



REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
March 11, 2021

Department Park & Zoo

Director Approval Angela Anthony

AGENDA ITEM Consider a scope of work to receive proposals for a Zoo Master Plan.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION City staff recommends approval. Members of all three current boards that work alongside of the Park and Zoo (Tree Board, Park Board, and FORPAZ) have volunteered to serve on the Zoo Master Plan Committee.

BACKGROUND The Ralph Mitchell Zoo is currently in preliminary stages to pursue Association of Zoo and Aquariums accreditation, with the application date for submittal projected to occur in March of 2026. One of the AZA accreditation documents that is needed is a Zoo Master Plan, which serves as the cornerstone document that provides a roadmap for all changes to the zoo for the next twenty years. This document will discuss building needs, landscaping, the acquisition and deposition of animals, other secondary plan creation and implementation (such as educational and conservation plans) as well as personnel needs. This document is necessary to pursue accreditation and to further the mission of the zoo.

BUDGET IMPACT Funding will be established after proposals are received.

SUGGESTED MOTION I move to approve the scope of work and authorize City Staff to solicit proposals for a Zoo Master Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Scope of Work for Zoo Master Plan
2. Excerpt from AZA Accreditation Standards and Related Policies Handbook detailing need of Zoo Master Plan for pursuance of AZA accreditation.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of Independence, Kansas, is soliciting proposals from qualified professional design consultants to assist the City of Independence's owned Ralph Mitchell Zoo in designing and preparing a Zoo Master Plan meeting or exceeding the attached specifications.

Sealed proposals will be received in the office of the City Clerk, 811 W. Laurel Street, Independence, Ks. 67301, on or before 2:00 p.m. on April, 15ndth. Proposals shall be plainly marked "ZOO PLAN". FAXED OR EMAILED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Proposals that are received after 2:00 p.m. will not be opened and will be returned to sender.

The city reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or to waive any irregularities should any occur as may best benefit the City.

If you have any questions regarding the proposal please contact Angela Anthony at 620-332-2512 or at angelaa@independenceks.gov.

Lacey Lies, Director of Finance

Date



SPECIFICATIONS & PROPOSAL SHEET

ZOO MASTER PLAN:

\$ _____

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS FOR SPECIFICATIONS

DELIVERY INCLUDED TO:
RALPH MITCHELL ZOO
300 MISS ABLE AVENUE
INDEPENDENCE, KS 67301

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:
ANGELA ANTHONY, PARK/ZOO DIR.
ANGELAA@INDEPENDENCEKS.GOV
(620) 332-2512



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PURPOSE:

Ralph Mitchell Zoo, operated by the City of Independence, is requesting proposals from professional design consultants to assist City and Zoo staff in designing and preparing a Master Plan for the Ralph Mitchell Zoo. The zoo is currently in the preliminary stages of pursuing accreditation with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), with the goal of submitting all application materials during March of 2026. The Ralph Mitchell Zoo, in conjunction with Riverside Park on which it is located, is known locally as the “Jewel of Independence”. In addition, Ralph Mitchell Zoo is in the planning stages of making significant capital improvements in facilities over the next twenty years, and for these improvements to occur it is imperative to implement a clearly defined Zoo Master Plan to guide these changes.

BACKGROUND:

Riverside Park was founded in 1914 when fifty acres of land adjacent to the Verdigris River was donated to the City of Independence. The renowned landscape architect, George Kessler, designed the park to work in harmony with the natural surroundings while anticipating future needs of the community. In following years, the park grew to include a large playground, baseball stadium, band stand, tennis courts, and buildings used for gatherings. Later additions to the park include a carousel in 1950, a miniature train in 1953, a Santa Fe 1050 steam locomotive in 1955, and a Corythosaurus from the Sinclair Dinoland display at the 1964 World's Fair in 1965.

Ralph Mitchell Zoo was added to the park in 1925. Elephants, tiger, seals, lions, and bears were early animal attractions for zoo visitors until the debut of Monkey Island in 1932. The Island continues to draw visitors worldwide due to its distinction as being the birthplace of Miss Able, a rhesus monkey made famous by her successful trip to space aboard a Jupiter Rocket in May of 1959. Monkey Island shares historical significance with other structures in the park and zoo in that it was one of the many construction projects built during the Great Depression. Between 1930 and 1940 the additions of the Swan Pool, historical stone steps in the zoo, three additional park buildings, the stadium wall, and the wall surrounding our eighty-six acre cemetery were constructed through the efforts of the local townspeople.

The staff of Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell Zoo are proud of the history that surrounds the park and zoo and we take our stewardship seriously. We are aware that progress marches steadily forward and we strive to maintain the balance between new and old. We believe we can offer new attractions while preserving and sharing those things that make us truly unique. Park and Zoo personnel have been tasked with the challenge in the last few years to of revitalizing our facilities and exhibits, along with performing the necessary renovations to our vintage amusement rides.

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A major focus in 2015 was the renovation of Monkey Island which received vital upgrades to its infrastructure. Thanks to the generosity of our non-profit partner the Friends of Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell ZOO (FORPAZ), and guidance from the Park Board, the addition of play equipment for the animals and aesthetic improvements occurred within the beloved feature in 2016. The coming years will see a continuation of our revitalization plans with more buildings, zoo exhibits, and other features receiving the care they deserve. We do this while caring for our animals, performing operations and maintenance of park and zoo grounds, rental facilities, five neighborhood parks, and trees that line the sidewalks within the downtown area.

PROJECT SCOPE:

The professional design consultants will work closely with administrative City Staff, the Park and Zoo Department, as well as a Zoo Plan Master Board comprised of members of our three park and zoo related boards: Riverside Park Board, Friends of Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell Zoo, and the Tree Board. This group will work together to coordinate and develop a Zoo Master Plan that will span the next twenty-year period for the Ralph Mitchell Zoo. The proposed plan should be written to address all aspects of the zoo's projected growth during the twenty-year timeframe including infrastructure repairs and construction of new facilities, guest services at the zoo, landscaping needs, acquisition and deposition of new animal species and exhibits, as well as the implementation of secondary plans such as strategic, conservation, and education plans. The Zoo Master Plan should include both measurable benchmarks as the twenty-year period progresses, in addition to measurable outcomes that will guide City and Zoo staff in attaining the goal of AZA accreditation in 2026, as well as facilitating the growth and success of Ralph Mitchell Zoo.

The professional design consultants who are awarded the project will be responsible for attending meetings with the administration team of the City of Independence, City Commission, the staff of the Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell Zoo Department, as well as our previously mentioned partner boards. Upon the awarding of the contract, a more detailed scope of work will be developed alongside of the professional design team.

PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING:

A pre-proposal meeting and tour of the Ralph Mitchell Zoo will be held on March 23rd, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am for any professional design consultant group who may be interested in placing a proposal for this project. In addition, if the design firm is unable to attend the meeting and tour in person, the option to attend the meeting via conference call is available. Please contact the Park and Zoo Director, Angela Anthony, by March 19, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. if you are requesting to participate via phone. While participate in the pre-proposal meeting is not necessary, it is strongly encouraged that at least one member of the interested design team is present at the meeting. City staff will facilitate the meeting and will include a scope of the project, a tour of the zoo, as well as a period for questions and answers.

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Any additional questions concerning the project to design a Zoo Master Plan for the Ralph Mitchell Zoo should be sent to Angela Anthony, Park and Zoo Director, at angelaa@independenceks.gov.

SELECTION PROCESS:

Submissions for the project will be reviewed by City Staff and presented at the City Commission meeting on Thursday, April 22nd at 5:30 p.m. for project award. The commission meeting is televised live via the City of Independence Facebook page. The City Commission will have the final authority to select based upon the capabilities and qualifications of proposal respondents. Neither Ralph Mitchell Zoo, nor the City of Independence, will be held responsible for any costs that are incurred by professional design consultant firms who choose to proposal on this project.

CONTRACT:

The City of Independence will enter into a contract for design services with the selected professional design firm. The City of Independence will require a time and expense agreement to be constructed by the project awardee, with an established maximum fee plainly stated on the proposed proposal.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

The successful professional design consultant will demonstrate the experience, expertise, and qualifications that are needed of the type of work that is specified and will demonstrate a capacity to manage the Zoo Master Plan project effectively. The consultant will demonstrate not only an interest in, but convey an understanding of, the requirements of this project. In addition, they will provide references for similar projects, provide the City with a proposed time schedule for project completion, and show the necessary ability to both identify as well as address any problems that may arise during the duration of the contracted work period.

Key Selection Criteria will include:

1. Professional Qualifications: The personnel have the training, education, and relevant experience needed to conduct the scope of work set forth in this document.
2. Specialized Experience in Related Projects: The design team has demonstrated that they hold the specialized experience needed to complete the Zoo Master Plan project for Ralph Mitchell Zoo, and have worked on similar projects in the past.
3. Technical Competence of Project: The design team has demonstrated that they hold the technical competence that will be needed to complete the Zoo Master Plan project for Ralph Mitchell Zoo.
4. Proposed Schedule and Budget Considerations: The design team will provide a

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detailed proposed schedule, as well as total cost of the project. The cost analysis will include an established maximum fee plainly stated.

5. Past Performance on Related Projects: The design team will furnish the zoo staff with examples of previously completed Zoo Master Plans for zoos that are of similar size and capabilities of Ralph Mitchell Zoo.
6. Project Understanding: The design team will show that they clearly understand the project and produce a plan of work for the Zoo Master Plan.
7. Quality Assurance Methods: The team will outline the quality control processes that they will have in place for the duration of this project, as well as the management approach of the design team.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Sealed proposals will be received in the office of the City Clerk, 811 W. Laurel Street, Independence, Ks. 67301, on or before 2:00 p.m. April, 15ndth. Proposals shall be plainly marked "ZOO PLAN". FAXED OR EMAILED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Proposals that are received after 2:00 p.m. will not be opened and will be returned to sender.

The city reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or to waive any irregularities should any occur as may best benefit the City.

13. MASTER & STRATEGIC PLANNING

Welfare Considerations:

As a science-based institution focused on animal care and welfare, conservation, and the continued advancement of visitor and community engagement, a strong commitment to master and strategic planning for continuous change and evaluation is the foundation of adhering to “modern zoological practices and philosophies”. Strategically assessing all aspects of operations and routinely renovating and/or replacing old exhibits with new modern habitats that are designed with animal welfare in mind, is something that is expected of all AZA-accredited institutions. In addition, continuous and careful planning for new and innovative education programs and guest experiences reflects commitment to professionally recognized best practices and modern philosophies.

- 13.1. The institution should follow a written master plan and strategic plan regarding facility innovation, planning, growth and community development, and should review or update the plans every five years at minimum. *(See page 6 for definitions of master plan and strategic plan.)*
- 13.2. Maintaining and advancing “modern zoological practices and philosophies” should be incorporated into the institution’s master plan and strategic plan. *(See page 6 for definition of modern zoological practices and philosophies,” and see the Preamble for further clarification.)*
- 13.3. The institution’s master plan and strategic plan should incorporate its mission, and the organizational values, goals, and objectives used in the design and development of animal exhibits and visitor experiences.
- 13.4. Animal welfare (including requirements under standard 1.5.0) must be applied or considered during the design and development of all new and/or renovated animal facilities (including exhibit space and holding areas).

Rev: 11/2020

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS FOLLOW:

Standards for Elephant Management & Care	43
Standards for Cetacean Care & Welfare	71

SEE ALSO:

General Related Policies	79
General Administrative Policies	110