



RE-VISION LINN PARK

Request for Proposals

*A new vision for Linn Park in the heart
of Downtown Birmingham, Alabama*

RFP Issued September 20, 2021

Notice is hereby given that REV Birmingham is seeking the services of an experienced and qualified firm ("Consultant") to assemble and lead an inclusive team in a community-oriented planning and design process which positions Linn Park in downtown Birmingham, AL, as a vibrant destination designed to drive inclusive growth, greater public use and property reinvestment.

The selected Consultant will enter into an Agreement for Professional Consultant Services ("Agreement") with REV Birmingham to prepare a world-class master development plan for Linn Park.



*Hudgins
Fountain in
Capitol Park
(which later
would be
renamed Linn
Park), 1900*

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Linn Park is one of the most important civic green spaces in the City of Birmingham. Established at the time of the City's founding, Linn Park has seen Birmingham grow and change while retaining its importance as a civic space at the heart of the city and the region. A successful civic effort to renovate and revitalize the park in the 1980s brought new life, recognition and prominence to the space. It paved the way for Linn Park to become a focal point for major events, a home for a select group of important monuments and a unifying physical anchor for the public and private institutions that surround the park.

Currently, the park struggles with a lack of intentional programming, activation and financial sustainability. It has become a focus for churches and other social service providers to bring meals, for the homeless and unsheltered community, resulting in the displacement of other stakeholders seeking to avoid the park for their own enjoyment. Most downtown property owners, employers and stakeholders view Linn Park's current state as a liability for the City Center and not an asset. Additionally, in 2020 the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police inspired protests and civic engagement across the country.



*Peaceful protestors in
Downtown Birmingham, 2020*

In Birmingham, protests for justice led to a call for the removal of a prominent Confederate monument obelisk in Linn Park and fueled a conversation around the future of this important civic space.

Through a process that unites people around the importance, role, design and sustainability of the space, we can bring stakeholders together to celebrate our shared existence and build public and private partnerships to refresh

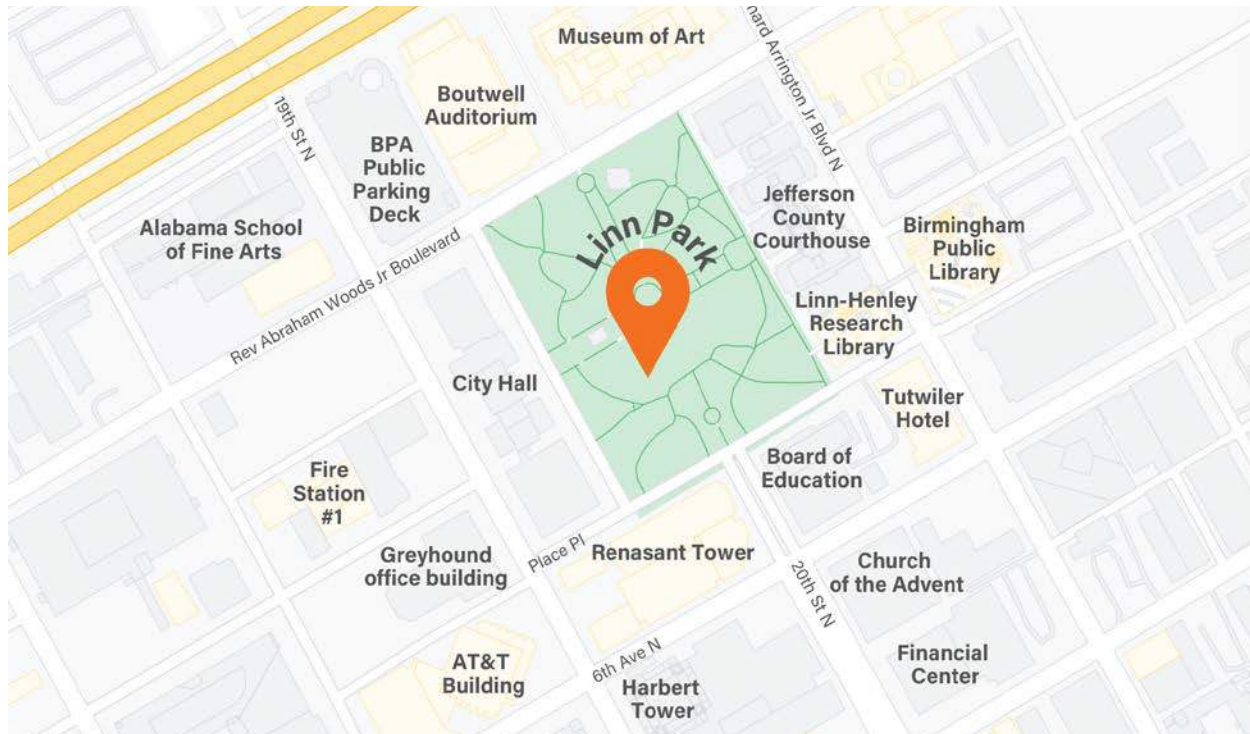
its use and sustain the space for the future. Linn Park's history and geographic location at the heart of our downtown provide an opportunity to bring our community together to make Linn Park a symbol of unity. At this heightened awareness of social justice in our nation, Linn Park has the opportunity to be a model for how communities could reimagine and open this public space to all through its programming and interpretation.

In order to do this, now is the time to initiate an inclusive planning process with several objectives:

Involve, engage and unify the public:

- determine the role the park plays in the context of modern Birmingham, including consideration of the park's name;
- outline needed design improvements;
- determine capital investments;
- design activation plans; and
- recommend sustainable management and financial structures.

As we envision how Linn Park could evolve, it is clear that a defined and intentional process will bring many more stakeholders directly impacted by the condition and programming of Linn Park into the design of Linn Park's future. However, this moment presents a planning opportunity that goes beyond simply a park plan. Any park resides in the context of its surroundings, and its surroundings impact how it can be used and designed. Linn Park is a civic space that is largely surrounded by civic or public uses and buildings including the Birmingham Museum of Art, Boutwell Auditorium, City Hall and the Jefferson County Courthouse.



Linn Park is the nexus point connecting Downtown's 20th Street spine and the civic business district.

Additionally, it is the linchpin between the proposed CityWalk, Uptown and Civic Center uses to the north and Birmingham Green (20th Street) and the business district that defines the City's skyline. A plan for the park should be seen within its role in connecting important civic spaces to the north and south of the park.

A resource for understanding Linn Park in the context of Birmingham's downtown is the City Center Master Plan completed at the end of 2019. <https://www.downtownbhamplan.com/>

Much like other successful planning processes in Birmingham, this process should be facilitated and guided by professionals with world-class expertise in the facilitation of public engagement, public space design and programming and operations of public space and urban planning.

A process that is fully envisioned from start to finish and that is not executed in a piecemeal fashion is most likely to result in a district plan that enhances the park itself, yields better connectivity to existing and soon-to-arrive destinations and leverages its location to increase pedestrian activity and broaden the park's appeal to the city as a whole.

A professional team engaged for this work should be inclusive by design, so that all of Birmingham plays a role in both the process and in the vibrancy that will result in the park and district should the work be successful.

A community-oriented planning and design process will position Linn Park as a vibrant destination to drive inclusive growth, greater public use and property reinvestment.

THE OBJECTIVE

A community-oriented planning and design process that positions Linn Park as a vibrant destination designed to drive inclusive growth, greater public use and property reinvestment. In this work, project leaders will convene stakeholders on the future of Linn Park and coordinate a process for determining upgrades to park design, capital investments required, and park programming and management structures that will sustain the park in the future.

Outcomes of this initiative include:

- Affirm the park's role in modern Birmingham in the context of its location, story of the city and brand image. This includes the brand and name of the park.
- Recommendations for upgrades to park design for better pedestrian connections and inclusive multi-purpose use;
- A plan and scope of work for necessary capital repairs and investments;
- A plan for ongoing park programs and activation that yields broader, increased community use and redirects objectionable activities;
- Recommendations for organizational structures and partnerships that will ensure physical and programmatic management is successful; and
- Recommendations for a financial plan for capital investments and ongoing sustainability for Linn Park.

CRITICAL COMPETENCIES FOR A PLANNING TEAM

The kind of project we need to have accomplished calls for the hiring of a team to deliver a world-class design and activation plan with the following competencies:

- Cultural Competency – Public engagement will make or break the process and its outcomes. A team must be able to connect with all potential audiences and be skillful in processing a variety of viewpoints and ideas.
- Design Competency– Experience in this kind of space design, inclusive design and how spaces are best used is critical. Additionally, for not only the park design but the neighborhood around it, a design team needs to be steeped in civic use and space design.
- Park/Public Space Programming Competency – The use of the space influences design and vibrancy. A specific plan to program the space on a daily basis must be done by those experienced in public space use and management.

- Ecosystem Competency – Understanding how ecosystems work, what land and hardscaping work best in our climate and what is easiest to manage and maintain are important for sustainability.
- Budget Design and Ongoing Sustainability Competency – An understanding of how to assess costs, construction and phasing is essential to giving us a plan that we can execute.

The Consultant will provide qualified technical and professional personnel to perform duties and responsibilities assigned under the terms of an Agreement.

LOCAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND TEAM

REV Birmingham ("REV") is a 501(c)(3) economic development organization with a mission to create vibrant commercial districts. REV has a vision of Birmingham as the most vibrant commercial market in the southeast where everyone can realize their dreams. REV is a multi-disciplinary urban economic development and place management organization with a long history of leading planning and implementation of catalytic development in Birmingham's City Center. REV will serve as the local project management for this planning process and will be the contracting agent. David Fleming is REV's President and CEO and is the primary contact for this project. www.revbirmingham.org

Additional key partners steering this plan are:

The City of Birmingham – Denise Gilmore, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Social Justice and Graham Boettcher, the Director of the Birmingham Museum of Art, have been tasked by Mayor Randall Woodfin to be the City's key leaders in the project.

The City of Birmingham Parks and Recreation Board – Represented by Shonae Eddins-Bennett who is the Director of the Parks Board. The Board consists of the civic leadership of the City's Parks system. Linn Park is under the purview of the Parks and Recreation Board.

The Friends of Linn Park – Temple Tutwiler created this organization in the 1980s when he successfully lead a vision process and the raising of resources to renovate and revitalize the park at that time. Since that time the Friends, through an endowment fund dedicated to the park, have continued to invest in park needs.

RESPONSE CRITERIA

The proposal shall clearly address all of the information requested herein. To achieve a uniform review process and obtain the maximum degree of comparability, proposals must be organized and contain all information as specified below:

A. **Cover Letter.** Maximum of two pages serving as an executive summary which shall include an understanding of the scope of services.

B. **Brief Company Profile.** General company information for the lead company for the team, including number of employees, location of company headquarters and branch offices, number of years in business and organization, disciplines, and staffing. Describe the general qualification of the firm as they relate to the work proposed within this RFP.

C. **Organization and Staffing.** Provide a list of the Consultant's employees and agents that the Consultant anticipates assigning to this project. This list shall include a summary of the qualifications, licenses, experience of each individual, and the work to be performed by each individual. Please include an indication of the percentage of minority participation on the team according to number of team members and responsibility for work. REV will retain under its

Agreement with the successful Consultant the right of approval of all persons performing under such Agreement.

D. **Description of Approach.** The proposal should demonstrate the Consultant's knowledge of the needs, objectives and deliverables of the work proposed under this RFP.

E. **Project Schedule.** The proposal should identify a detailed tentative project schedule within which the Consultant should complete the work proposed under this RFP.

F. **Community Engagement.** The proposal should include a description of Community Design/Engagement Workshops for residents and stakeholders to be implemented as part of due diligence and continued public awareness and feedback. Outline the team's approach to community engagement.

G. **Cost Proposal.** The cost proposal shall include a fee proposal for primary deliverables as well as the hourly rate for services. Delineation of any sub-consultant's fee schedule is required, if applicable. The cost proposal should include hourly billable cost of each team member.

H. **References.** Provide three references for prior comparable work of the Consultant, including name, address, contact person and phone number of the municipality/company, length of time services were provided, and a description of all the services that were provided.

Consultants interested shall submit a .pdf version of the proposal to:

David Fleming
REV Birmingham
dfleming@revbirmingham.org

Submit the requested documentation by **5 p.m. on October 18, 2021.**

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Experience and knowledge relating to general planning, long-range/comprehensive planning, public space design, public space activation/programming, place management and building financial sustainability.
2. Quality of work on similar or related projects previously undertaken.
3. Qualifications and experience of staff and sub-consultant staff. It is expected that special effort will be given to building an inclusive team in any response to this RFP.
4. Projected workload that will potentially run concurrently with these projects and could affect the firm's ability to adequately staff these projects.
5. Timeline developed for the project.

The selection of professional consultant(s) shall be based on qualification information exhibited in both written and graphic form. Interviews may be required.

The steering committee may select a short list of Consultants for further evaluation in the form of an oral presentation and interview.

REV reserves the sole and absolute right to use whatever criteria they desire in evaluating the proposals and selecting the Consultant.

Until a definitive written Agreement is entered into, no Consultant should rely to its detriment on this RFP, its response to the RFP, or any oral or written discussions with REV, no rights of any Consultant are created, and no obligations of REV shall exist.

RESPONSE DEADLINE AND GENERAL PROJECT TIMELINE

September 20, 2021	Issue RFP
September 27, 2021	Questions Due
September 29, 2021	Answers to Questions Posted
October 18, 2021	RFP Responses Due

AMENDMENTS TO RFP

REV reserves the right to amend the RFP by addendum prior to the final proposal submittal date. Amendments will be posted.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions concerning the RFP, **please contact David Fleming at dfleming@revbirmingham.org**. If appropriate, the question asked and its answer (but not the identity of the questioner) will be posted on the master development plan website and emailed to all parties expressing an interest in the RFP.

Firms are prohibited from contacting any other officer, director, employee, or agent about the RFP, and any such contact may result in the disqualification of a related proposal.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The Linn Park Planning Initiative will unite our community around a relevant vision for a civic space at the heart of our community and elevate the value of this green space to our City and region. The park is the nexus point connecting Birmingham's central spine of 20th Street and the Uptown/Civic Center district, holding together physically the institutions of our local civic life.

It is bordered by the Birmingham City Hall and the Jefferson County Courthouse. Not only do the people of Birmingham deserve a space that is beautiful and useful, the space will be important to truly connecting our downtown to the renovated Civic Center and City Walk. It can serve as a valuable connection to users now and in the future. In this key location, Linn Park can be a place where all people are welcome, safe and inspired to connect to and work for our common good and common future.

Through this initiative, we can unite and excite our community's various constituencies and create the civic infrastructure needed to support Linn Park for many years to come.