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# DOWNTOWN HOUSTON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS COHESIVE BRAND DESIGN

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## Project Overview

Central Houston Inc (CHI), the Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD) and the Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA) are seeking a qualified firm with a proven track record and experience assisting districts and urban places in developing and launching new, cohesive and compelling brand identities. Houston is a rapidly changing urban center that is home to major industries, innovation and becoming one of the world's most dynamic mixed-use neighborhoods. CHI, HDMD, & DRA seek to be the voice of, to, and for the community - connecting the growing residential and workforce populations within the commercial district and bringing a sense of cohesion and placemaking to the area. The new, unified brand should embody all three of the organization's legacies and purposes and should create a nod to their future operating under one newly-developed shared vision and mission.

Note: Concurrently, CHI, HDMD, and DRA are pursuing a website redesign effort intended to consolidate the organizations' many stand-alone websites. Agencies with exceptional competencies in both areas are invited to submit to both.

## Organizational Overview

CHI is a 501(c)6 nonprofit corporation that has led or assisted in countless efforts that have reimaged, reshaped, catalyzed, and improved Downtown Houston. CHI has historically convened business, real estate, non-profit, and governmental agencies, and philanthropic leaders together to advance strategic planning, investments, and other community-building initiatives. CHI serves as the operator to both HDMD and the DRA.

- HDMD – a locally applied, state created public entity, the HDMD has been in operation since 1996. The HDMD implements a special assessment on real estate within Downtown Houston and operates under the direction of a 30-member board of directors. CHI has provided the staff and administration to HDMD since its inception. The HDMD was renewed most recently in 2020 for a term of 5 years.
- DRA – comprised of a 9-member board of directors appointed by the taxing entities, manages Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #3. A TIRZ is a public, local government tool created by the City of Houston which captures incremental increases in property tax value generated over time within a defined geographic area. Since 2014, CHI has provided the staff and administration to

the DRA via a contract with the City of Houston. TIRZ #3 is currently authorized through 2043.

### **Vision**

At the intersection of global commerce and local culture, Downtown is Houston's heart of opportunity, excitement, and joy.

### **Mission**

Champion and enhance Downtown Houston as a connected and thriving place for everyone

### **Current Situation**

The organization is currently operating three different organizational names and identities, each reflective of its independent board / financing tool. The organizations would like to enter into a rebranding process to reflect their new direction articulated in their newly-adopted [strategic alignment plan](#). The plan provides a strategic focus and path forward for the next five years for the organizations operating in tandem. The plan was developed throughout 2022 with input from a wide variety of stakeholders who participated in focus groups, surveys, and other meetings. The new brand identity should serve as a unified, externally facing umbrella for the existing entities to help simplify stakeholders' understanding of the organization(s) and improve communications efficacy. For samples of the current situation, currently there are three organizational websites, [www.downtownhouston.org](http://www.downtownhouston.org), [www.centralhouston.org](http://www.centralhouston.org), and [www.downtowntirz.com](http://www.downtowntirz.com). HDMD utilizes the social media handle "Downtown Houston" and the url [www.downtownhouston.org](http://www.downtownhouston.org), while CHI retains an independent social media handle on LinkedIn.

### **Project Scope and Deliverables**

The selected firm will work with the Stakeholder Engagement Committee, the group tasked with overseeing implementation of Goal 5 of the strategic alignment plan, to develop a cohesive brand that unites our three organizations under one recognizable name, brand, and mark. The selected agency will be expected to fulfill the following deliverables, in close collaboration with CHI's Director of Marketing and Communications and select Executives and staff members.

1. **Brand Development:** new brand name; brand positioning; brand narrative; topline key messages
2. **Brand Identity:** logos; color palette; guidelines on look and feel; guidelines on imagery selection
3. **Brand Relationships:** recommended strategy on the overarching brand and sub-brands; align all brand logos and brand identities; recommend how they interact and message the relationships
4. **Asset Development:** brand guidelines; PPTs; e-signatures; others TBD through rebrand process
5. **Website:** recommendations on website strategy between brand and sub-brands; overarching brand website development; this would feed into the separate website project
6. **Launch:** recommendations on rollout and launch strategy

### Proposed Timeline:

The selected firm will begin working with the oversight committee upon executing a contract. Initial research and development will occur in January 2023 with the launch of the new brand in the summer of 2023.

### Budget

The current budgeted amount for the project is \$75,000. Additional components may be added as developments occur, and subject to agreement by both parties.

### Instructions:

Please submit a single electronic PDF file submission via email to Jenna Beasley at [jenna@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:jenna@downtowndistrict.org) to consist of the following sections:

- Title Page: includes company name, address, phone number, email address and primary contact person
- Proposal Submission Requirements to include:
  - Your company description, including your values and approach

- Description of due diligence and service approach, including an outline of the proposed process and specific approaches as well as key milestones
- Experience and similar successful projects previously undertaken by your company and individuals
- Staff, including a description of proposed staff availability, and expertise specific to the RFP
- References, including name, phone number, email address for references from 2-3 previous clients for similar projects
- Budget, including proposed staff and hourly rates.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The criteria used in the evaluation of the proposals will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Demonstrated capacity to successfully rebrand an organization (25%)
- Effective stakeholder engagement approaches (15%)
- Firm Experience; including depth and breadth of proposed project team (20%)
- Value and pricing structure (20%)
- Review of references (10%)
- Participation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), defined as minority- or woman-owned business enterprises (MWBE) (10%). Proof of DBE or MWBE status, such as certification by the City of Houston, may be required.

### **Due Dates and Notifications**

Proposals Due: Friday, January 20, 2023 by 5 PM

Contract Award/Project Begins: February 10, 2023; subject to change

### **Questions**

Qualified vendors are encouraged to send an email to [jenna@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:jenna@downtowndistrict.org) ASAP indicating their intent to submit a quote or proposal.

Faxed submittals are not acceptable. Late bids are not acceptable and will not be considered in this process.

Any questions regarding this Request for Proposal (RFP) should be emailed to Jenna Beasley at [jenna@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:jenna@downtowndistrict.org) by January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 5 PM. Answers will be forwarded to all vendors who sent an email indicating their intent to submit. Phone calls and other solicitation will not be accepted.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM FOR  
HOUSTON DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

Central Houston Inc (CHI) Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD) and the Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA) will receive responses to this Request for Proposal (RFP), for a creative firm to develop and launch a new brand identity. Proposals will be received until 5:00 P.M., local time on Friday, January 20, 2023, by Jenna Beasley, Communications Manager, to [jenna@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:jenna@downtowndistrict.org). Proposals submitted to HDMD after the submission deadline will not be accepted. Respective of this advertisement, telephone or mail queries or requests for information will not be addressed by the HDMD.

Beginning Tuesday, December 20, 2022, this Request for Proposal (RFP) may be reviewed and downloaded as an electronic file from the HDMD's website: <http://www.downtowndistrict.org/procurement-rfp-opportunities/>. Based on the Proposals submitted, an evaluation and selection committee will identify the highest-ranked winning proposal. Staff will negotiate and recommend to the HDMD Board for authorization to contract with the selected consultant based on the evaluation criteria.

Proposers shall comply with City of Houston Code of Ordinances, Chapter 15, Articles II, V, VI, and XI and the Mayor's Executive Orders No.1-7 Pay or Play (POP) Program for Houston Public Works for the public procurement procedures of the City of Houston Office of Business Opportunity (OBO) established in March 2008 and the entity responsible for the administration of the Minority/ Women-Owned (M/WBE), Persons with Disabilities Enterprises (PDBE), and Hire Houston First programs. The successful Proposer will be required to make good faith efforts to achieve an M/WBE and PDBE participation goal of twenty percent (20%).