REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR

INVEST SOUTH/WEST

DESIGN SERVICES FIRMS
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July 10, 2020

On behalf of the City of Chicago, we invite your participation in a process to identify Pre-Qualified design services firms for an extraordinary new opportunity: developing scores of sites along key corridors within the INVEST South/West neighborhood improvement initiative. Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot launched INVEST South/West as a transformative approach to reinvesting in the urban fabric of Chicago’s South and West Side neighborhoods. A more detailed description follows in the accompanying Request for Qualifications (RFQ). But the City, together with forward-looking public and private interests and community organizations, has already identified millions in funding and begun executing on existing plans and developing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) within the INVEST South/West communities.

The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) has been asked to lead the process to create a Pre-Qualified List of local designers as a resource for developers appended to subsequent RFPs. This list will do a great deal to promote the qualifications of established and emerging firms that reflect the diversity of the City of Chicago. Chicago has taken the lead in embracing equity in investment in its planning and development work on the South and West sides, and our design community should take a leading role in promoting equity and inclusivity within the profession.

CAC would like to learn more about your practice, work at the neighborhood level, and pursuit of exceptional design. The Pre-Qualified List identifies firms considered by an independent jury to be most capable of executing high-quality design on a range of neighborhood development projects. The next stage in the process will be the City’s release of individual project INVEST South/West RFPs, whereby prospective clients will be connected with designers on the Pre-Qualified List.

Please review the RFQ and follow its instructions carefully. It is designed to be clear and straightforward but it is not exhaustive; additional information will be available through a series of links in the document. The RFQ also describes the selection process, including where and how to direct questions that are not answered by the distributed materials. We are excited to see your response and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Thank you,

LYNN OSMOND
President & CEO
Chicago Architecture Center

Thank you,

REED KROLLOFF
Dean & The Rowe Family College of Architecture Endowed Chair
IIT College of Architecture
Jury Chair
OVERVIEW
GOAL OF THIS RFQ

This RFQ will assess Chicago-based design firms in order to identify 24 to 36 that will be pre-qualified for a range of development opportunities along INVEST South/West target corridors. Projects for these sites will encompass adaptive reuse/rehabilitation and mixed-use new construction of low- to mid-rise scale. This Pre-Qualified List is not exclusive, but rather a resource for developers in considering firms to commission for work.

This RFQ seeks to identify a diverse pool of participants: large and small firms; legacy and emerging practices; offices that primarily serve the commercial sector and those that primarily serve the community sector; architects who have worked on the South and West sides before, and architects who haven’t.

The one criterion that should link all participating offices is a record of sustained commitment to--and peer-recognition of--design excellence. Cognizant that no one practice can be all things to all people, offices are strongly encouraged to team with one another to mutually strengthen your responses to this RFQ. The Pre-Qualified List that emerges will identify and elevate talent that is as diverse as the city of Chicago itself. This list will remain valid for three years over the life of INVEST South/West, with possible extension and revision at the City’s discretion.

INVEST SOUTH/WEST INITIATIVE

INVEST South/West is an unprecedented community improvement initiative from Mayor Lightfoot intended to marshal the resources of multiple City departments, community organizations, and corporate partners toward 10 neighborhoods on Chicago’s South and West sides, and more specifically, 12 priority corridors in these areas. Over the next three years, INVEST South/West will direct $750 million in public, private, and philanthropic investment to re-activate a constellation of historic neighborhood cores with vibrant uses, amenities, transportation infrastructure, and an improved public realm.

INVEST South/West will leverage $250 million in existing business development and infrastructure funding from the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) through the Tax Increment Financing and Neighborhood Opportunity Fund programs to support improvement projects that align with local priorities.

These investments will build on more than $500 million in planned infrastructure improvements that will provide transportation, housing, and quality of life enhancements that bolster the vitality of the corridors and surrounding blocks. This includes area infrastructure projects already allocated, such as FastTracks improvements to the CTA Green Line, the Auburn Park Metra Station, and a new track and field facility in Gately Park in Pullman.

ELIGIBILITY

Primary applicants must be architects based in the Chicagoland area and licensed to practice in the State of Illinois. Please indicate this clearly in your submission. The Chicagoland-based primary applicant may elect to partner with another firm, which may be headquartered elsewhere. The Chicago-based practice must be the prime in any contract for city-owned properties.
A key tenet of this initiative is driving inclusive growth. A goal of this RFP is to drive a similar growth in Chicago's local design community, which has much to offer and much to gain in contributing to re-envisioning of these communities. Respondents to this RFQ will be able to create unique places and experiences that will sustain thriving commercial corridors.

**Methodology**
In 2019, DPD analyzed hundreds of miles of street frontage zoned for commercial or business uses throughout the South and West sides of the city. The department looked at data and information from a variety of sources, including business licenses, historic resources, transit service, community plans, demographics, and more.

An initial analysis of three dozen possible commercial corridors was narrowed by DPD to 12 priority corridors by using two chief criteria: the existence of at least one well-developed community plan with a commercial component, and the existence of at least one active commercial area at a specific node or intersection. Focusing on these corridors allows the City to take quick action in under-invested neighborhoods using available resources and existing plans. After the City is able to measure the success of the initiative, INVEST South/West may be expanded to additional neighborhoods across Chicago.

**INVEST SOUTH/WEST NEIGHBORHOODS AND PRIORITY CORRIDORS**

**Auburn Gresham**
79th Street and Ashland Avenue (link)

**Austin**
Chicago Avenue from Austin to Kilpatrick (link)

**Bronzeville**
Cottage Grove Avenue and adjacent blocks (link)

**Greater Englewood**
63rd and Halsted Streets (link)

**Greater Roseland (two corridors)**
South Michigan Avenue; 111th Street (link)

**Humboldt Park (two corridors)**
North Avenue from Kostner to Kedzie; Chicago Avenue from Pulaski to Kedzie (link)

**New City**
47th Street and Ashland Avenue (link)

**North Lawndale**
Ogden Avenue from Kedzie to Pulaski (link)

**South Chicago**
Commercial Avenue from 85th to 92nd and adjacent blocks (link)

**South Shore**
79th Street from Stony Island to the Metra Tracks (link)
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR INVEST SOUTH/WEST DESIGN SERVICES FIRMS

PROCESS
SUMMARY

This RFQ is part of a multi-stage selection process that will continue with City of Chicago-issued RFPs for multiple project sites which may proceed toward the commission of design services. The specific schedule and requirements of this RFQ follow. Although it is not anticipated, dates, schedules, and the process itself are subject to change at the sole discretion of CAC and/or the City of Chicago.

IMPORTANT DATES

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<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>RFQ released for public view</td>
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<td>July 15</td>
<td>Deadline to submit questions</td>
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<td>July 17</td>
<td>Deadline for firms to register to apply</td>
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<td>July 20</td>
<td>Deadline for CAC to provide written answers to all questions</td>
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<td>July 29</td>
<td>RFQ applications due</td>
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<td>August 4</td>
<td>Jury deliberations</td>
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<td>August 5</td>
<td>City begins vetting of recommended firms</td>
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<td>August 12</td>
<td>First group of RFPs expected to be released (to include Pre-Qualified List)</td>
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BUDGET

With the wide-ranging scale and scope of INVEST South/West projects still being developed, there is no set capital budget. Projects of various scales and complexities will be outlined in individual RFPs to follow the RFQ process.

SPONSOR

This RFQ process, including CAC’s role as Project Manager, is supported primarily by a grant from the Pritzker Traubert Foundation.

PROJECT MANAGER

CAC is serving as Project Manager for this RFQ on behalf of the City of Chicago seeking Pre-Qualified Design Services Firms for projects within INVEST South/West. Founded in 1966, the CAC is the leading organization devoted to celebrating and promoting Chicago as a center of architectural innovation through its tours, exhibitions, public programs, and advocacy. As Chicago’s forum for the exchange of ideas on urban design, the CAC inspires people to participate in the building of vibrant communities and to demand the highest standard in urban design. For more information, please visit www.architecture.org.
SUBMISSION
04 SUBMISSION

INSTRUCTIONS

All submissions must be completed according to these instructions. Failure to do so may be grounds for disqualification. CAC and the City of Chicago will have final jurisdiction in any related dispute.

REGISTRATION

Prior to filing a submission, primary applicants must register their intent to respond to this RFQ. Please email CAC staff at programs@architecture.org by 5:00pm Central Standard Time on July 17, 2020 with the following applicant information: firm name/team name, address, and primary contact(s). Failure to register by this deadline disqualifies the applicant from this RFQ.

FORMAT

All applications must be filed electronically via our secure Slideroom submission portal. In addition to written material, you may upload as many digitized photographs, renderings, or drawings (images should be rendered at 72 DPI at a minimum size of 4” x 6” or 1800 x 1200 pixels) as you choose, keeping within page count limitations. You may separately attach up to six (6) images (10MB or less per image) as optional reference material for the jury. These images must also appear within your PDF application file, and may not be supplemental to it. No additional materials may be included with your firm’s submission. Submissions are limited to no more than 40 pages, including title/cover pages. Page totals per section are suggestions and though each section must be completed, not all of the page count needs to be consumed. Space not used in one section may be added to another, but the submission must be ordered as follows, and may not exceed the specified total of 40 pages. Be sure the name of your firm is clearly visible on the cover page, and the name and contact information (including mailing and emailing addresses and phone number) for your firm is clearly visible on the back page. Type may not be less than 10 points in size, and lines of text must be single-spaced or greater. All submitted pages should be single-sided and formatted as 8.5” x 11” paper size, as jurors may choose to print a review copy of your submission. Margins are at the submitter’s discretion and full-bleed images are allowable. Total file size upload not to exceed 20MB.

COST

There is no cost to apply.

CONTENT

An independent RFQ selection jury will look for the following in each submission. These items will serve as the basis for evaluation:

Cover Letter/Statement of Interest
(1-2 pages)

This letter should be a thoughtful discussion about why your firm is interested in this project. At this point, the Statement will serve in lieu of a direct conversation with CAC, so the text should be personal, clear, and compelling. The name, telephone number, and e-mail address for the firm’s primary contact should be included in the text. The letter should be addressed to the attention of the jury.

Firm Overview/Philosophy
(4-6 pages)

This section should provide an overview of your firm, including information on its history, structure, and achievements. Explain your philosophy of practice, methodology, and approach to art or design. Feel free to illustrate this section with previous project experience of any type, where possible highlighting your experience in providing design services to communities similar
to those on the South and West Sides of Chicago. Please emphasize how your office has maintained a consistent record of peer-recognized design excellence across project types.

**Sample of Relevant Projects** *(15-20 pages)*

Please provide examples of four (4) to six (6) previous projects, at least four of which must be built or substantially built, that you feel demonstrate the expertise necessary to participate in various community-based projects along INVEST South/West improvement corridors. For each built or substantially built project, please describe how you were able to meet or exceed the client’s expectations and whether the project budget and schedule were met. For unbuilt work, please illustrate a clear and practical design concept in the project narrative and provide details on the origin of the work (invited competition, speculative, project bid).

**Team Structure** *(4-6 pages)*

Teams must demonstrate that they have appropriate expertise—either in-house or through partnership. Provide biographical information for each principal and senior manager on the team. RFQ participants are strongly encouraged to engage in meaningful diversity and inclusion in structuring a design team.

**Joint Submission**

Firms with size and capacity limitations, or lacking key experience, may elect to partner with a larger firm in order to strengthen a submission. Partnered firms should have clearly defined roles within the design team proposal, and a justification for partnership should be provided; employment lineage, history of collaboration between the two firms, or a specific strategic reason for partnership are examples of such a justification.

**Fee/Cost and Quality Controls** *(up to 4 pages)*

Please indicate your typical gross fee ranges for projects, including the billing rate for each type of staff member engaged in the project. Explain the general distribution of project time and responsibilities by position. As part of this discussion, please include information about your firm’s systems for quality and cost control.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Any questions about the RFQ must be submitted electronically to programs@architecture.org by 5:00pm Central Standard Time on July 15, 2020. All questions, with their answers, will be distributed electronically (and without attribution) to all applicants on July 20, 2020. Please be sure in submitting questions that you include a point-of-contact name, email address, and phone number; participants will not receive answers if this information is not included with the submission of their questions.
05

SELECTION
05 SELECTION

PROCESS

Soon after the submission deadline, a Selection Jury convened by CAC will consider each submission and evaluate it according to the following criteria. The Jury will identify 24-36 Pre-Qualified design services firms for future opportunities through competitive INVEST South/West RFPs.

CRITERIA

Each RFQ submission will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Philosophy and Method

The Jury must understand not only what a designer has done in the past, but also why they have done it. Information should explain clearly and succinctly your methodology, philosophy, and approach to urbanism, design, usability, and appropriateness to the local context.

Quality/Character of Previous Work

Firms responding to this RFQ must demonstrate a consistent record of peer-recognized design excellence and innovation in their previous work. Design ability will be evaluated by examining the aesthetic, cultural, functional, and technical merits of past work.

Quality of Submission

The quality and clarity of the submitted narrative will be evaluated by the jury, as will the quality and character of the graphic design. Jurors will look for overall legibility of the submission and how you choose to put your work forward.

JURY

CAC will convene an independent seven-person selection jury, comprised of the following:

Jury Chair:
Reed Kroloff,
Dean & The Rowe Family College of Architecture Endowed Chair,
IIT College of Architecture

Juror:
Lynn Osmond,
President & CEO,
Chicago Architecture Center

Juror:
Allison Grace Williams, FAIA
Principal,
AGWms_Studio

Juror:
Gerardo Garcia,
Design Review Lead,
City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development

Juror:
Bill Williams,
Principal,
KMW Communities

Juror:
Sara Zewde,
Founding Principal,
Studio Zewde

Juror:
Philip Enquist, FAIA
Consulting Partner,
SOM
SUBMISSIONS

Completed RFQ Responses must be submitted electronically, through a password-protected application page on Slideroom. Please submit your Response by 5:00 PM Central Standard Time on July 29, 2020.

Late submissions will be disqualified.
Submissions will not be returned.

OWNERSHIP AND COPYRIGHT

All submitted materials shall become the property of the Chicago Architecture Center and may be retained for archival purposes and possible exhibition and publication. Firms retain standard ownership of their intellectual property. By participating in this RFQ, each firm acknowledges and agrees that CAC shall have the right to reproduce the submitted materials and/or use the materials for any non-construction purpose—including archival, educational, public relations, or marketing. CAC shall have the right to release any of the submitted materials to the media or otherwise publish and distribute the design materials and will make every effort to credit the firm responsible for authoring the material. However, CAC takes no responsibility for proper publication credits by any third party.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. The CAC reserves the right to reject any and all responses, and to waive minor irregularities in any RFQ/proposal.
B. The CAC reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted, and to request additional information from any applicant.
C. Neither CAC nor the City shall be responsible for any costs incurred by the firm in preparing, submitting, or presenting its response to the RFQ.
D. CAC and the City encourage minority and women-owned firms to submit qualifications consistent with the City’s policy to insure that minority and women-owned firms are afforded the maximum practicable opportunity to participate in City redevelopment projects.

NOTIFICATION

Response to this RFQ does not commit CAC or the City of Chicago to enter into a contract or award any services related to the project described in this RFQ; nor does it obligate them to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of this Request for Qualifications.

We look forward to your response.

APPROVAL BY CITY DPD

Following Jury selection, staff with the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development will confirm that each design services firm chosen for the Pre-Qualified List is in good standing and is approved to do business with the City.
APPENDICES
A: MAP OF INVEST SOUTH/WEST COMMUNITY AREAS
Visioning workshops held with Invest South/West communities suggest development opportunities will typically be low-rise to mid-rise multifamily and mixed-use projects (3-6 stories). Additionally, adaptive re-use of mercantile buildings and iconic neighborhood buildings like Laramie Bank and the Englewood Fire Station, may be part of the scope of these projects. A presentation from Visioning Workshops can be found here.
Design Excellence celebrates the City of Chicago’s unique architectural and urban design legacy while also aspiring for a higher level of design in new development. The Guiding Principles were laid out as the result of a design excellence charter and stakeholder buy-in to the development of these Guiding Principles is key to their success.

How do we engender a culture that values design excellence in everyday life?

The answer to this question is likely the built and natural environment. As such, the Guiding Principles strive for inclusivity in the design process and the breadth of project types to which they apply. They also seek to foster innovation, promote the creation of a sense of place, seek to push the envelope of sustainability best practices and encourage collaboration and engagement with the public and other city departments and agencies.

To achieve the goals of Design Excellence, 10 Guiding Principles have been developed, spanning five key themes aimed at a comprehensive and robust response to the impact of the city’s built environment on the people of Chicago:

- **EQUITY** - Fair treatment, targeted support, and prosperity for all citizens
- **INNOVATION** - Creative approaches to design and problem-solving
- **SENSE OF PLACE** - Celebrating and strengthening the culture of our communities
- **SUSTAINABILITY** - Committing to environmental, cultural, and financial longevity
- **COMMUNICATION** - Fostering design appreciation and responding to community needs

View the full document of [Design Excellence Principles](#).