

City of Portsmouth  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**RFP # 14-24**

**Invitation**

The City of Portsmouth is seeking proposals from an experienced and qualified consultant, or consultant team, to help the City of Portsmouth develop design plans for upgrading the City's South Mill Playground to a more Universally Accessible Playground. The City has allocated funds in the budget to complete a preliminary design and develop an opinion of cost to be used to request necessary funds for construction as part of its fiscal year 2025 Capital Improvements plan. A **mandatory** pre-proposal meeting and site visit will be conducted at **11:00 a.m. on Wednesday November 8, 2023**, located at Portsmouth City Hall, 1 Junkins Ave in conference room A.

**Sealed proposals, plainly marked, "RFP#14-24 South Mill Playground Design" on the outside of the mailing envelope as well as the sealed proposal envelope**, addressed to the Finance/Purchasing Department 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801 will be accepted until **November 28, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.**

Request for Proposals may be obtained from the City's web site:  
[www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing-bids-and-proposals](http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing-bids-and-proposals) under the project heading. Questions shall be directed to [purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com) no later than November 13, 2023 @ 4:30 p.m.

The City of Portsmouth reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, and to accept and negotiate the terms of any proposal that may be in the best interest of the City.

City of Portsmouth, NH RFP # 14-24  
Request for Proposals  
Professional Planning Services- South Mill Playground Design

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Portsmouth is seeking proposals from an experienced and qualified consultant, or consultant team, to help the City of Portsmouth develop design plans for upgrades to the City's South Mill Playground to a more Universally Accessible Playground. The City has allocated funds in the budget to complete a preliminary design and develop an opinion of cost to be used to request necessary funds for construction as part of its fiscal year 2025 Capital Improvements plan. The term "universally accessible (UA) playground" is often used to describe a playground that offers caregivers, their children, and adults full use of all areas, regardless of ability.

A **mandatory** pre-proposal meeting and site visit will be conducted at **11:00 a.m.** on **November 8, 2023**, located at Portsmouth City Hall, 1 Junkins Ave in conference room A.

Consultant shall provide four (4) copies of the proposal.

This RFP includes the following sections:

- Background and Purpose
- Scope of Work
- Selection Criteria and Contracting Process
- Proposal Submission Requirements

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to upgrade the City's South Mill Pond Playground to a more universally accessible (UA) playground.

The term "universally accessible (UA) playground" is often used to describe a playground that offers seniors, caregivers and their children full use of all areas, regardless of ability. Portsmouth, with its abundant local parks, has limited access to play facilities that are universally accessible to children, adults, and families. Supporting City goals, a UA playground will represent and support the diversity of our community, providing a platform for people to engage socially, physically, creatively and playfully. Everyone deserves the right to access our public parks and playgrounds with equal opportunity. The construction of a UA playground will increase access thereby making our community stronger.

The UA playground design should incorporate the principles of universal design, defined as the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (based on the seven principles of universal design established by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State).

The UA principles are:

1. Equitable Use - The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. Flexibility in Use - The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. Simple and Intuitive - Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. Perceptible Information - The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5. Tolerance for Error - The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. Low Physical Effort - The design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use - Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility. In addition, this project must be in compliance with ADA standards for Accessible Design.

The proposed playground will replace existing, playground equipment and design. The new playground design will stress to be 'barrier free' and feature areas of play offering unique play features, rehabilitation equipment, nature-based, and garden/landscape experiences for both children and adults born out of UA principles. Types of features that may be considered include a music garden, quiet space, accessible stage, raised sand bed, connection to water, early childhood area (natural components and dramatic play), adult recreation & rehabilitation, large-scale slide, all accessible swings, and accessible pathways. Conceptually and physically, these areas will be connected by natural, accessible landscape to the extent possible.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The City plans to approach this project in phases. The first being a preliminary design exploring options with public input. Once a preferred alternative is selected additional funding will be requested to complete final design and construction. Assuming successful completion of the first phase, it is the City's intent to use the selected consultant to complete the final design and to provide construction services for the UA playground at South Mill Playground. The "Scope of Work" for final design and construction services will be negotiated upon successful completion of the first phase and availability of additional funding.

### **Preliminary Plan Development**

- Complete necessary enabling engineering to be able to provide three alternatives for City consideration. Work will likely include survey, geotechnical exploration and identification of necessary environmental permits.
- Provide three conceptual designs for consideration by the City. The alternative shall maximize the use of universally accessible playground elements.
- Create (3) concept renderings to support the selection process.
- Provide a construction estimate for the selected alternative and for individual project phases, should construction phasing become necessary.
- Provide a construction schedule for the project.

### **Community Engagement**

- Successful consultant shall work with the City to develop content for public outreach.
- Consultant shall conduct a public design charrette to review the proposed alternatives and to solicit public input.
- Prepare and present final design recommendations to City Council.

### **Schedule**

The City reserves the right to amend dates. While the timeline may be subject to change, all participating parties will be notified. The anticipated schedule is as follows:

- November 8, 2023 @ 11:00 a.m. Mandatory Pre-proposal meeting and site visit
- November 13, 2023 RFP-related questions due to Purchasing
- November 28, 2023 RFP closed
- Final Design Fall of 2024
- Anticipated Construction Spring of 2025

## **City Role**

Recreation Department and Public Works staff will be responsible for administering the project, overseeing the consultant's work on this project and coordinating work with the City's Recreation Department. The City does have certain resources with regard to the ability to conduct surveys and other engagement tools to assist the consultant. The City's Director of Communications and Community Engagement will also be available for consultation and coordination.

## **Selection Criteria and Contracting Process**

Proposals will be evaluated by a team of City staff. The following criteria will be used:

1. Qualifications of firm and project team members including any proposed sub consultants
2. Previous related work
3. Understanding of and approach to work
4. Presentation skill
5. Schedule
6. Responsiveness to submission requirements

The City, at its discretion, may select a firm outright or select a finalist(s) for in-person and/or video conference interviews. The highest-ranking consultant firm will be invited to enter into contract negotiations with the City. In the event that the City cannot reach agreement on a contract, the City will end negotiations and may proceed to the next highest rank qualified firm.

**Reservation of Rights** - The City of Portsmouth reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, and to accept and negotiate the terms and conditions of any proposal that may be in the best interest of the City. The City reserves the right to undertake such investigation as it deems necessary to verify qualifications. The City reserves the right to negotiate directly with the firm(s) selected for additional project work.

**Indemnification of Owner** – Contractor will indemnify Owner against all suits, claims, judgments, awards, loss, cost, or expense (including without limitation attorneys' fees) arising in any way out of the Contractor's negligent performance of its obligations under this Contract. Contractor will defend all such actions with counsel satisfactory to Owner at its own expense, including attorneys' fees, and will satisfy any judgment rendered against Owner in such action.

**Nondiscrimination in City Contracts**-Any entity that enters into a contact for goods or services with the City of Portsmouth or any of its boards, agencies and departments and any recipient of city funds shall:

Implement an employment nondiscrimination policy prohibiting discrimination in hiring, discharging, promoting, or demoting, matters of compensation, or any other employment-related decision or benefit on account of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or marital or familial status.

Not discriminate in the performance of the contract on account of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or marital or familial status.

### **Proposal Submission Requirements**

Proposals shall include the following and shall be organized using each of the required elements as section headings in the order in which they appear below:

- A. Firm Description – provide a brief description of the firm including firm size and area of specialization.
- B. Project Team – Provide names and resumes of key professionals who would be assigned to the project. Resumes shall be included for key project personnel only. Each team member’s education, experience and presentation skills shall be listed. The project manager shall be designated and a description of relevant previous projects, and the project staff that have played a central role in those projects shall be provided. Identify with specificity the cultural and like plans that have been developed by the project team members by providing a copy of such plans or a link to the plans.
- C. Statement of project understanding – State in succinct terms the consultant’s understanding of what is required to provide a design and describe the consultant’s approach and technical plan for accomplishing the work listed broken out by task. The consultant is encouraged to elaborate on or suggest improvements to the scope of work.
- D. Submit a detailed schedule by task and subtask and indicate clearly whether the consultant can commit to perform the work within the time frame desired by the City. If there are elements of the schedule that the consultant believes should be adjusted to provide a better final product or to be more cost effective, please clearly identify such opportunities or suggested adjustments.
- E. A lump sum proposal price itemized by task, and hourly rates for project personnel.
- F. Three (3) references, including current contact name and phone number for similar projects which the project manager has managed.

The proposal shall be printed on two sides of the page and shall not have a plastic cover. Four (4) hard copies shall be submitted at the time and date described above.