DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Request For Proposal
Downtown Neighborhood Seeks Food Access Innovators

Deadline to respond: July 31, 2023

Deliver to:
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
Attention: Kendsie Channing,
Manager of Neighbor Experience
29 Pearl St. NW, Suite 1
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
or
kchanning@downtowngr.org

Downtown Neighborhood Seeks Food Access Innovators

Inquiries and submittals should be sent to Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. attn.: Kendsie Channing, Manager of Neighbor Experience, kchanning@downtowngr.org.

Request for Proposals

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc (DGRI) seeks a community partner or partners who can operate a storefront to provide accessible, consistently available, and affordable fresh food to neighbors living in Heartside/Downtown Grand Rapids. DGRI has identified one potential storefront to accommodate the operation at 117 Division Ave. S.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to identify creative strategies and partnerships that effectively and measurably advance the community's goals of providing consistently available, accessible, affordable, fresh food and grocery in Heartside.

Proposals that expeditiously bring solutions to food access in the Heartside neighborhood will be viewed favorably.

Background

In 2016 DGRI and the City of Grand Rapids adopted GR Forward, a 10-year master plan for Downtown that was the culmination of significant community input about the future of Downtown. Goal 2 of this plan focuses on improving the quality of life for Downtown neighbors. Chief among the priorities is expanding access to fresh food.

Through the Heartside Quality of Life study of 2022, neighbors indicated that grocery access remains a top goal that would greatly improve the experience of living in Downtown Grand Rapids. Priority will be given to proposals that best meet the following community-informed recommendations:

- Sustain daily hours of operation.
    - Varied hours to provide greater access to neighbors working a variety of shifts is a bonus.
- Provide a variety of fresh, reasonably priced produce, available year-round.
    - Access to household goods and other food products.
    - Ethnically diverse foods to meet a variety of audiences.
- Accept various methods of payment including food benefits (such as WIC, SNAP EBT, Bridge cards), cash, and credit cards.
- Partner with diverse of local farms and/or food providers.

Proposal Requirements

To be considered, please provide a detailed proposal of how your organization can fulfill the following aspirations for a grocery solution in the Heartside/Downtown neighborhood. We are open to partnerships and encourage innovative ideas to meet the priorities set by the Downtown Neighbor community.

Proposals must include detailed information about the following categories.

Please be clear, concise and thorough in your response.

1. **Concept**

- Describe your idea for grocery service in the Downtown neighborhood.
- Describe the implementation plan and timeline for your concept.

2. Operational Details

- **Qualifications**: A detailed description of your or your organization's experience with operating a grocery store and providing fresh food access in an urban setting. Additional information about neighborhood demographics can be found in the Appendix.
- **Permitting and Licensing**: In what timeframe are you able to secure proper permitting and licensing to open a storefront?
    - We seek to open a storefront as soon as possible but understand that permitting and licensing take time.
- **Staffing**: An overview of your proposed staffing model for this location to meet the priorities of neighbors. Please indicate your planned operation hours.
- **Product Sourcing**: Share the products - specifically fresh produce - that you can source and intend to provide in this location.
- **Detailed Budget**: Line-item budget for operating this storefront. Your budget should include at a minimum the following:
    - Set up costs.
    - Staffing costs.
    - Product/produce sourcing costs.
    - Infrastructure costs – fridges, tables, shelving, etc.
    - Insurance allotment.
    - Utilities costs.
    - If possible, please provide projections for continued success of the storefront after DGRI funding period is complete.

3. Additional Questions

- What barriers do you foresee in operating in a Downtown storefront? How do you plan to address them?
- What additional resources might you require to open a fresh food or grocery access solution in Downtown Grand Rapids?
    - Additional support may be available from DGRI. Please indicate additional needs that you have for your idea to be implemented.
- Would you consider the possibility of partnership with other community entities that address food accessibility and/or justice?

<u>Evaluation Factors</u>

Proposals will be evaluated by a committee of neighbors, representative of the population who live within walking distance of the storefront. A rubric will be used to evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

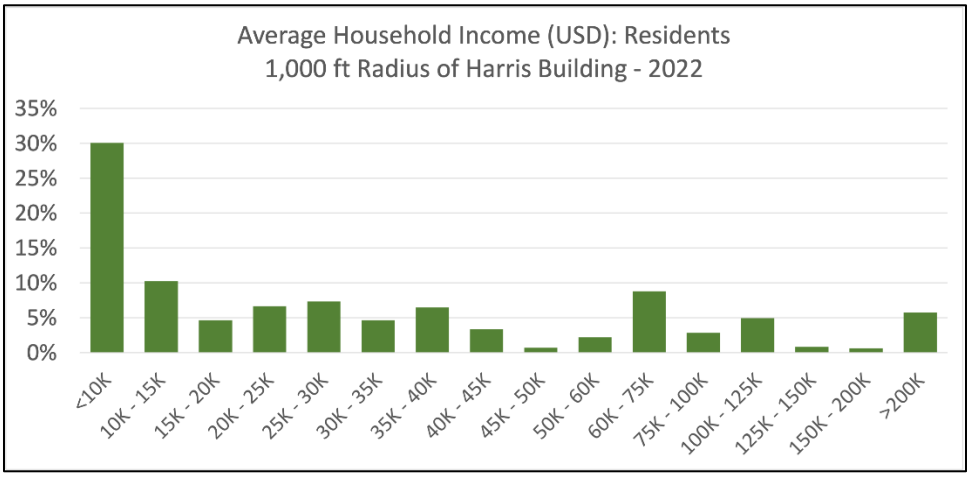
- Clarity, conciseness and thoroughness.
- Project understanding & approach for achieving objectives.
- Alignment with Community goals.
- Ability to comply with permitting, licensing and food benefit programs.
- Diversity of project team, producers and partners.
- Detailed budget.
- Proposed timeline that prioritizes urgency of opening a solution.

Proposal Timeline

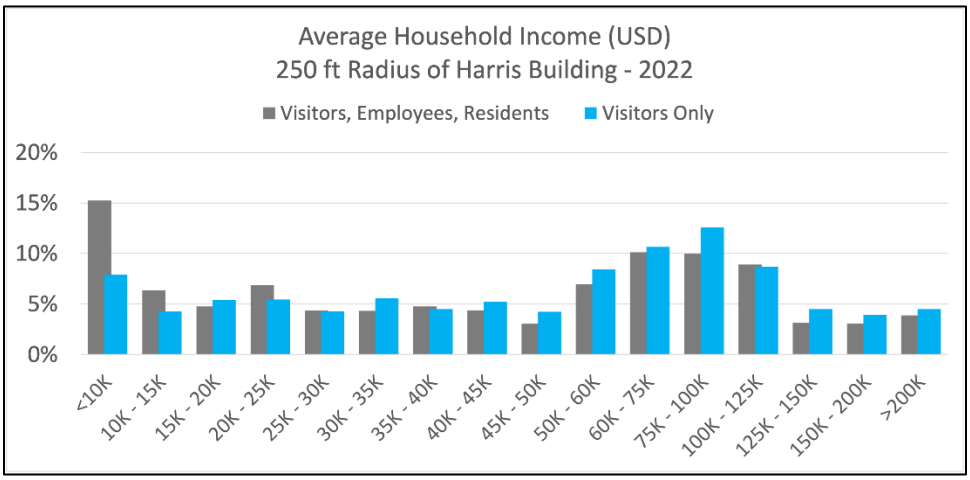
- June 19, 2023: RFP issued.
- June 26, 2023: RFP questions and clarifications due no later than 5 PM ET.
- June 28, 2023: RFP response to questions completed.
- June 30, 2023: Storefront space tour reservation deadline.
    - Please email kchanning@downtowngr.org to set up a time to tour the available space.
- **July 31, 2023: Deadline to submit RFP is 5 PM ET.**
    - Please email a digital copy to kchanning@downtowngr.org.
- August 7, 2023: Notice of selection.

Appendix

- **Household Income:**
  - Residents within 1,000 ft of the Harris Building (2022)
    - Average Income: $45K
    - Median Income: $24K



  - Visitors, Employees, Residents to Harris Building (2022)
    - Average Income: $63K
    - Median Income: $44K
  - Visitors Only to Harris Building (2022)
    - Average Income: $74K
    - Median Income: $54K



- **Average Commercial Retail Rent Per Square Foot (2022):**
  - DDA: $18.51/sf
  - Heartside: $10.48/sf

- **Storefront Details:**
  - Address: 117 Division Ave. S.
  - Storefront area: 840 sq. ft. with 3 industrial outlets.
  - Adjustments to space: Floor will be refinished, walls white-boxed and divider wall built where the gray wall on the right comes into the room by mid-July.





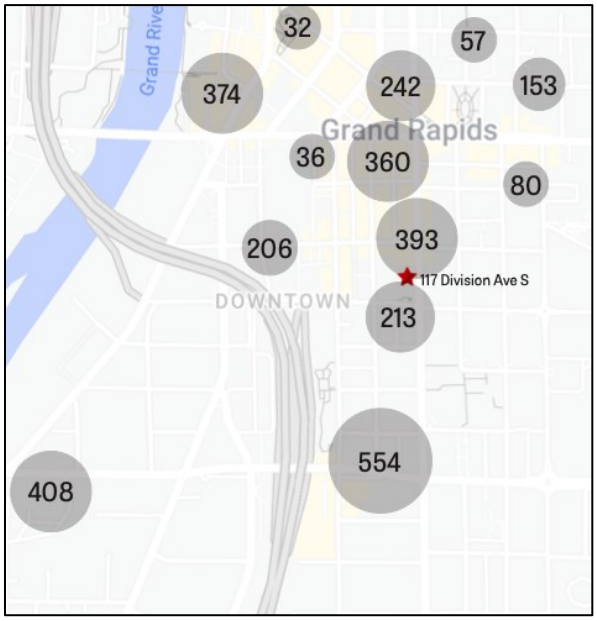
Above: Storefront from Division Ave. S.

Below: Inside looking from the back to front (left) and inside looking back from front windows (right).

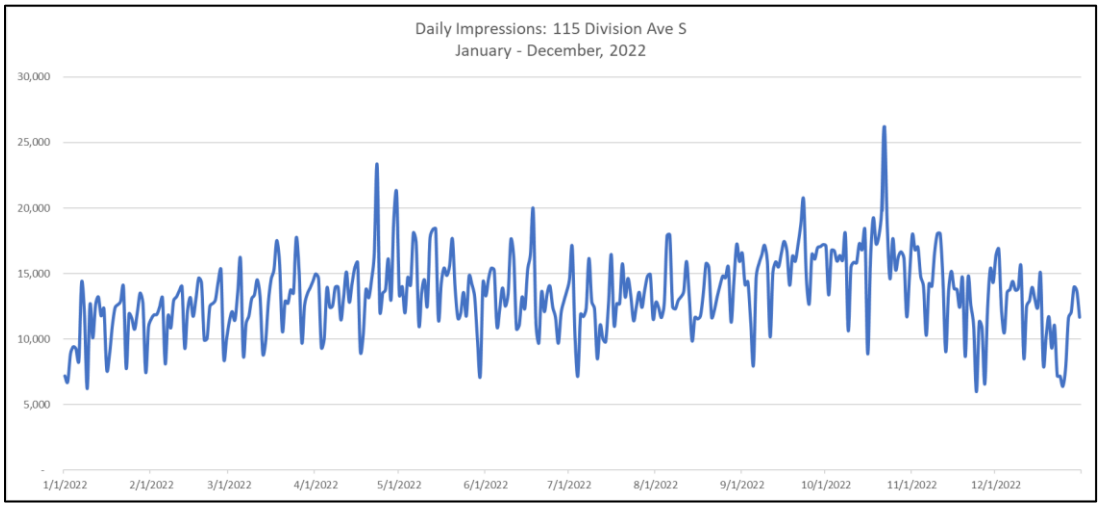




- **Density of Multi-Unit Housing:**
  - Over 60 residential buildings are within a 10-minute walk radius.
  - Over 3,000 residents live within a 10-minute walk radius.



- **Streetscape Vibrancy:**
  - Traffic passing storefront daily (2022): An average of 13,442 interactions with storefront via all modes of transit (cars, bikes, on foot).



- **Additional Resources:**
  - GR Forward, Goal 2 (2016): Increase Access to Fresh Produce Downtown (pg. 160).
  - Heartside Quality of Life Study, Focus Area (2018): Fresh Food Access (pg. 49).