

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## **Downtown Improvement District (DID) Establishment Plan**

**BBA Project Number: 2017-001**

### **OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED**

**1.) Will alternative timelines for completion of the Scope of Work be accepted?**

Yes, proposals can include alternative timelines for completion of the Scope of Work. Please include the alternative timeline as an add/alternate to the main proposal and provide an explanation to support the submission of an alternative timeline.

**2.) Is it possible for contractors to be reimbursed for expenses related to travel to and from Burlington, Vermont?**

Yes, contractors can submit travel expenses for reimbursement. Such costs should be a part of the total project budget. We ask that out of state contractors consider use of video conferencing as much as possible in place of travel, to minimize both the cost and climate impact of the project. The BBA reserves the right to make local accommodations for the selected contractor at their expense. Local accommodations will be in area hotels.

**3.) What are the roles of the DID Working Group and the DID Advisory Group?**

The DID Working Group includes representatives from key organizations leading the project for the City of Burlington. It includes a single representation from the following organizations:

- a.) Burlington Business Association, Kelly Devine
- b.) Church Street Marketplace BID, Ron Redmond
- c.) Community and Economic Development Office, City of Burlington, Gillian Nanton
- d.) Department of Public Works, Patrick Mulligan

This group meets regularly, up to weekly. This group will work closely with the selected contractor to provide input, direction and local leadership on the project. They will serve as the key point of contact for the contractor. Kelly Devine of the Burlington Business Association will be the key contact and will call on DID Working Group members to support this effort as needed and as their areas of expertise warrant.

### **Downtown Improvement District (DID) Advisory Committee Establishing Language:**

An advisory group known as the DID Advisory Committee will be established to assist the BBA, CEDO, CSM, and DPW in carrying out the specific tasks related to the evaluation of a downtown-wide DID / PTMD. The DID Advisory Committee will be an ad hoc group established by City Council resolution comprised of individuals with specific skills and/or representation as identified in the establishing resolution. The DID Advisory Committee is not intended to be a public body of the City of Burlington with any specific duties or authority, but is intended to serve as an informal advisory group to guide the BBA and City departments' evaluation of a downtown-wide DID / PTMD and their development of a final report to the City Council and other downtown stakeholders. Any materials provided by or communications with the City or City employees to DID Advisory Committee will be considered public records of the City.

### **Downtown Improvement District Advisory Committee Members with Nominating Organization**

- City Council: Councilor Adam Roof
- City Council: Downtown Resident - to be appointed
- Church Street Marketplace: Jeff Nick, Chair
- Mayor Weinberger - Legal Professional - Robert DiPalma, Paul, Frank & Collins, Burlington Resident
- Mayor Weinberger - Financial Professional - vetting of candidates underway
- BBA Nominee, Downtown Property Owner - David Schilling, Investors Corp of Vermont
- BBA Nominee, Downtown Office Tenant - Ashley Bond, University of Vermont Medical Center Manager of Property and Real Estate
- BBA Nominee, Downtown Retail Tenant - Kara Alnaswari, Leibling
- BBA Nominee, Marketing Professional - Rich Price, Select Design

#### **4.) Why does the RFP ask for a tiered membership structure?**

Burlington, VT has an existing Business Improvement District called the Church Street Marketplace. It is a pedestrianized, four-block section of downtown. The Church Street Marketplace has been in existence for more than 30 years. It has an existing structure and provides a high-level of service from its annual budget of nearly \$1,000,000. The need for service and for the nearly 20 blocks in downtown Burlington will be lower than what is required on the Church Street Marketplace. Businesses in this area have

requested a level of service and a fee structure which meets their needs and economic conditions.

**5.) Please explain the public process for getting BID Approval?**

The approval process for the BID will be driven by the selected governance plan. In all cases it will require at a minimum approval by the Burlington City Council. In addition, it may require the following:

- a.) Approval by the following citizen run commissions:
  - i.) Public Works
  - ii.) Church Street Marketplace
- b.) A change to the Charter governing the city of Burlington. Since Vermont is a Dillon's rules state this process requires:
  - i.) Review by the Charter Change Committee of the Burlington City Council
  - ii.) Vote of approval of the Burlington City Council
  - iii.) Vote of approval by the State of Vermont Legislature
  - iv.) Vote of approval by the voters in the City of Burlington
    - Such a vote would need to occur during the scheduled election in November of 2018 or during Town Meeting Day on the first Tuesday of March in any given year.

**6.) What is the current vacancy rate in downtown Burlington?**

The most current figures for downtown vacancy are as follows:

- a.) Retail/restaurant/storefront: 15.6% which is impacted significantly by the redevelopment of Burlington Town Center Mall which has intentional vacancies in preparation for its Summer of 2017 demolition. If this property is removed the vacancy rate drops of 4.9%
- b.) Office: 8.4%

*Source: Allen, Brooks & Minor Report, June 2017*

**7.) What information can the contractor rely on for local market trends?**

Access will be provided to the most recent Allen, Brooks & Minor Report, a local and reliable source for Burlington and the state's commercial marketplace.

**8.) Why does the RFP mention downtown security as a service need? What is the prime driver for security services?**

Burlington has challenges with downtown safety and security which are typical for a community of its size. The State of Vermont faces ongoing challenges with addressing its rates of Opioid Addiction. Issues which impact downtowns such as homelessness,

panhandling, and non-criminal, but disruptive behavior are present in Burlington.

**9.) Can you further define the scope of the outreach needed?**

Outreach for this Scope of Work will be focused on businesses, property owners within the Downtown Burlington area and Burlington's political and community leadership. The consultant will not be conducting public outreach in this phase of the project.

**10.) Is the local community and its leaders well informed about Business Improvement Districts and their structure?**

Discussions about our Business Improvement district have been active for the past five years. Generally, the business community, downtown stakeholders, and community leaders are well informed.

**11.) Who is the lead client for the project?**

The Burlington Business Association will be the client of record for the project. All project management activities and invoicing should be directed to the Burlington Business Association which will oversee this effort.