

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Grand River Corridor Equity Framework Implementation: Establishing a Stakeholder Review Body 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



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Grand River Network seeks a qualified consultant to facilitate an inclusive process with local partners to design and recommend an independent Stakeholder Body that regularly reviews and reports on implementation progress toward the Grand River Equity Framework.

About 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.

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.

About the Grand River Equity Framework

[The Grand River Equity Framework](#) is a foundational and guiding document completed in 2023 through a robust and inclusive community planning effort. The Framework established a common local understanding of equity within the context of Grand River corridor revitalization efforts. The Framework also recommends a comprehensive series of actions to ensure the benefits of public space and river corridor improvements are shared widely by all members of the community.

Project partners understand that truly meaningful implementation of the Equity Framework depends on dedicated social/organizational infrastructure that understands community priorities, collects and evaluates data from many implementation projects and partners, maintains an ongoing informational feedback loop with stakeholders and holds the collective community accountable for carrying out equitable river work.

With this RFQ, project partners seek consultant services to support organizing around the next step towards Framework implementation detailed in Priority Outcome 6.3:

“Establishment of an independent stakeholder body to review progress on river equity goals and publicly issue findings and recommendations.”

Additional Background Information

Grand Rapidians 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 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.

Building on the decades of local engagement around river restoration and redevelopment, the Equity Framework imagines a Grand River for everyone as expressed in the document's vision statement:

We envision a Grand River for All that honors both our history and our future by embedding racial and economic equity into all we do, both in the water and along the riverbanks. We envision restoration and resilience within the river's tributaries, its watershed, and its ecosystems, as well as environmental justice for our communities. We envision broadly shared commercial opportunities and accessible spaces and places as tangible outcomes from our investment in a thriving river corridor.

The Equity Framework contains action strategies, priority equity outcomes, and suggested metrics to track progress, organized across six community-defined priorities:

- Equitable Economic Development
- An Accessible River
- An Inviting, Inclusive River
- A Healthy River and Community
- Engaged, Supported Youth
- Implementation and Accountability

The full document is available at: <https://grandriver.network/grand-river-equity-framework/>

Scope of Work

The consultant scope of work for this project includes:

- Supporting the effort to recruit and seat a community-based work group to advise this process.
- Collaborating with project organizers and work group to complete the following primary tasks:
 - Draft a clear Purpose and Charter for the proposed Stakeholder Review Body.
 - Design a proposed composition strategy as well as an approach to recruit and appoint Review Body members.
 - Prioritize key indicators of 42 priority outcomes identified in Equity Framework.
 - Additional next steps in the process could include:
 - Delineate the data collection process and initial partners.
 - Delineate the process for publicly reporting findings, celebrating success and constructively making recommendations for continuous improvement.
 - Delineate the process for regular review and updating of the Equity Framework.

- Facilitating group meetings, focus groups or other outreach efforts determined to help shape the Stakeholder Review Body.
- Participating in project management meetings with key staff.
- Developing any meeting materials required to support constructive conversation and participation.
- Drafting a final report that includes, among other things, the resulting Equity Framework Stakeholder Review Body charter, recruitment process, governance principles and any other actionable next steps to advance Framework implementation and accountability that may flow from the process. This is the key project deliverable.

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)

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

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.
- Familiarity with notions of Equity and Equity tools.
- Familiarity with the potential of public space improvements to deliver a multitude of community benefits and play a role in advancing a more equitable society.
- Proven ability to facilitate diverse groups of people.

- 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
- Q1 2025 – Submit Key Deliverables