

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
Downtown Rochester Minnesota
Plan for Enhanced Public Realm Delivery

Submittals Due April 13, 2026

PROJECT BACKGROUND & NEED

Rochester Minnesota, with a population of over 123,000 and approximately 3 million visitors annually, is home to the Mayo Clinic, the number 1 hospital in the world.¹ Downtown Rochester is undergoing a transformational period in the history of the city.

As a destination for health and wellness and a magnet for medical professionals, researchers, and patients, Rochester as America's City for Health, continues to create a dynamic and accessible urban core, with an increasingly vibrant, equitable, and inclusive public realm. Investments in recent years, in both public and private sector projects, have increasingly created places for people, making the downtown a more walkable, welcoming, and connected city center.

Now, Mayo Clinic will expand their downtown Rochester facilities with Bold. Forward. Unbound. in Rochester (BFUiR), a development project representing a commitment of over \$5 billion. With the existing campus integrated into the urban fabric of the city, the project will cover an area of over five standard City blocks. Planned completion of the project in 2030 includes: two new clinical buildings connected by skybridges, two new parking structures, and a new logistic center, along with the necessary energy production and infrastructure upgrades to support innovative next generation health care.

Directly related to the BFUiR project, the City of Rochester has eight public right of way projects, impacting 20 downtown blocks, which will be carried out over the next four years (2026-2029). These projects include above and below ground public and private infrastructure to accommodate both Mayo Clinic operations and regular City services. The permanent street vacation of Third and Fourth Avenues West to accommodate BFUiR buildings, necessitates the relocation of many street functions, not the least of which is the north/south bike lanes through the downtown. Relocation of the bicycle routes is critical in the ongoing efforts for transportation mode shift in the city. Additionally, as part of this mode shift, development of the Link Bus Rapid Transit ("Link") system is occurring with the route and two stations being constructed within feet of the BFUiR project. With a medical

¹ <https://rankings.newsweek.com/worlds-best-hospitals-2026>

campus integrated into the urban fabric of the city, coordination between public and private improvement projects has never been more necessary.

Backing these projects with collaborative planning efforts and financing, the Destination Medical Center (DMC) initiative is the State of Minnesota's largest public-private economic development partnership. Established in 2005 with the purpose of supporting city infrastructure and improving the urban experience to keep pace with growth of the local healthcare anchor, the initiative includes \$585 million in public investment over a 20-year period through 2035. In the first 10 years, DMCs investment has helped to facilitate Rochester's emergence as a dynamic hub for innovation, quality of life, and economic growth.

As Mayo Clinic reimagines healthcare delivery through Bold. Forward. Unbound. in Rochester, the surrounding district has an opportunity to demonstrate how thoughtful urban design can be a powerful tool for improving human and environmental health.

(DMC 2025 Development Plan Update)

In 2025 as the plans for BFUiR, Link and other ongoing public improvement projects coalesced, the Mayo Clinic, City of Rochester, and DMC agreed to **Five Guiding Principles**² to steer a people-first approach in maintaining the downtown while meeting needs for residents and visitors during and after construction. While the Guiding Principles have been agreed upon, a plan is now needed to ensure these principles and the priorities of the three organizations are carried out during and after development. The City of Rochester will take the lead in working with the consultant in this planning effort and city project managers will be responsible for carrying out the work as defined in the adopted plan. DMC has committed to providing financial assistance to the project and will be a participant throughout the process. Mayo Clinic will also be invited to fully participate in the process.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION & EXPECTATIONS

The City of Rochester and DMC are seeking a qualified professional firm or team (the "Subconsultant" or "Respondent") to assist in developing a **public realm plan**. The Plan will provide a model for the *public realm* including streets and sidewalks, public and private spaces that contain infrastructure to support utilities, transportation, wayfinding and elements of comfort such as weather protection and seating. It will consider the public

² See Attachment A – Guiding Principles

realm not as individual segments or isolated spaces, but as interconnected systems which will provide places for health, social interaction, and equitable access to outdoor life while still delivering necessary services. The successful plan will:

- Integrate new public streetscape with adjacent private development.
- Encourage mode shift by optimizing pedestrian and bicycle convenience and comfort and support transit, micromobility, and ride sharing opportunity.
- Create interactive experiences and celebrate Rochester as a City for Health.
- Design streetscapes to function as both multimodal transportation routes and as linear parks.
- Identify products and processes that reduce impacts to climate change/health.
- Incorporate innovation in design and/or programming.

The plan will build upon the design guidelines adopted by the City in 2017 for the DMC District³, which addresses downtown sub-districts, streets/corridors, and individual site development. It will further identify and create more specific plans for varying typologies of streets, utilizing and updating *Guideline B.11 Types of Streets & Corridors* for the project area. These public realm concepts will be based on needs related to the current projects and plans related to BFUIR, Link, and the ongoing mode shift/support for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure throughout the city.

The plan will include a framework which outlines a strategy to build the transformative district-wide development in a concentrated time frame. Already partially established for projects under design in 2026⁴, the framework will consider public and private development efforts occurring in the same physical space (or close proximity) and the needs and expectations of both sectors. The framework will rely on the agreed upon five guiding principles, including maximizing construction opportunities by applying a “dig once” philosophy and considering current and future user experiences over the 5-year period of construction. The framework will assist in understanding the interconnected spaces, systems, construction timelines, and financing for the delivery of an enhanced public realm within the project area using the five guiding principles.

Innovation must be incorporated into aspects of public infrastructure, including above and/or below-ground elements. The consultant will develop a scoring guide with criteria and standards for different levels of performance to help determine the appropriate innovative design elements based on their location, impact, and difficulty and cost to develop, construct, and maintain.

³ <https://www.rochestermn.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/14350/636367654730970000>

⁴ See Attachment B – Project Area Map

The timeline for the project is as follows:

- First week of June: Project Kick Off
- June – Mid-September: Owner (City, Mayo Clinic, DMC) Engagement
- June – July: Community Engagement
- Late August: First Drafts
- Mid-September: Project Revisions
- October 30: Final Deliverable

SCOPE OF SERVICES AND DELIVERABLES

- Services include:
 - Project owner engagement and coordination – Mayo Clinic, City, DMC
 - Stakeholder engagement with select neighboring properties (including two churches and a private school).
 - Community engagement – businesses and organizations within the project area, adjacent neighborhoods, including Rochester Downtown Association, and the City's Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee.
 - Development of a safe systems approach to integrate transportation routes and other public infrastructure within an innovative and enhanced public realm.
 - Development of a rubric for innovation with a street hierarchy to deliver multiple needs and opportunities within the project area.
 - Work will be built on foundations already established by:
 - DMC 2025 Update and the *Design for Well-Being* priority - *embedding health and wellness into the built environment*.
 - Rochester DMC District Design Guidelines (2017)
 - BFUIR Five Guiding Principles (City/Mayo Clinic/DMC 2025)
 - City approved plans, permits, and agreements for the BFUIR project
 - Reconnecting Downtown Mobility Networks (City/Toole 2026)
 - Reimagining 6th Avenue Project (City/Toole 2026)
 - Rochester Active Transportation Plan (October 2022)
 - City of Rochester Engineering policies
 - Link plans and designs
 - Individual aspects of projects already underway
- The plan will include selections of:
 - Street furnishings (e.g. benches, lights, etc.)
 - Pavements
 - Materials palette
 - Plantings palette
 - Public art concepts

- Wayfinding system using the design elements and wayfinding signage (signage conceptual stage)
- Elements that support transportation mode shift (e.g. mobility hub concepts)
- Elements that highlight Rochester as a City for Health, Mayo Clinic's innovation in medicine and DMC's healthy placemaking.
- Strategic framework outlining
 - Coordination of the public realm design with public/city and private/Mayo Clinic design elements distinct but coordinated across the project area
 - Coordination of *multimodal corridors and their connections* between points of interest and the larger community systems
 - Timelines for construction activity between public/city and private/Mayo Clinic to promote the "*dig once*" philosophy over a 5-year period
 - Financing and delivery of public realm elements between the three organizations, assuming a budget of \$38M in City/DMC contributions
- Innovation Evaluation Framework that includes:
 - A street hierarchy identifying those project streets where innovative infrastructure elements will have the greatest impact.
 - Project timing by street to determine when innovative elements would need to be designed and constructed.
 - Innovation impact on priorities including:
 - Environmental or public health,
 - Sustainability goals,
 - Transportation mode shift,
 - A "good, better, best" score for innovation ideas

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The issuance of this Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") constitutes only an invitation to submit responses to the City. It is not to be construed as an official and customary request for bids, but as a means by which the City can facilitate the acquisition of information related to the purchase of services. Any response submitted as provided herein constitutes a suggestion to supply information/negotiate and NOT A BID.

The City reserves the right to determine, in its sole and absolute discretion, whether any aspect of the proposal satisfactorily meets the criteria established in this RFQ, the right to seek clarification from any Respondent(s), the right to negotiate with any Respondent(s) whether or not they submitted a response, the right to reject any or all responses with or without cause, and the right to cancel and/or amend, in part or entirely, the RFQ.

The RFQ does not commit the City either to award a contract or to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of a response. Submission of a response as provided herein shall neither obligate nor entitle a prospective Respondent to enter into an Agreement with the City.

It is understood that any response received and evaluated by the City can be used as a basis for direct negotiation of the cost and terms of a contract between the City and the Respondent submitting Qualifications. The City reserves the right to negotiate pertinent contract terms concurrently with any number of firms as it deems in its best interest, whether such firm has submitted a response. In submitting this response, it is understood by the Respondent that the City reserves the right to accept any response, to reject any and all response and to waive any irregularities or informalities that the City deems is in its best interest.

If this RFQ is withdrawn by the City for any reason, including but not limited to, the failure of any of those things or events set forth herein to occur, the City shall have no liability to Respondent for any costs or expenses incurred in connection with this RFQ or otherwise. Accordingly, each response should be submitted in the most favorable terms of costs and programmatic considerations and in a complete and understandable form. The City reserves the right to request additional data, oral discussion, or a presentation in support of the written response. The City is not obligated to respond to any response submitted nor is it legally bound in any manner whatsoever by the submission of a response. It is the intention of the City to enter into a contract with the firm(s) with which the City can make the most satisfactory arrangements for its needs.

The City has broad rights with respect to the procurement and contracting processes as detailed in this request. The City may decide to contract with more than one entity to develop the services contemplated herein.

We intend to move rapidly through the consultant selection process, starting with this RFQ and then asking for proposals as part of the contract process.

Anticipated Procurement Timeline:

Proposals received by the deadline will be evaluated by a panel of City and DMC representatives who may select one or more to interview based on provided examples from past projects. Interviews will be conducted between April 24-30, when discussion of the firm's experience and approach will occur. The City of Rochester anticipates that the evaluation and selection will be completed by May 11, 2026. Contract negotiations with selected firm are anticipated finalized by May 19 and approval by City Council June 1, with project kick off as soon as possible after that date.

- March 27: RFQ released
- April 13: Submittal of Qualifications Deadline
- April 13-20: Owner Group Review of Submittals
- April 24-30: Interviews
- May 1-11: Negotiations
- May 19: Finalize Contract
- June 1: City Council Approval of Contract

Evaluation Criteria:

- Examples of past projects
 - Working with multiple project owners
 - Utilizing innovation in the public realm
 - Supporting healthy community endeavors
- Engagement approach utilizing the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation
- Timeline and estimated cost for work

CONTENT OF RESPONSE

The following information should be submitted in no more than twenty pages.

- Examples of three past successful projects that included innovation
- Brief description of project approach
- Team members and experience
- Engagement approach utilizing the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation
- Timeline for work with final deliverables anticipated October 30, 2026 (or provide a reasonable timeline to accomplish the project]

Guiding Principles

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH FOR DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION



Provide the best experience possible

- Optimize and align schedules across projects to minimize disruption.
- Manage road closures.
- Intuitive wayfinding and approach to movement during construction between Mayo Clinic, downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Application of Business Forward model.
- A solution-oriented approach that balances project needs with safety, quality, and community standards with an eye toward the future.

Communication & Engagement

- Timely, actionable and coordinated communications.
- Communicate about the now (short-term) and the future.
- Ongoing community engagement to inform approach to public spaces.
- Convey meaningful impact of utility improvements.

Connectivity

- Improve connections to neighborhoods and downtown.
- Below grade and at-grade systems (including wayfinding, walking/biking, and other infrastructure).
- Wayfinding/connectivity - Integrated and connected to the rest of the community.
- Takes advantage of technology to improve wayfinding and experience.

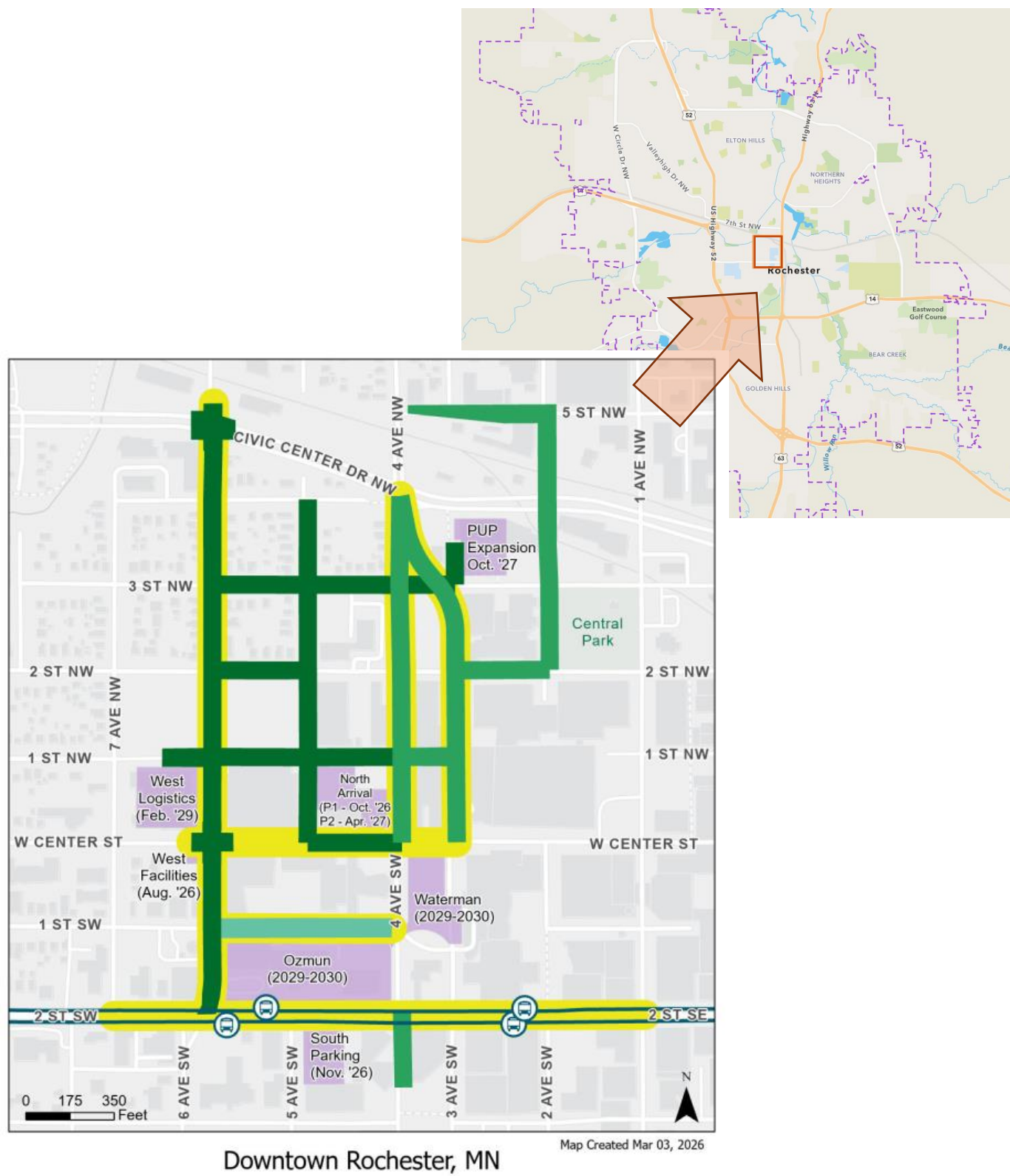
Elevated experience in and around construction

- Thoughtful approaches to downtown and neighborhood gateway corridors.
- Use of landscaping, plantings and art.
- People-first approach including focus on neighboring properties, downtown businesses and surrounding neighborhoods.

Maximize Opportunities

- Dig once - Make infrastructure investments to avoid future disruption with a goal not disrupting impacted streets for preservation work for the next 15 years and replacement work for 50 years.
- Plan infrastructure that supports current and future development and emerging technologies.
- Maximize the opportunity and economic impact presented by these significant investments to the benefit of the community.

Attachment B Project Area Location



- City ROW Project Area related to BFUIR
- 2026 Start
- 2027 Start
- 2028 Start
- Future BRT Stop
- Future BRT Route
- Mayo Project Site (expected completion date)
- Enhanced Public Realm