



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Economic
Development
Department

River North, Downtown, and Waterfront

Development Partner



Request for Qualifications Issue Date | October 7, 2026

Questions Due | October 19, 2026

Submission Deadline | November 16, 2026

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1. Opportunity Overview

The City of Grand Rapids invites qualified firms and teams to respond to this transformational opportunity: serving as the Development Partner (Partner) for nearly seven acres of city-owned, downtown, and waterfront property in the River North neighborhood. The Partner would perform due diligence and a master site planning process to understand the options that should be considered to unlock the full potential of the sites.

This opportunity will position a redevelopment with a better understanding of the sites and what it would take to activate the future of this vital downtown neighborhood at the confluence of urban life and riverfront access. As a result of this Request for Qualifications, the City would establish a Professional Service Agreement for fee with the selected Partner. Then the selected Partner will work alongside the City to lead a complex due diligence, multi-phase initiative that requires equal measures of master site planning expertise, real estate development sophistication, operational coordination, and authentic community engagement.

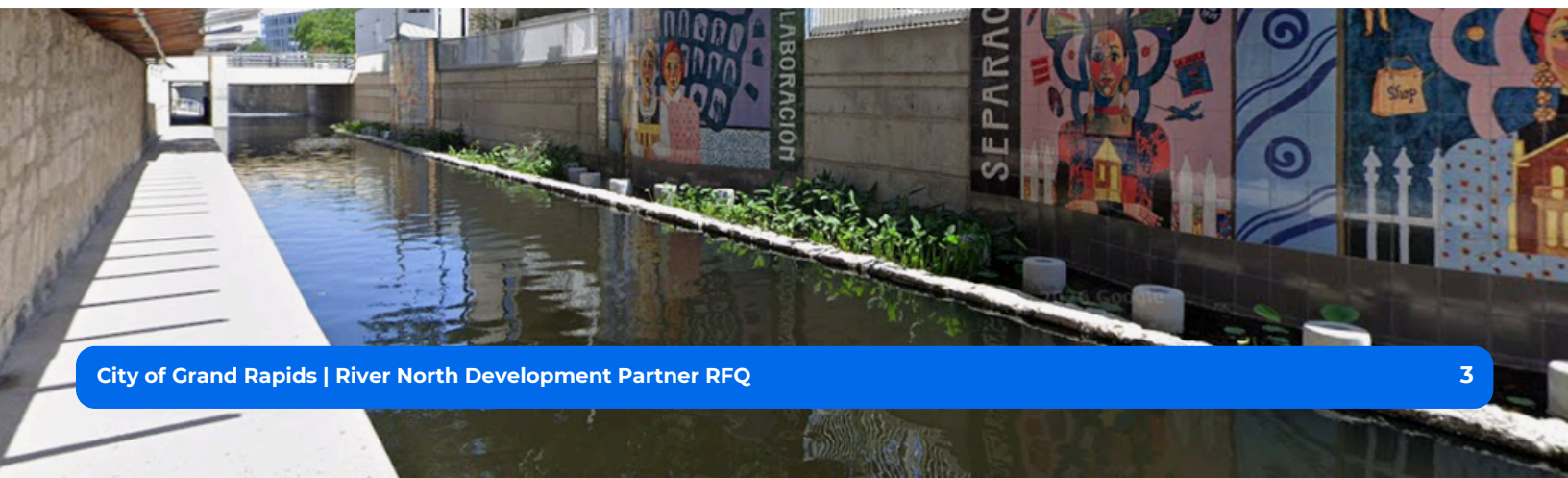
Upon completion of the due diligence and master site planning, the Partner will have a contractual right of first refusal to purchase the city-property on the same material terms as those set forth in any offer, sale, or option to purchase the city-owned property. The process for disposition of the city-owned real property shall be administered pursuant to City Commission Policy No. 900-63 and consist of a Request for Proposals. It would be at this time, the City would enter Phase II to dispose of the site(s) for redevelopment.

The Partnership

The City seeks a Partner with demonstrated capacity to:

- Lead a rigorous due diligence and master site planning process — including environmental review, geotechnical and infrastructure assessment, market analysis, riverfront design and activation strategy that is consistent with adopted City plans, and financial feasibility — across multiple city-owned parcels;
- Navigate the technical and logistical complexity of either maintaining in place or relocating essential city services while maintaining continuity of public-facing operations;
- Lead an inclusive, iterative neighborhood design charrette and community engagement process that educates the public about potential opportunities, integrates adopted City plans, and incorporates the voices of diverse stakeholders to inform final development outcomes;
- Orchestrate a thoughtful redevelopment plan of multiple city-owned parcels that honors the existing community fabric, activates the river edge, and enhances neighborhood assets;
- Recommend an ownership, maintenance, operations, and governance structure that produces durable, long-term public benefit without stifling project feasibility;

This opportunity requires more than conventional development expertise — it demands a partner committed to community-centered development practices and capable of balancing public sector objectives with sustainable project economics.



Project Scope

Total Development Area: Three adjacent parcels in the River North neighborhood across 6.43 acres.

Location: River North neighborhood, downtown Grand Rapids — generally bounded by Monroe Avenue NW and the Grand River.

Current Use: A mix of administrative offices, vehicle storage, surface parking, and materials storage.

Current Zoning: Traditional Neighborhood - Transitional City Center (TN-TCC), which permits mixed-use development of 5 stories by right and up to 7 stories under certain conditions. 1101 and 1165 Monroe Ave NW are also located within the Grand River Overlay. The City may consider zoning amendments or overlay modifications as recommended by the master site plan when in alignment with the Community Master Plan.

Anticipated Development Type: Mixed-use, mixed-income development aligned with the community planning documents detailed in Section 2 and consistent with the public priorities detailed in Section 3.

Engagement Term: The Partner will have twelve (12) months to perform deliverables described in the resulting Professional Services Agreement. This scope of work is detailed in the Appendix.



Disposition and Ownership Structure

The City has not predetermined a disposition mechanism for the parcels. The Partner is expected to evaluate and recommend appropriate structures — which may include direct sale, ground lease, land bank conveyance, community land trust, limited equity cooperative, Brownfield Authority transfer, or hybrid approaches — based on the goals of the master site plan and the financial characteristics of individual parcels.

Stakeholder Coordination

The Partner will coordinate regularly with the following stakeholders throughout the engagement:

- City of Grand Rapids Project Team
- Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRi);
- Grand Rapids Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Building Authority, as applicable;
- River North Business Association and adjacent property owners;
- Other community-based organizations and stakeholder groups identified through the engagement process.

Partner Eligibility to Participate in Future Development

Selection as Partner does not preclude participation in parcel ownership or development. The specific terms governing Partner participation in future disposition processes, including the Partner's right of first refusal, will be further defined in the professional services agreement. Respondents should acknowledge and accept this framework.

2. Community Context

Grand Rapids, Michigan's second-largest city, is a fast-growing regional hub of 200,000 residents within a metro area of 1.1 million. Its diversified economy is driven by healthcare and life sciences comprising the Medical Mile, including Corewell Health, Michigan State University, and Grand Valley State University; advanced manufacturing with firms like Steelcase and MillerKnoll; a rapidly expanding tech sector; and major retail employers such as Meijer.

The region continues to grow quickly, with employment exceeding 591,000 jobs, strong in-migration of young professionals, high college graduate retention, competitive wages, and a cost of living below the national average.

Downtown Grand Rapids is experiencing record investment, including large mixed-use developments (Fulton & Market, Studio Park Tower, Factory Yards), major entertainment venues (Acrisure Amphitheater, Amway Stadium), and extensive public realm improvements along the Grand River. Riverfront enhancements include museum expansion, trail connections, new plazas, ecological restoration, and over 100 miles of linked regional trails.

The River North neighborhood—once industrial and now a key connector between downtown and the Grand River—is anchored by Corewell Health's Center for Transformation and Innovation campus, MSU's Medical Mile investments, and an upgraded Canal Park. Mobility improvements and public space investments continue to strengthen connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

Local planning frameworks (GR Forward, the Community Master Plan, and River for All) call for dense, mixed-use, walkable development; expanded housing options; strong multimodal connections; equitable engagement; and an accessible, vibrant riverfront. Together, they guide the River North area toward becoming a connected, people-centered district that expands public access, supports housing and jobs, and reinforces an inclusive, high-quality urban environment.



3. Development Vision and Objectives

Overarching Vision

The City envisions a development that serves as a model for community-centered urban development — one that strengthens the River North neighborhood, enhances downtown vibrancy, improves public access to the riverfront, and creates lasting community benefit without contributing to displacement. The Partner will be expected to translate this vision into a master site plan and execution strategy.

Primary Development Objectives

The City's objectives for this development opportunity, listed in priority order:

1. Mixed-use Development, including Housing Diversity & Density

Combination of public amenity destinations and/or equitable housing, which may include complementary uses such as museums and office/retail space or concentrations of arts, culture, and nightlife. Housing component shall:

- Achieve a minimum average residential density of 40 units per acre across the full site, applied as a site-wide average to allow flexibility in how density is distributed across individual development pads;
- Provide a meaningful mix of housing types serving diverse household incomes, which may include market-rate rental, for-sale condominium and townhome product, income-restricted rental, and mixed-income buildings combining multiple product types;
- Achieve a stated City target of at least 20% of all residential units affordable at or below 100% of Area Median Income (AMI). Deeper affordability or greater affordability at scale will be viewed favorably;
- Consider innovative ownership structures that maintain long-term affordability (e.g., community land trusts, limited equity cooperatives);

2. Neighborhood Wealth-Building Serving Retail and Services

- Include ground-floor commercial space oriented toward neighborhood needs;
- Prioritize local, independent businesses and minority-owned enterprises with intentional capacity for small, emerging, minority-owned, women-owned, and Grand Rapids-based firms to participate alongside established developers;
- Create spaces that enhance rather than compete with existing neighborhood businesses;
- Align commercial programming with the City's industry strengths in technology, design, medical, and furniture sectors where market demand supports it.

3. Public Realm and Waterfront Access

- Treat the river's edge as a public asset accessible to all Grand Rapids residents, not merely as a backdrop for private development;
- Provide enhanced public access to the river walk along the southern edge of the 1101 Monroe parcel, establishing a continuous connection between the Monroe Avenue public sidewalk and the riverwalk.
- Provide design and programming that promote an active, pedestrian-scaled river edge that is consistent with the vision and guidelines of adopted City plans.
- Create high-quality public spaces that invite diverse community use;
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity through and around the development;
- Incorporate design elements that reflect community priorities reflected in the GR Forward Plan and River for All.

4. Environmental Sustainability

- Pursue high-performance building standards;
- Incorporate stormwater management and green infrastructure;
- Maximize energy efficiency and consider renewable energy integration;
- Maximize flood protection while allowing access to and along the river corridor;
- Support alternative transportation through design and amenities.

5. Economic Viability

- Demonstrate realistic financial feasibility and appropriate capitalization across the execution framework;
- Identify required public support — including TIF, brownfield, NEZ, or other tools — with clear public benefit justification;
- Create sustainable long-term value for both the community and the development team;
- Demonstrate capacity to execute the full development program through orchestrated participation of multiple firms.



Photo Credit: Flywheel Companies

Approach Expectations

Respondents should provide a methodology and approach narrative that demonstrates how the team would:

- Approach due diligence and master site planning across the full RFQ boundary, including phasing strategy if appropriate;
- Integrate the development with surrounding neighborhood fabric;
- Respond to site constraints and opportunities;
- Develop preliminary building massing, site layout, and public space configuration through community-informed iteration;
- Provide sufficient detail to evaluate alignment with City objectives while allowing the final design to emerge through the planning engagement and community input.

The City recognizes that final development plans will emerge through collaborative design processes involving community input. Respondent submissions should demonstrate process expertise, methodology, and team vision while maintaining openness to evolution. Conceptual sketches or precedent images may be included to illustrate the team's perspective; the City does not expect or require fully resolved schematic designs at the qualifications stage.

Discouraged Approaches

The City will not favorably consider submissions that:

- Demonstrate insufficient community engagement strategy;
- Propose uses, operations, or design that are inconsistent with an active, pedestrian-scaled river edge and Greenway; unfairly limits who gets to participate in a development project and;
- Require extraordinary public subsidy without proportional public benefit.

4. Development Center Relocation

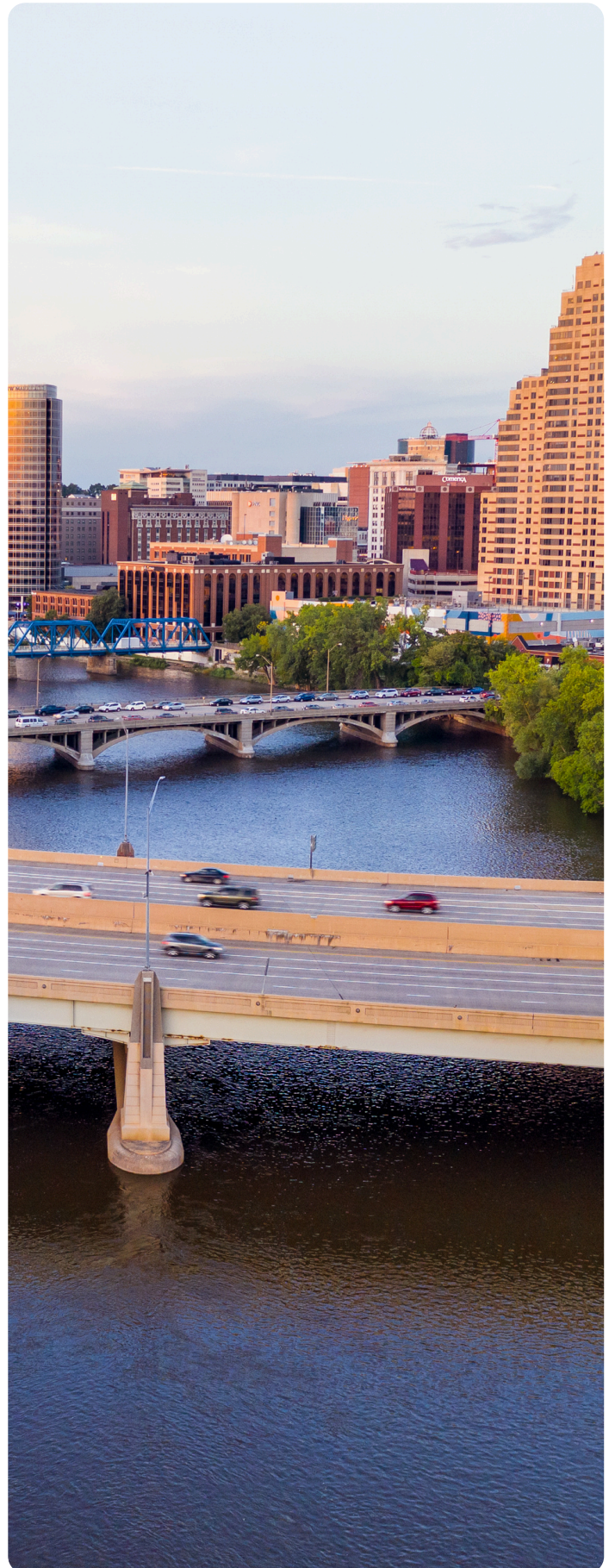
A critical component of this opportunity is coordinating the achievement of the City's Facilities Master Plan vision for an expanded Development Center, currently located at 1120 Monroe Ave NW. Long term, the City desires a Consolidated Development Center and intends to co-locate related functions and offer a one-stop shop for development-related interactions with City Staff (combining seven departments). It will consist of three primary functions: public development related interactions, internal City development projects, and public meetings.

With this offering, the City is looking for the Partner to consider the most feasible way to continue and expand the Development Center.

The City is open to various approaches, which may include:

- City services returning to redeveloped space within the project area;
- City services relocating to alternative City-owned or leased space;
- Hybrid arrangements or;
- A parking solution within Parcels 1, 2 and/or 3, which would allow the Development Center to remain in its current location.

Respondents should describe their approach to managing relocation scenarios and identify any preliminary thinking on relocation solutions.



5. Site Information and Property Descriptions

The City of Grand Rapids has a robust toolkit of incentives to help support development at the project site. Several key tools are outlined below.

Please note that incentive types and amounts will vary by project type, and that additional tools may be available through partner organizations and programs.

Parcel 1: 1101 Monroe Ave NW

Address: 1101 Monroe Ave NW

Parcel ID: 41-13-24-226-003

Current Zoning: Traditional Neighborhood - Transitional City Center (TN-TCC)

Current Use: The building is only partially utilized recently housing Parks and Recreation, the Water System, and the Fire Department. Currently occupied by the Fire Department until relocation to a new Fire Training Center in 2027. There is also parking and vehicle storage.



Parcel 2: 1165 Monroe Ave NW

Address: 1165 Monroe Ave NW

Parcel ID: 41-13-24-226-008

Current Zoning: Traditional Neighborhood - Transitional City Center (TN-TCC)

Current Use: Storage and parking.



Parcel 1 & 2

Site Characteristics

- Parcel 1 has an existing building on the property that is 58,614 square feet in size and includes a building built in 1911 that is a decommissioned, classically styled pump station with significance as a landmark on the corner of Monroe and Coldbrook. The site is bounded by the Street Lighting and Consumers Substation to the south, the Coldbrook Annex and Monroe Fire Station to the north, and the Development Center and Development Center Annex directly across Monroe Ave.
- Parcel 2 has an existing building on the property that is 13,720 square feet in size and is unfinished with concrete flooring, exposed ceiling and painted exterior concrete block walls.
- **Dimensions:** 678 feet of frontage along Monroe Ave NW to the east and then along the Grand River to the West. The site's gross net land area is 4.7 acres, or 204,620 square feet.
- **Topography:** Parcels are mostly flat.
- **Access:** Drives are located at the southside of Parcel 1 and also the northside of the building on Parcel 2. The Grand River Edge Trail runs along the length of the west edge of the property.
- **Utilities:** Information about the presence, location, and future requirements for utilities on and through the site is located in Appendix E.
- **Environmental:** Phase I Baseline Environmental Assessment and Hazardous Materials Assessment presently underway for both parcels.
- **Flood Protection and Floodplain Conditions:** Both parcels lie within the 500-year floodplain and are adjacent to the City's flood protection system. FEMA requires that this protection system remain operational at all times. If any work—such as excavation, grading, utility installation, or similar activities—could affect the system's stability or functionality, the City Engineer must be contacted before the work begins.

Development Considerations

Approximately 25,000 square feet of the building on Parcel 1 may be considered part of a historic resource and will be preserved to the extent feasible. The successful submission will collaborate with the City to identify the most appropriate tools and methodologies for preserving the exterior architectural façade of the main building along Monroe, and shall provide detailed recommendations specifying the key attributes to be addressed. There are also multiple additions to the original building that may be removed if necessary.

Parcel 2 has no historical attributes and could be imagined separately. The onsite parking is used to support the Development Center, located at 1120 Monroe directly across the street. If the Development Center remains at 1120, then minimum parking to support that use will need to be provided within the development.

The Monroe North Business Area Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan identify this property as a site for future development and riverfront green space activation.

The 2007 Monroe North Area Specific Plan shows the site as Public/Quasi Public use as Mixed Use and a Mixed-Use Village Center with Open Space along the Grand River.

The November 2019 River for All Grand River Corridor study re-envisioned this site and the adjacent Leonard Fire Station site with a mixed-use development fronting Leonard and the Coldbrook building repurposed for public use and offices. Various open spaces and park uses are also proposed.

The 2022 Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department Strategic Master Plan is currently being updated and changes the expectation for Parcel 1. At a minimum, the City expects there to be connectivity to the river on Parcel 1 and Parcel 2. Finally, the City will maintain a 50' easement adjacent to the river.

Parcel 3: 1120 Monroe Ave NW

Address: 1120 Monroe Ave NW

Parcel ID: 41-13-24-227-014

Size: 1.73 acres, building is 58,352 gross sq. feet

Current Zoning: Traditional Neighborhood - Transitional City Center (TN-TCC)

Current Use: The City's Development Center hosts 105 employees across several specialties and serves as the City's centralized resource for all building and renovation activities. It is responsible for administering building permits, planning and zoning services, trade permits, code compliance, and building inspections. Additionally, there is parking for staff and customers. Finally, in addition to the main building, a 13,800 gross square foot structure, is onsite, currently used as a storage building for various City departments. There are some interior offices and non-accessible restroom spaces that are unused.



Parcel 3

Site Characteristics

- **Dimensions:** 275' x 260'
- **Topography:** Flat
- **Access:** 275' of frontage along Monroe Ave, 312' of frontage along Ionia Ave NW
- **Utilities:** Information about the presence, location, and future requirements for utilities on and through the site is located in Appendix E.
- **Environmental:** Category N Baseline Environmental Assessment was conducted in March 2010.
- **Flood Protection and Floodplain Conditions:** This parcel lies within the 500 year floodplain.

Development Considerations

The building will be a hub for public interactions and collaborations related to zoning, code compliance, plan development, and permitting transactions, offered in a fully accessible facility.

A new 45,000 gross square feet consolidated Development Center should accommodate administrative offices and workstations for all the departments, as well as associated ancillary spaces like conference rooms, focus rooms, collaboration spaces, copy/print rooms, break/wellness rooms, community meeting space, and storage.

The identification of a location for the consolidated Development Center should consider the following recommendations:

- Parking must accommodate 250 staff members, 50 visitors, plus City-owned vehicles for field staff.
- Site access and circulation must accommodate visiting public with oversized vehicles, trailers, etc.
- Walkability between City Hall and the Consolidated Development Center is ideal.
- If an existing building is considered, bring into full ADA compliance and implement City of Grand Rapids Workplace Standards.

Parcel 3 is part of the River North Business Association (historically known as “Monroe North”) and was identified in the 2024 Bridge to Our Future Community Master Plan Future Character and Land Use Map as “Downtown.” The intent of the Downtown Future Character designation is to “promote a dense development pattern focused on the close proximity of services, a diversity of uses, and dynamic building styles. Many buildings contain multiple uses with restaurants or retail on the ground floor and office space or residential units above.” The proximity to Parcel 1 makes Parcel 3 desirable for economic development opportunities.

Available Documentation

The City will make the following materials available to qualified respondents:

- Building Plans, including as-builts
- Decommissioning plans
- Site surveys and boundary information;
- Environmental assessment reports (Phase I and Phase II as applicable);
- Utility maps and capacity information;

These materials will be made available to shortlisted respondents or upon execution of a non-disclosure agreement, as appropriate.

6. Community Engagement Expectations

The City expects the Partner to demonstrate genuine commitment to community-centered development through robust and inclusive engagement processes. No formal engagement has yet occurred on these sites collectively; the engagement process led by the Partner will guide all major planning decisions.

Engagement Principles

Community engagement for this project must:

1. Center Resident Voice

- Prioritize feedback and sentiment from current River North neighborhood business owners, property owners, and residents;
- Ensure access and opportunity for historically underserved and resilient community members;
- Create meaningful opportunities for residents to shape development outcomes, not simply react to predetermined plans.

2. Be Authentically Inclusive

- Utilize varied engagement methods to reach diverse community members — including digital engagement tools; partnerships with trusted community organizations to co-host or co-facilitate engagement sessions; and pop-up engagement at existing neighborhood events, local businesses, parks, and transit stops;
- Remove barriers to participation (communication and marketing, venue selection, childcare, language access, accessibility, transportation, etc.).

3. Demonstrate Transparency

- Clearly communicate what is negotiable and what is predetermined;
- Share information about development economics, timelines, and decision-making processes;
- Report back to community on a predictable, communicated schedule on how feedback influenced project evolution.

Required Engagement Activities

At minimum, the Partner must:

- Establish a clear Threshold of Engagement at the inform level and identify meaningful opportunities to inform the public.
- Publish and maintain an online website using the City's designated public participation platform to provide project information and updates, a calendar of engagement activities, contact information, and public project deliverables on a platform agreed upon by the City;
- Develop a strategy to identify and invite community partners, residents, and other stakeholders who will be impacted by this effort;
- Partner with City staff and the River North Business Association to discuss prioritization of public space amenities, project phasing, and any required closure of local streets and sidewalks. Strategize how this prioritization will impact decision-making and how to communicate its impact to those involved; Create meaningful opportunities for community engagement, aligned with the engagement principles above, as the master site plan is refined throughout the twelve-month engagement.

Evaluation of Engagement Capacity

Respondents will be evaluated on:

- Track record of authentic, inclusive, and transparent community engagement in past projects;
- Proposed engagement approach and methodology for this project;
- Alignment with The City of Grand Rapids Community Engagement Framework;
- Capacity to meaningfully incorporate community input into project evolution.

7. Submission Requirements

Submission Format

By November 16, 2026, respondents must submit one (1) electronic PDF copy via econdevshrd@grand-rapids.mi.us and 10 hard copies delivered to the Economic Development Department at 300 Monroe Avenue NW, Grand Rapids.

The submission should not exceed 40 pages excluding required forms, letters of support, and visual materials. Use a minimum 11-point font.

Required Content

All submissions must include the following components.

A. Cover Letter and Executive Summary (Maximum 3 pages)

- Signed cover letter introducing the responding firm or team and identifying the proposed project lead;
- Executive summary of the team's qualifications and proposed approach;
- Statement of approach to community partnership;
- Affirmation of capacity to perform the full scope of work.

B. Partner Team (Maximum 5 pages)

Lead Entity

- Legal name, address, ownership structure, federal taxpayer ID number;
- Years in business and organizational overview;
- Principal team members with roles and relevant experience;

Required Professional Expertise

Responding teams must demonstrate the following capabilities, either through in-house staff or named subconsultants:

- Urban planner (AICP certification preferred);
- Licensed civil engineer with experience in urban infrastructure assessment;
- Environmental professional licensed or credentialed to conduct Phase I/II ESAs;
- Licensed architect or landscape architect with urban design experience;
- Real estate finance professional with mixed-use development experience;
- Community engagement specialist;
- Other key consultants as appropriate (legal, market research, brownfield/TIF specialist, property management, etc.).

Team Structure

- Organizational chart showing relationships among team members;
- Description of decision-making structure;
- Identification of any anticipated team changes prior to project completion;
- Confirmation of Grand Rapids-based status, where applicable;
- Micro Local/Women/Minority Business Enterprise certifications, where applicable.

C. Relevant Experience and Past Performance (Maximum 8 pages)

Provide detailed information on at least three (3) and no more than five (5) comparable projects. The City is particularly interested in master site planning and master development engagements involving:

- Publicly owned land assemblages of five or more acres;
- Mixed-use, mixed-income programming;
- Multi-developer or multi-parcel execution frameworks;
- Integration of emerging or small-scale developers alongside established firms;
- Successful community engagement and stakeholder coordination;
- Public-private partnerships, complex incentive structuring and possibly relocation of city services.

For each project, include:

- Project name, location, client, and year of completion;
- Scope and scale (square footage, units, uses, development cost);
- Your firm's role and responsibilities;
- Description of community engagement approach and outcomes;
- Description of site investigation and due diligence performed;
- Financing structure and sources;
- Community benefit components and outcomes achieved (with quantitative metrics where available);
- Challenges encountered and how addressed, including any qualifications and experiences mitigating drainage from future large rain events with limited sewer capacity;
- Client/partner references with contact information;
- Photographs or renderings.

D. Approach to Vision and Methodology (Maximum 10 pages plus visual materials)

A narrative description of the team's proposed approach to this twelve-month engagement, including:

- Overall philosophy and approach to master site planning in an urban context;
- Proposed process for site due diligence, including environmental investigation;
- Approach to market analysis and financial feasibility modeling;
- Approach to developing and evaluating Development Center options;
- Perspective on ownership structures that balance public benefit with development feasibility;
- Approach to integrating site-specific design with the GR Forward, Community Master Plan, and River for All frameworks;
- Initial vision for the site and alignment with City objectives, illustrated as appropriate through diagrams, precedent imagery, or conceptual sketches (final massing and design will emerge through the engagement).

The City understands that concepts will evolve through community engagement and design refinement. Respondent submissions should demonstrate methodology and team perspective while indicating openness to iteration.

E. Community Engagement Plan (Maximum 5 pages)

- Proposed engagement approach and methodology;
- Timeline and engagement milestones across the twelve-month engagement;
- Strategies for inclusive participation;
- Partnerships with community-based organizations;
- Clear public participation evaluation plan and metrics of success;
- Examples of authentic community engagement from past projects;
- Proposed accountability mechanisms

F. Financial Capacity and Proposed Business Terms (Maximum 5 pages)

Financial Capacity

- Recent audited financial statements or letters from financial institutions;
- Description of anticipated financing structure for any future parcel development the respondent intends to pursue;
- Equity sources and debt capacity, as applicable.

Financial information will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Respondents should recognize, however, that as a public entity, the City may be required to disclose certain information pursuant to Freedom of Information Act requests.

G. Project Timeline (Maximum 2 pages)

- Anticipated schedule for the twelve-month master site planning engagement, with key milestones;
- Proposed sequence and timing for community engagement, design development, due diligence, financial modeling, and disposition recommendations;
- Critical path items and dependencies;
- Risk factors that could affect timeline.

H. Proof of Insurance

A certificate of insurance or letter from the respondent's insurance carrier confirming current coverage at or above the following minimums (which the selected Partner will be required to maintain throughout the engagement):

- Commercial General Liability: \$2,000,000 per occurrence / \$4,000,000 aggregate;
- Professional Errors & Omissions: \$1,000,000 per claim;
- Workers' Compensation: statutory limits as required by Michigan law;
- Automobile Liability: \$1,000,000 combined single limit.

I. Required Forms

- Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Optional Supplementary Materials

Respondents may include:

- Letters of support from community organizations, lenders, or other stakeholders;
- Additional project examples beyond the required five;
- Supporting market or financial analysis;
- Additional visual materials.

These materials do not count toward page limits but should be clearly labeled as supplementary.

8. Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

Two-Phase Selection Process

Phase I: Written Submission Review. All submissions will be evaluated based on the written materials. The City intends to shortlist respondents to advance to Phase II.

Phase II: Interview Shortlisted respondents will be invited to:

- Present to the Selection Committee;
- Respond to questions and engage in dialogue;
- Potentially refine submissions based on feedback.

Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on the following weighted criteria:

1. Alignment with Development Vision and Objectives (20 points)

- Responsiveness to the City's stated objectives and priorities;
- Quality and appropriateness of the proposed approach;
- Commitment to community benefit and anti-displacement strategies;
- Affordable housing inclusion and innovation;
- Public realm and waterfront access enhancements;
- Environmental sustainability approach.

2. Master Site Planning Approach and Methodology (20 points)

- Quality and clarity of proposed approach to due diligence, market analysis, financial feasibility, and master site planning;
- Demonstrated methodology and ability to produce an actionable master site plan;

3. Team Qualifications and Experience (20 points)

- Relevant master site planning and master development experience and track record;
- Demonstrated capacity for community-centered development;
- Strength and completeness of the team across all required disciplines;
- References and past performance.

4. Community Engagement and Equitable Development (20 points)

- Quality and authenticity of proposed community engagement strategy;
- Track record of meaningful community partnership;
- Strategy and demonstrated capacity to support emerging, minority-owned, women-owned, and small-scale developers;
- Cultural competency and inclusive practices.

5. Financial Capacity, Local Presence, and Business Terms (20 points)

- Reasonableness of financial capacity and stability;
- Public investment requirements relative to public benefit;
- Grand Rapids / West Michigan presence and local knowledge;
- Participation of M/W/DBE firms within the team.

Total: 100 points

Selection Committee

Submissions will be evaluated by an internal City staff committee, with the assistance of some community representatives, formed at the City's sole discretion.

Selection Authority

Final selection will be made by City Commission based on the Selection Committee's recommendation and community input.

Right to Reject and Negotiate

The City reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all submissions;
- Waive informalities or irregularities in submissions;
- Request additional information or clarification;
- Negotiate with one or more respondents;
- Select a respondent other than the highest-ranked based on overall best value to the City;
- Terminate the selection process at any time.

Selection through this RFQ process does not guarantee any subsequent development rights or development agreement.

9. Timeline and Key Dates

The anticipated timeline for this RFQ process is as follows:

Milestone	Date
RFQ Release	10/7/2026
Deadline for Written Questions	10/19/2026
Site Visit (optional)	10/20/2026
City Responses to Questions Posted	10/23/2026
Submission Deadline	11/16/2026
Review of Submissions	Dept Group Review 11/19/2026
Notification of Shortlisted Respondents	11/23/2026
Shortlist Interviews	Early December
Final Selection	December 2026/January 2027
Professional Service Agreement Begins	January/February 2027
Delivery of Services	12 months after start of Agreement

Note: Proposers shall note that the dates provided are provided as a guideline only and are subject to change as the City deems in its own best interests.

Upon request, City staff will make themselves available for pre-submission visits, which will be held on October 20, 2026. The site visit would provide an opportunity for:

- Overview of the opportunity and City objectives;
- Site tour;
- Question and answer session and;
- Opportunity to meet with City staff.

To attend, please RSVP by Friday, October 15 to: econdevs@grand-rapids.mi.us.

Questions and Communications

All questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing to Economic Development Director, Sarah L. Rainero at srainero@grand-rapids.mi.us by October 19, 2026.

Questions and answers will be posted publicly on October 23, 2026 on <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/departments/economic-development/>. It is each respondent's responsibility to check for posted answers.

No oral communications regarding this RFQ will be considered official. Direct contact with City Commissioners, City staff (other than the designated contact), or Selection Committee members regarding this RFQ is prohibited and may result in disqualification.

Designated Contact:
Sarah Rainero
Economic Development Director
City of Grand Rapids
srainero@grand-rapids.mi.us
616-970-7438



10. Terms & Conditions

Professional Services Agreement

Following selection, the City and the Partner will enter into a professional services agreement governing the twelve-month engagement, scope of work, deliverables, fees, and the framework for the Partner coordination.

This signed and completed RFQ document, along with the complete submitted response, will be included by reference as part of any contract document with the awarded vendor.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Partner will agree to defend and indemnify the City, against and hold them harmless from any and all losses, claims, liabilities, injuries, damages, and expenses whatsoever, including attorneys' fees and costs, that the City may incur by reason of (i) the breach of the professional services agreement by the Partner; or (ii) any injury or damage sustained to any person or property to the extent arising out of (a) the Partner's errors, omissions, intentional misconduct or negligent acts, or (b) the improper performance or lack of performance by the Partner of their duties and obligations under or pursuant to the agreement or the agreement documents. If the Partner fails to honor its obligation to defend and indemnify the City, as required herein, the City may defend itself with counsel of its choosing, but at the Partner's expense, without recovery from the City.

The City may also under such circumstances settle any claim upon whatever terms as it in its reasonable judgment deems appropriate, and the Partner shall be bound by any defense asserted by the City, any settlement reached, or any judgment or award entered.

All plans, original drawings, original tracings, electronic files, specifications, reports, photographs and other documents relative to the project which the Partner prepares or causes to be prepared in connection with services performed under this RFQ shall become the property of the City.

Costs and Expenses

Each respondent is responsible for all costs associated with preparing and submitting a response to this RFQ. The City will not reimburse any costs associated with the preparation or submission of qualifications.

Reservation of Rights

The City reserves the right, at its sole discretion and for any reason or no reason, to cancel, modify, or suspend this solicitation and/or any planned award if it is in the City's best interest, at no additional cost to the City.

Additionally, the City reserves the right to:

- Request additional information or presentations;
- Conduct site visits or interviews with any or all respondents;
- Negotiate with multiple respondents simultaneously or sequentially;
- Reject any or all responses for any reason;
- Waive minor irregularities;
- Modify the scope of work prior to contract execution;
- Issue subsequent RFPs for all or portions of the opportunity.

Any such cancellation will be communicated to the selected proposer prior to final contract execution.

Public Records and Confidentiality

All information in an application and the subsequent contract is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, PA 442 of 1976, as amended, MCL 15.231 et seq., or latest revision thereof. Respondents shall note that pricing methodologies, cost and fee proposals, and any other response information related to pricing shall not be considered confidential information.

The City makes no guarantee that information marked confidential will be withheld if requested under FOIA. Final determination of whether information is exempt from disclosure will be made by the City in accordance with applicable law.

Non-Discrimination Requirements and Compliance in City Contracts

The City of Grand Rapids is committed to nondiscrimination in contracting, equal employment opportunity, and workforce diversity. The successful service provider agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment to be employed in the performance of the Services with respect to hire, tenure, or conditions or privileges of employment, or any matter directly or indirectly related to employment, because of race, creed, color, religion, natural origin, age, sex, height, weight, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status. The service provider agrees to review and examine with City staff relevant employment data and other information pertaining to hiring practices in accordance with Grand Rapids City Commission Policy 600-10. Additionally, the service provider agrees that they will not discriminate in the administration of contracts and acquisitions in the performance of the Services. Breach of this covenant may be regarded as a material breach of the Agreement as provided for in the Michigan Civil Rights Act 453 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1976, as amended; and non-compliance with Grand Rapids Commission Policy 600-10.

Submission and Receipt of Bids

In order to receive consideration, bids are to be received prior to the specified time of opening as designated on the Bid solicitation notice; late bids will not be accepted. The City reserves the right to postpone the bid opening as it deems necessary.

Conflict of Interest

Respondents must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any current or recent relationships with the City, City officials, or Selection Committee members. The City will determine whether any disclosed conflict precludes participation.

Insurance and Bonding

The selected Partner will be required to maintain insurance coverage at the levels specified in Section 7.H and any additional insurance and performance bonds as specified in the subsequent Professional Services Agreement.

Compliance with Laws

All work and development must comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances, including but not limited to:

- Fair Housing Act and Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act;
- Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Environmental regulations;
- Building and safety codes;
- Zoning and land use regulations;
- Prevailing wage requirements (if applicable).

Non-Collusion

By signed submittal and completion of this document, the Proposer certifies that this proposal response is made without prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a proposal for the same product and that this proposal is in all respects bona fide, fair and not the result of any act of fraud or collusion with another person or firm engaged in the same line of business or commerce. The Proposer understands collusive bidding is a violation of Federal Law and that any false statement thereunder constitutes a felony and can result in fines, imprisonment, as well as civil damages.

11. Submission Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure your submission is complete:

- Cover Letter and Executive Summary (max 3 pages)
- Partner Team information (max 5 pages)
- Relevant Experience and Past Performance (max 8 pages, 3–5 projects)
- Approach to Vision and Methodology (max 10 pages plus visual materials)
- Community Engagement Plan (max 5 pages)
- Financial Capacity and Proposed Business Terms (max 5 pages)
- Project Timeline (max 2 pages)
- Proof of Insurance
- All Required Forms (Appendix A)
- Submission in PDF format
- Submitted by deadline via email and hard copy
- Optional: Supplementary materials clearly labeled

12. Appendices

Appendix A: Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Appendix B: Site Maps and Documentation

- Site location map;
- Utilities map and information
- Zoning map, and map with overlays;
- Future Land Use and Character Map and
- Recent private investments map.

Appendix C: Planning Document References

- Links to the GR Forward Plan (currently under revision);
- City Facility Master Plan
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Yluw2kD_INEJw-Dwr7NB9Dc2Ex3Hz2k/view?usp=sharing
- Links to the Grand Rapids Community Master Plan;
 - <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/63c9f07657c64f4fb1ddd17a77e914d6>
- Community Engagement Framework
 - <https://media-002-us.cdn.govstack.com/grandrapidsmi-us/media/ut2p2qur/cogr-ce-manual-2026.pdf>
- Links to the River vision
 - <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/departments/engineering/river-for-all-initiative/>
- Relevant zoning ordinances:
 - Site Layout and Building Placement Requirements:
https://library.municode.com/mi/grand_rapids/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITV--ZONING_PLANNING_CH61ZOOR_ART6MIECOZODI_S5.6.07SILABUPLRE
 - Building Element Requirements:
https://library.municode.com/mi/grand_rapids/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITV--ZONING_PLANNING_CH61ZOOR_ART6MIECOZODI_S5.6.08BUELRE
 - Grand River Overlay District:
https://library.municode.com/mi/grand_rapids/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITV--ZONING_PLANNING_CH61ZOOR_ART8OVDI_S5.8.03GRRIOVDI
 - Urban Open Space:
https://library.municode.com/mi/grand_rapids/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITV--ZONING_PLANNING_CH61ZOOR_ART11LAGRIN_S5.11.14UROPSP

Appendix D: Utilities Information

The following information is what is known, and what is anticipated pursuant to known city needs and existing specifications. Also, part of Phase 1 will be a detailed plan for addressing all utilities and necessary easements.

Parcel 1 was one of the main utility hubs of the city for decades and has direct access to water, sanitary services, electric, and gas services. The sanitary discharge is currently handled by a grinder pump. The sanitary system will need to meet current ordinances. Parcel 2 has access to water, sanitary services, electric, and gas services in the ROW, which is currently served through the 1101 Monroe property.

- For the electrical power to Coldbrook on Parcel 1, the building is fed from the substation. This is a Consumers Energy facility and will need to remain with access. Partner will need to work with Consumers to potentially relocate the electric service off of the substation and onto the standard grid.
- Department of Energy, Lighting and Communications (ELC) also has a fiber connection from a vault outside Parcel 1 that goes into the building to feed the cameras and Fire. This is located in the red circle along Monroe. This will need to be disconnected at such time the property is sold.
- ELC also has a large and major duct bank that heads north along Monroe (it is believed to be in the ROW and then eventually on the fire station to the north). There is a large vault that is both in the ROW and on City property. This is the critical fiber and power feed to the north that eventually serves 1500 Scribner. This likely will not be able to be relocated so an easement will be needed.
- Two large diameter (10 ft, and 4 ft) storm sewers owned by the Kent County Drain Commissioner run across Parcel 1, and discharge to the river in two separate outfalls. The 10 ft diameter storm sewer runs under part of the building, and any future development shall consider placement of any building. The City of Grand Rapids is working with the Kent County Drain Commissioner to determine minimum setbacks. It is anticipated that an easement(s) will need to be the width of the drains, plus also space to get equipment in, which could be up to 60' wide for the larger storm sewer. Additionally, the drains could be reimaged and possibly be relocated.

- A 6" water main with a public hydrant runs along the west side of Parcel 1. The watermain and hydrant can be abandoned as part of the project.

Parcel 3 has direct access to water, sanitary services , electric, and gas services.

- A large storm sewer (11 ft diameter and up to 18' near Northeast corner) owned by the Kent County Drain Commissioner is located on this site, which is also referenced above and runs under 1101 Monroe Coldbrook building. Exact location is ill-defined. Any future development shall avoid placing a building on top of or within an appropriate setback from this storm sewer. Further work remains with the Kent County Drain Commissioner to determine minimum setback. The current capacity of the drain is limited, and when large rainfall events occur, manhole surcharge on this parcel. Development should consider how to mitigate for such flood events.

Appendix E: Partner Role & Scope of Work

The selected Partner will, upon acceptance by the City Commission, enter into a professional services agreement for work to be performed by the Partner as drafted below.

1 Partner Core Functions

Lead the Master Site Planning and Due Diligence Process

The Partner will guide the City through an approximately twelve (12) month planning engagement that produces an actionable, community-supported master site plan. This includes site investigation, market analysis, financial modeling, master site planning, community engagement, and the consideration of development scenarios.

2 Site Investigation and Due Diligence

The Partner will conduct or commission all necessary preliminary site investigations, including:

- Continued Environmental Site Assessment for Parcels 1 & 2 at a minimum, which may include Phase II Environmental Site Assessment as warranted by Phase I findings;
- Survey
- Geotechnical assessment of soil conditions, load-bearing capacity, and groundwater table;
- Title review and clearing (or assisting in clearing) and deficiencies on title;
- Utility locations, development of legal descriptions for and utility easement documents
- Infrastructure assessment, including sanitary sewer, water, stormwater, and utility capacity;
- Floodplain and drainage analysis (recent improvements have established all development sites at a minimum of two feet above freeboard);
- Identification of any applicable permits, including any EGLE or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requirements for riverfront improvements.

3 Market Analysis

The Partner will produce a primary market analysis that:

- Assesses residential, commercial, and retail demand drivers in the River North trade area;
- Identifies primary and secondary market opportunities with supporting data;
- Evaluates comparable mixed-use urban development projects in peer markets;
- Establishes realistic absorption projections by product type;
- Identifies market risks and mitigation strategies.
- Identifies recommended project phasing approach in light of the analysis

The City's established industry strengths in technology, design, medical, and furniture sectors represent natural market opportunities, but the Partner is expected to recommend programming based on rigorous primary market analysis rather than aspirational assumptions.

4 Financial Analysis and Incentive Structuring

The Partner will analyze the financial feasibility of development scenarios and assist the City in structuring appropriate incentives. The City has the ability to offer up to twenty-five (25) years of tax increment financing (TIF) or property tax abatement where necessary to support project feasibility. The Partner will:

- Model development pro formas for each recommended alternative;
- Assess financing gaps and recommend appropriate public incentive structures and;
- Evaluate Brownfield TIF, Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ), Housing TIF, and other available tools.

5 Master Site Plan and Development Program

The Partner will produce a master site plan encompassing all properties within the RFQ boundary. The plan must include:

- A comprehensive master site plan at an appropriate scale;
- A recommended ownership and governance structure that produces long-term public benefit without stifling development feasibility;
- A clear strategy for enhancing and activating the Grand River edge, integrated with Canal Park and the broader River for All vision;
- Coordination with the Development Center relocation requirements described in Section 4.

6 Anticipated Deliverables

Upon completion of the planning engagement, the Partner will deliver the following:

- Comprehensive site due diligence report, including Phase I/II environmental findings, geotechnical summary, infrastructure assessment, and title review;
- Strategy to address future capacity needs of the Coldbrook Creek drain to support redevelopment,
- Primary market analysis report documenting residential, commercial, and retail demand, absorption projections, and market risk assessment;
- Financial feasibility analysis for each recommended development alternative, including recommended incentive structures;
- Master site plan encompassing at least Parcels 1 and 2 within the RFQ boundary;
- Recommended disposition strategy, including sequencing and pricing guidance;
- Recommended ownership and governance structure, with defined long-term public benefit metrics;
- Grand River edge activation strategy with conceptual design recommendations;
- Development Center relocation coordination plan, if applicable;
- Community engagement summary documenting input received and how it shaped plan recommendations;
- Final presentation to City leadership, Planning Commission, and/or City Commission as required.