



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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City of Burlington Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE SERVICES DURING CONSTRUCTION OF CITYPLACE BURLINGTON

- Date of Issuance:** Friday, January 5, 2018
- Deadline for Questions:** Wednesday, January 17, 2018 by 4:30pm EST. All respondents are required to submit any questions related to this RFP via email. CEDO will distribute a list of questions and answers via email to all respondents. Direct all questions regarding this RFP to wclavelle@burlingtonvt.gov.
- Deadline for Responses:** **Friday, February 2, 2018 by 4:30pm EST**
- Contact:** Will Clavelle, Projects and Policy Specialist
Community & Economic Development Office
149 Church St, Suite 32
Burlington, VT 05401
802-865-7187
wclavelle@burlingtonvt.gov

BACKGROUND

CityPlace Burlington (formerly Burlington Town Center) sits on approximately 5 acres in the heart of Burlington's downtown. It opened in 1976 under the name "Burlington Square Mall" as part of 1960s-era urban renewal development. Although it was meant to help Burlington compete with suburban shopping centers and did expand the city's downtown retail base, consumer tastes have shifted and it has been a chronic underperformer economically for many years.

The property was purchased by Devonwood Investors in 2013, and since late 2014 the City of Burlington has worked with the owner on a process to create a plan for the site that would allow for a mixed-use development that contributes to a healthier, more walkable and prosperous downtown and is aligned with the goals of the City's master planning document, *planBTV Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan*. This two-year public process culminated in a public vote in November 2016, which approved critical elements of the project. In March 2017, plans for the project were approved by the City's Development Review Board, and in October 2017, the City Council approved a final development agreement, allowing the project to proceed with construction, which is slated to last approximately three years.

The project will rise to 14 stories in some places and include about 272 residential housing units, 230,000 square feet of office space, 95,000 square feet of retail space, 28,000 SF of additional retail or daycare space, 3,000 square feet of community space, and a 909-space parking garage. The project will

also reconnect two City streets (Pine St. and Saint Paul St.) that were cut off from the street grid by the building during urban renewal. It will also “activate” the streets running along the north and south sides of the project (Bank St. and Cherry St.).

The City has engaged with the business community in the vicinity of the redevelopment many times (particularly within the past year as the project has materialized) to answer questions and share information, including construction timelines and impacts. Part of this engagement has taken the form of three business meetings, held on 10/21/16, 7/20/17, and 9/7/17. The City also has an email listserv of businesses in the vicinity of the project, which it has used on many occasions to provide information and updates.

This is the largest development project in the history of Burlington, and the City recognizes that the potential for significant disruption to the downtown and its businesses is great. The City would like to assist businesses in the area of the redevelopment to ensure that impacts are minimized to the greatest extent possible, and that businesses are taking proactive steps to do everything within their power to minimize revenue loss and to remain vital, visible, and accessible throughout construction.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Burlington’s Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO) is seeking proposals to provide business assistance services to businesses in the vicinity of the CityPlace Burlington redevelopment, with the goal of helping them remain viable and even thrive throughout construction. Although assistance might be more intense in the early stages of the project, ideally it would continue to be available in some capacity throughout the duration of construction, as needed by businesses.

Although there are only about 10-15 first-floor businesses *directly adjacent* to the project site (which is one block between Pine St. and Saint Paul St. on both Cherry and Bank Streets), there are over 150 businesses within a 2-block radius of the project. This covers much of the downtown core and the Church Street Marketplace, a pedestrian corridor in the heart of downtown with high visitor volumes. These businesses may reasonably expect to see significant disruptions from construction noise, vibrations, traffic, and parking issues. Thus, in order to provide high-quality assistance services to the businesses most affected by this construction project, we are seeking proposals that demonstrate the following:

1. Consultant must have a demonstrated depth of experience in successfully helping businesses minimize revenue loss and thrive during periods of construction or other disruptive events lasting 1 or more years.
2. Consultant must be willing and able to travel to Burlington to meet with and assist businesses in person on multiple occasions. Applicants must also be accessible to a reasonable extent by phone, email, Skype, or some other digital means to assist businesses with questions and issues when they are not physically on-site.
3. Consultant must have the capacity to begin this project and to visit Burlington shortly after the deadline for proposals.
4. It is preferred that consultants have some degree of flexibility in modifying this proposal as a result of discussions with CEDO staff, if it is determined that certain modifications would better meet the needs of businesses during this particular project.
5. Consultant must be able to commit to some level of assistance and/or programming for one year, with the potential for a second year to be added to the Scope of Work.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Talk with CEDO staff via conference call or in person prior to commencement of the project to better understand the construction project and the needs of area businesses, and to discuss and finalize timeline and topics to be covered in the course of providing assistance.
2. Create and execute a marketing plan for services. This can be done in collaboration with CEDO, who will also market the program independently through its normal channels of outreach and communication, but applicant should have a plan for reaching out to and engaging the target audience of businesses in the vicinity of construction.
3. Offer some combination of workshops that will be available to a range of interested businesses and one-on-one consultation for individual businesses seeking in-depth assistance. This assistance/programming should last one year, with the potential to add a second year to the Scope of Work. Applicants will outline their proposed services in the section titled "Submission Requirements" below.
4. Workshops must cover topics specific to keeping a business viable during lengthy and disruptive periods of construction. These may include but are not limited to: customer retention; advertising and marketing in a difficult environment; staffing considerations; innovative ways to get new customers in the door; improving the appearance of your business and its immediate environment; setting yourself apart from the competition; strategic planning; how to make your business a destination; communications strategies; diversifying revenue streams; and ideas for minimizing costs when revenues are down. If your organization has this expertise, workshops can also include higher-level visioning exercises that explore issues such as the future of the downtown and how to market, brand and implement a promotional campaign effectively.
5. Provide one-on-one assistance to businesses. CEDO anticipates that there may be more interest in individual consulting services than capacity on the part of the chosen consultant. Respondents should create an application for interested businesses or otherwise determine how they will choose which businesses receive assistance. Priority should be given to businesses directly adjacent to construction (this would include businesses on Bank or Cherry Streets between Pine St. and Saint Paul St.).
6. One-on-one assistance should include, at a minimum: a physical inspection of the business, discussion with owner/s (and staff, as appropriate) to understand needs and concerns, a review of current advertising and communications strategies, and a review of the business's finances and business plan, if requested by owner. A confidential report detailing recommendations and a plan for the business should be written for the business owner/s and shared following the assessment.
7. Provide follow-up assistance in some capacity throughout construction to business owners who receive individual assistance. This could be via email, phone, Skype, or some other digital means. Applicants will outline their proposed services in this area in the section titled "Submission Requirements" below.
8. The ideal respondent will have some level of flexibility in modifying their plan (and budget), number of businesses served, number of workshops offered, etc., as business needs evolve and construction timelines shift.
9. Be responsive to City staff and maintain open lines of communication throughout the project. This includes staff in CEDO's Sustainability, Housing, and Economic Development division as well as CEDO leadership and the Mayor's Office, as needed.

TIMELINE AND DELIVERY

If you would like to submit a proposal, you must respond to all of the questions listed below in the section titled "Submission Requirements" and submit your proposal in hard copy in a sealed envelope as well as in electronic format (PDF preferred) by **Friday, February 2, 2018 by 4:30pm EST** to the following address:

Community & Economic Development Office
Attention: Will Clavelle
149 Church Street, Suite 32
Burlington, VT 05401

Email address: wclavelle@burlingtonvt.gov

Proposals must be typed. The Request for Proposals is also available on CEDO's website at www.burlingtonvt.gov/cedo, or by contacting Will Clavelle, wclavelle@burlingtonvt.gov.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Bidders must comply with all provisions of state law, and be a business in good standing with the Secretary of State and Department of Taxes in the state in which they primarily do business. The accepted bidder will have to comply with the city's livable wage, outsourcing, and union deterrence ordinances, copies of which are available on the city's website (or may be supplied on request).

It is important that all respondents are given clear and consistent information. Therefore, **all respondents are required to submit any questions related to this RFP via email**. The City of Burlington/CEDO will distribute a list of questions and answers via email to all respondents. Direct all questions regarding this RFP to wclavelle@burlingtonvt.gov. **Questions will be accepted up until 4:30pm EST on Wednesday, January 17, 2018** to ensure all parties have adequate time to review the answers.

The City of Burlington does not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status or genetic information.

The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities, and employment opportunities.

Responses should include the following:

1. Description of organization including length of time in existence, contact person, address, telephone number, and email address.
2. Resumes of staff who will provide services in the form of workshops and/or one-on-one business assistance. Include qualifications of staff who will be implementing the project, as well as any sub-consultants. Include the percentage of time each staff member will be spending on the project and indicate the primary point of contact.
3. Description of organization's experience with providing assistance, training, and workshops to businesses, especially in the area of surviving disruptive events such as construction. Identify any skills, current services offered, and accomplishments that demonstrate your capacity for success.

4. List of three (3) references who have knowledge of organization's recent work in the areas listed above. At least two of these should be clients/business owners who can speak to the impact of the organization's work on their business.

5. Proposed schedule of work and milestones for completion. Carefully read "Scope of Work" above, and please address the following issues:

- Detail how you would approach planning and coordination with CEDO on this project. Outline your concept, rationale, implementation plan, and marketing plan.
- Explain your plan for providing a combination of workshops and one-on-one assistance to businesses. Provide a timeline for the next year of what this would look like. There is potential to add a second year to the Scope of Work.
- Explain how the workshops are run and the topics that would be covered.
- Indicate your capacity to lead higher-level visioning exercises at these workshops that explore issues such as the future of the downtown and how to promote it effectively.
- Include examples of work implemented in other communities, including before and after photos of businesses, promotional material developed, examples of branding used in other communities, etc.
- Explain how you determine which businesses would receive one-on-one assistance, given your capacity constraints (priority should be given to businesses directly adjacent to construction, including businesses on Bank or Cherry Streets between Pine St. and Saint Paul St.).
- Explain what one-on-one business assistance would entail, including the initial assessment as well as how recommendations are communicated to the business.
- Explain how follow-up assistance would work for businesses that received one-on-one assistance (e.g. phone, email, Skype, and frequency of communication).
- Provide a description of any exceptions you are proposing to the Scope of Work.
- Indicate whether or not you are flexible in modifying your proposal (and budget) over time, as business needs evolve and construction timelines shift.

6. A detailed budget, broken down by the per-unit cost for the types of services you outline above. You may also include ranges, e.g., what it would cost to provide different numbers of workshops throughout the year, what it would cost to provide one-on-one assistance to different numbers of businesses, and/or what it would cost to provide different levels of follow-up services to assisted businesses. The budget should also include estimates for travel and expenses, if applicable.

7. A schedule of hourly rates for each employee who will be involved with implementation of this project.

8. A list of any lawsuits filed against the organization in the previous three (3) years, and describe any pending litigation related to the types of services mentioned in this RFP.

9. Proposals must be signed by an authorized employee to receive consideration.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

CEDO will review proposals for compliance with submission criteria, inclusion of required content, feasibility of implementation, capacity, experience and qualifications of staff, and how well it meets the needs of the most businesses. CEDO will also seek the input of the staff of the Burlington Business Association and the Church Street Marketplace, a 4-block pedestrian corridor in the heart of the downtown, which is in the immediate vicinity of the redevelopment and home to hundreds of

businesses. CEDO reserves the right to contact applicants with further questions or to clarify their proposal. CEDO intends to select one organization to provide services as part of this project, but reserves the right to select more than one if it would be preferable to utilize different consultants for different elements of the Scope of Work. CEDO will make its selection/s based on the following criteria:

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|--|-------------------|
| 1. How organization addresses the Scope of Work | 25 points maximum |
| 2. Experience and success in working with businesses facing disruptive conditions | 25 points maximum |
| 3. Budget and overall value – the most experienced people doing the most work at the most competitive price. | 20 points maximum |
| 4. Flexibility in modifying plans (and budget) based on construction timelines and needs of businesses. | 20 points maximum |
| 5. Accessibility to business owners and City staff, including ability to travel to Burlington and provide services via phone, email, Skype or other means. | 10 points maximum |

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Indemnification

The Vendor will act in an independent capacity and not as officers or employees of the Municipality. The Vendor shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless the Municipality and its officers and employees from liability and any claims, suits, expenses, losses, judgments, and damages arising as a result of the Vendor's acts and/or omissions in the performance of this contract.

The Municipality is responsible for its own actions. The Vendor is not obligated to indemnify the Municipality or its officers, agents and employees for any liability of the Municipality, its officers, agents and employees attributable to its, or their own, negligent acts, errors or omissions.

Limitations of Liability

The City of Burlington assumes no responsibility and liability for costs incurred by parties responding to this invitation to bid or responding to any further requests for interviews, additional data, etc., prior to the issuance of the contract.

Rejection of Proposals

The City of Burlington reserves the right to reject any or all responses, to negotiate with one or more parties, or to award the contract in the City's best interests. The City reserves the right to re-advertise for additional responses and to extend the deadline for submission of responses.

Ownership of Documents

Proposals, plans, specifications, electronic data and reports prepared under any agreement with the selected contractor and the City shall become the property of the City. Records shall be furnished to the City by the contractor upon request at any time, however contractor may retain copies of the original documents.

No Benefit to City Official

Bidders warrant that no elected or appointed official or employee of the City will benefit financially from this contract. The City reserves the right to refuse to award any contract to or rescind any contract entered into with any bidder who offers any gratuity of any kind to a public official to induce the City to enter into this agreement.

Vermont Public Records

All communications with or documents provided to the City are subject to the Vermont Access to Public Records Act (VAPRA). If a bidder believes that any material submitted is proprietary or a trade secret, it

must specifically identify that material by marking it “Confidential” or “Proprietary” and separating it from other sections or pages of the submission. The bidder must provide the City with a convincing rationale to justify any exemption from the VAPRA, but the bidder understands and agrees that the decision whether to release or exempt any materials rests solely with the City.

Addenda

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an addendum will be provided to all proposing organizations in written or electronic form.

Deadline for receipt of responses to this RFP is Friday, February 2, 2018 by 4:30pm EST. Proposals should be sent to the Community & Economic Development Office in both hard copy and electronic format at the following:

Community & Economic Development Office

Attention: Will Clavelle

149 Church Street, Suite 32

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