

# **Southeast Michigan Green Stormwater Infrastructure Collaborative**

## **Request for Proposals**

Released: March 11, 2021

**Proposals due: April 16, 2021**

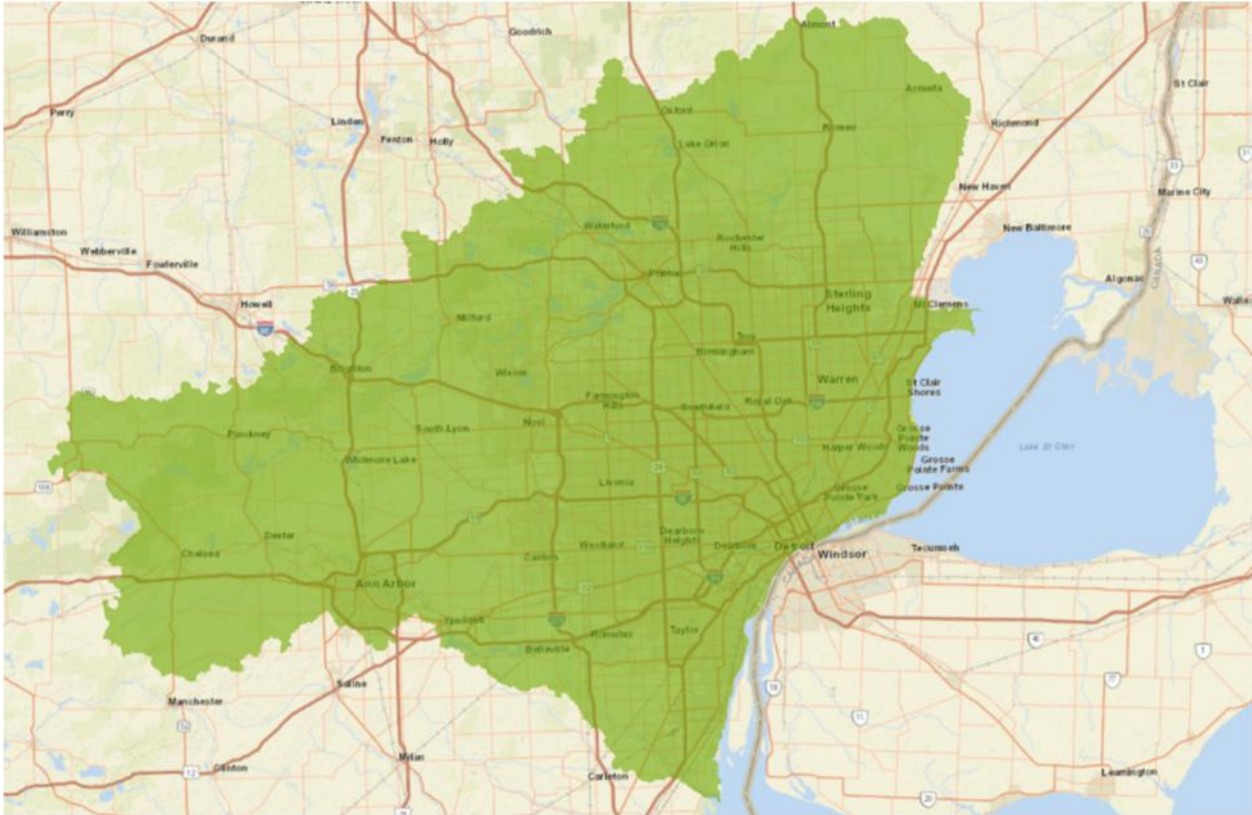
The Southeast Michigan Green Stormwater Infrastructure Collaborative (Collaborative) seeks proposals for the development of a market analysis and business plan for potential products and services to be developed by the Collaborative.

### **Background**

Led by Friends of the Rouge, Southeast Michigan nonprofit watershed organizations seek to scale-up rain garden and other green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) services commensurate to the challenge of climate change by developing a collaborative earned revenue program model. Partners include the Huron River Watershed Council, Clinton River Watershed Council, Friends of the Detroit River, and the Alliance of Downriver Watersheds. The service area of these organizations covers most of urban southeast Michigan (see map below). With an emphasis on residential markets, this new regional Collaborative will focus on the development and installation of rain gardens (and other GSI) of various types and sizes. These GSI practices use the natural, growing environment to capture and treat stormwater, as opposed to the current, aging infrastructure (e.g. gutters, pipes, and storage chambers) that is not currently filtering pollutants out of runoff water. The GSI Collaborative is also interested in developing a GSI maintenance framework to address maintenance needs for GSI across the Southeast Michigan region, especially on public, corporate, and neighborhood association landscapes.

The Collaborative will utilize the market analysis and business plan to further develop organizational elements such as a marketing plan, and concurrently a formal organizational structure. The Collaborative hopes to reduce burdens on southeast Michigan watershed non-profit organizations by enabling them to create joint, coordinated programming. A coordinated approach provides many benefits. First, it will avoid current and future costs of redundant program creation by coordinating programs into a central location. Rather than reinventing similar programming, partners can take build programs out from a single start-up. This is especially important for enabling more efficient delivery of services near watershed boundaries (communities like Detroit, Dearborn Heights, River Rouge, Novi, and West Bloomfield). By aligning key messaging into a single voice, a collaborative approach will drive increased regional adoption of rain gardens, helping reduce negative impacts in all communities but especially in disproportionately impacted downriver communities. Reducing the need to develop and maintain compartmentalized programs frees partners to invest in program delivery, developing stronger connections and shifting resources towards underserved communities.

Watershed organization staff within the Collaborative are committed to working with the Contractor to refine the goals and targets of the market analysis and the direction of the business planning. Staff can assist with research, as well, but need direction on how to do so to improve the desired products. Staff are also eager to receive preliminary results to provide feedback that will help refine final products.



*Southeast Michigan Green Stormwater Infrastructure Collaborative coverage area*

## **Funding**

The Collaborative currently has \$25,000 available to put towards this request, and is in the process of seeking additional funding. The Collaborative requests that prospective contractors propose work up to that current amount with additional work contingent upon them securing additional funding. It is acceptable to propose work that addresses a portion of the Collaborative's goals.

## **General Requirements**

To submit a complete proposal, an individual or organization will need to prepare and submit the below items.

**Project Description and Work Plan** (5 pages maximum): Prepare a written description of how you will address the desired work and product elements (see below). Clearly describe your approach to the work elements and which procedures you will use to accomplish them. Use enough detail to describe proposed work to review staff with little previous background in market analysis or business plan development.

**Timetable** (1 additional page, may be included with above)

**Organization and Staff Qualifications** (1 additional page, may be included with above): Include a description of your organization's qualifications including a list of prospective staff (you may include resumes or CVs) who will likely work on the project. Include your organization's mission, experience

with market analysis and business plan development, and experience in environmental or water resources management.

**Project Budget** (1 page): Include a project budget that contains the following minimum line items:

- ) Staffing (include staff by position title, hours, rate and totals)
- ) Staff fringe benefits
- ) Contractual services (please itemize by contract)
- ) Supplies and materials (itemize generally)
- ) Travel
- ) Indirect cost/overhead/profit allowance

Please also include a separate total budget for each work task (can be included in work plan).

### **Desired Work and Product Elements**

All proposals should include a narrative work plan that includes the activities below. However, the Collaborative recognizes that there may be different approaches to meet its goals. Proposals with different approaches will be considered to the degree to which a strong case is made that the approach will provide better results or get closer to the Collaborative's goals.

**1. Meet with the GSI Collaborative.**

The contractor shall first meet (in-person or virtually) with Collaborative participants at the beginning of the project to discuss project objectives and gain information on Collaborative organizations, their capacities and desired GSI products and services. The contractor may subsequently need to meet additional times with the Collaborative as work is developed.

**2. Develop list of potential collaborative products and services.**

The Contractor will work with Collaborative staff to develop a list of potential GSI products and services that Collaborative organizations are developing or considering. Items on this list will be prioritized to help scope the market analysis (Element 3). Prioritization will be based on the degree to which Collaborative organizations wish to develop programming to produce the products and services and the degree to which broad collaboration would improve delivery. The following products/services are currently being considered, but this list may be expanded or contracted through the course of discussion.

Services:

- o Training and consultation for design and construction of simple-design (i.e. not requiring professional engineer certification) residential and public property rain gardens
- o Municipal stormwater inspection services
- o Rain garden, bio-infiltration and detention pond maintenance service
- o Residential stormwater evaluation and landscape design consultation
- o Commercial stormwater site evaluation and landscape concept designs

Products:

- o Native plants
- o Native trees
- o Rain barrels (potentially paired with composters)

**3. Research and produce a market analysis of one or more selected products or services.**

Once a set of products and services is selected for evaluation, the Contractor will develop and produce a market analysis of these products/services. The market analysis should include the following for each evaluated product or service:

- ) Target audience/customer definition(s)
- ) Awareness of product/service
- ) Level of need/desire for product/service
- ) Willingness to pay for product/service
- ) Factors considered in decision making and potential marketing
- ) Likely product/service Information sources
- ) Primary competitors

Prospective contractors should provide detail on how they plan to obtain this information and where they expect assistance from staff within the Collaborative.

**4. Produce a business plan centered around high-value products or services.**

Based on findings in the market analysis report, the Contractor will develop a business plan for the GSI Collaborative that includes the following elements:

- ) Organizational overview
- ) Summary of market analysis
- ) Description of products and services to be delivered
- ) Summary of competitive analysis
- ) Discussion of management and operational considerations
- ) Discussion of marketing and sales considerations
- ) Financial analysis projecting 3 years of costs and revenues

**5. Revise products as needed.**

Prospective contractors should plan to meet with the Collaborative a few times throughout the development process, at least. A minimum of one meeting following the development of draft products is expected with the expectation that the contractor will revise products based on Collaborative feedback. Meetings may be virtual or in-person, depending on need.

**Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

The Collaborative will evaluate proposals on the basis of qualification, experience, proposal scope, completeness, and cost as follows.

- ) *Qualification and Experience* – the depth of experience in performing analysis and developing products similar to those requested above. Any experience working for other environmental organizations or experience in stormwater or landscaping will be valued higher.
- ) *Proposal Scope* – the degree to which the proposed work will meet its overall goals and objectives.

- ) *Completeness* – the depth of exploration or completeness of evaluation of each element above. Clarity and creativity will also be valued here to the degree to which the approach produces products that meet the Collaborative’s needs.
- ) *Cost* – the total cost of the proposal will be evaluated after the previous three criteria categories are considered, such that a cost per value will be established.

## **Proposal Selection**

The Collaborative will review all submitted and complete proposals and evaluate them based on the above criteria. The proposal that best meets the criteria will be selected for follow-up and contracting. The Collaborative reserves the right to make no selection if none of the proposals are deemed to sufficiently meet the goals and objectives. The Collaborative will inform unsuccessful applicants of their status and can offer feedback if requested. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by April 30, 2021.

## **Process, Schedule and Deadline**

The Collaborative partners are fully prepared to engage with contractors throughout the product development process. The concept timeline below represents a schedule that aims for launch timed with the 2022 field season, however, the team is open to changes, as required. If a different timeline for work is deemed more reasonable, please include an alternative timeline in your proposal.

Proposals should be submitted by **5 PM, April 16**. Late proposals may not be considered.

\* Activities that are part of the market analysis and business plan development. Other activities are for the Collaborative to complete and provided as context.

- © March – April 2021: \*Obtain proposals; \*Finalize Contract and Scope of Work
- © May – July 2021: \*Conduct market & viability research; \*Develop interim products and gain feedback to further analysis and investigation.
- © July – September 2021: \*Finalize market analysis and business plan products; Identify services and pricing, develop organizational structure and governance
- © August 2021 - February 2022: Develop a marketing plan, considering messaging style, channels, branding, and schedule; Design initial marketing products including a website, informational brochures and digital media assets
- © March 2022: Launch collaborative enterprise to initiate earned revenue marketing and services for 2022 field season

## **Revisions**

Following proposal selection, staff from the Collaborative team may contact the selected contractor to request revisions to work plan or budget items, prior to contracting. If revisions cannot be accommodated, the Collaborative reserves the right to offer a contract to another contractor.

## **Contracting**

Upon receipt of a satisfactory proposal and budget, the Collaborative, via Friends of the Rouge, will issue a contract. Once terms are accepted and the contract is signed by both parties, work can begin. Friends of the Rouge will not reimburse the contractor for any efforts prior to that point.

### **Contacts**

Please send all requested materials in digital format to the below email address with the subject "Collaborative GSI BP Proposal – [your organization name]." All materials must be Microsoft office, Google doc or pdf format.

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Questions or clarifications are encouraged. Contact Matthew or Ric Lawson (contact below) with any questions you may have.

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