

CITYWIDE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

EVENT # 1732

**Urban Tree Canopy Assessment
&
Urban Forest Management Plan**

City of Saint Paul

Department of Parks and Recreation | Forestry Section

Issue Date:	June 17, 2026
Submission Deadline:	July 17, 2026, 3:00 P.M. CST
Questions Deadline:	July 6, 2026
Submission Portal:	https://stpaulbids.com

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I. Summary and Background

The City of Saint Paul, Department of Parks and Recreation, Forestry Section ("Parks Forestry") is soliciting proposals for an Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Analysis and a comprehensive Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP). Parks Forestry seeks an experienced consultant — certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) — to develop both deliverables in close partnership with the Forestry Section. Funding to support this project has been made available through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2025 ReLeaf Grants Program.

Parks Forestry is responsible for the maintenance, planting, and long-term resilience of Saint Paul's public urban forest. Privately owned trees, for which individual property owners and developers bear primary responsibility, collectively form the remainder of the city's urban canopy. Together, these public and private components constitute the full extent of Saint Paul's urban forest.

Saint Paul's urban forest is a critical component of the city's infrastructure and natural ecosystem. A healthy, well-managed urban forest delivers measurable environmental and economic benefits while meaningfully contributing to the health and quality of life of residents and visitors alike. Sustaining this resource requires proactive planning that accounts for the full range of threats facing urban trees — including invasive pests and diseases, shifting climate conditions, air and water pollution, soil compaction, constrained growing environments, and the ongoing challenge of limited management resources.

II. Proposal Submission Guidelines

Submission Method and Deadline

All proposals must be submitted electronically through the City of Saint Paul's official procurement Supplier Portal at <https://stpaulbids.com> prior to the deadline listed on the cover page of this RFP. Proposals submitted by oral communication, facsimile, email, or hard copy will not be accepted. Late proposals will not be considered under any circumstances.

Upon successful submission of a proposal, vendors will receive notification from Supplier Portal. Vendors are responsible for ensuring timely submission — delays attributable to internet connectivity, file size, or transmission speed are the sole responsibility of the Vendor.

Questions and Addenda

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing via the procurement portal at <https://stpaulbids.com> no later than the questions deadline shown on the cover page. Questions received after the deadline will not be answered. Responses to all questions will be posted as addenda and distributed to all registered Vendors. Vendors are responsible for monitoring the portal for addenda prior to submission.

Direct contact with City staff regarding the substance of this RFP — outside the formal question process — is prohibited and may result in disqualification.

Required Proposal Format and Organization

Proposals should be organized using the following tab structure. Each tab should be clearly labeled and separated:

- Tab 1 — Executive Summary: Brief overview of the firm, proposed approach, and key differentiators (maximum 2 pages).
- Tab 2 — Technical Approach: Detailed description of methodology for both the UTC Assessment and UFMP, including the satellite imagery platform and classification methodology to be used.
- Tab 3 — Work Plan and Timeline: Task-by-task work plan with estimated hours per task and a project schedule with milestones.
- Tab 4 — Vendor Qualifications and Team: Firm background, relevant public sector project experience, key staff resumes, ISA or ASCA certifications, and organizational chart.
- Tab 5 — References: Minimum three (3) references from comparable urban tree canopy or urban forest management plan projects completed within the past seven (7) years, including client name, contact name, phone number, and email address.
- Tab 6 — Equity and Inclusion: Description of the firm's approach to equity-centered community engagement and any relevant experience serving diverse or underserved communities.
- Tab 7 — Budget Proposal (submitted as a separate PDF file named: STPAUL_UFMP-UTC_[VendorName]_Budget): Itemized costs as described in Section VII.

File naming convention for all non-cost files: STPAUL_UFMP-UTC_[VendorName]

III. Project Purpose and Description

This project will equip Parks Forestry with the analytical tools and strategic framework needed to assess the current condition of the urban forest and identify opportunities for canopy protection, expansion, and enhancement. The UTC assessment data and resulting UFMP will inform both day-to-day management decisions and long-term budgetary allocations for citywide urban forestry operations. Over time, this initiative is designed to sustain a robust urban forestry program and support the continued growth of a high-quality, expanding urban tree canopy across Saint Paul.

Urban Tree Canopy Assessment

A current UTC assessment is an essential foundation for a credible, data-driven Urban Forest Management Plan. Parks Forestry completed its first UTC analysis in partnership with the University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources in 2010. In the years since, Saint Paul's urban canopy has undergone significant change — shaped by the management of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), multiple large-scale storm events, successive years of severe drought, and continued development and construction pressure. An updated analysis will enable direct comparison to the

2010 baseline, clarify current conditions, and identify where management efforts are most urgently needed.

The current UTC Assessment is available at: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/natural-resources/forestry/urban-tree-canopy-assessment>

Urban Forest Management Plan

Parks Forestry has not previously developed a comprehensive Urban Forest Management Plan. Existing guiding documents include the Street and Park Tree Master Plan (originally developed in 1978 and revised in 2010) and the Emerald Ash Borer Management Program (developed and adopted by City Council in 2009). Both documents will be made available to the selected consultant.

The UFMP will reflect current best practices and technical standards in the field and will integrate a community-informed vision for the future of the urban forest — developed through structured public engagement — with the quantitative data gathered during the UTC assessment phase. The plan will also incorporate public input on service-level expectations for forestry operations, including priorities such as boulevard tree planting and replacement cycles.

IV. Scope of Work

This section describes all required tasks for the Urban Tree Canopy Assessment and Urban Forest Management Plan. The selected consultant is responsible for all tasks described below unless explicitly identified as a City responsibility.

Part A: Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessment

The selected consultant shall conduct a comprehensive, citywide Urban Tree Canopy assessment for the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota. The UTC assessment shall be completed using satellite imagery and high-resolution aerial imagery analysis. The assessment shall deliver a high-resolution, spatially explicit analysis of current baseline conditions, encompassing land cover, tree canopy extent, and planting potential across the full city limits.

Task 1: Land Cover Classification

Procure and utilize the most recent available satellite or aerial imagery — such as the USDA National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) or comparable high-resolution satellite imagery — with a strong preference for 2025 or newer leaf-on imagery.

Extract the following land cover classes into ArcGIS geodatabase feature classes:

- Trees (leaves and branches over two (2) meters in height; differentiate from shrubs)
- Shrubs and Low Vegetation
- Bare Soil
- Water
- Buildings
- Impervious Surfaces

The proposal must describe in detail:

- Satellite or aerial imagery source(s) to be used
- Classification methodology (e.g., object-based image analysis, machine learning classification, or similar)
- Expected accuracy of each land cover class, and how accuracy will be verified

This assessment must achieve a minimum of 94% user's accuracy for tree canopy and impervious surface classes. Overall accuracy across all classes must be equal to or greater than 92%. Full documentation of all spatial datasets will be required in the form of FGDC-compliant metadata for each feature class.

Task 2: Tree Canopy Analysis and Mapping

Utilizing the listed land use boundaries, analyze and map current UTC for the City of Saint Paul and calculate percentage of total area for existing land cover statistics (utilizing classifications from Task 1) for the following geographies:

- Full Project Area (Citywide Boundary)
 - Current canopy cover based on the most recent available leaf-on aerial or satellite imagery, with a strong preference for 2025 or newer imagery
 - Canopy change analysis comparing current conditions to the 2009 dataset utilized for the 2010-11 UTC assessment (dataset to be provided by the City)
- District Council, City Council Ward and Parcel Boundaries (dataset to be provided by the City):
 - Canopy analysis for each of Saint Paul's seventeen (17) District Councils
 - Canopy analysis for each of the seven (7) City Wards
 - Canopy analysis at the parcel level
- Land Use Boundaries—available from Metropolitan Council Generalized Land Use-Historical, including:
 - Commercial
 - Mixed Use Commercial
 - Office
 - Retail and Other Commercial
 - Airport or Airstrip
 - Industrial
 - Mixed Use Industrial
 - Industrial or Utility
 - Institutional
 - Open Space and Recreational
 - Agricultural
 - Farmstead
 - Golf Course
 - Park, Recreational, or Preserve
 - Undeveloped

- Residential
 - Mixed Use Residential
 - Multifamily
 - Single Family Attached
 - Single Family Detached
- Transportation
 - Major Highway
 - Major Railway
 - Rights-of Way (dataset to be provided by City)
 - City Right-of-Way
 - County Right-of-Way
 - State/Federal Right-of-Way
- Additional Geographies and Overlays:
 - Priority Areas: MN DNR's Priority Area's Map, derived from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool methodology (dataset to be provided by the City)
 - Potential Canopy Analysis (see Task 3)

Task 3: Potential Canopy Analysis

Identify and map areas within Saint Paul where additional tree canopy could be established. The Potential Canopy Analysis shall incorporate multiple criteria, including but not limited to:

- Opportunities for canopy increase on both public and private property, further categorized as:
 - Land that could support trees
 - Impervious surfaces that could be modified to support trees such as parking lots and concrete streetscapes.
- Environmental justice and equity considerations (e.g., proximity to disadvantaged communities or areas with low canopy coverage)
- Existing land use and ownership

The potential canopy analysis shall identify priority planting zones and quantify potential canopy expansion within each zone, differentiating between public and private properties. The assessment shall account for low canopy areas that cannot accommodate trees due to site constraints, including but not limited to:

- Parkland that is utilized for recreation such as sports fields, playgrounds, golf courses
- Airports

Task 4: Ecosystem Services Analysis

Utilizing the land cover data generated in Tasks 1–3, calculate citywide and sub-area ecosystem service values for Saint Paul's existing urban tree canopy, including:

- Air quality improvement (removal of pollutants including particulates, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide)
- Carbon dioxide storage and annual sequestration
- Stormwater interception and runoff reduction
- Urban heat island mitigation (energy savings and cooling effect)

Methodology and tools used to calculate ecosystem services (e.g., i-Tree Eco, i-Tree Canopy, or equivalent) shall be documented and described in the final deliverables.

Task 5: GIS Data Delivery — UTC Assessment

All geospatial data produced as part of the UTC Assessment shall be delivered to the City in the following formats:

- File geodatabase format (preferred) or ESRI ArcGIS-compatible shapefile (acceptable alternative)
- Projected Coordinate System NAD_1983_86_Adj_MN_Ramsey_Feet
- FGDC-compliant metadata for all feature classes
- Summary statistics tables in Microsoft Excel-compatible format

Part B: Urban Forest Management Plan

Building directly on the findings of the UTC Assessment, the selected consultant shall develop a comprehensive Urban Forest Management Plan for the City of Saint Paul. The UFMP will serve as the primary guiding document for the effective, efficient, and equitable management of Saint Paul's urban forest over a long-term planning horizon.

Task 6: Plan Alignment and Policy Review

The UFMP shall align with applicable City of Saint Paul comprehensive plans, strategic plans, and relevant state and federal policies and programs. Specifically, the consultant shall:

- Review and analyze the City's adopted comprehensive plan, sustainability plans, equity frameworks, existing urban forestry ordinances, policies, and inter-departmental protocols (to be provided by the City), and provide recommendations for amendments or enhancements
- Identify alignment opportunities with Saint Paul's infill development strategies, stormwater management plans, and climate resilience initiatives
- Assess the consistency of current forestry practices with industry best practices (ISA, ANSI A300 standards), and provide recommendations for amendments or enhancements

Task 7: UTC Assessment Integration and Equity Analysis

Synthesize UTC Assessment findings into actionable management strategies for the UFMP, including:

- Summary of canopy coverage by District Council and City Council Ward with comparisons to the 2010 baseline
- Identification of canopy deficits and areas for investment, with emphasis on Priority Areas for environmental justice
- Analysis of canopy distribution across Saint Paul's communities, with specific recommendations for improving equitable access to urban forest benefits
- Establishment of citywide tree canopy coverage goals and canopy equity goals informed by assessment data and community input

Task 8: Goals, Objectives, and Strategic Direction

The UFMP shall establish a community-informed vision and measurable long-term goals and objectives for Saint Paul's urban forest. This shall include:

- A framework for continued public engagement
- A vision statement developed collaboratively with community input and Parks Forestry staff
- Measurable long-term goals and supporting objectives
- Incremental milestone goals at 5-year intervals
- Recommendations for annual targets to enable ongoing tracking of progress toward plan goals including quantifying the number of trees or acreage to be planted to meet those goals
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) for each goal area

Task 9: Species Diversity and Resilience Recommendations

The UFMP shall assess the current species composition of Saint Paul's public tree inventory and provide recommendations to improve long-term resilience, including:

- Review of the current public tree inventory data and existing approved boulevard tree list (data to be provided by the City)
- Assessment of current species diversity, including identification of over-represented species or genera that present pest and disease vulnerability
- Recommendations for species goals (target percentage thresholds by genus and species) to reduce vulnerability to invasive insects and diseases, E.g. Asian Longhorned Beetle and Dutch Elm Disease
- Recommendations for species appropriate for planting under current and projected future climate conditions, accounting for anticipated climate shifts over the next 50-100 years
- Recommendations to address threats to long-term canopy sustainability including climate change, soil compaction, constrained growing environments, and resource limitations

Task 10: Staffing, Resources, Technology, and Funding

The UFMP shall provide a thorough operational analysis and recommendations to support sustainable urban forestry program delivery, including:

- Review of current Parks Forestry staffing levels, equipment, and workflows, with recommendations to address identified deficiencies
- Assessment of Parks Forestry's current use of technology in urban forest management (including tree inventory systems, GIS, and work order management) and recommendations for improvements
- Analysis of existing funding resources and mechanisms, with recommendations for new or enhanced funding sources and partnership opportunities (grants, cost-share programs, urban forestry partnerships)
- Recommendations to inform budgetary allocations necessary to achieve the plan's goals and sustain a long-term urban forestry program

Task 11: Public Engagement

The selected consultant shall develop and implement a structured public engagement strategy in coordination with Parks Forestry. The engagement process shall be designed to gather meaningful

community input on urban forest priorities, desired functions of the urban forest, public perception on the state of the urban canopy and the value of city trees, and service levels. Key requirements include:

- Coordinate with city staff on the development of a Public Engagement Plan identifying target audiences, engagement methods, schedule, and materials
- Conduct a minimum of two (2) public open house or community meetings
- Ensure meaningful outreach to diverse communities across all seventeen (17) District Councils, with particular emphasis on Priority Areas
- Develop and administer a community survey (in partnership with Parks Forestry) to gather input on urban forest priorities and service-level preferences
- Coordinate with Parks Forestry on all public-facing materials and messaging
- Develop an education and outreach strategy to support ongoing stakeholder engagement following plan adoption, including items such as:
 - defining interested community groups, local non-profits and city stakeholder groups
 - establishing links for public participation in canopy establishment efforts (voluntary tree plantings on public and private property in coordination with local non-profits)
 - developing a framework for achieving cooperation across ownership and stakeholder groups

Task 12: UFMP Drafting, Review, and Finalization

The consultant shall lead the drafting, review, and finalization of the Urban Forest Management Plan through the following steps:

- Submit a complete Draft UFMP to Parks Forestry for internal review and comment (minimum 30-day review period)
- Incorporate all City feedback and submit a revised Second Draft for final review
- Finalize the UFMP incorporating all remaining feedback, professionally written and visually formatted, including research, citations, statistics, maps, photographs, tables, and graphs as appropriate
- Deliver a web-optimized digital version suitable for online publication and download
- Prepare an Executive Summary and presentation materials suitable for City Council hearings, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and community stakeholders

City Responsibilities

Parks Forestry will provide the following information and support to the selected consultant

- Current public tree inventory data
- GIS files:
 - 2010 UTC baseline
 - District Council boundaries
 - City Council Ward boundaries
 - Parcel boundaries
 - Land Use boundaries

- Priority Areas: MN DNR's Priority Area's Map, derived from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool methodology
- Street and Park Tree Master Plan (1978, revised 2010)
- Emerald Ash Borer Management Program Plan (2009)
- Current Boulevard Tree Planting List
- City 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- City Climate Action Resilience Plan
- Relevant urban forestry ordinances, plans, policies, and code sections
- Staff liaison support and participation in meetings
- Assistance scheduling and promoting public engagement events

V. Deliverables and Performance Requirements

UTC Assessment Deliverables

- Land cover classification geodatabase with FGDC-compliant metadata for all feature classes
- GIS data delivered in file geodatabase format (preferred) or ESRI-compatible shapefile (acceptable alternate), in Projected Coordinate System NAD_1983_86_Adj_MN_Ramsey_Feet
- Summary statistics tables in Microsoft Excel-compatible format
- Tree canopy analysis maps at citywide, District Council, City Council Ward, parcel and land use geography levels
- Canopy change analysis comparing current conditions to the 2010 baseline dataset
- Potential Canopy Analysis map and report to be integrated into UFMP
- Ecosystem services analysis report with quantified benefits
- Technical methodology report documenting imagery source(s), classification approach, accuracy assessment results, and all assumptions

UFMP Deliverables

- Engagement summary report documenting public input gathered
- Complete Draft UFMP submitted for Parks Forestry review (minimum 30-day review period)
- Final UFMP — professionally formatted digital document incorporating all City feedback, with maps, photos, tables, citations, and graphics as appropriate
- Web-optimized PDF version suitable for online publication and download
- Executive Summary (maximum 4 pages) suitable for City Council and stakeholder presentation
- Presentation materials for Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council meetings
- All supporting GIS data, map files, and analysis data used to develop the UFMP not provided by the City

Performance Standards and Accuracy Requirements

Requirement	Standard
Tree canopy classification accuracy	Minimum 94% user's accuracy
Impervious surface classification accuracy	Minimum 94% user's accuracy
Overall land cover accuracy (all classes)	Equal to or greater than 92%
Imagery source preference	2025 or newer leaf-on aerial or satellite imagery
GIS coordinate system	Projected Coordinate System NAD_1983_86_Adj_MN_Ramsey_Feet
GIS format	file geodatabase (preferred) or ESRI shapefile (acceptable alternate)
Metadata standard	FGDC-compliant for all feature classes
Draft UFMP review period	Minimum 30 days for City review and comment

VI. Project Timeline

RFP Schedule and Project Milestones

Event	Date
RFP Issued	June 17, 2026
Written Questions Deadline	July 6, 2026
Questions Answered / Addenda Posted	July 10, 2026
Proposals Due	July 17, 2026, 3:00 P.M. CST
Evaluation and Interviews (if applicable)	July-August 2026
Anticipated Contract Award	August 28, 2026
Project Kickoff	August 31, 2026
UTC Assessment Delivery	December 4, 2026
Draft UFMP Submitted for City Review	February 19, 2027
Final UFMP Submitted for City Review	April 16, 2027
Parks Commission Presentation	May-June, 2027
City Council Presentation	May-June, 2027
Project Completion Deadline	June 30, 2027

Proposers shall include a detailed proposed project schedule (Gantt chart or equivalent) as part of their proposal submission, identifying all major tasks, milestones, and deliverables with estimated completion dates.

VII. Budget Proposal Requirements

Budget proposals must be submitted as a separate PDF file using the file naming convention STPAUL_UFMP-UTC_[VendorName]_Budget. Budget proposals shall be organized as follows:

- Task-by-task cost breakdown for each task identified in Section IV. Costs must be provided separately for the UTC Assessment (Part A) and the UFMP (Part B).
- Total not-to-exceed amount: Provide a total not-to-exceed project cost for the combined UTC Assessment and UFMP scope.

The proposer's net pricing must account for all costs associated with providing the services described herein, including but not limited to insurance, tools, vehicles and equipment, labor, payment and compliance with the City's prevailing wage requirements or minimum wage requirements (if applicable), overhead, profit, and any other related costs.

Proposers are strongly encouraged to review pertinent and appropriate information regarding the designated areas and to familiarize themselves with any conditions which may affect performance and proposed prices. Submission of a proposal will be prima facie evidence that the proposer did, in fact, review all available information and is aware of all conditions affecting performance and proposed prices.

VIII. Vendor Qualifications and Experience

Proposers must demonstrate the qualifications and experience necessary to successfully complete both the UTC Assessment and the Urban Forest Management Plan as described in Section II.

IX. Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

A staff evaluation committee will review and score all responsive proposals using the criteria and weights listed below. The City reserves the right to conduct interviews with the highest-scoring proposal teams. The Project Manager and key technical staff must participate in any interview. Proposers are responsible for all costs associated with preparing, submitting, and presenting their proposals.

Criterion	What a Strong Proposal Will Demonstrate	Weight
Technical Approach and Methodology	Clearly describes a sound, proven methodology for the UTC Assessment using satellite/aerial imagery classification. Demonstrates a credible, best-practice approach to developing an Urban Forest Management Plan. Identifies project risks and proposed mitigation strategies.	30%
Relevant Experience and Qualifications	Demonstrates a strong track record of completing comparable UTC assessments and urban forest management plans for municipalities. Key staff have directly relevant technical expertise and hold current ISA or ASCA certification.	25%
Cost	Provides a complete, itemized, and competitive cost proposal. Costs are reasonable and well-justified relative to the scope of work. The total cost represents good value to the City.	25%
Project Schedule and Work Plan	Proposes a realistic and detailed project schedule with clear milestones. Demonstrates capacity to begin work within the City's desired timeframe and complete all deliverables within the project timeline.	10%
Equity and Community Engagement Approach	Demonstrates experience conducting meaningful outreach to diverse and underserved communities. Proposes a thoughtful, culturally responsive engagement approach aligned with the City's equity goals.	5%
References	Provides strong references from comparable municipal clients that speak to the firm's technical competence, communication, and ability to deliver on time and within budget.	5%
TOTAL		100%

The City reserves the right to ask for additional information or clarification from any or all proposers. The final contract award will be conditioned upon the successful proposer's compliance with all terms and conditions, mutual agreement on the final work plan, and completion of a contract agreeable to both parties.

X. Public Information and Data Practices

Data submitted by a business to the City in response to a Request for Proposals are private or nonpublic until the responses are opened. Once the responses are opened, the name of the responder is read and becomes public. All other data in a responder's response to a Request for Proposals are private or nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process. "Completion of the evaluation process" means that the City has completed negotiating the contract with the selected vendor. After the City has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data submitted by all responders are public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. § 13.37. A statement by a responder that submitted data are copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the data contained in the response. Proposals submitted in response to an RFP become the property of the City and will not be returned.

If all responses to a Request for Proposals are rejected prior to the completion of the evaluation process, all data, other than that made public at the response opening, remain private or nonpublic until a re-issuance of the Request for Proposals results in completion of the evaluation process or a determination is made to abandon the purchase. If the rejection occurs after the completion of the evaluation process, the data remains public. If a re-issuance of an RFP does not occur within one year of the proposal opening date, the remaining data become public.

XI. Reservation of Rights / Proposal Rejections

This Request for Proposals does not obligate the City of Saint Paul to award a contract or complete the proposed project. The City reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in the City's best interest. Proposals must be clear and concise. Proposals that are difficult to follow, that do not conform to the RFP format or requirements, or that fail to include required information may be rejected.

The City of Saint Paul reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP
- Select a proposal for contract negotiation other than the one with the lowest cost
- Negotiate any aspect of the proposal with any vendor
- Terminate negotiations and select the next most responsive vendor for contract negotiations
- Terminate negotiations and prepare and release a new RFP
- Waive minor informalities in any proposal
- Request additional information or clarification from any or all proposers

Any decision to cancel or reject any or all proposals is at the sole discretion of the City of Saint Paul. The City also reserves the right to change the evaluation criteria or any other provision of this RFP by posting notice of such changes on <https://stpaulbids.com>. Vendors are expected to

monitor this site regularly for updates and amendments. Such changes constitute written notice to each registered Vendor.

— END OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS —