-profit providers as well as meeting the needs of the residents as defined through public input. Identify new program areas and discuss how to develop them.

- a. Update the list of programs sponsored by the area's public, non-profit, and private entities that including group name, program name, demographic target participants; program fees.
- b. For township or publicly-sponsored programs, provide information on participation trends over the past 5 years.
- c. Analyze if there is a comprehensive offering of programs in the community that includes these types of activities: active and passive; competitive and noncompetitive; individuals and groups; all sexes and age abilities; variety of social, physical and cultural experiences.
- d. Identify program deficiencies in the community and how the township can address these deficiencies.
- e. Analyze the township's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act with respect to programs and services.
- f. Discuss and analyze the feasibility of intergovernmental or private cooperation in providing certain programs.

X. Financing – This will be done in-house

Outcome – Determine a level of financing necessary to provide and maintain appropriate parks and recreation programs and facilities.

- a. Provide a five-year comparison of tax support for recreation and parks in relation to the overall municipal budget and to other departments from the municipality.

- b. Compare township expenditures, other operating and capital, with agencies and municipalities that have similar populations and socio-economic characteristics.
- c. Provide a breakdown of the major sources and amounts of revenues including taxes, fees, charges, donations, sponsorships, grants, etc.
- d. Describe and analyze the current recreation and park budget process.
- e. Identify and discuss various sources of funding such as fees and charges, foundations, grants, donations, mandatory dedication, etc. and provide examples of their appropriate application.

XI. Recommendations

Outcome – Determine specific actions that the township should undertake to fund, maximize and improve its services to better meet the needs of the residents.

- a. Detail the recommended changes for administration, personnel, facilities, maintenance, programs and financing and provide supporting data to justify the recommendations.
- b. Provide a cost estimate to implement each recommendation and discuss any potential implementation concerns or obstacles.

XII. Implementation and Executive Summary

- a. Prioritize the operating-related recommendations (non-capital) included in Section XI
- b. For each recommendation, identify the following:
 - i. Who is going to be responsible?
 - ii. What is the targeted date for implementation?
 - iii. Potential costs.
 - iv. Potential funding source(s).
- c. For capital improvements, provide a prioritized, multi-year Capital Improvement Program that is broken down by short-term (1-3 years), medium-term (4-7 years), and long-term (8+ years) projects and include the following information for each project:
 - i. Facility/area name.
 - ii. General description of proposed improvements
 - iii. Total estimated development costs of improvements, and phasing if applicable.
 - iv. Proposed financing sources.

XIII. For operating-related costs associated with administration, personnel, programming and maintenance components, provide a five-year summary of projected fiscal implications on the operating budget.

XIV. Develop a brief executive summary of the plan’s highest priority findings and recommendations to be included in the beginning of the plan document.

XV. The township requires three (3) bound copies and one (1) electronic PDF copy of the final study report as one complete document, and one (1) electronic copy of the plan.

SECTION III. ORGANIZATION AND REQUIRED SUBMITTALS FOR PROPOSAL

A Letter of Transmittal, to include:

1. A statement indicating your understanding of the work to be performed.
2. An affirmation of the firm's qualifications for professionally and expertly conducting the work as understood.
3. The firm's contact person concerning the proposal, including phone and email
4. A clear statement of the firm's, and/or the principals of the firm, relationship(s) with or knowledge of any officials or employees of the township and the nature of this relationship or knowledge.

FAILURE TO CLEARLY STATE AND FULLY DISCLOSE ANY OF THE INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL SHALL BE GROUNDS FOR THE TOWNSHIP TO REJECT THE FIRM'S PROPOSALS AND WILL BE GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION OF ANY CONTRACT ENTERED INTO BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP AND THE FIRM WITHOUT PAYMENT FOR WORK COMPLETED.

B Profile of the Firm – this should be a brief statement indicating the firm's experience in conducting work of the nature sought by this RFP. Advertising brochures about the firm may be submitted as a part of this profile if the brochures specifically address the experience of the firm related to the work to be performed. Additionally, the profile should include:

1. The location of the firm's office where the proposed services will be performed.
2. Resumes of individual consultants or employees proposed to conduct the work and the specific duties of each consultant or employee relative to the proposed work
3. A brief reference list of other municipalities served by the firm should be provided with telephone numbers and names of contact persons.
4. Any other information may be included if it related to the capabilities and expertise of the firm in doing comparable work.
5. Consultants must have the following qualifications:
 - a. Experience developing and implementing public participation techniques such as holding public and study committee meetings, conducting key person interviews, and developing citizen surveys.
 - b. At least one member of the consulting team with prior experience conducting comprehensive plan studies. This member should be the project leader and should assume overall project coordination responsibilities between the township and the consulting team.
 - c. Experience with planning, design and general operations of parks and recreation.
 - d. Experience developing and recommending to local government officials' policies and procedures related to providing public parks and recreation services and/or facilities.
 - e. Experience setting goals, analyzing problems, generating alternative solutions, and providing recommendations and implementation strategies.
 - f. Participation in preparing and reviewing the plan text (from draft through final plan presentation). The township requires review comments from the consultant.
 - g. Visits to all existing sites.
 - h. Have at least one Certified Parks and Recreation Professional on the team.

C. Explanation of Work to be Performed

The proposal must include a detailed description of the procedures and methods you propose to use to complete the work requested by the township. The methods and procedures proposed will receive primary consideration in evaluating your proposal. Examples of similar work will be helpful and may be included.

D. Work Schedule

A project work schedule should be provided which includes time frames for each major element, target dates for public meetings and dates for completion of draft and final documents.

E. Cost

Full cost information should be provided showing the minimum number of hours to be provided by each person assigned to the proposed work by the firm's organizational levels. The proposed hourly rate for billing should be included for each person. The hours of work and cost shall be itemized for each major work element of the proposal. An itemized estimate of reimbursable expenses must be included. The total amount of maximum payment must be stated.

The cost shall be based on the hours of work provided and 'out-of-pocket expenses' and shall not exceed the maximum cost proposed unless an amendment to the contract is negotiated and approved by the proper authority of the township.

Your method of billing must be indicated. The preferred practice of Ross Township is to pay for this type of consulting upon completion of the work and receipt of the required report; however, Ross Township will consider paying on a periodic basis as substantial portions of the work is completed. Regardless of the billing method used, ten percent (10%) of the total contract price will be withheld until the final product is approved by the Board of Commissioners.

F. Other Submittals

Additionally, Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause (attached as appendices to this RFP) for the proposing firm shall be fully executed and returned with the proposal.

SECTION IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated based on the technical and professional expertise and the experience of the firm, the proposed method and the procedures for completion of the work and the cost of the proposal. The apparent ability of the firm to be independent and objective in performing the requested work will also be considered.

A. Technical Expertise and Experience

The technical expertise and experience of the firm will be determined by the following factors:

1. The overall experience of the firm in conducting similar work that is to be provided to Ross Township.

2. The expertise and professional levels of the individuals proposed to conduct the work the township.
3. The clarity and completeness of the proposal and the apparent general understanding of the work to be performed.

B. Procedures and Methods

The methods and procedures proposed to be utilized to conduct the work requested as they related to the thoroughness and objectiveness will be of primary importance in evaluating the proposals. This includes evaluation of the soundness of the approach relative to the techniques for collecting and analyzing data, sequence and relationships of major steps and methods for managing the work to ensure timely and orderly completion.

C. Cost

The cost will be weighed in relation to the other proposals received and shall be evaluated relative to the number of hours of professional consulting services and the overall level of expertise of the specific firm's personnel proposed to perform the work for Ross Township.

All or selected firms submitting proposals may be invited to give an oral presentation explaining their proposal.

END