



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):

Opportunity Name	Detroit Regional Partnership (DRP) – Regional Growth Coalition Program Support Services
Contract Durations	Anticipated December 2026 through August 2027, timelines for each section are shared in the scope, some work could go through December 2027
Estimated Budget	Anticipated budget of \$400,000 across all sections. Firms can bid on individual sections 1-3 or all sections.
Direct Proposals to	Real Estate Team real.estate@detroitregionalpartnership.com
Location	Remote, Detroit Metro Region
Key DRP Contacts	Sarah Gregory, Managing VP, Strategic Partnerships & Talent sarah.gregory@detroitregionalpartnership.com Shannon Selby, VP, Real Estate Shannon.selby@detroitregionalpartnership.com
Timeline	A. Request for proposals release date: 10/19/2026 B. Deadline for submitting proposals: 11/06/2026 by 5:00pm EST C. Interviews with Bidder Finalists: Weeks of 11/9 and 11/16/2026 D. Delivery Method for submitting proposals: E-mail proposals to real.estate@detroitregionalpartnership.com. In the email subject line, please include: "Proposal for DRP Regional Growth Coalition." Proposals submitted in other forms will not be accepted. E. Questions: Please submit questions to real.estate@detroitregionalpartnership.com by 10/23/2026. A Q&A document will be shared with the distribution list by 10/29/2026. F. Contract and Payment Schedule: Once proposals are received, DRP will evaluate proposals and select a vendor, develop a contract proposal, and set contract terms, including a payment schedule. A monthly, invoiced payment schedule is anticipated. This is not an RFP for a retainer contract. All billing must reflect actual work completed. G. Notification of Award: It is expected that a decision to select the successful bidder will be made approximately within 2 weeks of the closing date of this RFP. Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful bidder(s), all offerors submitting proposals in response to this Request will be informed, via e-mail, of the decision.

Overview: What DRP Is Seeking

DRP is launching the **Regional Growth Coalition (RGC)**, an opt-in, peer-informed network that helps communities across the 11-county Detroit region become more ready to compete for business investment. The Coalition's central performance goal is to make it **faster, easier and more predictable** for a company to move a project forward in a participating community.

The RGC builds on a broader body of site- and community-readiness work already underway at DRP. Through the **Verified Industrial Properties (VIP) Program**, DRP has worked to identify and advance competitive industrial sites across the region. DRP also developed the **Industrial Development Toolkit**, a publicly available resource that communities, planners, economic development organizations and other partners can use independently to better understand modern industrial development and strengthen local readiness. The RGC adds another layer to that work by creating an ongoing network for communities that want to engage more deeply around growth, readiness and process improvement.

DRP is seeking one or more firms to design and launch the RGC through 2027. The selected firm(s) will help DRP:

- Set the Coalition's strategy, goals and rollout plan.
- Understand where participating communities stand on growth vision and readiness through a self-assessment and 1:1 conversations.
- Identify, test and spread ways to shorten and simplify local development processes.
- Convene members and give them market intelligence, peer learning and practical resources.
- Measure whether the Coalition is changing how long it takes and how hard it is to move projects forward.

DRP retains responsibility for the Coalition's direction and its relationships with communities and stakeholders. Selected firms bring structure, expertise and capacity. The work is organized into sections that firms may bid on separately or together (see "How This RFP Is Organized").

The Regional Growth Coalition

Why community readiness matters

Companies deciding where to build or expand weigh two things: whether a site is ready to meet their specifications and timeline, and whether the community is supportive and prepared for what investment brings. A prepared community has informed leaders and residents, knows its growth priorities, and has a clear and predictable process for evaluating and approving projects. A shortage of ready sites and ready communities limits the region's ability to win the next generation of manufacturing and technology projects.

Each project ultimately lands in a local community, which lives with the results. DRP therefore wants to engage communities that are interested in securing business growth, so that DRP and its partners can act as better matchmakers between business opportunities and communities that want them.

What the Coalition is

The RGC is a leadership network convened by DRP and focused on advancing community vitality through business investment. Participating communities share the kind of growth they want. The Coalition gives them a forum with peers and industry experts to advance that vision and their readiness to compete, along with best practices and targeted technical assistance aimed at speed, ease and predictability for businesses considering investment.

The RGC complements DRP's broader site- and community-readiness efforts, including VIP and the Industrial Development Toolkit, by providing an ongoing network for communities that want to learn from peers, better understand their readiness and pursue deeper improvement opportunities.

The Coalition is guided by these principles:

- **Community-led.** Communities decide what kind of growth they want and where.
- **Opt-in.** Participation brings access to the network and support, not new mandates or loss of local control.
- **Peer-informed.** Leaders learn from each other and build shared standards together.
- **Focused on business investment.** The goal is to help communities compete for job-creating growth.
- **Neutral and coordinated.** DRP convenes as a trusted, neutral partner and works alongside statewide and regional organizations rather than duplicating them.

How we got here

The DRP is the economic development agency for the 11-county Detroit Region, responsible for marketing the region to global business leaders and attracting new companies, jobs, investment and technology. DRP's business-attraction team builds relationships with companies and site selectors worldwide, generating investment leads and working with MEDC and county and local partners to match projects with the right sites. This coordinated effort gives companies a responsive, unified experience and strengthens Michigan's ability to compete for investment. DRP has a 10-year goal (2020–2030) of generating 50,000 new jobs and \$10 billion in new investment. From 2020 to 2025, DRP secured 141 business expansion and attraction projects representing more than \$5 billion in investment and 16,000 direct new jobs, at an average wage of \$76,000. Counting wider regional impact, results total \$10.8 billion in investment and 42,300 jobs.

DRP's work across the region gives it a comprehensive view of the factors that drive competitive location decisions. The Coalition builds on two earlier steps in a sequence from site readiness to community readiness:

- **Verified Industrial Properties (VIP) Program (2021).** VIP identifies, assesses and markets vacant industrial sites for mobility and manufacturing projects. It has assessed more than 100 sites across the 11-county region, supported by \$7.3 million in federal and matching funds from the EDA's Build Back Better Regional Challenge (part of the \$52 million Global Epicenter of Mobility coalition award) and \$9.7 million from the State of Michigan's Strategic Site Readiness Program.
- **Industrial Development Toolkit (released 2026).** The Toolkit is DRP's first educational resource for community readiness. Developed with input from more than 50 municipal officials, developers, utility providers and economic development practitioners, it gives local leaders tools, templates and a practical framework to understand modern industrial development, decide how it fits their goals, and plan for it with confidence. It also helps developers understand how communities approach the process.
- **Regional Growth Coalition.** The RGC helps communities build the processes and capacity to compete. VIP prepares sites, the Toolkit prepares communities to think about modern industrial growth, and the RGC helps them act on it.

How This RFP Is Organized

This RFP is modular. Firms may respond to one section or several. DRP may award sections to different firms and will coordinate among them. Proposals must identify the sections addressed and give costs and timelines by section. Estimated timelines are guidance, and we ask firms to confirm their capacity and timelines.

Section	Focus	Estimated timeline	Status
Section 1	RGC strategy, speed and ease framework, community assessment, convening framework, and outcomes and measurement	Dec 2026 – Dec 2027	In scope
Section 2	Polling and market perception baseline	Dec 2026 – Feb 2027	In scope
Section 3	Education and resources	Dec 2026 – Feb 2027	In scope
Section 4	Communications and storytelling	Separate selection	Informational only

Scope of Work & Deliverables

The selected firm(s) will accomplish the deliverables below. DRP will maintain responsibility for the overall direction of the Regional Growth Coalition and its relationships with participating communities and stakeholders. DRP will select the communities for engagement and will establish those relationships before the assessment process begins.

Section 1: RGC Strategy, Speed & Ease, Community Assessment and Convening

DRP is seeking a firm (or team of firms) to co-create the first phase of the RGC strategy and rollout plan, learn where participating communities stand, identify and test ways to speed up and simplify local development, convene the Coalition, and measure results. Section 1 contains five connected components (1.1 through 1.5).

Section 1 at a glance:

Component	Key deliverables	Estimated timeline	Price as
1.1 Strategy, operating model and readiness journey	Objectives and tactics; operating model; partner alignment map; phasing options; journey map; engagement strategy; handoff plan	Nov 2026 – Feb 2027	Fixed fee by part (A–D)
1.2 Speed & ease framework	Timeline benchmarks; timeline testing; practice standards; technical assistance model; AI exploration	Framework Nov 2026 – Feb 2027; timeline testing from Mar 2027 – Aug 2027	Fixed fee by part; cost per community for testing

Component	Key deliverables	Estimated timeline	Price as
1.3 Community assessment tools and support	Process document; self-assessment tool; 1:1 guide; prep sessions; community meetings and recaps; aggregate findings	Framework Nov 2026 – Feb 2027; community engagement support Jan 2027 – May 2027	Tools fixed fee; cost per community for support
1.4 Convening framework	Launch event; three quarterly convenings; market-intelligence module	Nov 2026 – Dec 2027	Launch separately; cost per convening
1.5 Outcomes and measurement	Measurement framework; indicators; instruments; reporting template; baseline; one measurement cycle	Framework Nov 2026 – Feb 2027; baseline and cycle through Aug 2027	Fixed fee for design; baseline and cycle priced separately

1.1 Strategy, Operating Model and Readiness Journey

Estimated timeline: December 2026 – February 2027

Part A: RGC objectives, tactics and operating model

DRP's working goals below are intended to guide the Coalition's strategy and implementation. Proposers should use them as a foundation and may recommend refinements as part of the strategy work.

- **Make local development faster, easier and more predictable.** Help participating communities reduce unnecessary time and friction in the development process and communicate that process clearly to businesses and developers.
- **Help communities define the growth they want and understand where they stand.** Support communities in clarifying their growth priorities, assessing their readiness to pursue them, and identifying the gaps or opportunities that matter most.
- **Build an aligned, peer-informed network that communities value.** Create an opt-in Coalition that communities want to participate in, with clear roles and coordination across regional and statewide partners so the work is additive rather than duplicative.
- **Build understanding of business growth as a community benefit.** Help leaders, partners and residents better understand what modern business investment looks like and how it can support jobs, tax base and long-term community vitality.

Across all four goals, DRP is focused on **measurable outcomes, not just activity**, and on building a model that DRP can realistically sustain and operate over time.

Working with the DRP team, the firm will turn the strategic goals above into a practical strategy and rollout plan. The firm will develop:

- **Objectives, tactics and success measures.** Objectives under each goal, with tactics, owners, milestones, decision points and suggesting measures that will show progress. The plan should identify what to prioritize in 2027 and what to defer.

- **Coalition operating model.** The value proposition for communities and partners; participation options; the approach to recruiting and onboarding members; the roles of DRP, members and partners; and light governance that fits DRP's role as a neutral convener and the Coalition's opt-in principles.
- **Partner alignment map.** How the RGC works with statewide and regional organizations (for example Business Leaders for Michigan, MEDC, SEMCOG, the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Association of Planning, and county and local economic development organizations): what each does, where the RGC builds on their resources, and how duplication is avoided. The map should include clear language DRP can use to show funders and partners that the work is coordinated.
- **Phasing and resourcing options.** A core plan and expanded options with cost implications, so DRP can scale the work to available funding.
- **Risks and assumptions.** Including community staff capacity, resident sentiment, timing and dependencies among the sections of this RFP.
- **Handoff plan.** The roles, tools, calendar and routines DRP staff will need to run the Coalition after this engagement.

Part B: Readiness journey map

A map of the journey a community takes from first learning about the Coalition to improving and demonstrating its readiness. For each stage, the map should show what DRP and its partners offer (education, assessments, convenings, peer groups, technical assistance), what existing resources from partners should be used instead of recreated, and which additional educational engagements may be needed. It should be informed by the education resources in Section 3 and the findings from 1.3, and will guide how DRP sequences engagements through 2027 and beyond.

Part C: Coalition engagement strategy

A strategy for how the Coalition will engage members over its first 12 months, serving as the framework that connects the sections of this RFP. It should recommend:

- The cadence, format and themes of the quarterly convenings.
- The sequencing and timing of educational resources (for example webinars, presentations and guides), so that each supports the others and the findings from the community assessments.
- Peer groups or sessions organized by community type, and how members and prospective members will be recruited and kept engaged.

The strategy should reflect the Coalition's community-led, opt-in and peer-informed principles and a realistic view of community staff capacity. It will draw on early assessment findings and be refined as engagement proceeds. DRP will approve the strategy and use it to direct the firms supporting convenings and developing content.

1.2 Speed & Ease Framework for Local Development

Estimated timeline: Framework December 2026 – February 2027; Timeline Testing March 2027 – August 2027

This is a central component of the Regional Growth Coalition's work. It establishes practical benchmarks for what a fast, easy and predictable local development process can look like, assesses where participating communities stand against those benchmarks, and defines how DRP and its partners can help address identified gaps. The work should draw on the Industrial Development Toolkit, VIP site assessment findings, the community assessments in Section 1.3, and input from developers and municipal staff.

Part A: Development timeline benchmarks

A document establishing how long key development steps should take for typical industrial and business-investment projects, with the method and sources behind each benchmark. Steps might include initial inquiry response, zoning confirmation, pre-application review, site plan review, approvals, permitting and utility coordination. The benchmarks should distinguish required timelines (for example those set by state law) from practical performance targets.

Part B: Timeline testing

The firm will run participating communities through a timeline testing method. The firm walks a recent or representative project through a community's actual process, step by step with the staff who run it, to document actual elapsed time, handoffs and points of delay, compared with the benchmarks and the community's self-reported timelines. Proposers may suggest an alternative method. DRP will select communities in consultation with the firm and with each community's agreement. Please provide cost per community and state your assumptions about the number of communities.

Part C: Speed and ease practice standards

Based on the benchmarks, testing and the Toolkit, the firm will recommend a short set of practical standards that make a community's process faster, easier and more predictable. Examples might include published checklists and timelines, pre-application meetings, a single point of contact, clear review timeframes and completeness checks. The standards should describe what each practice involves, the staff capacity it requires, and basic and advanced levels so communities of different sizes can participate. They should build on, and not duplicate, MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities best practices and the Toolkit. The firm may also advise whether a voluntary commitment or recognition framework would encourage adoption in an opt-in network.

Part D: Technical assistance and gap-closure model

A design for how DRP and its partners will provide targeted technical assistance to communities after the assessments. It should cover how needs are identified and prioritized; a menu of support (for example tools, templates, peer exchange, expert review or referrals); which parts DRP, partners or other firms would deliver; staffing, cost and timing for the first 12 months; and how communities request help. The firm may propose a small pilot with a few communities.

Part E: Exploring AI to speed local development

An exploration of how artificial intelligence could help municipalities move investment opportunities forward with greater ease and speed. The firm will review two categories: (1) purpose-built AI tools for planning and development, such as those used for code and zoning interpretation, site plan and building plan review, completeness checks and permit processing; and (2) general-purpose generative AI assistants that municipal staff could use in their existing work, such as summarizing codes and ordinances, drafting checklists, correspondence and staff reports, answering routine questions from applicants and residents, and preparing for reviews.

For the most relevant tools and uses, the firm will describe what they do, which parts of the development process they address, what results have been reported (such as time savings or accuracy), and what they require of a municipality, including cost, staff capacity, training, data and integration with existing systems. The firm will connect the findings to what DRP learns in 1.3, identifying where delays occur in participating communities' processes and which could plausibly be addressed by these tools. The deliverable is a report or white paper with recommendations on whether, where and how DRP might consider AI in future work with communities, with options and suggested

next steps. DRP may award this part separately. Please state whether you would perform it directly, with a partner, or not at all.

1.3 Community Assessment Tools and Implementation Support

Estimated timeline: Framework December 2026 – February 2027; Community Engagement Support January 2027 – May 2027

DRP is seeking a firm to design and help carry out a process for understanding where participating communities stand on growth. The process should help DRP and each community understand the community's vision for growth, how ready it is to pursue that vision and compete for business investment, and how its development process works in practice. Below is DRP's current framing. Proposers should respond to it and may propose alternative methods. DRP anticipates recruiting approximately 10–15 municipalities as initial Regional Growth Coalition members. These communities will commit to completing the self-assessment and participating in a 1:1 deep-dive conversation with DRP and the selected consultant. The findings from this process, together with each community's interest, leadership commitment and capacity to participate in deeper work, will inform DRP's selection of approximately 3–5 Pilot Communities for process-improvement and technical-assistance work beginning in Spring 2027.

Part A: Design the assessment tools

The firm will design the following, with DRP review and revision before use:

- **Community assessment process:** Outline the steps, the time commitment, and how DRP will use and share what it learns. The firm should recommend a data-handling approach consistent with the Coalition's opt-in principle (for example, what is shared in aggregate and what only with the community). This information will be used during outreach to communities to properly set expectations.
- **Community self-assessment tool.** An in-depth digital tool completed before the 1:1 conversation. It should cover the community's vision for growth and its readiness, and identify existing best practices and potential gaps in areas such as plans and zoning, infrastructure, approval processes, incentives, resident engagement and sites. It should capture community-reported timelines for key development steps, using the steps defined in 1.2A. It should be designed for several people in each community to complete (for example planning, economic development, public works and elected officials), with sections routed to those best placed to answer, and include a primer explaining why questions are asked, who should complete which parts and how to use the tool.
- **1:1 deep-dive process and guide.** The format, facilitation approach and interview questions for the conversation between each community and the DRP team, designed to surface the community's vision for growth and how ready it is to pursue it.

Part B: Support DRP with 1:1 community assessments

The firm will support DRP's engagement with up to 10 initial RGC municipal members through the self-assessment and 1:1 deep-dive process. Please provide a cost per community.

- **Prep sessions.** A one-hour session with DRP staff before each community meeting, informed by the community's completed self-assessment.
- **1:1 community meetings.** Co-lead each conversation with DRP and capture notes. DRP staff will participate for relationship building and intelligence gathering. Plan for in-person meetings, with the ability to pivot to virtual.

- **Community recap.** After each meeting, a summary for the community covering the discussion, findings, a one-page readiness snapshot and recommended next steps. Drafted within five business days for DRP review before it is sent.
- **Aggregate findings report.** A report delivered within two weeks of the final meeting identifying key findings, aligned goals, aggregate needs and opportunities, strengths and best practices, and recommendations to guide the quarterly convenings and the work in 1.1, 1.2 and Section 3.

1.4 Convening Framework

Estimated timeline: December 2026 – December 2027

DRP is seeking a firm to support convening the full Regional Growth Coalition, beginning with a launch event in January 2027 and continuing with quarterly convenings through the end of 2027. The convenings are the Coalition's primary forum to share data and market intelligence, host peer discussion and learning, explore strategies to advance community readiness, and advance regional alignment and collaboration. By the January launch, DRP expects to have an initial group of Coalition members identified and committed to the assessment process. The launch will recognize those members and formally introduce the Coalition, while the assessment process continues through March. Final Pilot Communities will be selected only after assessment findings are complete.

Part A: Coalition launch event

The firm will support the design and delivery of the launch event in coordination with DRP staff:

- **Event concept and programming.** The agenda and program for the launch, including Coalition members and other regional stakeholders aligned on the importance of business growth as a primary vehicle for community vitality.
- **Speaker identification, recruitment and coordination.** Recommend and coordinate speakers, including briefing materials and day-of coordination.
- **Invitation, outreach and registration.** Support invitations and outreach to members and prospective members, and manage registration and attendance reporting.
- **Day-of program facilitation.** Attend the event and see the program through on the day.
- **Post-event follow-up.** A summary of the event, attendee feedback and recommended next steps to sustain momentum into the first quarterly convening.

Part B: Quarterly Coalition convenings

After the launch, the firm will support three quarterly convenings of the full Coalition in 2027. For each convening, the firm will:

- **Develop agendas and programming.** Design each agenda and format around the Coalition's priorities, informed by DRP's direction and the community assessments. Formats should go beyond presentations to include facilitated discussion, member-led sessions and working groups. In-person is preferred, with the ability to pivot to virtual based on participant preferences.
- **Identify and coordinate speakers and presenters.** Recommend, recruit and coordinate speakers, panelists and member presenters, with briefing materials, including suggestions for how DRP can effectively engage its private-sector experts, such as brokers, site selectors, developers, utilities and industry leaders, to bring market intelligence and real-time perspective into selected convenings.

- **Handle outreach, registration and logistics.** Manage invitations, registration and attendance tracking, and make participation easy for members with limited staff time.
- **Capture and follow up.** Gather attendee feedback and provide a brief summary with key takeaways and recommended topics or actions for the next convening.

Please include the cost per convening and the cost of the launch event separately.

1.5 Outcomes and Measurement

Estimated timeline: framework December 2026 – February 2027; baseline and one measurement cycle completed August 2027

DRP is seeking a firm to define how the success of the Regional Growth Coalition will be measured and to complete one measurement cycle. The central question the measures should answer is: **are participating communities reducing timelines and improving predictability against established benchmarks?** The measures should go beyond participation and the number of resources produced, and the approach should be practical for a voluntary network. DRP will own and operate the reporting system after this engagement.

DRP expects three layers of measures: **speed and ease** (the primary performance measures); **momentum** (the early signal that the network is active); and **longer-term growth outcomes** such as business investment, new tax base and local job growth.

Part A: Design the measurement approach

The firm will design the following, with DRP review and revision before use:

- **Measurement framework and indicator definitions.** A framework linking Coalition activities to near-, mid- and long-term outcomes, with defined indicators, data sources and collection methods. It should address how to distinguish the Coalition's contribution from other factors that affect growth, and identify which indicators DRP can collect itself and which need outside data.
- **Speed and ease indicators.** Indicators for whether participating communities are reducing timelines and improving against the benchmarks in 1.2, using community-reported baseline timelines from the self-assessment and timeline testing results.
- **Momentum indicators.** Indicators such as convening frequency and attendance, the number and diversity of participating communities and partners, engagement over time, and examples of collaboration between members.
- **Data collection instruments and protocols.** Instruments and instructions for collecting indicators, including exit surveys or feedback from companies and developers who interact with participating communities, and structured collection of developer examples about existing barriers and, later, improvements.
- **Reporting template or dashboard.** A format DRP staff can update and run themselves after the first measurement cycle.

Part B: Establish the baseline and support one measurement cycle

- **Baseline report.** Establish baseline measures using existing data, the 1.2 benchmarks, community-reported timelines and new data collected with the instruments above. DRP may also share perception data from the research in Section 2.

- **One measurement cycle.** Administer the instruments, analyze results and report them against the baseline. Because it may be early for the Coalition's full impact to show, the report should distinguish early signals from results that need more time.

Section 2: Polling & Market Perception

Estimated timeline: December 2026 – February 2027

DRP is seeking a firm to establish a baseline on how residents, community leaders and business leaders view the role and importance of business growth as a driver of community vitality, and the region's readiness to support successful outcomes. The baseline will be one way DRP and the RGC measure annual progress toward shared goals, and a dataset DRP can track over time. The initial poll covers two groups:

- **Residents and community leaders:** current perceptions of the role and impact of business growth, industrial projects and economic development in driving community vitality.
- **Developers and business:** current sentiment about the region's business friendliness and readiness to support business growth and expansion projects.

The firm will complete the following:

- **Research design.** A plan covering audiences, research questions, methods, sampling approach, timeline and how results will be reported, designed so questions and methods can be repeated.
- **Resident and community leader baseline poll.** Design, administer and analyze a baseline poll on perceptions of business growth and development. Please price this separately, stating your assumed sample size and method.
- **Developer and business location leader research.** Design, administer and analyze a baseline poll, survey or structured interviews (the firm will recommend which) of developers, site selectors and business leaders who evaluate the region for investment, to understand how they perceive the region.
- **Baseline report.** Findings, methodology, limitations and a summary.

While this scope covers the initial poll, please include a cost to conduct the same polling again in future years.

Section 3: Education + Resources

Estimated timeline: December 2026 – February 2027

DRP is seeking a firm to develop practical educational resources that help RGC communities speak to the role of business growth in community vitality, advance their visions for business growth, understand the readiness factors that drive expansion decisions, adopt practices that improve speed, ease and predictability for businesses considering investment, and address other topics identified through the assessment and convening process. Partially informed by the existing Industrial Development Toolkit, the new materials should give elected officials, municipal staff and support stakeholders actionable insights, recognizing that they have limited time and technical background.

The firm will complete two resources in the target timeline. Formats and topics are open for discussion. To support costing, assume each resource is a maximum of 10 pages, delivered in both Word and PowerPoint, with two rounds of DRP review, and presented once to the RGC at a quarterly convening or virtual webinar. Please price each resource separately and state your assumptions. In your proposal, suggest topics, effective formats, and ideas to improve delivery and engagement.

In coordination with DRP, the firm will select the two topics most useful in building Coalition momentum and demonstrating the quality of content that will support shared objectives. At least one resource should address speed, ease and predictability. Example topics follow.

Example topic: Framework for Community Readiness

A clear, sequenced roadmap of the key factors that drive business expansion decisions and the actions a community can take to advance its readiness. Example roadmap topics:

- **Setting a growth vision.** Deciding the type and location of desired investment, aligned with community goals (jobs, tax base, quality of life) and realistic infrastructure limits.
- **Zoning and planning.** Aligning the master plan, future land use and zoning ordinance with the community's vision so desired projects are allowed and expected where the community wants them.
- **Resident engagement.** Involving residents and stakeholders throughout the process, not only at public hearings.
- **Site readiness.** Identifying priority sites and buildings and what makes them competitive (for example ownership, environmental conditions, utilities and access).
- **Permitting and review: speed, ease and predictability.** How projects move from first inquiry through site plan review, approvals and permits, who is involved, typical timelines, and what makes the process predictable for developers.

Example topic: Why Infrastructure Matters

A resource that explains infrastructure as an enabler of business investment and community growth. Infrastructure capacity and timing often decide whether a community or site can compete, and the planning, funding and construction behind them take longer than most project schedules allow. It should help community leaders understand what companies need, why infrastructure decisions should be made ahead of a specific project, and how to approach them strategically. It should draw on VIP site assessment findings, the Toolkit and regional examples, and cover at minimum:

- **Core infrastructure systems.** How to establish a baseline of current and future capacity for water and sanitary sewer, stormwater, electric power, natural gas, transportation access (roads, rail and freight routes) and broadband, and what modern manufacturing and other business users typically require.
- **Infrastructure and competitiveness.** How capacity, reliability and delivery timelines affect site selection, and why infrastructure gaps are among the most common reasons sites are passed over.
- **How infrastructure gets planned, funded and delivered.** The roles of municipalities, counties, utilities, road agencies and the State; common funding tools (state and federal grants, tax increment financing, special assessments and developer participation); and realistic lead times.
- **Working across municipal boundaries.** How communities can partner with neighboring jurisdictions to extend water and sewer service, including conditional land transfer agreements under Michigan's Public Act 425.
- **Infrastructure as a strategic choice.** How to tie capital improvement planning to the growth vision and priority sites, when to engage utility providers, and how infrastructure investment benefits existing residents and businesses as well as new investment.

Example topic: Community and Resident Engagement

A resource that helps communities engage residents and stakeholders early and effectively on growth and development decisions. Communities that involve residents early make decisions that better reflect local priorities and give developers a more predictable path with less pushback. It should give municipal staff and officials practical guidance and ready-to-use tools for each stage of the readiness framework. It should build on, and not duplicate, MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practices for Public Participation and the Toolkit, and coordinate with the messaging toolkit in Section 4. It should cover at minimum:

- **Why early engagement matters.** How engaging residents before a project arrives builds trust, surfaces concerns while there is time to address them, and reduces late-stage opposition and delays.
- **Who to engage.** Residents near priority sites, existing businesses, schools and workforce partners, community organizations, and groups that rarely attend public meetings, with approaches for reaching each.
- **Engagement methods by stage.** Recommended in-person and online approaches for vision-setting, plan and zoning updates, and project review, with templates such as a public participation plan, meeting formats, FAQs and project fact sheets.
- **Talking about modern business investment.** How to share accurate information about today's manufacturing and business investment and respond to common concerns such as traffic, noise, environmental impact, water and energy use, and job quality.
- **Roles of communities and developers.** Expectations for when and how developers engage residents, how to approach community benefits conversations, and how to stay transparent with residents while respecting the confidentiality of early-stage site selection.
- **Closing the loop.** How to report back on what was heard and how it shaped decisions, and how to sustain engagement as projects move forward

Section 4: Communications + Storytelling (Informational – Outside This RFP)

This section is outside the scope of this RFP. It is shared so firms understand that separate communications support will enable Coalition communications, and so they can coordinate with it.

DRP is selecting a firm to handle comprehensive communications for the RGC, including a clear, consistent narrative about business growth and its impact on communities, and resources that equip Coalition partners to support aligned communications. The narrative will reflect DRP's position that business and industrial growth is key to regional prosperity, help audiences see what modern business investment looks like and how it can strengthen the communities where it happens, and be consistent with the Coalition's principles: communities decide what kind of growth they want, and DRP lifts their stories. Partners hold the local relationships and credibility DRP cannot replicate on its own, but many are resource-constrained.

The communications firm will:

- **Activate the Growth Coalition.** Develop an activation plan covering a partner kickoff, ongoing engagement and a regular cadence of new content; equip partners and leaders to speak from a shared narrative; and recommend simple ways to track partner adoption and reach, including a central resource hub.
- **Build a Coalition Communications Toolkit.** Package campaign content (story frames, pro-growth messaging, principles and proof points) into ready-to-use, locally adaptable materials such as messaging guides, social

posts, newsletter templates, op-ed and letter-to-the-editor frameworks, board-report one-pagers and staff briefing cards, including an audience-specific version for state and local policymakers. Ease of use is a requirement.

- **Extend DRP's storytelling.** Develop narrative frames (for example growth and the tax base, the cost of standing still, community-driven growth, community readiness, good jobs, and a region with a plan); identify and prepare local ambassadors and examples; keep the tone credible by acknowledging community frustration, avoiding partisanship and leading with community voice and evidence; adapt content for local media, partner newsletters and social channels; and prepare to extend messaging toward residents and communities in later 2027.

Success looks like: a majority of coalition partners actively using toolkit materials; consistent language about economic growth and DRP's and the RGC's role across the region; expanded reach among local business, municipal and media audiences; and a coalition ready to carry shared messaging forward.

Coordination. Firms selected under this RFP will coordinate with DRP staff and with each other and with the communications firm. Assessment findings may surface stories and common messaging needs, convenings may feature stories and resources, and DRP may share perception data from Section 2 to inform messaging.

Guidance for Proposers

To help you prepare a focused response:

- **What DRP provides.** Established relationships with the participating communities, introductions to partner organizations, DRP data and market intelligence (including VIP findings and DRP's competitiveness benchmarking), the Industrial Development Toolkit, and staff time for review and participation. DRP will make decisions on community selection, the strategy and all external communications.
- **Pricing format.** Please price by section and component using the format in "Section 1 at a glance": fixed fees for design work, cost per community, cost per convening, and the launch event separately. Show execution and ancillary costs separately, include all anticipated meetings, and attach an hourly rate sheet.
- **State your assumptions.** Include assumptions about the number of communities, review rounds, travel, venues and who will provide data or access.
- **Be specific to this work.** We value proposals that show experience with local government development processes and voluntary networks, and that explain how you would measure faster, easier, more predictable outcomes in practice. Please avoid generic capabilities language.
- **Length.** We suggest no more than 15 pages, excluding appendices and work samples.
- **Questions.** Send questions by the date in the Key Dates table to the submission address. DRP will post answers to all bidders without identifying the asker.
- **Subcontractors and partners.** Say which parts of your proposal you would perform directly and which with partners, and provide the same credentials information for partners.

Contract/Administrative Requirements

- **Ownership.** Reports, tools and other work products developed under this engagement will be owned by DRP.
- **Confidentiality.** Selected firms will be expected to appropriately protect community-reported information and confidential or early-stage site-selection information shared through the engagement.
- **Project coordination.** Selected firms must communicate proactively with DRP regarding delivery dates, dependencies and any circumstances that could affect agreed timelines.

Proposal Content and Submission

Please keep proposals as simple as possible. Provide a concise description of your capabilities to produce the deliverables and include:

- Firm name, list of principals, and brief biographies of the staff who will execute the scopes of work.
- If more than one firm, the roles and responsibilities of each and a brief description of their history working together on similar projects.
- The sections and components you are bidding on.
- Your understanding of the challenge and the steps you will take to accomplish the scope within the proposed timeline, including how your approach will produce measurable speed and ease improvements.
- A detailed budget broken down by deliverable, with a proposed payment schedule, an hourly rate sheet, and all anticipated meetings included.
- Time estimates for the deliverables.
- Disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, including current work with advanced manufacturing projects considering the Detroit Region and current or past work with the owners of potential sites.
- Examples of work, which may be included as an appendix.

RFP Review Process

DRP will review proposals in three steps:

- **Preliminary screening.** Proposals must follow the format in this RFP. An evaluation team will determine whether a proposal warrants further consideration.
- **Bidder candidate interviews.** DRP will ask finalists for additional information or to join a web meeting to discuss their proposal. These will occur during the weeks of November 9th and November 16th.
- **Evaluation.** An evaluation committee will score proposals against a pre-determined matrix using the criteria below:

Scoring:

- **Total Cost: 25 points maximum**

Since the basis of the award to service providers is a competitive process, the proposed cost will be the primary selection criteria. Proposers must submit the expenses related to producing each of the items identified in the scope of work/deliverables. Please break down project costs into two general categories:

- Execution costs refer to salaries, wages, fringe benefits and related costs of the overall program management, program coordination, and general administrative functions.
- Ancillary costs refer to all costs not attributed to execution costs. This can include costs such as travel, registration fees, meeting fees, etc.

- **Description of deliverables: 20 points maximum**
Provide a description of how your organization intends to fulfill the scope of work and deliverables associated with this project and other relevant services provided by your organization. Describe how your approach will meet the expectations identified in the previous sections. Indicate if any work will be contracted to other organizations.
- **Project Team & Client Engagement Process: 20 points maximum**
DRP expects the service provider to have staff in their employ who have credentials (education and/or experience) and the capacity to perform the required services. Provide a description of the proposed project team, including names, titles, and role in the project and the planned engagement process with DRP staff throughout the project lifecycle.
- **Past performance & experience: 20 points maximum**
Please provide an organizational overview of experience and demonstrate the credentials and capacity to perform the required work. Provide three case studies (attachments or links) to past projects on similar work. Please provide the same information for any individuals or businesses outside of your own organization that will be contracted for any portion of this project.
- **Timeline/capacity: 20 points maximum**
Provide a timeline for the completion of deliverables. Bidders should provide a timeline of activity for deliverables following the award of the contract. Provide a list of any assumptions made regarding the timeline.

Evaluation Scoring:

Total Cost	25
Description of Deliverables	20
Project Team & Client Engagement Process	20
Past Performance & Experience	20
Timeline	20
Total Points	105