

Reference Materials:

We encourage consultant teams to explore the [Downtown Detroit Partnership](#) website as a reference when developing their proposals. Additional materials are listed below:

- City of Detroit I-375 Webpage: [I-375 Reconnecting Communities | City of Detroit](#)
- MDOT I-375 Webpage: <https://375detroit.org/>
- DDP Peer Review – [Part 3: Construction Mitigation](#)

Bidder Q&A

- 1. I wanted to confirm the due date. The RFP lists two different dates — is the correct deadline the 14th or the 22nd?**

The RFP has been updated to reflect the May 22nd deadline

- 2. Could you clarify whether there are existing vendors already engaged as part of this proposal, or if it is our responsibility to identify and propose vendors within our submission? Specifically, does “vendors” refer to those responsible for implementation—such as the construction or installation of wayfinding elements?**

The Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP) has existing relationships with vendors and has utilized them in the past. We are happy to share those contacts as needed. However, we are also open to firms proposing new vendors or contractors they have experience with as part of their submission.

- 3. Are there any specific city codes, guidelines, or regulatory requirements we should be aware of or plan to work within as part of this proposal?**

There will likely be parameters from both MDOT and the City that we’ll need to follow. This project is intended to supplement MDOT’s work—similar in scope to the I-696 project—with a focus on enhancing the user experience and supporting impacted businesses. It’s important to note that MDOT is using a progressive design-build approach, meaning design and construction are happening concurrently. We are working closely with the information currently available, but this evolving process should be factored into how phasing and a three-year strategic plan are developed. Any recommendations within MDOT’s construction zone will need to align with their guidelines, and the City may also provide input.

- 4. Will the selected agency be responsible for managing social media channels and creating content, or are you seeking more of a strategic and supportive role?**

In this approach, the focus is primarily on strategy. We have a [marketing and communications] team, including Talitha and others, who will likely coordinate with the selected agency. However,

it's important to note that this is separate from DDP's organizational social media. The goal is to address the marketing and communication needs specifically related to the I-375 project during construction.

- 5. I understand that DDP has worked with various agencies over the years. Is there an incumbent agency that has been invited to bid on this project?**

We have shared the RFP with various agencies that DDP has engaged with in the past.

- 6. Is there a budget available that you can share, or are you looking for agencies to provide recommendations based on the scope of the project?**

We would like agencies to provide recommendations and submit bids based on the scope. From there, we will continue to refine and develop the project over the next three years.

- 7. Just to follow up, will this include an advertising budget, or is that something anticipated separately from this scope?**

Please include any recommended ad spend or budget allocations in your proposal, along with a proposed budget for the tools and strategies you suggest.

- 8. Do you feel that aligning with the messaging MDOT is putting out will be relatively seamless, given that they have their own component in place?**

We anticipate working closely with MDOT, continuing our coordination from the peer review process. However, this strategy will be supplemental to their efforts. While MDOT will focus on the transportation aspects, our approach will concentrate on ensuring that the public clearly understands the impact, how to navigate downtown, and that businesses remain visible and accessible. The emphasis will be on branding, storytelling, and maintaining downtown's relevance during construction.

- 9. Are you expecting web design services, or is that also part of the strategic approach?**

In the RFP, we are asking each agency to assess whether a website design is a necessary component of the strategy. We currently have the "[I-375 Road Ahead](#)" webpage, which was used for the peer review. However, we are open to suggestions and would like you to determine if a website is essential or if other avenues can effectively help us tell our story.

10. Are you looking for the consultant team to design and build the website, or simply to advise on whether a website is needed as part of the overall strategy?

At this stage, we're asking for strategic guidance. If your proposed plan includes a website as part of the broader marketing and communications strategy, please include that in your scope and proposal. MDOT currently has its own website for the project, so we encourage all applicants to review their materials. As a reminder, our role is to supplement MDOT's efforts—bringing a different lens that ensures downtown remains visible and vibrant during what will be a three-year period of significant impact, particularly regarding navigability and accessibility.

11. The last two sentences state that the communications plan should include a budget and implementation plan, and that DDP is looking to implement it. Can you clarify—will DDP be responsible for implementing the plan internally, with the selected agency providing only the strategy? Or is implementation part of the agency's scope as well?

The primary focus of this RFP is on strategy and planning—developing a clear roadmap, including timing and a proposed budget for implementation of the recommended tools and strategies. DDP would then take that plan into a second phase, where we would lead the implementation based on the framework provided.

12. Will you be providing an initial list of printed and digital assets expected over the three-year period to help accurately estimate the print and installation budget?

DDP will work closely with the selected contractor or consultant throughout the process to help shape and guide the strategy. However, the purpose of this RFP is to have you recommend the tools and strategies needed. That includes identifying the anticipated print and digital materials, along with associated needs. We're looking for you to define and support those recommendations as part of your proposal.

13. If the proposed strategy includes ongoing updates or adjustments based on project progress over the three-year period, how would DDP prefer we address that in pricing? Should those be included as optional line items in addition to the initial scope, or will pricing be evaluated on a case-by-case basis?

We recognize that this is a dynamic, evolving schedule, largely dependent on MDOT's project phasing. We're asking for a three-year strategy that outlines complementary tools and approaches appropriate for a construction project of this duration. As the project evolves, we expect that some components may need to be revisited to ensure pricing and implementation

remain current. Including optional line items or phased pricing is appropriate, with the understanding that adjustments may be needed over time.

14. The RFP states that the DDP team will be responsible for implementing the plan developed by the selected agency, correct?

To clarify, when we say DDP will be leading the implementation, it means that DDP as an organization will take the lead on executing the plan. However, this does not preclude us from engaging additional firms or outside support to assist with the process. It's important to note that this effort is being led by DDP, rather than by MDOT or the City of Detroit.

15. Do you have a sense of how many steps or levels of review will be involved, and who the key decision-makers are? For example, with elements like branding and storytelling—which may need to be developed early on—will those go through multiple teams or tiers of approval that could impact timelines?

This is a DDP-led initiative, so the primary approvals will come through our team. If there are elements that require input from the City or MDOT—such as wayfinding or components that trigger permitting—we would coordinate with those entities as needed. However, since this is DDP's mitigation program and not directly owned by MDOT or the City, most marketing and branding decisions will be handled internally by the DDP team.

16. Regarding the regular reporting on community sentiment, engagement metrics, and sign effectiveness, does this indicate that the selected contractor will be involved in the ongoing implementation and reporting process, or is the expectation centered on providing a plan for how to collect and monitor this data?

Given that this is an evolving, three-year project, we recognize the need to adjust marketing, branding, and communication strategies as MDOT progresses. Our goal is to continually assess the effectiveness of the tools and strategies we've used, ensuring they remain relevant as MDOT's construction stages evolve. If necessary, we'll explore alternative approaches to better align with the current phase of the project.

17. In alignment with the evolving nature of the project, how long do you envision the firm being under contract for this work? Would it be a six-month to one-year duration, or is a longer timeframe expected?

For this specific RFP, we anticipate a six-month strategy timeframe, with regular check-ins with our team. Given that MDOT plans to begin construction in late August, we expect to begin implementing certain elements—such as wayfinding signage and other communication components—earlier in the process to align with MDOT’s construction schedule.

18. In addition to the general public, residents, and business owners, are there any other key stakeholder groups or audiences you aim to reach through this initiative?

The broader Metro Detroit region should also be considered. While we want to ensure that local small businesses and regular downtown users are kept informed, we also have large entertainment venues with a broader audience that will be impacted. The strategy will be a blend of these groups, but there will be a heavier focus on ensuring clear communication to everyday users and the local small business community downtown.

19. Could you provide an overview of the roles and capacity of the internal communications team?

Yes, the focus for this will be specifically on the I-375 project itself. The DDP team will be focused on broader marketing and communications for downtown during construction, so this initiative is a separate component from their work. While there will be coordination and synergy between the teams, this effort will be distinct, specifically targeting communications related to the I-375 project.

20. Is there a place where we can access an organizational chart outlining the roles and responsibilities of the DDP team members?

I’ll need to follow up with you on that. As we move forward, we will certainly outline the roles of our team members, but I’ll get back to you with more specific information.

21. For the social media channels related to this campaign, the focus is specifically on DDP's social media accounts?

DDP's social media will likely be used in some capacity, but we encourage you to consider the broader strategy. From what we understand, MDOT also plans to utilize social media. We’ve asked each team to assess how social media would fit into your strategy and determine the most appropriate approach for its use.

22. If our plan includes elements like graphics, should we assume that DDP already has the necessary assets in place, meaning no new video or photo shoots would be required? Or

should we plan for the possibility that new assets, such as videos or photos, will need to be created and included in the scope?

New assets will need to be developed and created. Please do not assume that DDP has any existing materials for this project. Given the unique nature of this initiative, all assets will need to be created specifically for this project.

23. I'm curious about the storytelling aspect of this project. Have you had discussions with the businesses that are likely to be most impacted, and do you anticipate their interest and willingness to participate in the storytelling efforts that may come from the recommendations?

We have not yet had conversations with the small business community specifically regarding storytelling. However, we recognize the importance of including them if there's a role to play, and we want to be mindful of how that would be incorporated. Additionally, we're considering the rich history of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley as part of the storytelling, which could be woven into the branding and narrative of this project.

24. The RFP mentions that certain businesses will need to be highlighted. Can you provide any transparency on how specific areas or businesses will be selected for this purpose?

Our focus is on the east side of downtown, which would be our primary target area. We also need to consider neighboring areas such as the Riverfront to the south and the Eastern Market to the north. We encourage everyone to integrate these areas into their strategies and think about how and when specific business highlights should be included in the planning. However, we are looking at this as a whole at the moment, considering the broader downtown area first.

25. Would out-of-home advertising, such as billboards or highway signage, be considered part of the strategy? I'm curious about the boundaries for this—should we pitch ideas for such elements, or are there specific requirements you're looking for in terms of these assets?

As you develop your scope or plan, we're open to ideas and not limiting ourselves at this stage. Our primary focus is ensuring navigability is clear, as we know that will be a challenge for people trying to get downtown. Additionally, we want to make sure that people are aware that businesses and events are still happening and encourage participation. So, we're open to various approaches and solutions at this point.

26. Does the project have any annual reporting requirements that we could leverage for this initiative, or would it just be DDP's annual report that we would be working with?

DDP is not aware of MDOT or the city conducting any simultaneous reporting related to this construction mitigation. However, DDP is collecting data, which we can share. Given the six-month timeframe for this phase, that data won't be immediately available, but it will be ongoing throughout the construction to help inform the project as it progresses over the next three years.

27. Are there any advisory groups, individuals, business associations, or other stakeholders already involved in that work who might be open to engaging in this project as well? Could you provide more details about the stakeholders involved, or is there a section in the peer review document that outlines this information?

Yes, continuing from our peer review, DDP is engaging with the same stakeholders to help inform our mitigation efforts. As the project progresses, we expect to maintain these relationships with our sister organizations. Primarily, DDP has led the process as the convener, facilitating separate engagements with groups like Eastern Market, Greektown Neighborhood Partnership, and other key stakeholders who helped inform our peer review. We've continued these conversations to guide our mitigation strategy moving forward.

Additionally, MDOT is conducting their own public and community engagement, which DDP participates in as a local organization. However, those engagements are led by MDOT and will continue according to their schedule.

28. Would the MDOT and City-led public meetings provide potential opportunities to engage stakeholders, or are they unlikely to be involved?

No. Meetings led by MDOT or the City, are separate from DDPs construction mitigation efforts.

29. Can you explain a bit more about why DDP is taking on this work? I get that it's about keeping traffic flowing to businesses and encouraging people to come down, but are there other reasons behind DDP leading this effort?

We strongly believe that the impact of this project will be substantial, a sentiment shared by both our funders and the downtown community. Given the significant economic progress we've made over the past decade, it's crucial that we ensure downtown remains vibrant and relevant during this period. Clear communication is essential in this effort, and we are committed to taking the lead in that area to keep everyone informed and engaged.

30. Could you please clarify the expectations for quoting on this multi-phased project? We understand that some elements of the RFP will fall within the first six months, while others may extend beyond that. How should we structure our quotes for the first six months, and

how should we approach quoting for potential work beyond that period, considering the variability after the initial phase?

Yes, we need a comprehensive strategy within the first six months, which will outline the next three years. Please quote for the recommended programs over that period, acknowledging potential trigger points. We're also looking for specific breakdowns for components like wayfinding and communications, rather than a lump sum, to help DDP plan for the full three years.

31. Is DDP currently considering any event-based activities, such as a tree lighting or similar event, specifically for the area most impacted? I'm wondering if there are any complementary initiatives in the works that align with events DDP is already known for, and that could help drive traffic to the area.

Yes, while it may not be on the same scale as a tree lighting, we are moving forward with a number of economic mitigation strategies, including programming and activations with the small business community during construction. These efforts are ongoing and separate from the current RFP, but at some point, they may align with and complement the broader initiatives, especially in terms of promotion.

Additional Q&A:

A. Do you have a total project budget? *Refer to response No. 6 in Bidder Q&A*

B. Are you hoping to engage an agency partner for the entire 3 years of construction?

Our intent is to engage an agency partner to develop a comprehensive communications strategy within the first six months. We're looking for proposals that include a clear scope and quote for the first six months, along with an outline and optional pricing for continued support beyond that period.

C. Do you have an example of a similar construction project locally or regionally where you believe the communications was done well? (i.e. who are the benchmarks?)

Refer to "Reference Materials: DDP Peer Review – [Part 3: Construction Mitigation](#)"

D. Is there an incumbent agency partner who was invited to bid on this work?

Refer to response No. 5 in Bidder Q&A

E. On page 4 of the RFP the proposal due date is listed as May 14th, but throughout the rest of the RFP it's May 22nd. Can you confirm which is correct? *Refer to response No. 1 in Bidder Q&A*

F. Do you have a paid ad spend for this project? *Refer to response No. 7 in Bidder Q&A*

G. Will the selected agency be responsible for managing the DDP's social media channels or developing content, or mostly supporting campaign specific strategy for social media?

Refer to response No. 21 in Bidder Q&A

H. Which tools, interactive maps or apps does the DDP use that the agency would be required to develop wayfinding for? *Refer to response No. 22 in Bidder Q&A*

I. Between the general public, residents and business owners, who would you rate as the priority stakeholder for this project? *Refer to response No. 18 & 24 in Bidder Q&A*

J. How does the DDP currently communicate with business owners? Do you have a regular email or newsletter communication?

DDP distributes several e-mail/newsletters to a broad audience that includes business owners, property owners, visitors, and other community stakeholders. These publications include the DDP Newsletter (quarterly), BIZ Insider (quarterly), CEO Note (quarterly), Small Business Newsletter (monthly), and The Road Ahead—an intermittent newsletter focused on I-75 and I-375 project updates.

K. Do you regularly communicate directly with residents? If so, through which methods?

Resident communication is handled on a project-by-project basis and may include in-person outreach to leasing and property manager, mailers, phone calls, or emails, depending on the needs of the community.

- L. For the “Public & Community Outreach” and “Marketing” pieces of the scope, will the DDP rely on the agency to implement the plans/strategy following their development?**

Refer to response No. 14 & 28 in Bidder Q&A

- M. The link that Isaac Douglas placed in the chat. Refer to “Reference Materials”**

- N. Communications department organization chart. Refer to DDP website – [DDP Team](#)**

- O. Signage vendor list/historical signage order information, for budgetary reasons.**

Refer to response No. 2 in Bidder Q&A

- P. Any other misc. items that can be shared. Refer to “Reference Materials”**

- Q. Should the logo/branding align with the DDP brand guidelines or have its own unique look and feel? (i.e., will it be a sub-brand of the DDP, or its own individual brand?)**

The branding should have its own look and identity, while still being complementary to DDP’s brand. Alignment with DDP’s values and tone is important, but the project branding should be tailored to resonate with the broader community and partners involved and impacted in the I-375 project.

- R. Will the branding need to include a project tagline or name that is different than “The Road Ahead I-375” or “The I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project”?**

Part of the branding scope should include the development of a refreshed project name or tagline. While “The Road Ahead I-375” and “The I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project” have been used to date, we are seeking recommendations for a clearer, more engaging name or tagline that supports effective public communication and outreach.

- S. Should the branding focus on the construction project as a whole, or just that downtown is open and accessible during construction?**

The branding should clearly convey that downtown remains open and accessible during construction. The goal is to balance branding and access messaging with storytelling that reinforces the community-focused purpose of the project and provide context around the history of the impacted area (i.e. the history of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley.)