

DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

DOWNTOWN WAYFINDING PROGRAM

Deadline: May 20, 2020, 4:00pm (Eastern Time)

Submit digital PDF proposals to:
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
Attn: Melvin Eledge Jr.
meledge@downtowngr.org

BACKGROUND

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) and the City of Grand Rapids (specifically Mobile GR) are requesting proposals for consulting services to develop a wayfinding program for Downtown Grand Rapids.

DGRI, in partnership with the City of Grand Rapids, is the organization responsible for city building and place-management in the urban core of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the state's second largest city. Established in 2013, DGRI serves as the singular management entity for the combined operations of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Downtown Improvement District (DID), and the Monroe North Tax Increment Finance Authority (MNTIFA). More details can be found at www.downtowngr.org.

Mobile GR and Parking Services is the City department responsible for providing residents, workers, and visitors with 21st century mobility options. The department manages the city's public parking system (metered on-street parking, off-street garages, and metered and no-cost public parking lots), all traffic related signage, and works to broaden and strengthen transportation options so that people can choose to walk, bicycle, use transit, carpool, ride share, or drive alone.

DGRI's work is directed by the GR Forward master plan which was developed through one of the most inclusive public engagement efforts in the city's history. GR Forward clearly defines the community's priorities for the next generation of growth in Downtown. Specifically, the Plan recommends improving Downtown navigation and wayfinding with its Goal 3 (Implement a 21st Century Mobility Strategy) by:

- Conducting a survey of all existing formal and informal wayfinding systems in the Downtown (*including Walk Your City, Michigan Street wayfinding, GR Tag Tour, etc*);
- Evaluating the success of existing wayfinding programs in Downtown;
- Choosing the most successful system and exploring expansion; and
- Consider leveraging technology and/or internet to assist with wayfinding in an efficient, effective, and ever-changing way.

SCOPE

The Downtown Wayfinding Program seeks professional consulting services to develop a master wayfinding signage plan complete with analysis, system design, documentation, specifications and implementation for various forms of signage. The plan should define the types and design of signs, where they should be used, where they should be located, what they should look like, and what kind of information they include.

The Program should consider all modes of transportation and outline a phased implementation strategy for the project. The Downtown Wayfinding Program goals include:

1. Increase and encourage visitor and resident discovery and exploration of Downtown.
2. Allow easy deciphering of directions to increase a person's ability to traverse the Downtown, while managing information overload and sign clutter.
3. Incorporate inclusive and universal design into the entire wayfinding program and system so that wayfinding can be used by a wide range of diverse users including children, non-English speakers, and persons with disabilities, including those with (but not limited to) vision, hearing, and/or cognitive impairment. As a reference, Spanish is the language with the largest number of speakers in Grand Rapids other than English.
4. Welcome and guide the traveling public from gateways into Downtown as well as to and from key destinations and points of interest such as entertainment amenities, colleges & universities, convention center, adjacent medical campuses, museums, parks, and the Grand River.
5. Coordinate Downtown wayfinding with existing adjacent non-city wayfinding. Examples include Medical Mile, adjacent college & university campuses, and the proposed regional bikeway/trail wayfinding that is scoped by the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition.
6. Develop design standards for wayfinding that are reflective of the City of Grand Rapids' identity while considering the recently completed guidelines from the River For All Plan that describe wayfinding along the planned river trail system. DGRI's Streetspace Guidelines should also be used as basis for the wayfinding design and signage to ensure compatibility with the recommended streetscape elements.
7. Define and identify Downtown and Downtown districts.
8. Anticipate future development in each area, changes in traffic patterns, new attractions, and increased pedestrian, bicycle, and micromobility vehicle traffic.
9. To the extent that makes sense, all wayfinding installations should be able to be easily updated by either DGRI and/or City staff to keep content relevant and up to date. The project scope should include recommendations that clarify roles and responsibilities for managing wayfinding signage content and information.
10. Condense sign clutter to contribute to beautifying Downtown Streetspaces and limit sidewalk obstructions.

The Downtown Wayfinding Program should consider the following types of wayfinding signage:

Pedestrian Signage

Signage designed for use by pedestrians for both directional wayfinding as well as destination wayfinding in order to orient people on foot within the Downtown fabric. Signage should incorporate a variety of installations (kiosks, primary signage, secondary signage etc.) and should consider, evaluate, and potentially integrate and enhance the use of micro-installations such as the existing Walk Your City program. Attention should be given to accessibility for people with various kinds of ability and non-English speakers.

Vehicular Gateway Signage

Signage designed for vehicular traffic should be directional as well as destination wayfinding; limiting destination identification to significant civic, entertainment and cultural institutions, and to Downtown parking. These signs should function primarily as tools allowing people to easily navigate the downtown and should serve the secondary purposes of acting as a “gateway feature” that allows visitors to be able to distinguish that they have entered Downtown and to introduce visitors to the Downtown’s wayfinding system.

Skywalk Wayfinding

Signage should be designed for pedestrian usage within the Downtown skywalk to provide clear wayfinding throughout the skywalk, highlighting the destinations along the route (places the skywalk passes through) as well as highlighting the skywalk entry and exit points and destinations at those connection points. In addition to standard signage, skywalk wayfinding should consider the inclusion of digital wayfinding elements such as kiosks, interactive screens and other similar elements. The Grand Rapids skywalk is used significantly by out-of-town visitors staying in hotels and going to Van Andel Arena and DeVos Place. These users are often confused by where they parked and which way to turn within the skywalk. The consultant should also make system design recommendations consistent with the other elements of the proposed wayfinding system. Refer to Attachment B for existing skywalk system diagram/map.

River and River Trail Wayfinding

Signage for the City’s river trail network (both current and future) and key streets and pedestrian-ways that interface and cross at river trail locations within Downtown. These signs and navigation aids should function primarily as tools to orient people on foot, on bicycles, or on other micromobility vehicles to the Grand River while providing access cues to the river trail from Downtown. *Grand Rapids is currently undertaking a massive river revitalization project that will restore the rapids to the river. This restoration, and the City’s River for All Plan and Guidelines (link included at end of RFP) should be considered when developing river wayfinding elements.*

Parking and Mobility Signage

Signage should be designed for both vehicular and pedestrian use and should provide consistency in branding and navigation within the Downtown. Parking and mobility signage should interface with the other wayfinding sign types in this RFP (pedestrian, vehicular, skywalk, river, and digital) to provide an easy to use interface for downtown users.

Mobility (specifically bicycle related) signage should consider coordination with the proposed regional bikeway/trail wayfinding that is scoped by the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition.

Parking signage within this scope should address where parking is located and wayfinding - not rates and availability. While this project scope includes only Downtown parking signage, transferability to near neighborhoods for consistency of the system should be a consideration in the development of the signage.

Bicycle parking that may be co-located in public parking facilities along with potential micromobility stations/hubs should be considered as part of the parking and mobility signage type.

Additionally, mobility signage should consider bicycle and transit navigation within the Downtown as well as identification signage for bicycle parking.

21st Century Wayfinding

The project should include recommendations and designs for 21st century wayfinding elements to potentially integrate into the Downtown Wayfinding Program as either pilots or phased-in permanent elements. An example includes digital kiosks. Technology tools that support persons with disabilities should also be considered. In the case of digital kiosks, the consultant should make recommendations for strategic placement and provide housing design for the installations that is consistent with the rest of the wayfinding program.

SERVICES REQUESTED

The selected consultant will work with a steering committee of individuals from DGRI, Mobile GR, City of Grand Rapids Planning, Experience Grand Rapids, the Convention/Arena Authority, Disability Advocates of Kent County, and other potential stakeholders. DGRI staff will be the primary point of contact and will manage the project. The contract will be facilitated and paid through DGRI. Services should include, but are not limited to, the following:

Task 1: Analysis

- Evaluate existing Downtown wayfinding, including existing adjacent university, college, and institutional signage, City parking facility signage, and transit signage.
 - ❖ Determine if existing downtown wayfinding locations are appropriate for future installs or if new locations should be recommended.
 - ❖ Evaluate how existing adjacent university, institutional, parking, transit and other non-Downtown wayfinding signage can be better linked with a new Downtown wayfinding program.
- Review and evaluate existing Downtown district designations and determine whether these need to be retained, modified, expanded, and/or abandoned.
- Review existing documents including GR Forward, River For All Guidelines, DGRI Streetspace Guidelines, and other related City documents (links provided at end of RFP).

Task 2: System Design

- Design signage concepts
- Develop full sign type array
- Prepare Opinion of Probable Costs (OPC)
- Prepare preliminary Asset Management Plan (AMP) that includes estimated operation and maintenance costs.

Task 3: Documentation

- Prepare sign location plan and sign message schedule
- Verify site and location
- Refine OPC and develop phasing plan
- Refine AMP and include a refined final estimate of operation and maintenance costs of the proposed system.
- Recommend and define roles and responsibilities for managing wayfinding signage content and information amongst City staff and DGRI.
- Prepare bid package

Task 4: Implementation*

- Assist with bid process
- Review shop drawings, color samples, proofs, etc.
- Consult with fabricator(s)
- Conduct final inspection and prepare punch list
- Develop wayfinding and signage reference manual

**Submitting firms should include separate line item fees for each of five (5) items associated with Task 4 Implementation. Task 4 will not be part of the scope represented in this RFP but may be added to the project by DGRI (in whole or in part) depending on the outcomes of the first 3 phases, the costs associated with implementation, and the extent of implementation. Fees for Task 4 should assume the consultant's*

services to implement the entire wayfinding project. Other tasks typically associated with consultant services associated with implementation may also be recommended and priced in Task 4.

Submitting firms should NOT include the fabrication or installation of any wayfinding signs as those services will be secured through a bidding process (after completion of Task 3) and delivered by a contractor selected through that bidding process.

PROJECT AREA

The Downtown Wayfinding Program is limited to the DDA boundary, which is included as Attachment A. For reference, the DDA boundary is 1.7 square miles and is approximately bounded on the north by Leonard Street, on the west by Seward Avenue, on the east by Lafayette Avenue, and on the south by Wealthy Street (boundary extends south of Wealthy to Logan and the railroad tracks at various locations).

PROJECT BUDGET

Applicants should prepare the budget based on implementing the scope of services; professional fees are one of the items that will be used to evaluate the proposals. *DGRI does not publish project budgets in RFPs.*

PROJECT TIMELINE

The project timeframe assumes that this type of work can be done, post Covid-19 shutdowns and that stay at home orders will be relaxed by July 1, 2020.

- April 22, 2020: RFP Issued
- May 6, 2020: Deadline to submit RFP Questions/Clarifications (by 4:00pm Eastern Time)
- May 13, 2020: DGRI response to Questions: (by 4:00pm Eastern Time)
- **Proposals Due: May 20, 2020 (4:00pm Eastern Time)**
- Notice of Selection: June 10, 2020
- Project Start Date: no later than July 1, 2020
- Completion of Task 3 (and ready to issue bid package for initial phase): October 14, 2020*

**Assumes an approximately 4-month (15-week) project timeframe. Respondents are welcome to propose alternate recommendations of a timeline based on their experience.*

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

DGRI reserves the right to request additional information from any or all potential consultants as necessary to clarify that which is contained in the proposals. Further DGRI reserves the right to negotiate with a consultant on terms of its proposal. DGRI also reserves the right to reject all proposals or to accept proposals in part.

Proposal shall be submitted digitally in PDF format to meledge@downtowngr.org. No paper or hard copy submittals are required.

Proposal submission shall be no longer than 12 PDF pages. The 12-page limit includes all proposal pages including resumes and any cover and end page. Size shall be 8½" x 11" in portrait orientation.

Proposal submission shall include, at minimum:

- Summary of project understanding.
- Firm overview for lead consultant and any subconsultants proposed to work on project.
- Project team composition and qualifications that identify all persons that will be actively involved on the project and their roles in the Downtown Wayfinding Program. Identify the project manager. Detail the qualifications, skills, background and relevant experience of the project team.
- A description of experience in completing work of this type, including three (3) examples of similar projects in an urban context. Include project references.
- A proposed technical approach that outlines the process to complete the tasks as identified in this RFP. Include the number meetings (in person and/or virtual) that are proposed for each task of the project and any other virtual meetings or engagement sessions that are proposed. **For the purposes of this proposal, assume that stay at home restrictions will be relaxed by the anticipated project start date.**
- Project schedule that includes a start-to-finish timeline to complete the project. Include milestone dates, major tasks, and deliverables.
- Professional fee to complete the work as described. Fees shall include all tasks and staffing necessary to complete the project as outlined above and within your submitted proposal. All reimbursable expenses shall be included in this fee.

REGISTRATION

Interested consultants are encouraged to send an email to Melvin Eledge (meledge@downtowngr.org) to register their intent to respond to this RFP. All firms expressing interest will be added to an email distribution list and will be notified if additional information related to the RFP becomes available. Firms failing to register in this manner may not receive all information relevant to the preparation of their proposals.

RFP QUESTIONS

Inquiries and questions regarding any aspect of this request for proposal should be emailed to Melvin Eledge at meledge@downtowngr.org. Telephone calls or other methods of communication will not be accepted. Questions may be submitted up until 5pm Wednesday, May 6, 2020. Responses will be sent to all registered participants no later than 5pm on Wednesday, May 13, 2020.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used in the consideration of proposals, with the relative weight of each of those criteria listed in parenthesis:

- Previous experience designing and implementing similar urban wayfinding programs (2)
- Project understanding and approach to achieving objectives (3)
- Proposed project schedule (1)
- Strength and diversity of project team (1.5)
- Thoroughness, clarity, and conciseness of the submittal (1)
- Professional fee; overall cost in detail (1.5)

REFERENCE MATERIAL

GR Forward: <https://downtowngr.org/our-work/projects/gr-forward> (specifically the section on implementing a 21st century mobility strategy)

River For All Guidelines: <http://riverforall.com/> and at this Dropbox location: https://www.dropbox.com/s/ij6obm5dhbhz9a6/2018-11-09_Design%20Guidelines_PRINT.pdf?dl=0 (wayfinding guidelines begin on page 61 of PDF)

Street Space Guidelines: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/downtowngr.org/general/Downtown-Streetspace-Guidelines-2019-07-26-web-page-view.pdf?mtime=20190730091659>

City of Grand Rapids Vital Streets Plan and Design Guidelines, documents at this homepage: <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/Vital-Streets-Program>

City of Grand Rapids Bicycle Action Plan, document at this homepage:

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/Bicycle-Action-Plan>

The Rapid (transit authority) Align Plan:

https://www.ridetherapid.org/assets/files/o8/aligntis_finalreport_wlocationsheets_8-8-18.pdf

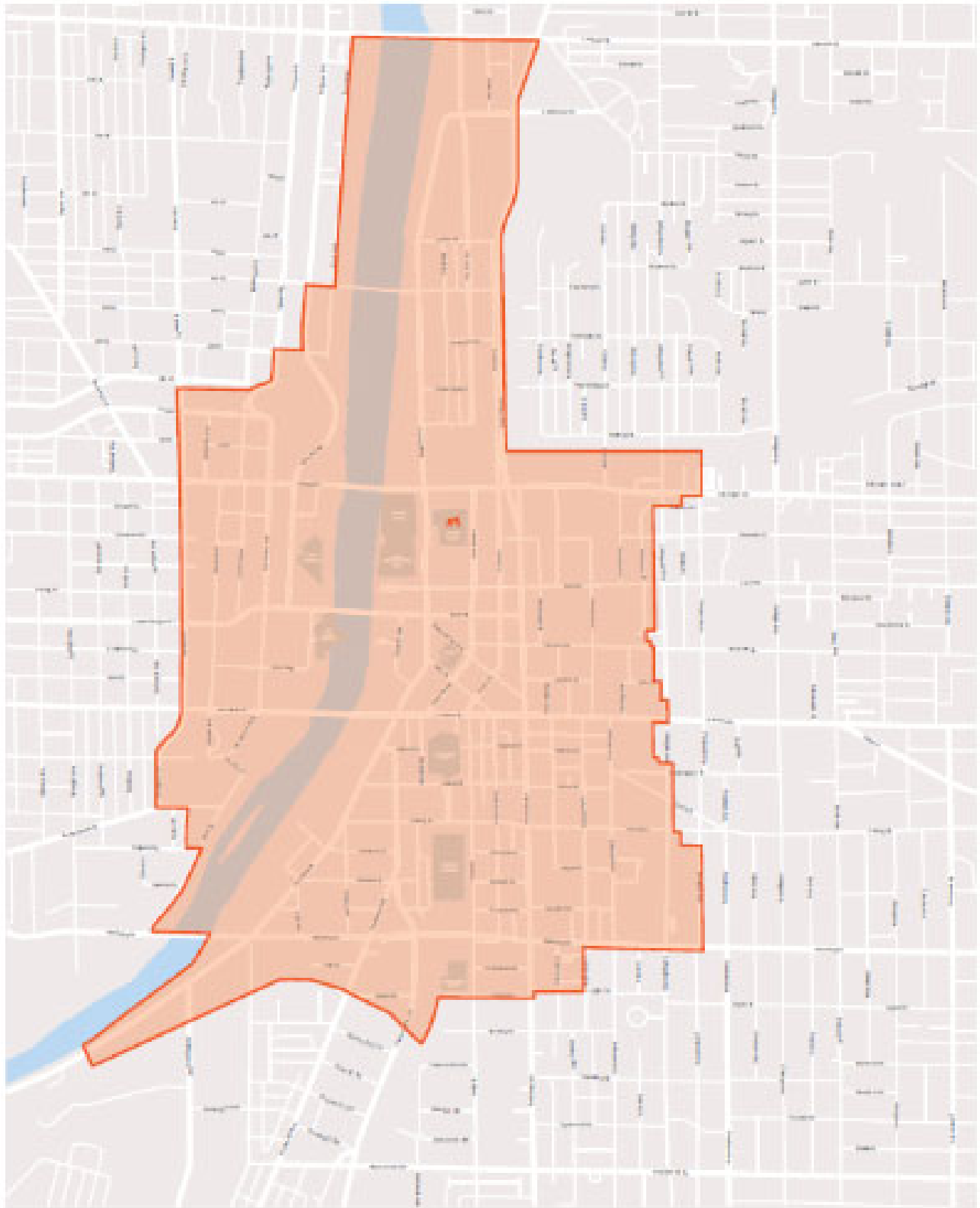
City of Grand Rapids Age Friendly Communities Work:

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/Age-Friendly-Grand-Rapids>

Other pertinent documents that should be referenced for this project include:

- The federal and Michigan Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), specifically Section 2D.50 Community Wayfinding Signs
- Disability Advocates of Kent County Inclusive Design and Prototyping Project (currently underway)
- Americans' with Disability Act (ADA)
- AIGA Sign Symbology: <https://www.aiga.org/symbol-signs>

ATTACHMENT A



ATTACHMENT B

