

BRANDING, MARKETING & PLACEMAKING STRATEGY FOR COUNTY ROAD E CORRIDOR

Request for Proposals for Professional Services



Sponsored by:



Contact Information:

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A. OBJECTIVE

The City of White Bear Lake, Minnesota in partnership with the Cities of Vadnais Heights and Gem Lake, Minnesota (hereafter referred to collectively as “project partners”), seek professional services to establish a brand identity, marketing and placemaking strategy for the County Road E Corridor, building on the momentum generated by the County Road E Corridor Action Plan process in Fall 2022.

The results of the project will inform both individual and collective action among the County Road E Corridor communities. The strategies will have a consumer focus to enhance the perception of the corridor and attract residents and visitors to the businesses within it.

The final product must include specific, measurable and actionable strategic plans that inform the work of future collaborative efforts between the communities both in the near term and future. Specifically:

- Identify a brand identity that is grounded in its current strengths but aspirational in the potential vibrancy of the corridor to include brand guidelines and logo
- A marketing plan to leverage the brand identity
- Placemaking strategy and guidelines to align with brand identity

B. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Located in northern Ramsey County in the Twin Cities suburbs, County Road E serves as the primary commercial corridor for the Cities of Gem Lake and Vadnais Heights and a significant residential and commercial corridor for White Bear Lake. Given the prominence of the corridor in the economic vitality of each of the three cities, it has been a focus of efforts to attract investment and enhance the quality of life for community members.

Corridor Overview

The cities of [Vadnais Heights](#), [Gem Lake](#) and [White Bear Lake](#) share borders along the corridor. There are a variety of uses in the approximately 4 mile long corridor including multi-family residential, single family detached and attached residential, retail, industrial, service, public and agricultural. Additionally it serves as an access point to major traffic arteries including Interstate 35E, U.S. Highway 61 and MN State Highway 120.

The corridor currently has a traditional auto-oriented, suburban environment and is seen more as an area to “pass through” than a desirable place to be. There are many opportunity sites along the corridor and there has been major private investments in the defined corridor area, which spans approximately a half mile north and south of the corridor. Approximately 26,000 people live in the census tracts abutting County Road E in the three communities according to the 2020 Decennial Census.

Project Basis

Recently, with support through a [Critical Corridors Programs](#) grant from Ramsey County, the communities completed a [County Road E Corridor Action Plan](#). The plan was generated with input from two advisory groups and a series of public engagement meetings. It identified a number of key themes that emerged throughout the process and leveraged those to create recommendations with a primary objective of creating a cohesive theme and overall sense of place for the corridor. With this objective in mind, a number of strategies and action steps were identified including fostering a sense of place and purpose. Some of the recommended actions steps for this strategy included joint marketing and promotions, placemaking activities and events, and coordinating streetscape elements.

Leveraging the County Road E Corridor Action Plan, the three communities have secured an additional grant from Ramsey County to further the collaborative work of revitalizing County Road E by moving forward with some of the report's recommendations. Concurrently with this project, the communities intend to formalize a working group of local leaders and staff to continue the momentum generated by the report and ensure that the process leads to tangible economic and physical improvements along the corridor over the long term.

C. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICES

The project partners are seeking proposals to establish a brand identity, marketing and placemaking strategy for the County Road E Corridor. The firm selected through this RFP will enter into a contractual agreement with the City of White Bear Lake to provide professional services related to the project. Based upon the requirements of the project partners, the consultant shall provide all professional services necessary to complete the project as described. It is anticipated this will involve working with staff representatives as well as seeking input from corridor stakeholders through engagement and/or advisory groups. At a minimum, this should include:

- Brand identity to appeal to consumers, both residents and visitors
 - Narrative description of the brand identity
 - Logo and tagline
 - Brand guidelines/style guide including messaging and brand voice
- Marketing strategy
 - Brand activation plan
 - SWOT analysis
 - Identification of target audience and value proposition
 - Competitor analysis
 - Identification of needed marketing tools, campaign strategies, communication channels, key messaging and needed content/collateral
- Placemaking strategy including design guidelines for near and long term efforts

- Design guidelines for physical enhancements such as wayfinding signage, banners, lighting and public seating
- Recommendations for programming and/or otherwise activating spaces

D. TENTATIVE PROJECT TIMELINE, BUDGET & PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The timeline below represents the project partners’ best estimates for the completion of major milestones regarding this project. Dates are subject to change as needed to best fit the project partners’ needs. However, consideration of input from the selected consultant will be used to develop a final schedule to be used in the award of contract.

- Selection of consultant.....December 2023/January 2024
- Project Kickoff1st Quarter 2024
- Complete ProjectSummer 2024

The project budget including all related expenses shall not exceed \$30,000.00. Payment to the selected consultant is anticipated to be a 50% deposit with final payment made upon successful project completion.

C. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Responses to the RFP are **due on December 15, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.** and shall be submitted by email attachment or cloud service (DropBox, Google Drive, etc.) in electronic PDF file format to the contact listed on the RFP cover page. Each proposal must remain valid for at least ninety (90) days from the due date of this RFP. Clearly label submittal and any related RFP correspondence: “Branding, Marketing & Placemaking Strategy for County Road E Corridor.”

All responses to this request should provide the following information:

- Company name, contact information and primary contact person for this project
- Brief description and history of firm, including anything that makes the firm uniquely qualified to complete this work
- Firm’s past experience with similar projects, past project examples and references for similar projects
- Key staff and any sub-consultants to be involved in the project
- Narrative and work plan describing proposed project management, communication and coordination, major project tasks, scope of work, project partner responsibilities and timeline for deliverables
- Proposed fee including all overhead and sub-consultant work

F. SELECTION CRITERIA

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated by a selection committee based upon the Respondent’s proposal and information provided as outlined in Section D of this document.

After review of submittals, the selection committee may request selected firms to participate in an interview.

Evaluation criteria will include:

- Overall quality of the response to this RFP.
- Experience of the proposed project team with similar projects.
- Strong graphic skills.
- Strong skills in written and oral communication.
- References
- Fees

G. ADMINISTRATIVE & MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

- Project partners are not liable for any costs incurred by prospective firms prior to the signing of a contract. Expenses incurred in the preparation of submittals, presentations and other incidental activities related to this solicitation are solely the responsibility of the respondent.
- Any changes to this RFP will be put in writing to each prospective Consultant no later than seven (7) calendar days before the due date of the proposals.
- All information in a Respondent's proposal, except for fee analysis, is subject to disclosure under the provisions of Minnesota Statute Chapter 13 - Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
- The project partners reserve the right to waive any irregularities in any proposal and to select the proposal evaluated to be the most advantageous to the project partners. The project partners reserve the right to disqualify any proposal or to reject all proposals if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the project partners. Furthermore, the project partners and their representatives reserve the right to reject any and all proposals or to request additional information from any respondent or from all respondents. The project partners reserve the right to waive, or not waive, informalities or irregularities in terms or conditions of any proposal if determined by the project partners to be in their best interest.
- All proposals submitted may be subject to clarifications and further negotiation. All agreements resulting from negotiations that differ from what is represented within the RFP or in the consultant's response shall be documented and included as part of the final contract.

H. Contract Award

It is the project partner's intent to review all respondent qualifications and proposals thoroughly and to select a candidate based upon selection criteria. Should the project partners believe it would be in their best interest, they may enter into negotiations with any of the Consultants until a contract sum can be finalized with the successful candidate.