

**NORTH CORKTOWN RFP DRAFT SUBMISSION FOR CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Completed Version 5/2/2017

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Purpose:

This draft document was prepared to assist the City of Detroit Planning and Development Dept. (PDD) in the development of an RFP for the North Corktown community planning process.

This document was constructed using the West Vernor Southwest Detroit RFP #16WN591 as a template. Portions of this text are copied directly from the West Vernor Southwest Detroit RFP and are the works of the original author.

The goal of the document was to provide a “Pre-RFP” level of community engagement for the PDD staff developing the North Corktown RFP. The information that is provided was collected over a period of time between July 2016 and March of 2017. We hope that this document will provide insight and assistance for PDD while authoring the North Corktown RFP. It is a goal for the North Corktown community to have a strong voice regarding decisions about our future potential growth. We see the release of the RFP and hiring of the planning firm as an important beginning point in this process. Ultimately, we hope you will consider steps for continuing community engagement throughout the RFP and hiring process as we all prepare for the dynamic change and opportunities that lie ahead.

Community participation included:

(3) Large Community Meetings

- (7) Multiple smaller focused workgroup meetings
- (3) Announcements at community meetings

(28) Total RFP Workgroup Contributors

(75) Distributed Draft documents via online survey

- Received detailed feedback from respondents equal to 6% of total outreach

(3) Neighborhood Organizations - North Corktown Neighborhood Association / North Corktown Sustainability Committee / Freedom House

(6) North Corktown Community Draft RFP Authors- Jeff Klein, Rhonda Greene, Bethany Betzler, Wai Ming Lau, Tricia Talley, Ryan Anderson.

1. INTRODUCTION AND VISION

The City of Detroit's Mayor's Office, the Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD), and the Planning and Development Department (PDD) (hereinafter the "City") seeks proposals from qualified firms to develop a community planning framework with strategic implementation strategies that builds upon previously completed neighborhood studies, creating a consolidated and actionable vision for the City of Detroit to synergize growth and support future investment within the North Corktown neighborhood while promoting neighborhood vitality and livability.

It is the intent of this plan to build upon the success of existing North Corktown housing and green space development and the adjacent collection of commercial areas and neighborhoods, and develop a strong housing strategy with open space design to attract new residents and greater commercial investment, mobility, culture, and recreation within the district. Under the guidance of the City, the chosen firm will analyze previous planning studies and develop recommendations for implementation strategies, including but not limited to, the development of a multi-family and single family rehabilitation program, identification of strategic demolitions, development of community arts and small business social seams, parks and open space assessment and other infrastructure improvements that advance economic, cultural and ecological performance (streetscapes, viaduct repairs, storm water management) with design, and develop an understanding of existing traffic in the area and develop a framework for understanding future mitigation work to alleviate both existing and future potential incompatible uses. The implementation strategy must provide an informed understanding of the target area and a clear path for use, including an actionable housing rehabilitation program, site specific design work, construction cost development, sustainable green and open space management strategies, and identified funding streams. The framework must also provide strong thinking around workforce development and creating a vision for linking culture, sustainability and green infrastructure to job, housing and revitalization goals. The City of Detroit has an interest in engaging a team that is able to review a variety of studies that have already been created through various stakeholders, assess the strengths and weakness of these studies, facilitate intensive resident engagement in the development process*, identify strategies and recommendations at the intersection of resident and redevelopment interests, verify study assumptions with community stakeholders, identify areas that require further development, and create a unified vision to lead the project to success. By creating detailed strategies for utilizing economic development incentives for redevelopment, prioritizing potential sites for implementation, the team shall develop a comprehensive framework for growing the region in a dynamic, inclusive and comprehensive manner.

*Here is an example of the type of resident engagement we feel is comprehensive enough to ensure real input from residents is not just heard but implemented by including them in the design process:

<http://margaretwheatley.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Leadership-in-Age-of-Complexity.pdf>

2. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

(TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)

3. TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

Successful respondents to this RFP must present a team of individuals with a diversity of skill sets in order to provide and manage all required areas of scope work. Some respondent firms may be multi-disciplinary enough to offer all of the necessary skills “in-house.” Well-developed proposals from either one single firm or a group of two or more firms are welcome and will be considered. The City strongly encourages respondents to consider inclusion of team members that are Detroit-based, minority led, and/ or otherwise have a substantive body of knowledge or experience with Detroit. The following is a detailed list of qualifications that the consultant team should provide, organized by area of expertise:

3.1 Project Management

- Demonstrates organizational excellence, assessment of range of real estate development, housing rehabilitation, workforce development, infrastructure, planning issues, financial evaluation, and cross-sector leadership
- Ability to oversee and manage efficient inter-agency processes and recruit stakeholders to facilitate timely decision making and project execution

3.2 Community Engagement and Social Equity

- Extensive experience with integrating diverse communities in planning processes.
- Successful engagement in communities of color, low income and/or depressed markets.
- Skill in researching and analyzing prior community planning documents and meeting with community stakeholders to establish implementation goals.
- Ability to develop unique strategies based on local values:
UNIFIED – INCLUSIVE – BALANCED – EQUITABLE – SUSTAINABLE – DIVERSE - ATTRACTIVE
- Ability to translate complex planning and engineering ideas and designs into informative and understandable presentations for a variety of audiences, as well as providing public presentations and exhibits in a variety of forums.
- Willingness to work with local groups that have established neighborhood relationships to achieve community engagement goals.
- Commitment to incorporating citizen preferences with City directives.
- Extensive experience providing social and environmental integration and cohesion.
- Show an exemplary record of partnering with public agencies on similar projects and implementing robust community engagement strategies to reach goals.

3.3 Cultural Historian / Anthropologist

- Experience conducting cultural heritage narratives, tangible and intangible. Ability to integrate cultural narratives into architecture and landscape design guidelines, public art, and urban form to define and sustain neighborhood character.

3.4 Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Engineering, and Urban Design Teams

- Demonstrates design excellence, technical competence, and innovative green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) and engineering designs in multi-consultant collaborative settings within an urban context.
- The vendor must have experience with strategies that effectively manage stormwater and strengthen the quality of life for communities through innovative public space development and community asset building.
- Design teams must show qualifications and experience in developing Master Plans, design guidelines (incl. for affordable and market rate new or rehabilitated housing), and urban design visions for a comprehensive neighborhood framework for housing and the public realm.
- Design teams must also demonstrate experience with technical design components such as infrastructure, land-use, utilities, streetscape, and both transit-oriented and non-motorized design. They must also be able to identify physical assets worthy of preservation or adaptive reuse and have experience in deploying those strategies.
- Team must have experience working with local municipal departments, especially relating to infrastructure improvements, parks, and public right of way
- Design team must also have a strong record of robust inclusive design practices that integrate community feedback into the design process.
- Illustrate experience with integrating green infrastructure and/or sustainable water features into streetscape projects and public open space
- Demonstrate a proven track record of developing connected networks of right of way improvements and streetscape improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Extensive experience in traffic mitigation including walking paths, bike lanes, trails and connectivity.

3.5 Professional with “Strong understanding of economic development, *infill housing*, housing rehabilitation, *micro neighborhood development strategy* and vacant property reuse”

- Team members demonstrate experience identifying opportunities that support residential growth, main street development and attracting new businesses that provide neighborhood amenities and employment opportunities for residents.
- Strong understanding of public finance, economic analysis, residential rehabilitation, and real estate development that is fair and equitable while mitigating the effects of gentrification for existing community residents.
- Team members demonstrate experience developing linkages between economic development, housing and green space/energy uses, and have working knowledge of metrics for measuring the benefits of the infrastructure on economic development, housing and revitalization.

4. NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES AND CONTEXT

Neighborhood Boundaries

North Corktown’s boundaries are somewhat contestable, but they are generally believed to be bordered by I-75 to the south, MLK Blvd. to the north, the John C. Lodge freeway to the east and I-96 to the west.

Neighborhood History

North Corktown is within the original borders of Corktown, which was believed to have been established in 1834. Around that year, and over the next couple of decades during the Great Famine in Ireland, is when Detroit experienced a significant growth in the Irish community. Today, North Corktown is home to a strong African-American population, and a strong Latino population, specifically Puerto Rican. Technically speaking, the neighborhood is 73.6% African American, 6.1% Hispanic/Latino, 17% Caucasian, and 3.3% Other. The median income is \$20,556 (National average: \$51,939.)

In the middle of the 20th Century, I-75 was constructed through the middle of Corktown, dividing it in two halves, North and South. The Corktown area north of the highway began to be known as Briggs - which was the name of Old Tiger Stadium at the time until 1960. "North Corktown" is a term used more recently to bring the identity back to its historic roots. However, talking to residents who have lived in the neighborhood their whole lives, sometimes for several generations, they still know their neighborhood simply as Corktown. As a neighborhood, we include North Corktown, Corktown *and* Briggs in considering our identity.

North Corktown still has several buildings from the early 1900s and even before. Even with many of them being torn down, you can feel the original layout of the neighborhood - with buildings that would have a business on the ground floor with residence on the top floor on almost every corner. The neighborhood was self-sustainable with grocery stores, drug stores,

confectionery shops, and saloons just blocks away for the residents, as well as Western Market not too much further down the road.

In the early 2000s, a group came together and formed the Greater Corktown Development Corporation. They built several new homes that had the same look and feel as the original neighborhood, with traditional architecture and a variety of different layouts and color schemes. The GCDC completed around 30 homes before halting the project due to the Financial Crisis. Over the past several years, many community members and organizations have stepped up their investment in the neighborhood by activating vacant lots and creating public parks and urban gardens.

Who We Are & What We Value

We are a place for everyone, from the very young to the elderly.

We value assets such as buildings, parks, businesses, and infrastructure, that will create a legacy of vibrancy in the neighborhood. Design matters in North Corktown, where we believe that affordable and accessible housing can and should be beautiful. We value equity to embrace, retain, and uplift all people in all economic categories and walks of life.

We are innovators. We work together to gradually improve our neighborhood and its quality of life through a cumulative impact of small resident-driven projects.

We know the value of green spaces and do our best to practice environmentally responsible lifestyles within the neighborhood. Many residents maintain and enjoy several gardens, pocket parks, vegetable farms and recreational spaces. We recycle, and try to provide safe havens (such as a lot filled with bird houses) for the surprising amount of wildlife that also calls North Corktown home.

We value art and culture (made visible by the many public art works, many of which were created by residents themselves.) We embrace a “come as you are” mentality. *All* are welcome. Residents here take liberty in creating the kind of lifestyle and home they desire. You will see an exuberant display of yard decorations, creative approaches to landscaping, kids playing games on vacant lots, wild pheasants and turkeys roaming through wildflowers, and a local high-school team practicing football on the same field where a recreational soccer league is having a match. Neighbors meet-up on Thursday nights around a bonfire during the summer and help shovel each other’s snow in the winter. You may meet someone who has lived here for 70 years and you may meet someone who’s lived here for 7 months. We are old and young, black and white, Asian and Latino, and more.

Sources:

North Corktown Neighborhood Association website (www.northcorktown.com)

North Corktown in the 21st Century, by Bill Cheek

North Corktown Sustainable Development Task Force Meeting (10.5.16)

North Corktown Work Group Meeting (9.29.16)

North Corktown Redevelopment Handbook

(<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~larissal/Corktown.htm>)

5. SUMMARY OF TASKS AND DELIVERABLES

(TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)

6. ANTICIPATED PROJECT TIMELINE

(TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)

7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City of Detroit is committed to advancing design excellence in all projects, which will produce equity, sustainability, resilience, and healthy living for those who live, work, and play within and around project areas. Accordingly, proposals and plans shall exhibit sound urban design principles and established neighborhood development strategies that will offer a variety of uses and appropriate building and landscape typologies with meaningful architectural expressions.

All designs and plans shall incorporate forward-thinking practices that promote social, economic and ecological sustainability. Examples include but are not limited to: increasing canopy cover; green infrastructure strategies that address stormwater management, drainage charge mitigation, biodiversity, habitat and food. Social spaces could be greenways, priority walking streets, gathering places and routes for non-motorized mobility that provide additional amenities to the neighborhood.

VALUES

UNIFIED – INCLUSIVE – BALANCED – EQUITABLE – SUSTAINABLE – DIVERSE - ATTRACTIVE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EQUITY

- Incorporate an inclusive design process that touches the neighborhood residents block by block in an effort to build on the current diverse and unified community..
- Consider and acknowledge cultural and historic significance within the neighborhood.
- Connect with and engage current community stakeholders including, the neighborhood associations, work groups, landowners, businesses, schools and places of worship to ensure community engagement throughout the entire planning process.
- Promote environmental stewardship and community health through environmental justice techniques in the built environment.
- Identify and provide actionable community benefit opportunities and guidelines for developers and residents.

CIRCULATION, TRANSPORTATION, CONNECTIVITY

- Provide a unified circulation plan that connects North Corktown to its adjacent neighborhoods and communities through, walkability, bike paths and vehicular circulation.
- Provide a strategy that includes intensive pedestrian walkable routes within North Corktown that promote and encourage walks through a community network that links parks, public spaces and commercial destinations and is modeled on the 20 minute neighborhood concept.
- Provide a strategy that includes intensive bicycle friendly routes within North Corktown that promote and encourage biking through a community network that links parks, public spaces and commercial destinations.
- Provide a strategy that connects to our current public transit systems while considering future opportunities to foster both economic activity and added mobility.
- Evaluate and mitigate existing vehicular circulation patterns like one-way streets and truck routes.

HOUSING AND LAND

- Support North Corktown as a vibrant community with a diverse mix of land use strategies and public infrastructure that support food, commerce, public health, safety and welfare.
- Incorporate development opportunities that lead to environmental resilience.
- Promote environmental stewardship and community health
- Provide single and multi-family housing opportunities that provide diversity through affordability and scale.

- Provide cohesive and strategic mixed-use development guidelines to encourage new investment in retail, housing and office space along appropriate “commercial” corridors.
- Preserve and identify existing and future “open space” that includes but is not limited to social, economic and environmental opportunities like parks, farms, wildlife corridors, and green infrastructure including solar, geo-thermal and storm water.
- Encourage walking and biking through a network of existing parks and additional public space improvements along priority pedestrian corridors and bicycle routes
- Preserve North Corktown’s current rural condition as a strong characteristic for design consideration.
- Consider funding and maintenance strategies both public and private for the long term success, care and management of the North Corktown Community.
- Ensure high quality, innovative and thoughtful design consideration through intensive spatial analysis by unifying social and environmental relationships.
- Consider, prioritize and promote cultural character and historic significance within the neighborhood.
- Explore opportunities to build small sustainable eco-communities within greater North Corktown..

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

(TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)

9. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Following the receipt of the qualified firm, a City designated Evaluation Committee, which should include community residents beyond the current North Corktown Neighborhood Association to evaluate each response. All Proposals, which meet the required format of this RFP, will be evaluated. Any Proposals determined to be non-responsive to the requirements of the RFP, including instructions governing submission and format, will be disqualified unless the City determines, in its sole discretion, that non-compliance is not substantial or that an alternative proposed by the Respondent is acceptable. The City may also at its discretion, request oral presentations, make site visits at Respondent’s facility and may request a demonstration of Respondent’s operations. If scheduled, a final determination will be made after the oral presentations and/or demonstrations are complete. All decisions reached by the Evaluation Committee will be by consensus.

10. PROPOSAL CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

(TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)

11. SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS AND OTHER KEY INFORMATION

(TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)

12. PROPOSAL DISCLAIMER AND DISCLOSURES

_(TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)

13. APPENDIX

_(TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)