

Request for Qualifications

Equity Framework Organizing & Development Grand River Corridor Revitalization Initiative Grand Rapids/Kent County, MI

Deadline:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will receive proposals until April 12, 2021

Deliver to:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

Attention: Andy Guy

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Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. seeks a qualified consultant to help design and facilitate an inclusive process to develop an Equity Framework. The Framework will guide the work of an independent nonprofit entity currently organizing to help lead execution of the community's vision for a revitalized Grand River Corridor.

The forthcoming nonprofit entity will serve as the backbone of a network of river revitalization partners that includes but is certainly not limited to the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County, Grand Rapids Whitewater, Grand Rapids Public Museum and many others.

The purpose of the Framework, and importantly the process to define it, is to develop a broadly supported basic structure for centering equity and inclusion practice in the nonprofit, its future work and, by extension, the substantial collaborative efforts required to restore and revitalize the Grand River corridor from Riverside to Millennium Parks.

Grand Rapidsians envision this restored and revitalized run of the Grand River as a signature public amenity in a class with such ambitious civic projects as The High Line in New York City, Atlanta's BeltLine and the waterfront revitalization initiatives underway in Toronto, Chicago and Detroit.

This transformative project offers enormous potential to serve the needs and desires of various local stakeholders, constituents and communities – particularly underinvested neighborhoods and those affected by generations of racial and ethnic segregation, unequal growth and poverty.

The project promises to help drive the region's next generation of growth and prosperity. With this RFQ, project partners seek consultant services to support the essential work of defining a community-based Equity Framework to ensure the benefits are shared by all.

The full community vision for river corridor revitalization is expressed thru several citizen-led planning initiatives, including the River for All plan, GR Forward and the Grand Rapids Whitewater Plan for River Restoration.

Building on these widely supported community planning initiatives, the Equity Framework more specifically will:

- Establish a common definition for, and shared understanding of, “equity” and key related terms and concepts. These terms could include but are not limited to:
 - Community
 - Environmental justice
 - Racial justice
 - Accessibility
 - Socioeconomic equity
 - Culture
 - Inclusion
- Define goals and strategies to leverage Grand River corridor revitalization efforts and subsequent public amenities as community building assets and a path to achieve equitable outcomes; and
- Determine management metrics to track progress and accountability towards the defined equity and inclusion goals envisioned by the community.

Potential goals, for example, might take shape as:

- Thriving civic and cultural life along the riverfront,
- Equitable economic development, and
- Community health, wellness and resilience.

Potential implementation strategies, for example, might take shape as:

- Promote neighborhood history and culture,
- Train and employ local residents and small businesses in river-related public works projects, and
- Grow tree canopy along the urban riverfront.

Potential quantifiable management metrics, for example, might take shape as:

- Local community visitorship to the riverfront by zip code,
- Unemployment rate in neighborhoods adjacent to the riverfront, and
- Air quality along the river corridor and in adjacent neighborhoods.

Background Information

The community has worked for several years on various aspects of this multi-faceted and complex community building project. This section includes relevant background on the extensive planning, design and other work done to date that's useful to inform this process.

Direct River-Related Assets

- [River for All](#), 2018
- [City of Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#), 2017
- [GR Forward](#), 2015
- [Grand Rapids Whitewater Plan for River Restoration](#)
- [Grand Rapids Whitewater Economic Impact Analysis](#), 2014
- [Green Grand Rapids](#), 2012

Other Related Community Tools & Plans

- [Recommendations for Riverfront Sites on the Market Avenue Corridor](#), 2021
- [Equitable Economic Development & Mobility Strategic Plan](#), 2020
- [South Division-Grandville Development Plan](#), 2019
- [North Quarter TIF & Development Plan](#), 2019
- [Grand Rapids Destination Assets Study](#), 2017
- [Rose Center Fellowship Report](#), 2017
- [Grandville Avenue Area Specific Plan](#), 2017
- [Southtown TIF & Development Plan](#), 2016
- [Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority Development and TIF Plan](#), 2016
- [Westside TIF & Development Plan](#), 2014
- [Westside Area Specific Plan](#), 2014
- [John Ball Area Neighbors/South West Area Neighbors Area Specific Plan](#), 2012
- [Belknap Lookout Area Specific Plan](#), 2010

Scope of Work

The consultant scope of work for this project includes:

- Collaborate with project organizers to design an inclusive process capable of delivering a broadly supported Framework.
- Develop any meeting materials required to support constructive conversation and participation.
- Facilitate group meetings, workshop(s) or other events determined to help shape the Framework.
- Prepare any necessary follow-up meeting materials to support productive process.
- Brief key leadership bodies as the process and project progresses.

- Draft a comprehensive final report that includes, among other things, a review of meetings and their outcomes, the resulting Equity Framework, any actionable next steps and/or other recommendations to advance Framework adoption and implementation. This is the key project deliverable.
- Participate in project management meetings with key staff.

Proposal Submission

Responses to this request for qualifications should be no longer than 10 pages. The proposal should include the following information:

- A summary of project understanding including any observations on particular project expectations, opportunities or challenges.
- A firm overview and identification of proposed project team members.
- A description of experience in completing this type or related work, including specific examples and project references.
- A description of your project management philosophy and approach towards completing this work.
- Additional information. Please present any relevant data or information which you consider pertinent to the project and selection process.

Consultant Selection

Project partners will evaluate all responses to this opportunity and may conduct interviews with short-listed facilitators and/or firms. The basis for evaluation will include:

- Connection with/knowledge of community/neighborhood dynamics in Grand Rapids/Kent County, particularly Neighborhoods of Focus and key river-adjacent neighborhoods.
- Proven ability to facilitate diverse groups of people.
- Professional excellence.
- Facilitation experience/approach fit.
- Quality of communication.

Project Schedule

- March 12, 2021 – RFQ Issued
- April 12, 2021 – Qualifications Due from Interested Applicants
- May 7, 2021 – Notice of Award
- June 2021 – Commence Project
- December 2021 – Submit Key Deliverables