

Request for Qualifications

Digital Video Production Services Grand River Corridor Revitalization Initiative Grand Rapids/Kent County, MI

Deadline:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will receive proposals until
5:00 PM on November 5, 2021

Deliver to:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
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Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI), on behalf of several partner organizations, seeks a qualified film producer and/or video production team to support the documentary needs of an ambitious, multi-year effort to restore and revitalize the Grand River as it flows through the urban core of Kent County, MI.

The river revitalization project partners envision a video production effort composed of two distinct but interrelated phases:

1. Producing a series of short (1-3 min) vignettes about key facets of the river restoration movement. These videos will help raise awareness of the community's vision to build a "River for All." They will be part of a comprehensive public relations effort to inform and engage the community around key river revitalization-related issues potentially including but not limited to:
 - Environmental issues such as water quality, invasive species and dam removal.
 - Equity issues such as greater access to opportunity for underserved/underrepresented communities.
 - Economic issues such as business and workforce development opportunities.
 - Recreational issues such as fishing, kayaking and park activities.
 - Socio-cultural issues such as the Native American experience, health equity and engaging communities of color in the outdoor experience.
2. Developing a production plan for a feature-length documentary that traces the community's history with the Grand River, the vision for restoring the natural asset and efforts to translate the vision into reality.

The partners envision that each of these phases will produce videos that connect with the audience in a meaningful way. The partners anticipate that both phases would use historical/archival media, original video coverage and/or interviews with key individuals. The overarching objectives of both the vignettes and the documentary are to:

- Promote the 'River for All' vision, purpose and anticipated outcomes.
- Inform public awareness of water quality, safety and river access issues and opportunities.
- Highlight new parks and recreational opportunities for people from all walks of life.
- Communicate the value and benefits of public investment in river corridor restoration and revitalization.
- Emphasize equity and inclusion as fundamental principles of the project.
- Visually document and archive footage of the physical environment and project-related activities before and after implementation for posterity.
- Generate enthusiasm and support for the project.

The river revitalization partners and their respective teams are available to help support the video production in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, narrative development, identifying interviewees, facilitating interviews and providing project data and graphical information.

Background Information

The greater Grand Rapids community has worked for more than a decade to define an ambitious vision for the future of the Grand River corridor as it runs through Kent County's urban core. The full vision involves intimately intertwined restorative initiatives along the *waterway* and the *waterfront*:

- **Waterway.** The removal of obsolete low-head dams through the urban core to – among other far-reaching social, economic and environmental benefits – put the rapids back in the City of Grand Rapids. This \$45 million catalyst project recently entered the formal government permitting process, and aims to "break ground" in 2022 on a multi-year construction effort.

The project, spearheaded by the nonprofit Grand Rapids Whitewater, is a designated member of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership. The cultural significance of restoring the whitewater rapids cannot be overstated. The project literally restores the namesake of the City and with it the icon of the community's natural heritage. The project also will transform the river channel from a divider of east and west into a central gathering place for the community. The intent is for these waterway elements to be done in a way that does not allow for the spread of invasive species, particularly the noxious sea lamprey.

- **Waterfront.** Transforming the east and west riverbanks into an approximately 9-mile multi-use trail and network of public amenities that loop around Downtown and link two major regional park assets – the City's Riverside Park to the north and the County's Millennium Park to the south.

While the full build-out of the trail and new public spaces will follow the work in the waterway, the project partners have already begun to advance on strategic improvements at the water's edge. This includes substantial investment in community-based planning processes, the demonstration of new nature-based flood management measures, pop up community events to begin changing the community's relationship with the river and the acquisition of waterfront property to facilitate key trail connections. The project partners also will begin major renovation of a central waterfront space – Lyon Square – in 2022 and have completed conceptual redevelopment plans for six other riverfront "opportunity sites." Ultimately the community envisions developing some two dozen riverfront opportunity sites in the urban core.

The specific scope and schedule for these subsequent improvements remains in development but the total public and private investment will be significant and occur over the next decade.

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.

Put simply, 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 partners estimate the construction of in-channel improvements, riverfront parks and trail connections will generate significant economic benefits and, in the initial phases, create some 1,500 one-time jobs. The revitalized river corridor also will generate permanent annual jobs through the stewardship and management of the amenities and, perhaps most excitingly, yet-to-be-determined economic opportunity as the outdoor recreation economy grows around the waterway.

Indeed the revitalization of the Grand River corridor promises to help drive the region's next generation of growth and prosperity.

For additional background on the community's vision for the future of the Grand River please see the following 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)

Scope of Services & Schedule

The consultant scope of work for this project includes:

- Developing a project plan, timeline and budget for all deliverables.
- Ideating creative and compelling storylines.
- Conducting archival research, identifying sources and arranging interviews.
- Producing storyboards or other planning tools to preview the planned video production.
- Gathering original video content and editing.
- Cataloging video files.
- Participating in project ideation and 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 summary of hourly rates and/or professional fees to perform the video services. A full budget proposal is not required at this time.
- 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:

- Understanding of the Grand River corridor revitalization initiative and its significance to the Grand Rapids/Kent County/West Michigan community.
- Video production qualifications, demonstrated with experience and portfolio of similar projects.
- Project approach, detail of proposed discovery period and proven ability to produce deliverables.
- Demonstrated experience genuinely ensuring that racial equity, diversity and inclusion are key storytelling values.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with diverse teams and individuals.
- Demonstrated ability to develop a clean, fresh finished product that genuinely communicates to and connects with a diverse audience across multiple media platforms.
- Professional excellence.
- Quality of communication.

Project Schedule

- October 8, 2021 – RFQ Issued
- November 5, 2021 – Qualifications Due from Interested Applicants
- December 10, 2021 – Notice of Award
- January 2022 – Commence Video Project Ideation & Organizing
- Spring 2022 – Commence Filming & Video Production