



Request for Proposals for Conceptual Design Services 5/2/11

The Morton Arboretum

Children's Garden-Phase II

Events Pavilion

Geographic Collections Visitor Station

Main Entrance Enhancement

Maintenance Complex

Permanent Parking Expansion

Tree Adventure Area

RFP: Pre-Proposal Site Visit May 10, 2011 at 2 PM

RFP Due Date: May 24, 2011 at 1 PM

I. Purpose:

As part of a 2011 Master Site Plan Update The Morton Arboretum has identified seven areas for future development. The Arboretum is requesting proposals for professional design services to prepare conceptual plans for these project areas that create a cohesive vision that respects the mission of the Arboretum and highlights our unique features. Graphic conceptual designs will then be used to move forward to secure funding for this new development. Priority for projects moving into the design development stage will be determined at a later date. The areas, listed alphabetically above, include projects that are both visitor attractions and infrastructure improvements.

II. Background:

The Morton Arboretum is a world-renowned leader in tree science and education, working to save and plant trees. The Arboretum ranks among the leading arboretums of the world in size, age, quality of specimens, and programs in Plant Collections, Research, and Education. Established in 1922 by Mr. Joy Morton, founder of the Morton Salt Company and son of J. Sterling Morton (founder of Arbor Day); the Arboretum encompasses 1,700 acres, including 500 acres of plant collections and gardens; and 900 acres of woodlands, prairie, meadows, lakes and streams. The Arboretum is open 365 days a year, with nine miles of roads and 16 miles of trails.

The mission of the Arboretum is to collect and study trees, shrubs, and other plants from around the world, to display them across naturally beautiful landscapes for people to study and enjoy, and to learn how to grow them in ways that enhance our environment. Our goal is to encourage the planting and conservation of trees and other plants for a greener, healthier, and more beautiful world.

Our plant collections include 190,000 specimens in the collections; 4,200 different *types* of trees, shrubs and other plants native to 40 countries, that serve as vital resources for scientific study. Plant collection categories include horticultural (landscaping and gardening), geographic (place of origin), scientific (related plant groups), special habitat (modified soils/sites), evaluation groups, and endangered plants. The world-renowned Schulenberg Prairie is one of the oldest reconstructed prairies in the U.S.

The Arboretum's Education Program interacted with more than 40,000 adults and children in 2010, including 32,710 students in school field trips and youth programs, while outreach efforts extend to over 450 schools and communities. The Children's Garden plays a significant role in reaching the Arboretum's youngest visitors and their families: approximately 375,000 of our visitors spend significant time interacting with the educators and volunteers there. In 2010, total Arboretum attendance reached 831,436, making the Arboretum the fourth most-visited public garden in the United States. A 501(c)3 charitable organization, the Arboretum is a private, nonprofit, philanthropic organization. Its \$23.4 million annual budget is supported by revenue from visitor programs and services, membership, tuition, admission fees, charitable contributions, and an endowment.

III. Scope of Work:

The consultant will be required to develop conceptual design plans for seven separate project areas. Some of these projects have existing conceptual plans and are included here so that they may be part of the comprehensive vision for this new development program. All proposed structures must adhere to the design aesthetic of the Arboretum, provide a green solution that will qualify for LEED certification, and strive for accessibility for all patrons.

1) The Children's Garden-Phase II involves the re-design and enhancement of three areas of our existing Children's Garden and the possible addition of indoor space. The Children's Garden is a 4 acre site that opened in September 2005 and was designed for children age 2-10. Attendance in the garden averages 375,000 visitors per year. The garden is divided into 3 main areas: Central Plaza, Backyard Discovery Gardens, and Adventure Woods.

The overall goals of the Children's Garden include increasing the depth of intellectual and physical engagement of garden visitors; improving and reinforcing key messages; providing opportunities for active, engaged learning for children of varied ages and physical/cognitive abilities; increase parent-child interaction; improve overall visitor safety; reinforce a positive overall visitor experience; reflect the existing overall aesthetic of the garden and accommodate heavy visitor traffic. (See attached design brief for additional information)

Based on the findings of a formal evaluation, garden visitation statistics, and observations by arboretum staff members, we are focused on improving the following Children's Garden components:

- Reconfiguration of the Wonder Pond experience
- Redesign of exhibits and interpretation in the Bloom, Zoom and Sprout garden and Windmill garden
- Redesign of the entrance/exit area.

As a compliment to this re-development we would also like to explore concepts for an engaging and active space that would provide shade and shelter from inclement weather, access to the outdoors, and room for program growth.

2) The Events Pavilion is being proposed to provide an additional rental facility for the Arboretum for corporate meetings, weddings and other special events. We are looking for a three season facility that can expand to accommodate 400+ people seated at tables, a kitchen, restrooms, and storage. We are also looking for a facility that incorporates the Arboretum image, focuses on the outdoors, and capitalizes on the views of the grounds. The proposed building should also have an outdoor patio space that can have tents added to expand the usable covered space. We have made a preliminary siting for this new structure on the west side of the Arboretum in an area that provides for easy vehicular and pedestrian access, adjacent to utilities and in an area where parking can be added.

3) The Geographic Collections Visitor Station is one of the areas for which the Arboretum has developed a conceptual design for a specific area on the east side of the grounds. The Arboretum has two existing Visitor Station that reflect the design and character of the original concept plans: Big Rock and the Prairie Visitor Stations.

The new visitor station will provide a physically and intellectually accessible entry point for appreciating the magnitude, uniqueness, and maturity of the Arboretum's geographic collections. This site will help illuminate where the collections came from, why collecting is important, how plants are chosen, and how plants are arranged. It should also provide inquiry-based interpretive opportunities focused on tree diversity and conservation, a framework that promotes environmental stewardship and supports action-based outcomes.

Visitor interaction and program utilization of the current structures prompt us to revisit the current design and layout of the proposed Visitor Station. (See attached design brief for additional information)

4) The Main Entrance Enhancement concept plan has already been developed. We would like to include it in this package of projects to coordinate the design vision with the rest of the concept plans. The new plan revitalizes the entryway landscape and signage along Route 53 to create a more identifiable image for those passing by and a better sense of arrival for those who are visiting.

5) The Maintenance Complex is being proposed to take the place of two existing South Farm barns that currently house most of the Arboretum vehicles and grounds maintenance staff. This new building will also include the collections staff offices, which are currently located in the Research and Administration building. A preliminary estimate of space needs is as follows: 31,000 sq. ft. for the shops, vehicle storage and dock space; and 12,000 sq. ft. for offices, common area and heated storage space. This complex will be located south of the existing Research/Administration building and also must address reconfiguring and adding parking, creating a new receiving dock and providing access for staff between the buildings.

6) The Permanent Parking Expansion is needed to provide our visitors with additional parking close to the Visitor Center and create a welcoming and attractive walkway for those who park on the near west side. The updated Master Site Plan locates this additional parking adjacent to Godshalk Meadow on the near west side. This lot should incorporate permeable paving, highlight the trial gardens area, include innovative environmental design, provide a landscaped walkway to the underpass and possibly incorporate the use of the former Arbordale House gardens.

7) The Tree Adventure Area proposed location is a 14+ acre site on the west side of the arboretum that has been chosen for its topographic interest and existing mature trees. The Tree Adventure Area will provide a series of structured opportunities for visitors and school groups to experience the woods in an exciting yet non-threatening context. This area also needs a conceptual design for an open air structure for large school groups to gather for information, inclement weather protection, and basic restroom facilities.

The concept design should address the following adventure experiences:

- A tree canopy experience that immerses the visitor in a multisensory engagement with trees
- Opportunities for physical, emotional, social, and intellectual engagement
- Nostalgic opportunities for adults to connect with their own childhood tree experiences
- Provide a sense of accomplishment
- Build self-efficacy in exploring trees and nature
- Invite repeat visitation

The proposed design must also enhance the existing features of the site and reflect the existing overall aesthetic of the Arboretum. The Tree Adventure Area should balance natural features with minimal fabricated structures and hold up to outdoor weathering and heavy use by visitors. This area must also strive to be universally accessible to all audiences, and enable class-sized groups to gather as part of structured programming.

The audience profiles for this area are “graduates” of the Children’s Garden (ages 10+and family), and active adults. The goal is to provide a space for active, familial groups looking for “soft” eco-adventure (contact with nature with perceived risk) and “Green” consumers who value trees and have environmental concern, social awareness, and a local perspective as well as a global view. (See attached design brief for additional information).

IV. Consultant Responsibilities:

This list reflects the minimum requirements of the consultants work responsibilities. Please review, expand and adjust where necessary for your firm's proposal.

- Review project sites and background information
- Gather additional information for possible design solutions
- Hold a design charettes with key staff
- Prepare 3 conceptual plans for each of the 7 project sites
- Present the conceptual designs for review
- Prepare a final conceptual design package based on client feedback
- Prepare cost estimates based on the final conceptual designs
- Prepare a four color graphic representation of the final concepts

V. Submittal Requirements: One hard copy and one electronic copy.

Transmittal Letter: The letter must be a statement signed by a representative of the company who is duly authorized to execute and submit this RFP. The letter must also state that if awarded this project they will enter into an agreement with the Arboretum to provide all of the services outlined in their proposal within the required timeline and budget and comply with the terms of the contract that will be negotiated with the Arboretum.

Approach to project: Provide a description of your approach to the design process as it relates to your review of the project sites and the visitor experience design briefs. Give a brief overview of your company and highlight your background as it applies to this type of project. Clearly identify the project deliverables and your timetable for completion.

Design Team: Identify all key team project members with their resume, their role and time commitment to this project, for your staff and any consultants. Companies are encouraged to create a multidiscipline team that may require collaboration with other design firms to provide the Arboretum with a complete package of conceptual designs and cost estimates. Also indicate the primary contact for this project team.

Additional Services: Identify any additional needed services that should be provided by the Arboretum or through a separate contract if they are not provided through your proposal.

Consultant Fees: Submit a proposal that includes the cost of services as follows:

- Lump sum fee for services outlined in your proposal to complete all of the work identified in our scope of services, including any outside consultant fees.
- List those items that are considered reimbursable costs and estimate the dollar amount for each.

- Identify any tasks or services that cannot be quantified at this time and list an hourly rate with a maximum not to exceed cost.

References & Experience: Provide a list of three projects completed within the last five years on which you have provided similar services. Preference should be given to project of similar scope and size. For each project include: project name and address, your firm’s role and cost of services, year completed and construction cost, contact person (name, position, phone and e-mail). Provide images of work completed by your firm applicable to this project that demonstrates your company’s design aesthetic and proficiency.

Claims and Suits: Please provide detailed information with your proposal if your firm is currently involved in any litigation from past or current projects and/or if your company has ever failed to complete any work it has been awarded.

VI. RFP/Conceptual Design Timetable:

Send out RFP	5/02/2011
Host Pre-proposal Site Visit	5/10/2011
RFP Submittals Due	5/24/2011
Presentation/Interview Firms	6/1-3/2011
Award Contracts	6/10/2011
Complete Conceptual Design Work	9/01/2011

VII. Administrative Information

Pre-Proposal Site Visit: The Morton Arboretum will host a pre-proposal general information and site visit meeting on Tuesday, May 10 to allow all selected firms the opportunity to view the proposed project sites and ask questions. Key staff members will be present to assist with reviewing the site and provide background information. The meeting will begin at 2 PM in the Arbor Room at the Thornhill Education Center on the west side of the Arboretum.

Receipt of Proposals: One printed copy and a CD or electronic copy of the proposal must be received on Tuesday, May 24, at or before 1:00 PM at The Morton Arboretum, 4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle, IL 60532, and identified as follows:

Request for Proposals-Conceptual Design Services
 The Morton Arboretum – Administration Building
 Attention: Susan Jacobson, Landscape Architect.

Owner Rights: The Morton Arboretum reserves the right to accept or reject either in whole or part, any and all submittals in response to this request, with or without cause, as is determined to be in the best interest of the Arboretum.

The Arboretum reserves the right to contact any references or clients listed in the documents for information in evaluating the consultant’s performance on previous projects.

All materials submitted for this RFP become the property of The Morton Arboretum and will only be returned at the Arboretum’s option, upon request.

The Morton Arboretum is not responsible for costs incurred by the consultants prior to issuance of a written agreement.

Acceptance of Proposal Content: The contents of the successful proposal may become the basis for a contract with the consultant. Failure of the chosen consultant to accept these obligations in contract or a similar instrument may result in cancellation of the award and removal from future proposal solicitations.

Contract Products: All products produced in response to the contract resulting from this proposal will be the sole property of The Morton Arboretum. This includes any original and reproducible drawings prepared for the project.

VIII. Presentation/Interview Guidelines

Interviews with selected consultants will be held June 1-3, 2011 in the Administration Building conference room at the Arboretum. The consultants will be notified by May 26, as to whether they have been selected for an interview. The specific date and time of the interviews will be determined after reviewing the written proposals. The presentation and interview will be allotted no more than one hour. The consultant's presentation should be no more than 40 minutes, to allow sufficient time for questions by both parties.

IX. Proposal Evaluation

The project proposal will be evaluated by a staff team using the following basic criteria:

- Completeness of the proposal with items requested in the RFP
- Proposed methodology and creative process
- Previous background and experience
- Cost effective approach to the project
- Cost of services

X. Reference Material

The following Visitor Experience Design Briefs have been attached with the RFP:

- Children's Garden
- Geographic Collections Visitor Station
- The Tree Adventure Area

XI. Contact

All questions regarding this RFP should be directed to:

Susan Jacobson, FASLA
Landscape Architect
The Morton Arboretum
Phone: 630-719-7944
Email: sjacobson@mortonarb.org