

Downtown Albany Wayfinding Master Plan Request for Proposals (RFP) Due Friday, April 6, 2018

The Downtown Albany Business Improvement District (BID), with the assistance of its project partners, the Albany Parking Authority (APA) and members of Albany's Cultural Heritage & Tourism Partnership, is seeking an innovative consultant to create a Wayfinding Master Plan for Albany's central business district.

The Master Plan must 1) craft and present a clear vision for downtown Albany's directional signage for multiple modes of transportation; 2) develop treatments of portals into the city; and 3) provide concepts for interpretive/placemaking signs for the historical and cultural assets in downtown Albany.

The results of the Master Plan will be used to apply for a grant through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application as part of the Regional Economic Development Councils in late July 2018. State funds are awarded each year in December. Should the BID received the grant, the monies would be used for final design work and implementation.

Introduction

Albany, the capital of the Empire State and the heart of New York's Capital Region, is much more than a star on a map. As one of the oldest cities in the country, Albany has a unique and extensive inventory of cultural and heritage assets, diverse neighborhoods, landmarks, parks, and other amenities—and Downtown in particular is becoming a vibrant neighborhood with a deep-rooted history and an exciting future. In recent years downtown Albany has seen more than \$300 million in commercial development and a dramatic increase in vibrancy and foot traffic. This investment, in turn, has spurred the development of more than \$50 million in new residential units in the city's urban core; the attraction of new, local retail; construction of one new hotel with another underway; and the recent opening of the 80,000-square-foot Albany Capital Center convention center.

Moreover, along with being the seat of state and local government, Albany, and particularly Downtown, is home to numerous world-class businesses, including regional headquarters of financial institutions, law firms, and Fortune 500 companies. It is also the anchor of New York's Tech Valley and a global center of nanotechnology.

But current wayfinding in downtown Albany is insufficient—the layered result of decades of different signage projects executed by numerous entities at the state, county, city, neighborhood, and organizational levels. The goal of this initiative is to make it easier for residents, commuters, and tourists to find downtown Albany destinations and attractions all within a cohesive, appealing look.

General Information

A. Instructions and Notifications to Consultants

1. **TERMS:** All proposals must be in accordance with the terms of this Request for Proposals.
2. **ASSOCIATED PROPOSAL COSTS:** All costs associated with developing or submitting documents in response to this request and/or providing oral or written clarification of its content shall be borne by the respondent. The BID assumes no responsibility for these costs.

3. PRICING: All pricing submitted will be considered firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
4. MISDIRECTED REPOSSES: Responses misdirected to other locations or otherwise not received by the BID by the established due date and at the established location for any cause will be determined to be late and may not be considered.
5. INCOMPLETE SUBMISSIONS: Respondents are advised to review all sections of the RFP carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejections of the proposal.
6. OWNERSHIP AND USE OF SUBMISSIONS: The BID shall be entitled to retain and use for the project without compensation to any party responding to the RFP any additional information submitted, including but not limited to any concept, element, or idea disclosed in, or evident from, the submissions or which may be revealed during any meetings or interviews with respondents.
7. ALTERNATE APPROACHES: Alternate approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this project are encouraged. Proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by the RFP may be rejected as being non-responsive.
8. CLARIFICATIONS:
 - a. All inquiries with respect to this RFP shall be directed to Georgette Steffens via e-mail at gsteffens@downtownalbany.org.
 - b. Replies to inquiries or clarifications will be posted on the BID's website at www.downtownalbany.org. Questions received less than four (4) business days prior to the date of submission of proposals will not be answered. Only questions answered in writing will be binding. Oral or other interpretations or clarifications will be without legal effect.
9. REJECTIONS: The BID reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

Note: This is a Request for Proposals (RFP), not an invitation to bid. Responses will be evaluated on the basis of the relative merits of the proposal, in addition to price. All respondents are advised to review all sections of the RFP and to follow instructions carefully, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.

B. Type of Contract

Any resulting contract for Professional Services will be a lump sum contract between the firm furnishing the professional services and the BID.

C. Project Area

The area of study includes Albany's central business district, a large portion of which is within the boundaries of the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District.

Within these boundaries lies new commercial office buildings; significant historic architecture; centers of state, county, and local government; the headquarters for The State University of New York, diverse arts and entertainment destinations; high-rated dining establishments; newly developed residential offerings; five hotels, with a sixth under construction; the new convention center; three public parking structures; parks and recreation facilities; and access to the Hudson River.

The Downtown Albany Map (included in packet – area within in the black outline) illustrates the study area and key nodes and corridors within the district.

D. Commencement and Prosecution of the Work

The work to be accomplished under any resulting contract for professional services shall commence upon a notice to proceed. Substantial work shall be completed by July 13, 2018, for the BID to be able to apply for grant funds for final design and implementation through the NYS Consolidated Funding Application.

Scope of Work

A wayfinding firm, through its own expert analysis and with information provided by local stakeholders and partners, will identify, assess, provide, and/or define the scope and feasibility of project elements, including:

- 2-3 concept/appearance renderings for the following:
 - Treatment of “portals” to the city
 - Directional signage for parking (by car to and exiting on foot from three public facilities) and commercial, cultural, historic, governmental, and educational sites
 - Interpretive/placemaking elements for the city’s historical and cultural assets, recommending wayfinding and travel/tourism best practices that may include signage, digital, app and/or web based elements
- A timeline for the completion of the various phases of the project

The completed Wayfinding Master Plan will incorporate best practices in wayfinding, and is expected to include detailed, action-oriented strategies that achieve the goals outlined above in this RFP. The Plan will be an inspiring document that, through its implementation, will position Downtown’s future as the ideal, sustainable urban center—a strong economic hub; a vibrant living neighborhood; and a modern, dynamic destination. The objectives and strategies built into the Plan should target attracting a new generation of talent and organizations in addition to its focus on strengthening and revitalizing the built environment. The plan will sensitively capitalize on the city’s 400-year history and its inherent assets, while appealing to modern, urban sensibilities.

The Plan will be a guiding document to develop the concepts into actionable, implementable elements. It is critical that the firm plan for efficient use of limited public resources and maximize leveraging of private investment.

The final document will be used to seek funds through New York State’s Regional Economic Development Counsel’s Consolidated Funding Application, which is due at the end of July, as well as other sources to then finalize the plan to allow for implementation.

Qualifications

The firm of choice must have portfolio projects of similar scope demonstrating innovative approaches.

It is expected that the breadth and depth desired for this plan will require a dynamic, innovative team capable of providing bold, creative, and actionable recommendations that honor Downtown Albany’s rich history, capitalize on current momentum, and maximize its future potential based on the many existing assets described above.

Submission Requirements

All responses to the RFP shall include the following information:

- Cover letter expressing interest, signed by the owner, officer, or authorized agent of the firm or organization, acknowledging and accepting the terms and conditions of the RFP, and tendering and offer to the BID. The letter must contain a commitment to provide both the services described and delivery within the allotted time.
- Description of the firm's qualifications for the development of a Downtown Wayfinding Master Plan, including relevant experience with similar projects.
- A minimum of three (3) similar projects is required.
- Résumés and profiles for the firm's principals and brief history of firm, including year of establishment.
- Brief biographical profiles and contact information for specific staff members who are anticipated to be assigned to the project by the firm, their role in the project, and a detailed résumé listing their individual work experience in this role on similar projects.
- General description of recommended approaches, processes, and deliverables for the Master Plan based on the premises described above.
- A proposal of deliverables, including an itemized budget and timeline for creation of vision, treatments, concepts, and other elements or phases recommended by the firm.
- A minimum of three (3) professional references for the firm from other entities that enlisted the firm to complete similar projects completed within the last three (3) years.

All information submitted becomes property of the Downtown Albany BID. The BID reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFP, as well as make modifications to the RFP during the proposal preparation period. Once submitted, the consultant team (including specific staff assigned to the project) may not be changed without written notice to and consent of the BID. All costs incurred in the preparation of the submittal and participation in the selection process are the sole responsibility of the consultant team.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the consultant, its agents and assigns shall defend, indemnify, and save harmless the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District, its officers, employees and agents, and strategic partners from and against all claims, actions, causes of action, injuries, damages, losses, liabilities, and expenses (including, without limitation, reasonable attorney's fees and court costs) or other liabilities of any kind and character which arise out of or result from work under this engagement, other than claims for the BID's own negligence. This indemnification shall survive the expiration or earlier termination of this engagement.

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF), one (1) printed original and five (5) printed copies of the submittal by **4:00 p.m., Friday, April 6, 2018** to:

Georgette Steffens
Executive Director
Downtown Albany Business Improvement District
21 Lodge Street, 1st Floor
Albany NY 12207
518.465.2143 ex. 15
gsteffens@@downtownalbany.org

Criteria for Submittal and Selection

Respondents are responsible for reviewing and certifying compliance with the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District's conditions of submittal.

Evaluation and Selection Process Respondents to the RFP will be evaluated based upon:

- Firm's experience and capacity – 10%
- Similar project experience, with both detailed plan development and plan implementation – 20%
- The qualifications and experience of the specific staff assigned to the project – 10%
- Project approach and methodology, creative and innovative, and demonstrated strategic and effective approaches that result in an implementation-ready plan – 20%
- Demonstrated capacity to creatively, efficiently, and effectively involve and communicate with diverse stakeholders – 10%
- Demonstrated understanding of the project and awareness of the project area – 10%
- Contract cost – 20%

Timeline

Project Overview Conference Call

There will be a conference call held on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 2:00 PM EST to discuss an overview of the project with the BID and partners. The call-in instructions are as follows:

518-579-5000 or 1-877-489-2703 (toll free)

No pin needed

RFPs Due

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF), one (1) printed original and five (5) printed copies of the submittal by 4:00 PM (EST), Friday, April 6, 2018.

Interviews

The top-rated respondents to the Request for Proposals will be invited to Albany for interviews. Notification for these respondents is tentatively scheduled for April 10, 2018. The interviews are scheduled for April 16 & 17, 2018. The interviews will be conducted by a selection team comprised of representatives from the project partners.

Award

Following the interviews, one team will be selected to negotiate a final contract for services. The final scope of work with specified deliverables may be modified through negotiation of the final contract. Final contract approval by the Downtown Albany BID Board is tentatively scheduled for April 18, 2018.

