



# District Infrastructure Investment Campaign

## Request for Proposals

Posted June 11, 2024

The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District requests proposals from creative firms and independent contractors for assistance in developing assets for a campaign highlighting the importance of investing in wastewater infrastructure.

A creative brief outlining the campaign and its deliverables can be found at the end of this document.

Proposals will be accepted until 4:30 p.m., CDT, Tuesday, June 25, 2024 via email to [amandaw@madsewer.org](mailto:amandaw@madsewer.org). The email must clearly state “Infrastructure Campaign” in the subject line. Any questions should be directed to Amanda Wegner at [amandaw@madsewer.org](mailto:amandaw@madsewer.org).

All proposal responses and their contents will be public record.

The District is federal and state tax-exempt. The District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to waive any technicality and accept any proposal that may, in its opinion, be advantageous to the District.

**Any questions may be directed to:**

Amanda Wegner

Communications & Public Affairs Director

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

[amandaw@madsewer.org](mailto:amandaw@madsewer.org)

## About the District

Established in 1930 to protect the lakes and streams of the upper Yahara watershed, the District is a wastewater collection and treatment utility serving about 429,000 people in 24 Madison-area owner communities covering about 187 square miles. Organized as a municipal corporation, the District is governed by a nine-member Commission appointed by the communities we serve.

The District owns and operates 145 miles of pipe and 18 regional pumping stations that convey approximately 37 million gallons of wastewater to the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant daily. Through the treatment process, we recover valuable resources from the wastewater we receive before returning clean water to the environment.

Our mission is to protect public health and the environment. The District is dedicated to service, reliability, and sustainability, and our tradition of innovation has positioned us as a leader among clean water utilities.

Learn more at [www.madsewer.org](http://www.madsewer.org).

## Background

The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District produces an annual budget for its fiscal year, which runs from January 1 through December 31. District staff prepare the annual budget each summer, with a formal introduction to its Commission in early September and approval in late October.

The [District's budget](#) includes operating and capital costs. Funding for the District and its projects comes through various sources, with the largest being service charges collected from our 24 owner communities; these service charges represent the actual cost of service.

Additionally, the District is a wholesale provider of wastewater collection and treatment. This means we do not bill households and businesses directly; instead, we bill our owner communities, which then bill their residents and businesses. Learn more about [service charges here](#).

Capital infrastructure is a major driver of the District's annual budget and associated budget increases, and the District's infrastructure needs are increasing due to aging infrastructure, regulatory requirements, added capacity to accommodate regional growth, and the need for resiliency and redundancy, among other factors.

At the same time, wastewater infrastructure is largely unseen, and the wastewater system is not well understood. To support investments in our infrastructure and anticipated service charge increases, the District seeks to develop and execute a public campaign to generate awareness of wastewater systems and infrastructure within our service area to change perceptions of the value of wastewater. This public-facing campaign will run in conjunction with

a robust communications and outreach campaign with the District’s owner communities in the run-up to the introduction of the 2025 budget in September 2024.

## Proposals

The District requests proposals from creative firms or independent contractors that can execute the deliverables outlined in the creative brief that follows.

Proposals must be limited to no more than four pages (not including portfolio/work samples) and include the following:

- 1. Contact information for primary contact**
- 2. Description of expertise and qualifications**
  - Provide information relative to the firm’s size, history, personnel, special expertise, and general credits. Individual resumes, awards, associations, etc., may be included in moderation but are not required.
- 3. Project understanding and approach**
  - Provide a statement as to your understanding of the project, how your firm is a fit for this work, and an outline, including a timeline, of how you will execute the work included in the creative brief.
- 4. Portfolio/work samples**
  - Provide a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 7.
  - Digital format(s)/link preferred
- 5. References**
  - Include name, title, organization, phone, and email for at least 2 references.
  - The District will not contact references until after selections are made.
- 6. Cost information**
  - Include the total cost to execute the deliverables in the creative brief.
  - If rates vary by asset/format or deliverable (i.e., print vs. video), please break out those costs/differences.
  - If a subcontractor will complete any aspects of the work, include the subcontractor costs/rates.

## Evaluation

The District will not award a contract solely on price; the award will be made in the District’s best interest as evaluated by members of the project review team. The evaluation team will review all proposal responses. Proposals will be evaluated and scored using the following criteria:

| <b>Evaluation Criteria</b>                   | <b>Points Allocation</b> |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Experience &amp; qualifications</b>       | 0-25                     |
| <b>Project understanding &amp; approach</b>  | 0-25                     |
| <b>Cost</b>                                  | 0-10                     |
| <b>Portfolio</b>                             | 0-20                     |
| <b>Overall impression &amp; creative fit</b> | 0-20                     |

The District reserves the right to contract for all or part of the project. The contract and associated scope of work will be a “not-to-exceed” contract. The selection process is expected to be completed, and the selected Consultant will be informed on or before June 28, 2024. Work is expected to start shortly after the contract is awarded. Creative assets must be completed by early to mid-August, as media placements must begin or no later than September 1, 2024.

## **Professional Services Contract**

Following the selection of a qualified firm for the work of this RFP, the District, and the firm will begin a good faith effort to negotiate a Professional Services Contract for the work. The District will supply our contract template for the basis of negotiations, which will include Terms & Conditions as well as the Scope of Services for performance. [District Professional Services Agreement \(PSA\)](#) Proposers must notify the Project manager of any questions or concerns about the standard Terms & Conditions during the request for proposal process.

## **Additional Documentation**

Proposers may find the following materials and documents helpful as they consider proposals:

- [District Strategic Plan](#)
- [District Service Area Map](#)
- [2024 Adopted Annual Budget](#)
- [District Brand Standards](#)
- [2023 Community Values Survey](#)

## **Additional Provisions**

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Requirements**

In connection with the performance of work for this project and under the related contract, the Proposer agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of age, race, religion, color, disability, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status protected by law. This provision shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion, or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship.

### **Use, Disclosure, and Confidentiality of Information**

The information supplied by a Proposer as part of an RFP response will become the property of the District. Proposals will be available to interested parties in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Records Law. None of the proposal responses will be made available to the public until after the negotiation and award of a contract or cancellation of the procurement.

To the extent allowed by law, the District will treat trade secrets as confidential (if designated as confidential and submitted separately in a sealed envelope). If a Proposer wishes for a

proposal to remain confidential, the Proposer must, before submitting a proposal, establish to the District's satisfaction that the proposal be given confidential status. The District reserves the right to make any final disclosure determinations in accordance with the law. (Note: Pricing information will not be considered confidential.)

### **Use of the District's Name**

Upon entering an agreement, the successful Contractor agrees not to use the name of the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District in relation to the agreement in commercial advertising, trade literature, or press releases to the public without the prior written approval of the District. The District has the right to enjoin the Contractor from any such use in violation of this provision, and the Contractor shall be responsible for damages and reimbursement of actual reasonable legal fees incurred with regard to legal evaluation and/or legal action taken by the District because of the Contractor's violation of this provision, including fees incurred to obtain an injunction.

### **Confidentiality**

Subject to Wisconsin's Public Records law, any data or other information regarding the District's customers, operations, or methods obtained by the Contractor during the course of the project shall remain confidential and shall not be released to third parties without the express written consent of the District.

# Creative Brief

## Wastewater Infrastructure Investment Campaign

**Staff lead:** Amy Steger, Communications & Marketing Specialist

**Campaign budget:** Maximum of \$15,000 for creative planning and development provided by vendor. Advertising and placement costs will be paid separately by the District.

**Campaign duration:** Media placements should begin in mid-late August or no later than September 1, 2024, and end about mid-late October 2024.

**Project description:** Develop an image-forward campaign on investing in wastewater infrastructure. The creative must lean into local communities and/or the people that inhabit them.

At least four creative images must be used for the campaign to tailor social artwork and out-of-home placements by location or timing.

**Objectives:** Generate awareness of wastewater systems and infrastructure within our service area to change perceptions of the value of wastewater, investment in our infrastructure, and support for utility rate increases.

We want to quantify reaching at least 250,000 viewer accounts through this campaign.

**Audience:** Homeowners (wastewater ratepayers) aged 30-55 residing in service area communities. Owner community leadership.

**Messaging and tone:** Campaign assets must communicate:

- Wastewater infrastructure is important and valuable
- It's worth investing in invisible systems
- If we don't update/upgrade/improve, our future is at stake

**Creative concepts:** Creative concepts noted offer a few ideas, but the District is open to alternative suggestions and artistic presentations.

**Copy inspiration:**

- *A lot less...*
  - It's a lot less [adverb] without wastewater infrastructure.
  - Invest wisely in your future.
    - [fun, relaxing, pretty, romantic, wholesome, exciting, etc.]
- *Life's more...*
  - Life's a lot more [adverb] with wastewater treatment.

- We're worth every penny.
- *We're worth it.*
  - What's wastewater treatment worth?
  - Every penny.
- *What if?*
  - What if...
    - ...we couldn't treat your wastewater?
    - ...we couldn't take it away?
    - ...there was nowhere else for it to go?
  - Support us so we can support you.
- *Indispensable*
  - Invisible infrastructure is indispensable.
  - Support your wastewater utility.

**Imagery inspiration, depending on copy direction:**

- People enjoying water activities (boating, fishing, paddleboarding, etc) but the water is polluted with brown solids, algae, and other items.
- People next to local bodies of polluted water, holding water sports equipment with sad/angry/disappointed faces.
- Popular water bodies or familiar locations in the area with polluted water, biosolids, etc. – wildlife or humans included a plus.
- People having all different kinds of fun with local freshwater resources.

**Photos in our inventory:**





**Campaign assets and deliverables (*responsibility*):**

- Local photo shoot or photo curation (*agency*)
- Social stills (*agency*):
  - o 9x16; 1x1
  - o Meta, X, LinkedIn
  - o Minimum four single-image creative designs
- Social video (*TBD*):
  - o 9x16
  - o For Meta reels, TikTok
  - o One video, using the series of all creative stills
- Out of home / OOH (*agency*):
  - o Minimum of two designs used across multiple placements
  - o Billboard (digital) dimensions to specs
    - 5 placements in the service area
  - o Metro transit bus advertising
    - Size/placement TBD based on availability
  - o Kiosk signage on District-owned bulletins
    - Four large (two locations, two sides), roughly 45x45 each
    - Two smaller (two locations, one side), roughly 34x34 each
    - Printed on waterproof material
    - Exact specs to be provided by District during design
- Poster for local placements (*agency*):
  - o 11x17 and 8.5x11
  - o District to hang in local coffee shops, groceries, etc.
- Campaign landing page (*District*):
  - o Invisible Infrastructure
  - o In menu under What We Do > Wastewater Collection
- Email (*District*):
  - o Feature in August or October eNews
  - o Features in emails to Owner Communities
- Media outreach (*District*)
  - o Create pitch/angle for a story with press/media





**Stakeholders:**

- Campaign manager: Amy Steger
  - Planning and strategy: Amy Steger
  - Creative oversight: Amy Steger
  - Creative development: [Agency or freelancer TBD]
  - Implementation, media buys, and publishing: Amy Steger
  - Campaign reporting: Amy Steger
  - Budget oversight: Amanda Wegner
  - Final approval: Amanda Wegner
  - PR outreach: Amanda Wegner
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