

BOROUGH OF MADISON
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – GATEWAY AND WAYFINDING SIGNAGE SYSTEM
EVALUATION REPORT
FEBRUARY 12, 2021

This Request for Proposals (RFP) was administered under New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law Competitive Contracting Rules and Regulations. The RFP was advertised in the Daily Record and Madison Eagle on October 29, 2020. The proposals were due and publicly opened on December 03, 2020 at 10:00AM. The review committee consisted of members from the Borough governing body, Downtown Development Commission (DDC) Marketing & Economic Development Committee and Borough staff:

Governing Body: Mayor Robert H. Conley, Council Member Debra J. Coen, Council Member John F. Hoover

DDC Marketing & Economic Development Committee: Suzy Whitehorn, Eric Range, Russell Stern, Deb Starker, Melanie Tomaszewski, Jim Hollenbach, John Morris, Michael Pellessier, Karen Giambra, Peter Teshima

Borough Staff: Robert Duffy, Kevin O'Keefe

Four (4) proposals were submitted:

- 1) Cloud Gehshan, Philadelphia, PA - \$147,306.00
- 2) Found Design LLC dba Merje, West Chester, PA - \$79,950.00
- 3) NV5, Parsippany, NJ - \$52,000.00
- 4) Arterial LLC, Montclair, NJ

The committee was unable to proceed with reviewing the proposal submitted by Arterial LLC due to failure to submit the proposal form. The review process took longer than originally anticipated. Cloud Gehshan, Merje and NV5 agreed to hold their proposals for an additional thirty (30) days in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.5(e).

The purpose of this RFP was to receive proposals for the planning, design, and fabrication of gateway and wayfinding signage systems based on the Borough of Madison Brand Identity and Style Guide, adopted in June 2019. The signage will be designed to project a consistent image for the Borough; highlight major entrances to the Borough; improve navigation for all modes of travel; guide visitors to landmarks, facilities and businesses; and be sustainable as well as flexible.

The criteria and weighting used for the evaluation of proposals is as follows:

- 1) TECHNICAL (40%)
 - a. Understanding of project as demonstrated in the proposal including conciseness, thoroughness and identification of issues and approaches/solutions.
 - b. Ability to provide design services in a phased approach to allow for the selections to be made in whole or parts of the whole.
- 2) MANAGERIAL, BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE (30%)
 - a. Strength of team qualifications/experience.
 - b. Extent of experience on similar projects including developing Gateway Signage Plans and completion of comparable projects.
 - c. Design/implementation schedule and availability to immediately begin project.
 - d. References.
 - e. Quality of sample work
- 3) COST (30%)
 - a. Lump sum cost for the design and implementation/management of this project.

The three (3) firms submitted proposals that outlined their process for the planning and designing of the signage and wayfinding system.

Cloud Gehshan, Philadelphia, PA – Cloud Gehshan broke out their proposal into four phases. First would be to kick off the project with initial meetings, information gathering, recommendations and the strategy forward. Following that would be developing the system and determining the cost to build. The design will then be reviewed and approved by the DDC. The work would come together in phase three with the creation of the final design and guidelines for the system. Cloud Gehshan would assist with the bid process and construction administration during the last phase.

Found Design LLC dba Merje, West Chester, PA – Merje divided their proposal into five tasks. Task 1 included identifying the gateway locations, primary and secondary routes, parking, districts, and the criteria for key destinations. Task 2 would be the preliminary design of the system and budget. Task 3 would focus on sign locations, types of signs and messaging. Task 4 would finalize the design system/program as well as an updated estimate of the cost to build. The final task would be the final design manual and drawings.

NV5, Parsippany, NJ – NV5 would begin the process with a project kick off and a review of existing Borough plans. This would be followed by developing the design concepts using the brand and identity style guide. The next step would be the development of design guidelines, sign types and locations. This step would also include creation of the bid specifications. The last part of the process would be construction administration.

All three (3) firms were given the opportunity to present their proposals to the evaluation committee. Each firm was given one (1) hour for the presentation along with question & answers. These presentations took place via Zoom on February 3, 2021; Cloud Gehshan presented between 5:00PM-6:00PM, NV5 6:00PM-7:00PM and Merje 7:00PM-8:00PM. Committee members asked the firms questions and for clarifications related to the RFP and their proposal submissions.

Based on the criteria and weighting used to evaluate the proposals, the evaluation committee ranked them as follows:

- 1) Merje 0.86
- 2) Cloud Gehshan 0.70
- 3) NV5 0.63

The highest possible score based on the weighting was 1.00. Merje clearly impressed the evaluation committee as they demonstrated an understanding of the RFP with the level of detail provided in their proposal. They have significant experience in this field and included impressive examples of prior work. Cloud Gehshan provided appealing samples of prior work but ranked slightly below that of Merje's samples. Cloud Gehshan's scores generally trailed that of Merje's by a small margin. Cloud Gehshan was significantly more expensive compared to Merje and NV5. Of the three (3) proposals, the committee found NV5's to be the weakest for a number of reasons including a general lack of detail within the proposal, limited experience in this type of project and samples that did not really stand out compared to Merje and Cloud Gehshan.

Merje's proposal was comprehensive and indicated that they have the experience and technical ability to manage this project at a reasonable cost. The RFP process was fair and vigorous and the committee has confidence in the end product that will be produced by Merje.

Given the criteria used to evaluate these proposals, the committee recommends awarding a contract to Merje at the proposed price of \$79,950.00. The contents of the original RFP issued by the Borough and the proposal submitted by Merje will be incorporated into a contract not to exceed one (1) year from the date of execution.