



Downtown Lansing Signature Streetscape Planter Initiative

RFQ #2026-07-08

PUBLIC NOTICE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Downtown Lansing Inc. SIGNATURE STREETSCAPE PLANTER INITIATIVE RFQ#2026-07-08

The mission of Downtown Lansing Inc. is to strengthen and nurture the culture, health, and sustainability of our downtown district. Notice is hereby given that a Request for Qualifications for the Downtown Lansing Inc. Signature Streetscape Planter Initiative will be received by Downtown Lansing Inc. located at 215 S. Washington Sq. Suite 100, Lansing, MI 48933, until July 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. For more information send name, address and email address to Kate Litwin, Community Development Director at kate@downtownlansing.org. DLI reserves the right to accept or reject any and all items or portions of items received.

Kate Litwin,
Community Development Director



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The City of Lansing and Downtown Lansing Inc., in partnership with the business community, recognize the need to facilitate economic development in our community. As part of the economic growth and local first strategy, Downtown Lansing Inc. has adopted the following policy:

DLI Local Vendor Policy:

It is the policy of Downtown Lansing Inc. staff and the Board of Directors to give priority preference in vending for events to a business/vendor located within the Central Business District when possible and within budget parameters.

In the event a business/vendor within the Central Business District is unavailable or unable to meet the requirements set forth by DLI, preference shall be given secondarily to a business/vendor located within the City of Lansing.

If no vendor/business located within the Central Business District or City of Lansing is available and financially viable, DLI may enter into an agreement and select a business/vendor outside of the Central Business District and the City of Lansing.

Local Preference for Bids

A Lansing based business that has been deemed responsive and responsible according to the Local Vendor Policy that is within 10% of the low bid will be given an opportunity to match the low bid amount to receive the contract. If there is more than one qualified, responsive and responsible Downtown or Lansing based bidder, the first opportunity to match the low bid will go to the Lansing based firm with the lowest bid.

If the Downtown or Lansing based business refuses to match the low bid, the contract will be awarded to the responsive and responsible low bidder.

Projects greater than \$1,000,000 are exempt from the Local Preference.

Qualifications for Lansing Based Business status:

1) Pay City income taxes on Net Profits

and

2) Pay City property taxes on a plant or office and equipment used for the performance of the contract bid upon – or – other real or personal property in the City of Lansing equivalent in value to such plant or office and equipment for not less than one year prior to determination.



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS:

Executive Summary

Downtown Lansing Inc. (DLI) seeks qualifications from multidisciplinary design professionals to create a signature family of oversized decorative streetscape planters. These planters will transform existing concrete planter pads into memorable public spaces while supporting seasonal horticulture and reinforcing Downtown Lansing's identity.

About Downtown Lansing

Downtown Lansing is experiencing meaningful momentum through public, private, and nonprofit investments and partnerships. Streetscape enhancements are an important component of creating an attractive, walkable, and economically strong downtown.

Project Vision

The project is intended to commission a coordinated collection of sculptural planters that function as civic infrastructure and public art in our city center along Washington Square and Michigan Avenue. DLI encourages innovative, timeless design rather than standard catalog products.

Existing Conditions

The project will utilize existing concrete planter pads located throughout downtown. The intent is to activate these existing assets with high-quality design rather than reconstruct the surrounding infrastructure, until the city's CSO street reconstruction takes place.

Project Goals

- Create iconic streetscape features unique to Downtown Lansing.
- Improve pedestrian experience and downtown aesthetics.
- Support vibrant seasonal plantings.
- Provide durable, low-maintenance installations.
- Strengthen the Michigan's Downtown brand.
- Encourage photography and placemaking.

Project Description

The selected team will design and fabricate a coordinated family of oversized commercial-grade planters, generally targeting dimensions of approximately 48 inches in height and width. Final locations and quantities will be confirmed during design development.



Desired Design Characteristics

- Timeless
- Sculptural
- Elegant
- Commercial quality
- Freeze/thaw resistant
- Photogenic
- Compatible with historic and modern architecture
- Year-round interest
- Low maintenance, including graffiti/damage resistance
- Distinctive to Lansing
- Ability to be removed and relocated, as needed, for construction or other purposes

Submission Requirements

- Letter of Interest
- Firm qualifications
- Project team/Artist Information
- Portfolio (3–5 comparable projects)
- References
- Fabrication capabilities
- Project approach
- Estimated schedule
- Required certifications and insurance information

Concept renderings are not required during the RFQ phase.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weight
Quality of Previous Work	30%
Relevant Experience	25%
Creative Approach	20%
Team Qualifications	15%
Project Understanding	10%

Technical Specifications

- Design will fit on a concrete pad measuring 70" long x 50" wide.
- Commercial-grade fiberglass, GFRC, cast stone, corten steel, powder-coated aluminum, or approved equal
- Concealed drainage preferred
- UV and Graffiti-resistant finish preferred
- Designed for Michigan freeze/thaw conditions
- Minimum anticipated service life of 20 years
- Suitable for annual and seasonal plantings



Project Schedule

Milestone	Date
RFQ Released	July 8, 2026
Questions Due	July 20, 2026
Responses Issued	July 23, 2026
Qualifications Due	July 31, 2026
Committee Review	August 7, 2026
Interviews	Week of August 10, 2026
RFP Distributed to Shortlist	August 17, 2026

Please Note: Installation of selected design(s) will take place in Fall, 2026. Applicants should take this timeline into consideration during the RFQ and RFP process.

Terms & Conditions

DLI reserves the right to reject any or all qualifications, waive irregularities, request additional information, negotiate with qualified firms, or cancel the solicitation at any time.

Insurance Requirements

Selected firms shall provide evidence of commercial general liability, workers' compensation, automobile liability, and any additional insurance required by DLI prior to contract execution.

Shortlist Process

Following evaluation of qualifications, DLI intends to invite a shortlist of firms to participate in a subsequent design competition or Request for Proposals. Honoraria may be provided at DLI's discretion.

What Success Looks Like

We are seeking more than a planter. We are seeking an enduring civic feature that residents recognize, visitors photograph, businesses are proud to sit beside, and that becomes synonymous with Downtown Lansing.

- Looks exceptional with or without flowers
- Works in all four seasons
- Balances artistry with function
- Contributes, through design elements or material selection, Downtown Lansing's identity as Michigan's Downtown.



Appendix A

Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) Submission Requirements

Downtown Lansing Inc. requests that each respondent organize its Statement of Qualifications in the following order to facilitate a consistent and equitable evaluation process. Submissions should be concise, well-organized, and demonstrate the respondent's ability to successfully complete a project of similar scope and complexity.

A. Cover Letter

- One page only
- Include firm name, primary contact, address, phone number, email, website, and a brief statement of interest.
- Describe why your team is uniquely qualified for this project.
- Include the signature of an authorized representative.

B. Firm Profile

- Provide a brief history of the firm.
- Identify office locations.
- Number of employees.
- Primary areas of expertise.
- Years in business.

C. Project Team

- Identify the proposed project manager and key personnel.
- Describe each team member's role and relevant experience.
- Include resumes in an appendix.

D. Relevant Experience

- Provide three (3) to five (5) projects of similar scale or complexity.
- Include project name, client, location, completion date, budget, scope, team role, materials, photographs, reference, and a brief statement describing why the project is relevant.
- Provide a one-page narrative describing how your team collaborates with clients, artists, engineers, fabricators, contractors, and stakeholders throughout the design and construction process.

E. Design Philosophy

- Maximum two (2) pages.
- Describe the firm's approach to placemaking, civic design, public art, streetscape enhancements, collaboration, and designing for four-season environments.



F. Fabrication Capabilities

- Describe fabrication methods.
- Identify in-house and subcontracted services.
- Discuss engineering capabilities, quality control, shipping, and installation experience.

G. Materials & Durability

- Describe experience with GFRC, fiberglass, cast stone, corten steel, powder-coated aluminum, or similar commercial materials.
- Discuss expected longevity and maintenance considerations.

H. References

- Provide three (3) client references including organization, contact person, title, phone number, email address, project completed, and relationship to your firm.

Submission Format

- Maximum narrative length: twenty-five (25) pages
- Page size: 8.5 x 11 inches.
- Minimum font size: 10-point.
- Electronic submission in searchable PDF format.

Visual Documentation

- Respondents are strongly encouraged to include photographs, renderings, diagrams, sketches, and graphics demonstrating completed projects and relevant experience.

Recommended Project Summary Table

For each relevant project, provide:

- Project Name
- Client
- Location
- Completion Date
- Project Budget
- Team Role
- Primary Materials
- Why the Project is Relevant



Appendix B: Inspiration Booklet

Downtown Lansing is investing in signature streetscape elements that transform existing concrete pads into memorable public spaces. We seek planters that are sculptural, durable, timeless, and uniquely suited to the city's evolving identity. These elements should be recognized as civic features—not simply containers for flowers.

Existing Conditions



Downtown Lansing is removing the newspaper boxes and metal decorative elements from concrete bases that measure 70" long x 50" wide x 10" high. The remaining concrete will be used as an elevated platform for the requested design.



Design characteristics we hope to inspire:

Oversized & Memorable

- Planters that create a visual destination—not just hold flowers.
- Bold scale that complements wide downtown sidewalks and public spaces.

Sculptural

- Designs that function as public art, even when flowers are not in bloom.
- Strong forms that create interest from every angle.

Timeless

- Elegant, enduring designs that will remain relevant for decades.
- Avoid trends in favor of lasting quality.

Four-Season Appeal

- Beautiful with spring bulbs, summer annuals, fall displays, and winter evergreens.
- Attractive even when empty or covered in snow.

Exceptional Craftsmanship

- High-quality materials and finishes suitable for a prominent civic environment.
- Attention to detail in fabrication and construction.

Durable & Commercial Grade

- Designed to withstand Michigan's freeze/thaw cycles, UV exposure, heavy pedestrian traffic, and routine maintenance.
- Materials intended for long-term public use.

Cohesive Collection

- A coordinated family of planters with a shared design language.
- Variation is encouraged while maintaining a unified identity.

Thoughtful Materials

- Durable materials such as GFRC, fiberglass, cast stone, corten steel, powder-coated aluminum, or other innovative commercial materials.
- Finishes that age gracefully and require minimal maintenance.

Human Scale

- Comfortable and inviting at the pedestrian level.
- Creates moments where people naturally stop, gather, and take photographs.

Distinctive Identity

- Designs that could become synonymous with Downtown Lansing.
- Original concepts that feel authentic to place without relying on clichés.

Supports Vibrant Plantings

- Designed to showcase colorful seasonal plantings while allowing the vessel itself to remain the visual anchor.

Creative Innovation

- Fresh ideas that challenge traditional expectations of what a streetscape planter can be.
- We welcome thoughtful, original approaches that balance artistry with function.



Inspirational Images





What we are NOT looking for:

- Small residential planters
- Faux-Tuscan urns
- Plastic pots
- Thin-wall decorative containers
- Generic catalog products
- Busy Victorian ornament

If your design can accomplish these five things, you're on the right track:

- **Be recognizable** — People remember it after one visit.
- **Be photogenic** — Visitors naturally want to take pictures with it.
- **Be beautiful year-round** — Not just when flowers are blooming.
- **Be durable** — Designed for decades of public use.
- **Be unmistakably Lansing** — Original, authentic, and worthy of becoming part of the city's identity and fits with our role as “Michigan’s Downtown.”

