

## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Facilitation Services: Nonprofit Board Strategic Planning  
Grand River Network  
Grand Rapids/Kent County, MI

**Deadline:**

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will receive proposals until May 9, 2024

**Deliver to:**

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.  
Attention: Andy Guy  
[aguy@downtowngr.org](mailto:aguy@downtowngr.org)



**DOWNTOWN**  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Grand River Network seeks a qualified consultant to facilitate a strategic planning process with its Board to deliver a three-year business plan that supports the organization's growth and development.

The Network seeks a consultant with demonstrated understanding of, and experience with, nonprofit organizations in collaborative settings, excellent facilitation skills, and proven experience with nonprofit strategic planning.

### **About the Grand River Network**

The [Grand River Network](#) is a backbone nonprofit agency working cross-sector to facilitate the coordination and action required among numerous community partners to implement the greater Grand Rapids community's vision for a revitalized Grand River corridor. This vision is detailed in such community plans as *GR Forward*, *River For All*, and the parks master plans for the City of Grand Rapids and Kent County.

Organized in 2022, the Network is incubated by Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. and holds the aspiration to connect the people, plans and resources necessary to build a river corridor alive with community, culture and creativity. More specifically, the priority projects detailed in the Network's initial business plan include:

- Developing the [Grand River Equity Framework](#) to establish a common understanding of "equity" in the context of river corridor revitalization;
- Directing \$55 million in public infrastructure funding to catalyze development of the Grand River Greenway in Grand Rapids and Kent County;
- Launching a process to establish a collaborative long-term management strategy for the Greenway; and
- Starting to build a communications platform and program that helps raise community awareness of the river corridor revitalization movement.

With these and other efforts completed or in motion, along with the benefit of lessons learned and expanded Board leadership since the organization's inception, now is an opportune time for the Network to revisit its strategic direction and update its business plan to ensure goals, objectives and importantly *how* the organization carries out its work remains relevant and aligned with community need and opportunity.

With this RFQ, the Network Board and supporting staff seek consultant services to help organize and facilitate this forward-looking strategic conversation.

### **Additional background Information**

Grand Rapidians envision a restored and revitalized Grand River Greenway 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.

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 this Greenway depends on the collaborative efforts of an array 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 in the next 5-10 years and is anticipated to catalyze additional private economic development opportunities in the river corridor.

To help quarterback this significant civic endeavor, the Network has focused on guiding overall river corridor vision and strategy, encouraging and supporting aligned activities among river corridor revitalization partners, capital fundraising to support initial priority projects and establishing heightened collaboration to drive change.

[Click here](#) to read more about the Network's current strategic statements around Mission, Vision, Values and Intended Impact.

### **Scope of Work**

The consultant scope of work for this strategic planning project includes:

- Develop a comprehensive project timeline. This project should be completed no later than December 2024.
- Design and facilitate a strategic planning process using a methodology acceptable to the Board.
- Work with the Board and staff to review, discuss, update as needed, and affirm the Grand River Network's strategic direction ie mission, vision, purpose statements and theory of change.
- Draft the organization's Business Plan 2.0, including strategic goals and objectives for 2025-2028. This is the key deliverable.
- Understand political, economic and social factors affecting the organization's work.
- Engage internal and external stakeholders to gather input that informs the Board planning process and deliberations.
- Prepare the Board to think critically about questions/possibilities and participate in dialogue about strategic goals/decision-making to advance mission.
- Reflect the needs, voices and interests of a changing and diverse community in the process and deliverables.
- Recommend a process for the organization to annually review and evaluate goals and progress, including a method to report outcomes.

### **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](mailto:aguy@downtowngr.org))

Respondents are encouraged to consider forming interdisciplinary teams to provide comprehensive and responsive services.

### **Consultant Selection**

The project steering committee and staff will evaluate all responses to this opportunity and may conduct interviews with short-listed facilitators and/or firms. Responses to this RFQ will be evaluated on the following factors:

- Proven ability to constructively facilitate diverse groups of people with diverse interests.
- Successful experience with nonprofit board organizing and strategic planning.
- General knowledge of local and regional civic dynamics – social, economic and environmental matters - in Grand Rapids/Kent County and the context within which Grand River corridor revitalization and greenway building now occurs.
- Familiarity with the potential of public space improvements, activation and stewardship to deliver a multitude of community benefits to a diverse constituency.
- Professional excellence.
- Quality of communication.

### **Project Schedule**

- March 27, 2024 – RFQ Issued
- May 9, 2024 – Qualifications Due from Interested Applicants
- May 22, 2024 – Notice of Award
- June 2024 – Commence Project
- December 2024 – Submit Key Deliverables