



City of Marquette

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP 26-01**

**City of Marquette Sustainable
Tourism Plan**

January 9, 2026

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with RFP 26-01 City of Marquette Sustainable Tourism Plan. Failure to do so will result in the rejection of the bid proposal.

All proposals must be received by February 27, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

The City of Marquette reserves the right to reject any and all proposals if judged not to be in the best interest of the City.

Karen M. Kovacs
City Manager

For questions or further information, contact:

DENNIS M STACHEWICZ, JR.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
CITY OF MARQUETTE
300 W. BARAGA AVE
MARQUETTE, MI 49855
(906) 225-8377
dstachewicz@marquettemi.gov

RFP 26-01

City of Marquette

Sustainable Tourism Plan

INTRODUCTION

The City of Marquette requests the submission of proposals from land use planning consulting firms to prepare a Sustainable Tourism Plan. The firm selected must demonstrate a capacity to work closely with project partners, key stakeholders, City staff, various City Boards and Commissions, and the public in the course of preparing the Plan. The City will accept proposals until 2:00 p.m. ET on February 27, 2026.

BACKGROUND

The City of Marquette, at approximately 19 square miles, is located in north-central Marquette County along the shores of Lake Superior. The city is bordered by Marquette Township to the north and west, Sands Township to the South, and Chocolay Township to the southeast. Marquette is less than an hour drive from Munising, MI, which hosts tourism operations and facilities for Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (a unit of the National Park Service). “Pictured Rocks” has recorded 1.3 million visitors in a recent year, and the spillover to Marquette is substantial.

Marquette was initially incorporated as a village in 1849, became a city in 1871, and functions on a Commission-Manager form of government. The City Manager is responsible for managing the City's daily operations and coordinating efforts to meet the policy goals and objectives established by the City Commission.

The City of Marquette has a population of 21,735 residents, making it the largest city in the Upper Peninsula. The City is known for its dramatic wonderland of hilly shoreline, expansive forests, and high-snowfall winters, providing all-season recreational opportunities. Marquette is the County seat and an artistic, culturally vibrant community, and the home of Northern Michigan University. Education, health care, and government operations are the primary economic drivers, along with services, retail, and all-season tourism, which is increasing dramatically.

This rapid increase in all-season tourism has created several impacts on the City. These include the challenge of reduced social carrying capacity among year-round residents, strain on City infrastructure, increased maintenance responsibilities and workload for public safety elements, stagnant living wages, and a scarcity of attainable housing.

The City of Marquette seeks, as the desired target for this effort, to better understand and balance the sociocultural, environmental, economic, and physical effects of tourism on the community, and to prioritize the distribution of financial and fiscal benefits among residents, local businesses, institutions, and the City government- which has seen little to no revenue increases to address the impacts of tourism that it must confront.

The City last adopted a new Community Master Plan in 2024 and the plan is accessible on the City's website:

<https://www.marquettemi.gov/departments/community-development/planning/>

There are also several other local plans that have recent data and information related to key planning issues (Tourism/Climate/Quality of Life/Economic Viability that will be important to reconcile with this effort. These include:

The Marquette Downtown Development Authority Master Plan:

<https://www.downtownmarquette.org/downtown-plan-2020>

The City of Marquette Parks and Recreation, and Trails Master Plans:

<https://www.marquettemi.gov/departments/community-services/parks-and-recreation/>

City of Marquette Economic Development Plan:

<https://www.marquettemi.gov/economic-development/>

Marquette County Master Plan (Borealis Beach Area – reference only):

<https://www.mqtcoplan.org/>

The Marquette Convention and Visitors Bureau (Travel Marquette) Plan = Unknown:

Contact – Susan Estler, Executive Director or Travel Marquette: Susan@travelmarquette.com
906-228-7749

SCOPE OF WORK/SERVICES

1. STEERING COMMITTEE/MEETING WITH CONSULTANT –a Steering Committee Comprised of stakeholders will be formed to advise the consultant. The proposal should include regular meetings with the Steering Committee to understand expectations as well as communicate the process and receive feedback. Potential Stakeholders should include representatives from within the community and agreed upon by the consultant and staff.
2. MEETINGS WITH CITY STAFF AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS - The proposal should include meetings with City staff members and key stakeholders throughout the project.
3. PUBLIC OUTREACH – The HIGHEST levels of public engagement shall be utilized as part of this effort. The proposal should identify multiple opportunities of scale and type for public engagement to ensure that all voices and ideas are heard. The City of Marquette also has a Public Participation Plan which may be accessed here: [Economic Development - City of Marquette](#)
4. DATA COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION - The proposal should include the conducting of an assessment of the results from the public visioning/outreach, meetings with staff/stakeholders, as well as reviewing the other local plans during the project. The results of this assessment will be shared with the Steering Committee and presented to the public.

5. PUBLIC PRESENTATION - With information obtained from the previous phases, the proposal should include a plan/schedule for a public session to educate the community about the findings. This will be an opportunity to collect feedback from the community prior to developing the draft plan.
6. DRAFT PLAN – The draft Sustainable Tourism Plan shall include, at a minimum:
 - A. A narrative that details the results from the stakeholder meetings and the public visioning/outreach.
 - B. Recommendations along with an annual priorities list, responsible parties, and possible funding sources.
7. PRESENTATION OF DRAFT PLAN – The proposal should include a plan/schedule for presentation of the draft Sustainable Tourism Plan to the Steering Committee and the community through public sessions.
8. ADOPTION OF PLAN - The consultant shall budget for several hours for pre-adoption assistance by telephone, email, video, or written correspondence after the draft is presented to the City Commission for approval (City staff will be responsible for all required notices and municipal coordination).

The selected firm will have responsibility of working with project partners, key stakeholders, City staff, various City Boards and Commissions, and the public during the development of the Sustainable Tourism Plan. As described in the Scope of Work/Services, meetings will be held with the City to keep its members apprised of progress and to gather feedback, in addition to the public meetings outlined. The City's staff members will be available to provide some background information, however, the consultant should not depend on staff for data collection activities. Base maps of the City and related coverages are available in ArcGIS shapefile format. The consultant will be responsible for the preparation of all text, maps, illustrations, and other materials. All digital materials shall be done in a format compatible with software used by the City of Marquette.

Submittal and Schedule

Any questions concerning the proposal should be directed to Dennis Stachewicz by phone at 906-225-8377 or email: dstachewicz@marquettemi.gov

Please submit any questions by February 6, 2026.

1. Submit all required materials as detailed in the Proposal Content section. Include one (1) unbound original, four (4) copies of each, and a flash drive containing a .PDF electronic copy.
2. Submit the proposal no later than 2:00 p.m. ET on February 27, 2026, in a package clearly marked as indicated:

COMPANY/FIRM NAME

“PROPOSAL FOR CITY OF MARQUETTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLAN”

3. Proposal shall be submitted to:

City of Marquette
Attn: Christina Tyynismaa, Staff Accountant
300 W. Baraga Ave
Marquette, MI 49855

4. The following schedule has been established:

Advertise Request for Proposal	January 9, 2026
Question and Answer Period Deadline	February 6, 2026
RFP Submittal Deadline	February 27, 2026
Interviews	March 25, 2026
Award of Contract by City Commission	April 6, 2026

5. Ownership of all information, reports, documents, materials, maps, plans, graphics, and other deliverables prepared for or on behalf of the City shall belong to the City. Subcontracting is allowed to provide the best product for the City of Marquette.
6. The City of Marquette reserves the right to waive any informalities or immaterial omissions or defects, and to reject any or all responses to the RFP, to advertise for new RFP responses, or to accept any RFP response deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Marquette. A response to the RFP shall not be construed as a contract, nor indicate a commitment of any kind by the City of Marquette. The RFP does not commit the City to pay costs incurred in the submission of a response to this RFP or any costs incurred prior to the execution of a final contract.

Proposal Content

1. Letter of Interest – Cover letter indicating interest in the project and identifying the ability to provide the services requested.
2. Introduction – A brief description of the firm including the number of years the firm has been in existence, range of professional services, office locations, and staff size.
3. Work Program – In the project overview, describe the general project approach and process to be employed, describe a process approach that was used in the past to successfully complete a similar project, and describe the proposed project schedule including a timeline of major milestones, deliverable, and completion.
4. Experience and Qualifications – A brief description of the firm’s prior work relevant to this RFP including the name, address, and phone number of client references and the primary contact persons.

5. Consultant Personnel – Identify individual(s) from the firm’s professions and any sub-contractors who will work on the project along with a brief summary of the individual(s) and their experience.
6. Timeframe Diagram – Submit a graphic diagram that shows the estimated project timeframe for meeting important project targets.
7. Cost Proposal – Submit a cost proposal for overall completion. The project Budget for this plan is \$60,000.00
8. Insurance Provide "evidence of insurance", or state method for addressing insurance in the following categories:
 - A. Worker's Compensation - in compliance with the Workers' Compensation Act.
 - B. Comprehensive General Liability shall be at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$1,000,000 aggregate bodily injury, and \$1,000,000 aggregate property damage or \$1,000,000 Combined Single Limit.
 - C. Comprehensive Automobile Liability shall be at least \$1,000,000 per person, \$1,000,000 per accident bodily injury, and \$1,000,000 property damage or \$1,000,000 Combined Single Limit.
 - D. Professional Liability (errors and omissions, including contractual liability) shall be at least \$1,000,000.

Selection Process

Proposals will be reviewed by a team of City Staff. The team reserves the right to request additional information from firms submitting proposals. Up to three consulting firms will be considered for interviews by the team. The criteria that will be considered in the evaluation of the proposals will include, but not by way of limitation:

1. Capabilities and previous experience in comparable projects and specialized experience and technical competence of the consultant team.
2. The firm’s general approach to the project. Although the City of Marquette has identified the general nature of services required, the consultant is given leeway to the approach to the methodology to provide the requested services.
3. Past record of performance on projects including such factors as quality of work, cost control, and demonstrated ability to meet scheduled deadlines.
4. Capacity of the firm to perform the work in a timely manner and affirmatively respond to the inquiries and schedule of the City of Marquette and dedicate the appropriate personnel as the schedule dictates.
5. Qualifications of individuals who will have direct involvement in tasks on this project.
6. Cost proposal.