

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Belle Isle Conservancy | Strategic Services for Clarity & Engagement Campaign Implementation

The Belle Isle Conservancy is requesting proposals from qualified firms and individuals interested in providing strategic recommendations for an integrated marketing campaign in accordance with the Scope of Work specified in this Request for Proposal (RFP).

TIMELINE

- RFP Release: February 28, 2018
- RFP Responses Due: March 30, 2018
- Consultant Selection: April/May 2018

OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Established in 2011 after a merger of four Belle Isle-focused groups, the Belle Isle Conservancy's (BIC) mission is to protect, preserve, restore and enhance the natural environment, historic structures and unique character of Belle Isle as a public park for the enjoyment of all - now and forever.

ISSUE STATEMENT

Belle Isle is a community gem and world-renowned park that Detroiters have visited and loved for generations. Ask just about any Detroiters about Belle Isle, and you'll more than likely get a sentimental response filled with fond memories of family reunions, childhood visits riding the Giant Slide or spending a random Saturday hanging out at the park with friends. However, the park has undergone various transformations over the past several years that have caused confusion and disengagement for a significant number of our park users, especially Detroit residents, who are our primary target audience.

One of the most significant changes in recent history happened in 2014 when the State of Michigan (Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)) entered a thirty-year lease with the City of Detroit to manage Belle Isle Park as a provision of the city's financial restructuring. Through the lease, Belle Isle became Michigan's 102nd state park. With this new management structure came great things, including much-needed infrastructure improvements, long-awaited bathroom and picnic shelter repairs, and, after almost ten years, the return of the Detroit Department of Transportation bus service on the Island. On the other hand, changes considered controversial by some

include a fee required to access the Island by vehicle (whereas the Park had been free prior), replacement of the Detroit Police Department with the Michigan State Police and DNR Conservation Officers for law enforcement, and new processes and procedures. This, among other changes, has resulted in a perception in the Detroit community that the park is no longer for everyone.

Belle Isle Park is a complex environment with many organizations responsible for different aspects of the park user's experience. For example, the DNR manages day-to-day park operations, large-scale events, facility rentals for the Belle Isle Casino, Flynn Pavilion, and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory, and more. Popular island institutions such as the Belle Isle Aquarium, the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, the Belle Isle Nature Center, Athletic Fields, and Golf Center are operated by an array of organizations or vendors. As such, many people are unclear about stakeholder roles and responsibilities.

To ameliorate these issues and minimize the controversy, we want to develop a strategy for how to best tell the Belle Isle Conservancy story and provide clarity on who the park stakeholder organizations are, who is responsible for what, and how park users can easily enjoy the Island. There should be a specific focus on the campaign to engage those who may no longer feel welcome.

SCOPE OF REQUESTED SERVICES

It is the intent of the Belle Isle Conservancy to launch an integrated marketing campaign to address and improve the issues stated above. The first step in this process is to engage a consultant to understand and validate the core issues, research and present opportunities to address the issues, and develop a list of recommended strategies with associated costs and expected impact for the Belle Isle Conservancy to deploy in the second phase of this community engagement effort.

The strategic recommendations developed should address the following goals:

- Increase public awareness and understanding of who the Belle Isle Conservancy is, for what the organization is responsible, and its impact in the community
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the park's new management structure, island partners, institutions, and policies and procedures
- Provide clarity on common misconceptions or misunderstandings on how to access the island, its offerings, and institutions
- Address barriers that make some park users feel unwelcome at the park

- Ensure the community views the park as a place for all to relax, recreate, and form lasting memories

Please note that the Conservancy has budgeted \$10,000 for the first phase of this project.

DELIVERABLES

- Documentation and validation of common misunderstandings and confusion (from the park user perspective) about the Belle Isle Conservancy, its role within Belle Isle Park, and other common questions or challenges to having a seamless experience at the park
- Presentation of integrated strategies to consider in a comprehensive campaign that will provide more clarity on the stakeholders and roles
- Development of a list of strategies and tools to implement with expected timelines, cost estimates, and projected impact
- Weekly check-ins/updates on the work performed

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Please address the following in your proposal:

- Description of the firm - experience, qualifications, and biographies of key staff who will work on the campaign. Please include resume of proposed project director.
- Project experience - three recent case studies executed by the firm related to the services requested for the Belle Isle Conservancy. Include overview of the firm's knowledge and connections to community.
- Proposed methodology and deliverables
- Itemized cost schedule of services - estimated price terms for service should be provided separately listing breakdown tasks
- Please indicate if there is potential to provide any of the above mentioned services pro bono.
- Proposed project and plan schedule
- References

CONSULTANT EVALUATION CRITERIA

A qualified firm or individual will have demonstrated experience and expertise in forming strategic partnerships with nonprofits, especially parks and recreation and cultural institutions. It will have proven success in conceiving and executing low-cost, high-impact marketing and public relations initiatives focused on our Detroit audience. A qualified firm or individual will be creative, viable, professionally organized and

well-versed in how to best communicate in a wide variety of media to a diverse set of audiences.

- Demonstrated experience of firm and staff on project
- Firm's understanding of similar efforts and the local community engagement climate and key stakeholders
- Fit of strategy to BIC's goals
- Fee structure

SUBMITTAL PROCESS

- Responses to the RFP are due on March 30, 2018 at 5PM EST.
- Responses should be emailed to proposals@belleisleconservancy.org with the subject line, "Proposal for Clarity & Engagement Campaign Strategy."
- Questions can be emailed to Brittany Sanders Rhodes at sandersb@belleisleconservancy.org.

STATEMENT OF NON-COMMITMENT

Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Belle Isle Conservancy to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in preparation of proposals responding to the RFP. The Belle Isle Conservancy reserves the right to amend this RFP document, make the selection of the proposal chosen for the work, reject all proposals or cancel the issuances of this RFP.