

Request for Qualifications

Defining the Operations, Maintenance & Activation Strategy Grand River Greenway Trail Grand Rapids/Kent County, MI

Deadline:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will receive proposals until February 12, 2024

Deliver Electronically to:

Andy Guy

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

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Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. seeks a qualified consultant to evaluate and recommend a Greenway Trail management strategy, structure and funding source(s) for the long-term maintenance, operations, and activation of the Grand River Greenway in Kent County.

The management strategy will support the work of the Grand River Network, an independent nonprofit entity currently organizing to help lead execution of the community's vision for a revitalized Grand River Corridor. Grand River Network serves as the backbone entity in a collaboration of river revitalization partners that includes but is certainly not limited to the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County, Grand Rapids Whitewater, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., Grand Rapids Public Museum and many others.

The purpose of this Operations, Maintenance, and Activation Strategy is to create a plan of action to establish consistent, quality, long-term stewardship of river-related public assets, beginning with the nonmotorized trail that will connect riverfront communities and destinations together.

Grand Rapidsians envision a restored and revitalized 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 in Detroit the Riverfront, Dequindre Cut and emerging Joe Louis Greenway.

In Kent County, the Grand River Greenway is an emerging network of public parks and other civic amenities linked together by 50 miles of multi-use trails following the Grand River corridor from the City of Lowell on the County's eastern border, thru Downtown Grand Rapids, to Millennium Park on the west.

The development of the Greenway in greater Grand Rapids is coordinated by a network of public and private partners including Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County, several local units of local government along with private and philanthropic partners. Current and future capital projects along the Greenway total over \$300 million of investment in parks, trails and other recreational assets anticipated over the next 5-10 years.

Building on these community investments, project partners seek consultant support services to create an Operations, Maintenance and Activation Strategy for the Grand River Greenway that will:

- Ensure purposeful, consistent and quality asset management, maintenance and operations standards to protect long-term capital investments.
- Delineate and optimize organizational roles, partnerships and performance among Local Government, various public finance tools and authorities, the Network, adjacent private property owners, and other partners.
- Identify opportunities to promote partnership, coordination, collaboration, and improve policies, procedures and standards.
- Ensure safety and exceptional user experience through, among other tactics, consistent quality activation.
- Ensure Greenway facilities support diverse economic opportunity and inclusive programming.
- Inform and build support for a plan to secure adequate, ongoing funding to protect and steward Greenway investments and operate the facilities at a high level consistent with community expectations.

Background Information

The greater Grand Rapids community has worked for several years on various aspects of this multi-faceted and complex Greenway project. While many individual municipal plans have prioritized trails in the last decade, interagency coordination is now considerably increasing through Greenway-related organizing efforts in recent years. The following information is relevant background on the extensive planning, design and other work done to date that's useful to inform this process:

- [Cannon Township Recreation Plan](#), 2016
- [Cascade Township Parks & Recreation Plan](#), 2023
- [City of Grand Rapids River for All Grand River Corridor Implementation Plan and Trail Design Guidelines](#), 2018
- [City of Grand Rapids Bicycle Action Plan](#), 2019
- [City of Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#), 2017
- [City of Grand Rapids Strategic Plan](#), 2022
- [City of Wyoming Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#)
- [Connect Ada](#), 2020
- [GR Forward](#), 2015
- [Grand River Corridor Equity Framework](#), 2023
- [Green Grand Rapids](#), 2012
- [Kent County Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan](#), 2019
- [Kent County Strategic Plan](#), 2022
- Kent Trails Maintenance Agreement, 2011
- [Lowell Township Parks & Recreation Plan](#), 2021
- [Plainfield Charter Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#), 2020

The effort to grow the Grand River Greenway in Kent County also builds on, and physically connects to, the ongoing [Grand River Greenway implementation efforts of Ottawa County](#). The Ottawa County reach of the Grand River Greenway is not the focus of this project although their approach and experience continues to inform efforts in Kent County.

Scope of Work

The consultant scope of work for this project includes:

- Compile and summarize current trail conditions data.
- Inventory current public space activation efforts and evaluate impact on Greenway facilities.
- Develop recommended management strategy, structure and funding source(s) to maintain and operate Grand River Greenway Trail in greater Grand Rapids/Kent County.
- Review, update as needed and potentially expand previously developed Maintenance Forecasts.
- Recommend roles, responsibilities and shared performance monitoring expectations for various agencies and partners.
- Evaluate in-house versus contracted operations and maintenance recommendations.
- Develop trail-specific annual budget (maintenance, programming, etc.) including estimates for personnel, equipment/supplies, contracted services, security.
- Identify maintenance and programming support needs (staff/jobs, storage facilities, additional equipment, etc.).
- Calculate adequate O&M reserve.

- Draft a comprehensive final report that includes, among other things, a Greenway Trail maintenance and operations management strategy, plan of action for implementation, and associated budget. This is the key project deliverable.

Geographic Areas of Interest

Different areas of the Greenway Trail will have different levels of service, as well as different lead organizations, potential partnerships, funding tools, etc. Three distinct areas of interest include:

- Downtown Grand Rapids (from Leonard Street to Fulton Street).
- Downtown to the regional destinations of Riverside Park (City of Grand Rapids) and Millennium Park (Kent County).
- From Riverside and Millennium Parks east and west, respectively, to the Kent County lines.

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 proposed project schedule, description of your project management philosophy and approach towards completing this work.
- A summary of hourly rates and/or professional fees to perform the requested services. A full budget is not required at this time.
- Additional information. Please present any relevant data or information which you consider pertinent to the project and selection process.

Responses should be submitted in digital format to Andy Guy (aguy@downtowngr.org).

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:

- Qualifications and capacity to perform the work.
- Experience with, and/or understanding of, relevant civic projects.
- Relevant planning, public space design, management and operations experience.
- Understanding of local ambition and context.
- Rates and fees.
- Professional excellence.
- Quality of communication.

Project Schedule

- January 15, 2024 – RFQ Issued
- February 12, 2024 – Qualifications Due from Interested Applicants
- February 29, 2024 – Notice of Award
- March 2024 – Commence Project
- August 2024 – Submit Key Deliverables