



## **Request for Qualifications (RFQ):** **Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines Update**

### **Introduction:**

Last revised over 8 years ago, the Downtown Memphis (TN) Design Guidelines & Principles are in need of an update to improve their usability and continue to raise the bar on design excellence for public projects and private development that receives a public incentive.

### **Why update the Design Guidelines?**

Improved design guidelines will:

- Provide clear direction to property owners and developers about the type and quality of development that our community expects.
- Raise the level of discourse and debate at Design Review Board (DRB) meetings by providing a better framework for evaluating projects with more objectivity.
- Set high standards to improve the quality of commercial development and architectural design for DMC-affiliated projects.
- Offer guidance for all projects that fall under the purview of the DRB, including projects located inside and outside the Central Business Improvement District (CBID).
- Provide direction on the appropriate use of quality exterior materials.

### **Goals for the revised Design Guidelines:**

- Clear, concise, and easy to understand document with an emphasis on pictures and illustrations over long paragraphs of plain text.
- Goal: Maximum document length of 20 pages.
- Use locally-relevant examples and illustrations when possible.
- Align with the BuildDowntown Plan priorities to help build compact critical mass and create a great pedestrian experience.
- Special emphasis on walkability, public realm and streetscape design, ground-floor transparency, and quality exterior materials.
- DRB and DMC adopt the revised design guidelines in Q2 2022.
- Maximum total budget of \$50,000.

### **Scope of Services:**

The exact scope of work will be determined in collaboration with the selected consultant. In general, the project is anticipated to include:

- Review and evaluate the existing CBID Design Guidelines.

- Identify best practices and examples of innovative and effective Design Guidelines applicable to Downtown Memphis.
- Work with DMC staff to solicit meaningful public input from key Downtown stakeholders and the general public throughout the process.
- Work closely in collaboration with DMC staff and a committee of volunteer Design Review Board (DRB) members to prepare a preliminary draft and a final draft document.
- Consultant should be available to attend one or more meetings of the DMC Board of Directors and the DRB, if needed.

**Project Timeline:**

The exact project timeline will be developed in consultation with the selected consultant. The dates below represent DMC goals for key milestones.

- August 2, 2021: RFQ published.
- September 13, 2021: RFQ responses due by 4:00 PM CST.
- October 2021: Interview a shortlist of finalists.
- Nov. 2021: Target date for DMC Board of Directors to select consultant; it is anticipated that the contract starting date will follow immediately thereafter.
- April, 2022: Complete first draft of the CBID Design Guidelines.
- June/July 2022: Request adoption of CBID Design Guidelines by DMC and DRB.

**Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Policy:**

The DMC strives for a goal of at least twenty-five percent (25%) participation in all projects by minority and/or women-owned business enterprises (MWBES). The selected consultant is required to proactively reach out to MWBES and provide a fair opportunity to receive notice, to bid on, and be considered for selection of any potential subcontracting opportunity associated with this project. In your response to the RFQ, please indicate how your firm will meet this goal in conducting the project, and how your firm will make best faith efforts toward achieving the goal.

**Deliverables:**

The consultant will prepare the updated CBID Design Guidelines in a format agreed upon in advance by the DMC Staff. The specific deliverables will be subject to further discussion with the selected consultant.

**Submission Requirements:**

Prospective consultants should respond to this RFQ with the information outlined below.

a. **Statement of Qualifications:**

Provide a concise summary of the firm’s background, capabilities, experience and qualifications relative to this project. Include a synopsis of similar assignments and projects completed by the firm in the last five years with an emphasis in developing Design Guidelines for urban areas using a graphic-focused and illustrative approach.

Provide a brief description of the firm's key personnel's present activities and their availability to accomplish the required services.

b. Examples of Relevant Work:

Provide up to 3 examples of successful design guidelines or similar planning documents prepared by the firm that demonstrates the quality of work product produced by your firm. Include contact information for a project reference, the name of each example document, and links to download the full materials.

c. Company Information:

Identification of staff's capabilities and the Project Manager assigned to the project; an organizational chart showing the proposed relationships between all key personnel, and the support staff assigned to the project; the proposed responsibilities of each person on the chart; and brief resumes to highlight special qualifications and experience relevant to the required project tasks.

d. Subconsultants:

Identify any subconsultants to be used, if any. Information shall include the name and address of the subconsultant, resumes of the key staff proposed for the project, and the tasks to be carried out.

e. EBO Policy:

Briefly discuss how your firm will make best faith efforts toward meeting the requirements of the DMC's EBO policy.

f. Project Approach & Public Participation:

Based upon the information provided within this RFQ, briefly describe your recommended project approach, including the potential public involvement strategy and a preliminary timeline of major project milestones and key tasks to be completed.

g. Estimated Project Cost:

Provide an estimate of total cost to complete the project.

**Selection Criteria:**

DMC Staff and a subcommittee of DRB members will review all responses to the RFQ and will select finalists to participate in one or more Zoom interviews. DMC Staff will make a final recommendation to the DMC Board of Directors, who will select the project consultant.

Selection of the consultant for this project will be based on the following factors:

- Responsiveness to the RFQ.
- Demonstrated experience writing clear and understandable design guidelines for urban areas and downtown contexts.
- Experience using graphics and illustrations to effectively communicate complex design ideas to a diverse and non-technical audience.

- Ability to successfully engage a variety of stakeholders in the public participation process.
- Professional qualifications and capability of the consultant team assigned to the project.
- Total project fee.
- Client references - minimum of three (3) required.

**Submittal Process & Deadline:**

Should you be interested in submitting a proposal for this project, please email the response as a single PDF document to [roler@downtownmemphis.com](mailto:roler@downtownmemphis.com) on or before 4:00 p.m. CST on September 13, 2021.

Questions? Email Brett Roler - [roler@downtownmemphis.com](mailto:roler@downtownmemphis.com)

The DMC may need to request additional information from the respondents as part of the selection process once finalist firms have been identified. Moreover, DMC reserves the right to not select a proposal as a result of this process. In that event, the DMC may, or may not, elect to reissue the RFQ if deemed necessary to solicit additional interest in the project.

**Additional Background Information:**

The history of Downtown Memphis is a colorful and rocky one, involving the birth of a new type of music, a large role in the cotton industry, direct involvement in the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, as well as many economic ups and downs. In its heyday, Downtown Memphis was a vibrant center of shipping and commerce. As the largest port on the Mississippi River between St. Louis and New Orleans, Memphis developed as a transportation center and as a market for large quantities of cotton grown in the area.

In the second half of the 19th century, Memphis was a booming and prosperous city that had capitalized on its river access, but by the late 20th century, the historic center city had fallen on hard times. In the 1970s, the wheels of progress began to turn in Downtown Memphis, leading to the formation of the Downtown Memphis Commission and one of the most dramatic revitalization efforts in the country.

In 1977, the City of Memphis and Shelby County governments established the Center City Commission, now known as the DMC, to capitalize on Downtown's role as the economic, cultural, and governmental heart of the city and county. Today, the DMC is the primary leader in the comprehensive redevelopment of the Central Business Improvement District (CBID) and the official partnership between local government and the private business community in Downtown's revitalization.

Today, Downtown is a bustling residential, business, and entertainment center truly the heart and soul of Memphis. With more than \$5 billion in development projects recently completed, underway, or scheduled to begin, Downtown Memphis is experiencing the most dramatic period of redevelopment in its history, with tremendous prospects on the horizon. Downtown Memphis is home to our City and County government, our medical district, as well as our

dining, arts, and entertainment districts. Downtown's diverse population fuels the cultural richness and authenticity that makes Memphis such a unique and special place.

The DMC's mission is "to improve the economy of Memphis and Shelby County by coordinating an aggressive public/private program to promote the redevelopment and economic growth of the CBID", the area referred to as "Downtown." The DMC consists of five (5) separate, but related, boards of volunteer members. The Design Review Board (DRB) is an eight-member board with additional non-voting advisors. The eight regular members are all appointed by the DMC Board of Directors.

The DRB reviews applications for public improvements and all projects receiving financial incentives from the DMC's affiliated agencies. The DRB is also charged with developing and implementing the CBID sign ordinance as the regulatory authority responsible for reviewing and approving exterior signage in Downtown Memphis.

The DRB last revised the CBID Design Guidelines in 2013. Although the current CBID Design Guidelines have served their purpose over the last 8 years, the DMC has decided that it is time to update these guidelines to ensure that the best tools are available to encourage high-quality development and redevelopment in Downtown Memphis. Any changes to the CBID Design Guidelines will require the approval of the DRB and the DMC Board of Directors.

**Please click the link below to view the current CBID Design Guidelines:**

[https://downtownmemphis.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/downtown\\_design\\_guidelines\\_-1.pdf](https://downtownmemphis.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/downtown_design_guidelines_-1.pdf)

**DMC Website:**

<https://downtownmemphis.com/>