

DRAFT

**CITY OF KNOXVILLE
PUBLIC WORKS
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FOUR YEAR
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE URBAN WILDERNESS**

Background

Knoxville's Urban Wilderness is a recreational, cultural, and historic preservation initiative within south Knoxville incorporating 1,000-forested acres along the centre city's south waterfront redevelopment site. It creates an exceptional recreation and historic corridor inviting residents and visitors to experience the special character-defining assets of Knoxville. With 40+ miles of multi-use trails, ten parks, four civil war sites, incredible views and unparalleled natural features, this unique area provides a premiere outdoor experience with regional and national appeal.

The area has been championed by Legacy Parks Foundation and has multiple partners and supporters including Ijams Nature Center, the Appalachian Mountain Bike Club (AMBC), The Aslan Foundation, the City of Knoxville Parks & Recreation Department, Knox County Parks & Recreation Department, multiple south Knoxville neighborhoods, private landowners and developers and many other organizations and entities.

The City of Knoxville has supported the Urban Wilderness through a variety of resources both financial and nonfinancial over the past four years and has a strong desire to see significant development of the Urban Wilderness during Mayor Rogero's second term in office. In order to provide efficient, impactful support, the City is engaging key partners in a planning process with the goal of developing an effective implementation plan and map(s) for use over the next four fiscal years.

To meet this goal, the City of Knoxville Parks & Recreation Department with support from key stakeholders has a desire to engage a design and planning firm or team to assist the City and its partners in developing a planning document that includes: (i) a four year project implementation strategy or plan; (ii) identification of key entry or access points (both existing and proposed), for users wishing to engage and enter the Urban Wilderness for various activities as well as current or proposed connections between key sites within the project area; (iii) and the development of base or foundational design elements (color, space, texture, materials) of the Urban Wilderness for use in signage, wayfinding, marketing materials and other purposes.

Schedule

Partner Meeting	January 19, 2016
Complete RFP Document	January 29, 2016
RFP Competitive Process	February 5, 2016
Proposal Due Date	February 26, 2016
Proposal Review/Selection	March 1-4, 2016
City Council Contract Approval	March 29, 2016
Contractor Notice to Proceed	April 11, 2016
Project Implementation	April 11 – May 30, 2016
Partner Meeting Review of Draft Plan	June 6, 2016
Mayor Rogero Feedback	Week of June 6, 2016

Scope of Work

The City of Knoxville Parks & Recreation Department with support from key stakeholders has a desire to engage a design and planning firm or team to assist the City in developing the following tasks:

(i) Creation of a simple and practical four year implementation plan for projects throughout Knoxville's Urban Wilderness.

The Urban Wilderness encompasses 1000+ acres, multiple public and private resources and multiple organizations interested in investing and developing the area. Developing a practical, usable project implementation plan that identifies and clearly defines the Urban Wilderness, key project site boundaries, lead organizations, timing and potential public sector funding requirements over the next four fiscal years will be an essential task.

(ii) The identification of key "entry points" (both existing and proposed), for users wishing to engage and enter the Urban Wilderness for various activities as well as key connections between sites within the Urban Wilderness.

The Urban Wilderness concept is well understood by many local users as an area of outdoor recreation, conservation and culture. Less understood by a growing customer base is how the Urban Wilderness is accessed based on desired activities. Identifying both existing and future access points for current and future users and helping to answering the question, "Where do I park for the Urban Wilderness?" will be an essential task. In addition, identifying connections between key landmarks or sites will be an important aspect of the project.

(iii) The development of "base" or foundational design elements (color, space, texture, materials) of the Urban Wilderness for use in signage, wayfinding, marketing materials and other purposes.

One unique advantage of the Urban Wilderness is its diversity of activities, topography and partners. From small neighborhood groups to private businesses and landowners; City Parks and County Parks; non-profit entities and privately funded foundations; this unique, organic area and programming has yielded many fruits. One challenge of this diversity is the use of consistent design elements that both respect individual locations (City Park, County, Park, Ijams, TWRA property, etc.) but effectively brands the "identity" of the Urban Wilderness experience as a whole.

Project Framework

Although the City of Knoxville expects competing firms or teams to develop a detailed project methodology the following framework should be used as a basis for the project.

Discovery/Research

The selected firm or team is expected to efficiently complete the discovery or research phase of the project by meeting with the project steering committee, reviewing the history of the Urban Wilderness including all existing plans, land use documents, projects to date and by interviewing key Urban Wilderness stakeholders. The City of Knoxville will work in conjunction with the selected team to provide background information but full vetting of all plans, documents and projects to date will be the responsibility of the team. The City will provide electronic documents as available as

well as KGIS mapping information at no cost to the team. City personnel will be available throughout to the discovery phase to assist and lead tours and/or visits to various sites throughout the Urban Wilderness and meeting with project steering committee throughout the project.

The selected team is expected to complete up to 75 key stakeholder interviews. Obtaining this information and developing strategies for the various interests within the Urban Wilderness is critical. The specific list of stakeholders and the interview format will be developed collaboratively between the City and the selected team.

Development of Foundational Design Elements

The development of “base” or foundational design elements (color, space, texture, materials) of the Urban Wilderness for use in signage, wayfinding, marketing materials and other purposes is one of the more challenging aspects of the project. The selected team will review existing design elements currently used by key entities as well as any, signage or design plans currently in use within the Urban Wilderness. Key entities and sites include but are not limited to; Ijams Nature Center; AMBC; The Aslan Foundation; Legacy Parks Foundation; City of Knoxville Redevelopment/South Waterfront; Knox County Parks & Recreation; Candora Marble site; City of Knoxville Fort Dickerson Chapman Entrance Project site; High Ground Park and the City of Knoxville P&R Department. The firm will be challenged with developing consistent design elements that both respect individual locations (City Park, County, Park, Ijams, TWRA property, High Ground Park, etc.) but can effectively be deployed for use by the City and its partners in creating an overarching “brand” or “identity” of the Urban Wilderness experience as a whole.

Implementation Plan Development

Developing a practical, usable project implementation plan that clearly identifies project site boundaries, lead organizations, timing and potential public sector funding needs over the next four fiscal years will be an essential task. The plan will be based on the information and data collected during the discovery phase and should be in a written (editable) format with appropriate graphics, maps and a clear strategy for implementation. The City is not looking for a voluminous or impractical document, but a clear, efficient plan for use over the next four fiscal years. Development of the plan will include routine review and feedback session with City and steering committee representatives.

Deliverables

Upon completing the project, the following deliverables are expected of the selected firm or team:

Implementation Plan Document in both a final hard copy and editable electronic format that includes all appropriate appendices from the discovery/research phase of the project (site visit information, stakeholder interviews, etc.)

Urban Wilderness Site Map(s) in both a final hard copy and editable electronic format. The City expects the project to yield at a minimum one large Urban Wilderness site map that includes key areas and lead entities for each site. The map(s) should incorporate the selected foundational design elements where applicable.

Steering Committee and City Administration Presentations will be required of the team at the completion of the project. The exact format for these presentations will be developed in conjunction with the City but teams should expect up to two formal presentations of up to one hour in length.