



August 18, 2025

Bidder:

The Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will receive bids via email until **Friday, September 12, 2025 at 4:00 PM** for the following:

Lower Boardman/Ottaway Downtown River Data Gathering & Site Assessment

The specifications can be obtained from the DDA's website link at: <https://dda.downtowntc.com/>
It is the sole responsibility of the Bidder to check the website for updates and addenda prior to the bid being submitted.

The DDA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, waive irregularities and to accept the bids either on an entire or individual basis that is in the best interest of the DDA.

The DDA accepts no responsibility for any expense incurred by the Bidder in the preparation and presentation of a bid. Such expenses shall be borne exclusively by the Bidder. Only the successful Bidder will be notified.

You must submit one (1) electronic copy of the proposal via email to the DDA office prior to the indicated above date and time or the bid will not be accepted. All bids will be opened at **4:30 on September 12, 2025** at the DDA Office. The subject line for the email must read "**Lower Boardman/Ottaway Downtown River Data Gathering & Site Assessment Proposal**".

If you have any questions, please contact DDA Executive Director Harry Burkholder before the bid is submitted. Phone: 231-922-2050 Email: harry@downtowntc.com

PLEASE SUBMIT BID TO: Harry Burkholder, Executive Director
harry@downtowntc.com

OVERVIEW

The Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA), in cooperation with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (GTB), is requesting proposals from qualified firms to: (1) gather data and conduct site assessments for the 1.6 miles of the Lower Boardman/Ottaway River that traverses Downtown; (2) develop conceptual plans that help stabilize the riverbank and near shoreline, improve instream habitat diversity, integrate native species plantings and other green infrastructure elements that reflect the indigenous knowledge, community input and climate vulnerabilities and; (3) develop final engineering and site plans for a subset of the project elements of the conceptual design for potential permitting and construction.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This past year, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (GTB) was awarded a \$11.9 million Transformational Habitat and Coastal Resilience grant from the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA) in support of one of the largest land preservation and restoration projects in the Grand Traverse Region. Under the grant title *Restoration, Engagement, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: An Indigenous Approach to Comprehensive Resiliency (RETEK)*, in collaboration with Leelanau County non-profit New Community Vision, the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission and the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority, the GTB is working to acquire, restore and permanently preserve 187 acres of coastal wetland along Grand Traverse Bay, **restore and develop green infrastructure along the Lower Boardman/Ottaway River** and support on-going collaborations with the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC) on a first-of-its kind bi-directional selective fish passage project to replace the Union Street Dam in downtown Traverse City. The Traverse City DDA is a subrecipient of the NOAA grant, working with and through the GTB.

Scope of Work

A portion of this project will work to restore the Lower Boardman/Ottaway River as a vital natural resource corridor - integrating the river into the built environment by improving in-stream habitat, naturalizing the shoreline and implementing green infrastructure to improve river quality. Project tasks and deliverables are outlined below.

Task One. Data Gathering and Site Assessments

This task will consist of acquiring and assessing available desktop data, including historic and current aerial imagery, LiDAR elevations, geomorphic, stormwater, soils, historic storm and precipitation, FEMA mapping and published models, hydraulic models, bathymetric, infrastructure and parcel mapping, as-built data from previous projects, trails, utilities, biological survey results, flow monitoring, cultural/rare species, and other relevant data. Available desktop data will be used to support site assessments, which will further refine project elements for conceptual planning. **Deliverable: Full Site Assessment and Data Summary**

Task Two. Concept Planning

The 2013 Boardman River Unified Plan outlined a vision to enhance the ecological health of the Lower Boardman/Ottaway River while creating new social and cultural spaces centered on the river and anchored in the region's historical and cultural context. These plans detail social and cultural interventions, including connectivity, recreation, and gathering spaces; and ecological interventions, including stormwater, bank stabilization, in-stream habitat improvements and invasive species management. The Concept Planning phase will update the decade-old Master Plan by integrating recently completed projects and identifying projects for implementation in collaboration with Tribal citizens, staff, the City of Traverse City and other partners. This work will include integrating in-stream habitat improvements in connection with Phase I. of the DDA's proposed Riverfront Project – specifically along the river's shoreline parallel to the 100 and 200 blocks of Front Street. The Concept Plan will identify shoreline and in-stream solutions for the entire 1.6-mile Lower Boardman-Ottaway. **Deliverable: Concept Plan(s)**

Task Three. Design & Engineering

A subset of the project elements identified in the Concept Plan(s) will advance forward through the design phase. In-stream habitat improvements will include a combination of rock vanes, managed log cover/basking structures, stone treatments of vertical wall bases, riffle habitat, spawning beds, and related techniques to increase the desired populations of fish, reptiles, and macroinvertebrates. This phase will include collection of additional site-specific data, including topography, geomorphology, soils, utilities and easements, existing crossings, stream cross-section, and profile information, the extent of erosional areas requiring specific restoration approaches, collection of bulk sediment samples, stormwater input and discharge points, vegetation, and other information needed to support the design(s). The design team will develop hydrologic-hydraulic curves specific to the stream reach, and will use these curves to set design parameters. **Deliverable: Final Plans will include a Title Sheet, Site Plan Sheets, Typical Section Sheets, Details Sheets, Plan and Profile Sheets, Stormwater Plan, Planting Details, Planting Plan, EPSC Cover Sheet, EPSC Notes Sheet, EPSC Details Sheets, EPSC Plan Sheets, Cross Section Sheets, Materials Estimate and Project Specifications.**

Assuming NOAA funding is allocated in 2026 and 2027, the DDA intends to complete the final two tasks of this project (see below). In its proposal, the interested firm should include a summary of their qualifications and ability to complete Tasks Four and Five. If the interested firm does not have the qualifications and ability to complete Tasks Four and Five, it should be stated. The inability to complete Tasks Four and Five will not count against any firm submitting a proposal. A separate RFP for Tasks Four and Five will be issued.

Task Four. Permitting

Permitting will be required to fulfill local, State, and Federal requirements for construction. The design team will complete the necessary permits to support the construction and ecological restoration. Permits are anticipated from Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Federal Emergency Management Agency, local permitting agencies, and compliance with National Environmental Policy Act. **Deliverable: Complete permit applications and approvals.**

Task Five. Construction and Vegetative Establishment

Major construction items and operations will include installation and maintenance of construction erosion control practices, excavation and micro-grading to stabilize the shoreline, installation of structure within the stream profile, and restoration of final grades and native species. Erosion control measures will be installed prior to any land-disturbing activity to prevent erosion and retain sediment onsite. Native vegetation, including species of cultural significance to regional Tribal communities such as sweetgrass, northern white cedar, sage, native tobacco and others, will be installed to restore a vegetated riparian buffer adjacent to the river channel and provide habitat for pollinators, birds and wildlife. These species can be found in the GLFWC Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) document. Upon completion of the work, all access roads, staging areas, construction entrances, and silt fences will be removed, and all disturbed soils will be stabilized with mulch and native seed to establish permanent ground cover. Concurrently with the riparian restoration, the DDA is anticipated to be constructing access improvements and green infrastructure as part of an expansive placemaking project to increase access and human use of the river.

Following site grading, the restored stream sections will be revegetated with native species. Native species selection will integrate community input from engagement sessions and reflect discussions about climate vulnerabilities highlighted in the 2023 Aanji-bimaadiziimagak o'ow aki report created by Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission with TEK from 11 Great Lakes Tribes and predictive models of climate stressors. A variety of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plant plugs will be installed adjacent to the river channel to stabilize banks following construction. Native seeds will be installed in areas disturbed by construction. Establishing deep rooted tree and shrub species will provide significant water quality benefits to the restored habitat and adjacent water bodies.

Communication and Project Integration

Interested firms should consider the time and resources needed to attend monthly updates with DDA staff and participate in regular virtual *RETEK* team meetings and/or on-site meetings.

Project Site

The Boardman-Ottaway River, the largest tributary to Grand Traverse Bay, encompasses 179 lineal miles (288 km) of perennial streams and supports 74 natural lakes. It sustains nearly 60 different fish species and includes 36 miles (58 km) designated as “Blue Ribbon” trout habitat. Prior to European colonization, this river was a sinuous and dynamic riverscape, winding and shifting through the sandy outwash landform, influenced by vegetative cover, storm events, lake and river water levels, and episodic hydraulic flow characteristics. Industrialization altered the natural features of the river and its corridor, negatively impacting how people, plants, and animals could connect with this water and Lake Michigan.

Beginning in 1867, a series of misguided projects, free of modern-day regulatory standards, unfolded on the Boardman-Ottaway River, resulting in asynchronous development patterns that continue to compromise the health and vitality of the Lower River today. Specific negative impacts include: 1) channelization of the river into a more limited space; 2) construction of four dams to create power; 3) bank stabilization features limiting lateral movement of the river; and

4) construction of stormwater management systems to direct water from local streets, parking lots, and built areas into the river.

Today, the collective health of the Lower River is threatened by the residual impacts of these anthropogenic changes. Particularly vulnerable are the fish and other aquatic species that play a vital role in the overall resilience of the coastal Grand Traverse Bay watershed and Native and non-Native communities whose economic livelihood and cultural sovereignty are linked to commercial and subsistence fishing. Additionally, current Lower River conditions exacerbate threats to the broader community, which bears a heightened vulnerability to predicted coastal climate hazards like rising Great Lakes water levels, extreme weather events, and increased winter and spring precipitation.

Improving fish passage, stabilizing shorelines, creating instream habitat for macroinvertebrates and fish species, and mitigating threats of nonpoint source pollution are restoration priorities that the RETEK team will advance in the Lower Boardman/Ottaway River.

Tasks, Milestones and Timeline

Tasks, Milestones and Timeline		2025		2026				2027			
		July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	Apr. - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	Apr. - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.
One.	Data Gathering & Site Assessment	x	x								
Two.	Concept Planning	x	x								
Three.	Design and Engineering		x	x	x						
Four.	Permitting				x	x					
Five.	Construction & Vegetative Establishment						x	x	x		

AVAILABLE RESOURCE MATERIALS

- Unified Plan for the Lower Boardman/Ottaway River ([link](#))
- Boardman/Ottaway Downtown Riverfront Conceptual Plan ([link](#))
- NOAA Project Summary (upon request)

TIMELINE

Date: Aug. 18, 2025 Issuance of RFP
Date: Sept. 12, 2025 RFP Due
Date: Sept. 16, 2025 Review and Score RFP and Select for Interview
Date: Sept. 24, 2025 Consultant Interviews
Date: Oct. 3, 2025 Consultant Selection/Negotiations
Date: Oct. 17, 2025 DDA Board Approval of Consultant Selection
Date: Oct. 23, 2025 Project Start-Up Meeting

The schedule presented above is for informational purposes only and is subject to change at the DDA's discretion.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Interested firms must submit one (1) electronic copy which should include at a minimum the following information:

1. Firm name and introduction
2. Qualifications of staff to be assigned to this project. Describe where personnel will be physically located while they are engaged in the project.
3. Examples of experience with similar projects.
4. Narrative in which the firm delineates their understanding of what is being requested by the DDA in this proposal including the items of work they will accomplish for the city, noting any work items they may feel should normally be accomplished under or related to this request, but in their opinion are beyond the scope of what is being requested and therefore not part of the proposal.
5. The methodology, approach or work plan, (for each task) including timelines, which would be used to complete the project.
6. Proposal Sheet with “Not to Exceed” project cost. All proposals submitted must also include a separate cost breakdown by hours and cost for the work.

Digital proposals must be submitted to Harry Burkholder, Executive Director
harry@downtowntc.com no later than **September 12, 2025**. The subject line for the email must read **“Lower Boardman/Ottaway Downtown River Data Gathering & Site Assessment” Proposal**.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals received shall be subject to evaluation by the DDA. This evaluation will be conducted in a manner appropriate, as may be deemed by the DDA, for the selection of a firm for the purpose of entering into a contract to perform this project. Price alone shall not be the basis for the award of this work but shall be only one of the components considered. The City does not intend to award a contract for this work solely on the basis of any response made to this request. The following facts, along with other factors, need to be considered:

1. The firm’s expertise and experience as related to the required work.
2. The firm’s understanding of the project scope and quality of the firm’s project approach.
3. The cost and time scheduled as proposed.
4. Qualifications and availability of the key staff members proposed to work on this project.
5. Involvement of the firm in similar types of projects, reference response and quality of work on similar projects.
6. Interviews with prospective Consultants

All proposals submitted must include “not to exceed” cost figures and separate cost breakdown by hours and cost for the work.

INSURANCE

The Firm is required to provide and maintain at all times during this project the following insurance. Certified copies, setting forth the limits and coverage, shall be furnished to the DDA before commencing with any work. The policy shall contain endorsements stating that a 10-day notice will be given and provide coverage for the following terms:

- A. Comprehensive General Liability Insurance with limits of liability not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and/or aggregate combined single limit with the DDA and Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians listed as additional insured parties. Professional liability insurance coverage in the amount of \$1,000,000 minimum.
- B. Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance, including applicable no-fault coverage, combined single limit bodily injury and property damage shall be maintained during the life of the contract. Coverage shall include all owned vehicles, all non-owned vehicles, and all hired vehicles.
- C. Workers Compensation Insurance, including Employers' Liability Coverage in accordance with all applicable statutes of the State of Michigan.
- D. If any of the insurance is canceled, the Firm shall cease operations and shall not resume until new insurance is obtained.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

The DDA reserves the right to waive any informality or defect in any proposal; to accept any proposal or parts thereof or to reject any or all proposals, should it deem it to be in the best interest of the DDA to do so. The DDA reserves the right to revise the contents of the proposal and to negotiate all aspects of this proposal and any future agreement with the successful form of the DDA's choice. The DDA further accepts no responsibility for expenses which may be incurred in the preparation of such proposals. The selected firm shall be expected to comply with all applicable State and Federal laws in the performance of services. Submittals to the DDA are considered public information. The DDA has the right to disclose information contained in the submittals. The DDA further has the right to photocopy, circulate or otherwise distribute any material submitted in response to the Request for Proposals (RFP). Original materials which the consultant may wish returned shall be clearly marked to be returned to them.

The selection of the successful firm shall be made without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, sexual preferences, handicap, political affiliation, veteran status or national origin. The city is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The selected Firm will be required to enter into a Consultant Agreement for this project. Any questions regarding this request shall be submitted in writing to the DDA Executive Director at least seven (7) days prior to the deadline for submitting the request for proposal.

Written answers to questions which in the opinion of the DDA may change or substantially clarify the request for proposal, will be submitted to all prospective firms.

PROPOSAL SHEET

Title: **Lower Boardman/Ottaway Downtown River Data Gathering & Site Assessment**

Due Date: **No later than September 12, 2025 at 4:00pm**

Having carefully examined the attached RFP and any other applicable information, the undersigned proposes to furnish all items necessary for and reasonably incidental to the proper completion of this bid proposal. The undersigned understands and agrees that they must be licensed to do business as Professional Engineers in the State of Michigan. The undersigned submits this proposal and agrees to meet or exceed all requirements and specifications listed in the RFP, unless otherwise indicated in writing and attached hereto. The undersigned understands and agrees, if selected to be awarded this work, to enter into an agreement with the DDA to supply this work.

The Bidder certifies that none of the following circumstances have occurred with respect to the Bidder, an officer of the Bidder, or an owner of a 25% or more share in the Bidder's business, within 3 years prior to the bid:

- (a) conviction of a criminal offense incident to the application for or performance of a contract;
- (b) conviction of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, receiving stolen property, or any other offense which currently, seriously and directly reflects on the Bidder's business integrity;
- (c) conviction under state or federal antitrust statutes;
- (d) attempting to influence a public employee to breach ethical conduct standards; or
- (e) conviction of a criminal offense or other violation of other state, local, or federal law, as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction or an administrative proceeding, which in the opinion of the City indicates that the bidder is unable to perform responsibility or which reflects a lack of integrity that could negatively impact or reflect upon the City of Traverse City, including but not limited to, any of the following offenses or violations of:
 - i. The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act.
 - ii. A persistent and knowing violation of the Michigan Consumer Protection Act.

- iii. Willful or persistent violations of the Michigan Occupational Health and Safety Act.
 - iv. A violation of federal, local, or state civil rights, equal rights, or non-discrimination laws, rules, or regulations.
 - v. Repeated or flagrant violations of laws related to the payment of wages and fringe benefits.
- (f) the loss of a license or the right to do business or practice a profession, the loss or suspension of which indicates dishonesty, a lack of integrity, or a failure or refusal to perform in accordance with the ethical standards of the business or profession in question.

The undersigned understands that the DDA reserves the right to accept any or all proposals in whole or in part and to waive irregularities in any proposal in the interest of the DDA. The proposal will be evaluated and awarded based on best value to the DDA. The decision criteria to be used, but will not be limited to, is price, accessories, options and overall capability to meet the needs of the DDA. The undersigned agrees that the proposal may not be withdrawn for a period of 60 days from the actual date of the opening of proposals.

Task One. \$ _____

Task Two. \$ _____

Task Three. \$ _____

Not To Exceed Project Cost \$ _____

Submitted By:

(Signature) (Name & Title – Print) (Telephone Number)

(Company Name) (Company Address, City, State, Zip Code)

REFERENCES: (include name of organization, contact person, and daytime phone number).

1. _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

2. _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

3. _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

SUBCONTRACTORS: (include name of organization, contact person, daytime phone number, and services to be performed).

1. _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

Services to be Performed: _____

2. _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

Services to be Performed: _____

3. _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

Services to be Performed: _____