

## Questions and Answers to the Underground Railroad Interpretive Center at the Customhouse

Answers will be in *(A. italic's)* and pasted to the questions received.

1. Will your group entertain a design build proposal form this project? Either way, we plan to respond.

*A. We would look and score it if we thought it was worthy, but the original plan is to bid out phase IV.*

2. Will your group entertain companies teaming up for this RFP response?

*A. We welcome the collaboration and understand the need to do so.*

3. Display Dynamics, Inc. is African American owned and operated, certified by the National Minority Supplier Development Council [NMSDC]. Would this satisfy the requirement for MBE participation in this project?

*A. Diversity is always good but, we haven't seen any goals associated with this project yet. The dollar threshold suggest there should be and most likely will be goals. At contract time general municipal law will have been reviewed and applied. Our rating criteria doesn't rate for MWB participation but, diversity is always a plus.*

Page 1 Paragraph 3

Who is doing the Management Plan? What is their schedule? Have they completed any work that can be shared?

*A. 2-Mgt. plans – UGRR Niag. Falls Heritage Area Comm. and the N.F. Nat'l Heritage Area. Both will hire their own consultants for the mgt. plan (the nat'l comm.. already has). You would have to contact them for projected schedules and current task..*

Page 1 Paragraph 4

What is the commission's schedule? Who is developing the plan?

*A. See Previous question.*

Page 1 Paragraph 5

What is the nature of the documentation regarding Harriet Tubman?

*A. Various – sources and scholars available nationally and local*

Page 2 Paragraph 2

What is the schedule for the restoration of the Customs House?

*A. Projected: Interior 2012/Exterior 2012-2013*

What will be in the remainder of the building? Offices or public services? Will the public be coming to the site for activities other than to visit the Interpretive Center?

- A. *Offices for gov't agencies – U.S. Border Patrol; U.S. Customs; Homeland Security - 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> flrs. Yes and No - The public will always view the site as either a wlk.-by, if unloading from the train and wanting to return, or a destination if visiting the specific area of the customhouse. Then there are the student groups who are seasonal.*

Page 2 Paragraph 4

Are the Customs House and new train station physically connected? What is their proximity to each other?

- A. *Both will be physically connected, not sure about actual distances – but close!!*

Page 3 Paragraph 4

Are the scholarly resources that have been a part of the project going to be available to the consultant as part of the client team? Or should we seek to add those types of resources to our own proposed teams?

- A. *We suggest you initiate those contacts, however we will make every ATTEMPT to assist you with contacting the needed scholars.*

Page 4 Paragraph 2

Will the client provide adequate “venues” for public input sessions?

- A. *Absolutely!*

Page 4 Paragraph 7

Are these various documents available from the client – or should we seek to acquire them from the authoring parties? If they are available from the client, are they available electronically?

- A. *I don't understand the question – which type of documents? Whatever documents we have electronically concerning the project, as long as they are not internal, we will make available per request to selected bidder.*

Page 5 Paragraph 6

Please clarify/confirm that education programs and signage are NOT part of this contract and/or the exhibit designer's responsibility.

- A. *The premise is to educate on the topic of the Underground Railroad locally, we expect a large number of student groups. A guided tour of the area would be considered a education prog. as an example. Education themes and not so much programs rate in the evaluation process. The exhibits should serve as a base for any educational component and/or programs created.*

Page 5 Paragraph 10

What amenities (i.e. restrooms) are planned for in the current architectural plans?

- A. *Architectural plans have not been completed yet but as stated earlier, the bldg. will have tenants.*

Page 6 Paragraph 7

Who are the proposed tenants at the Customs House site?

- A. *See previous questions.*

Page 6 Paragraph 8

Should we assume that it is “best” to stay within the currently proposed architectural plan/footprint?

- A. *Yes*

Page 6 Paragraph 11

Has a budget, or guidelines for budget development been established?

- A. *We have an idea on what each phase should cost.*

Page 6 Paragraph 13

How much time should be allocated in our proposed project schedules for “period for review and comment”?

- A. *We estimate 3-weeks to a month.*

Page 7 Paragraph 1

Please clarify what is meant by “photo ready” at this point in the project.

- A. *Phase III exhibits design ready to go into phase IV*

Page 7 Paragraph 7

re: Revenue – admission charged? What other revenue might be anticipated? What will the Interpretive Center’s source of ongoing operational funds be? How do you see the gift shop fitting in?

- A. *We are hoping you could tell us. We envision docent tours for pre-formed groups and , school tours of the exhibits as well as, of the area (i.e the Whirlpool Bridge) for a fee. A gift shop is a must.*

Page 8 Paragraph 1

Please clarify “camera ready” and “shop ready”

- Do you mean “print ready” graphics files for use in exhibit production? Or documents that can be reproduced for bidding purposes

- A. *The above example for our purposes, but both examples seem to be what we need to carry out phase IV. You will probably have to help us decide what is best going in phase IV.*

- Do you mean, “shop drawings” (which are typically produced by the exhibit fabricator)? Or do you mean “detailed, biddable, design intent drawings and specifications”?

Page 8 Paragraph 3

Will “as built” CAD files of the building be available to the exhibit consultant?

A. *If they are available we will make them accessible.*

Please clarify "camera ready"

A. *See the above answer – we want the selected bidder to have phase III exhibit designs ready to go into phase IV.*

Page 8 Paragraph 5

Please clarify what will be included in the base building contract – lighting, wall ceiling & floor finishes, electrical, av routing, etc.

A. *All of the above. We are for purposes of this proposal only concerned at the interpretative center space. The selected bidder can choose to add any specific treatments to the exhibit space.*

Page 8 Paragraph 9

When will the building be substantially complete and ready for exhibit installation?

A. *We estimate 2012 for the interior*

Page 8 Paragraph 7

Has a target or "ballpark" production (Phase IV) budget been identified? Suggested? Talked about? Hinted at?

A. *Yes. – we have an idea on what those cost could be.*

Will considerations be made to consultants proposing "adequate" responses for less than \$200,000, or is the client looking to maximize product & services for this amount?

A. *We would consider anything we deem is world class. We are not price driven but, have an idea on what cost should be to create a space worthy of visitation. Adequate should not mean or look like just enough to satisfy.*

Page 11 Paragraph 1

Does this mean separate sealed envelopes for each phase? Or just itemization of and cost detail within each phase?

A. *The latter*

Page 11 Paragraph 5

By "price cap," do you mean a fixed/not to exceed fee? Or do you mean something else? Please clarify.

A. *Not to exceed the fee/Budget*

No specific reference within the RFP

Is there a set payment schedule/method set up for this type of project with the city? Or can proposals include a requested invoicing/payment plan?

A. *Not sure how the city will handle this but, certainly the selected bidder will know prior to going under contract.*

Is project funding secured and in place for Phases I – III? For Phase I.V?

- A. *We are secure for phase's I-III, We have some promised dedicated funding but also have some back-up pools of funding if needed for phase IV.*

Can you please confirm that the budget for this project, including all three phases of work (Interpretive Plan, Operations Plan, and Exhibit Design), is \$200,000? Or does this budget only apply to Phase III of the project?

- A. *The \$200,000 is inclusive of all 3-phases of this RFP*

What is the time frame for decision-making on the selection process? If firms are selected to interview, when do you anticipate that happening?

- A. *See the above questions.*

How many firms received the proposal and how many attended the site visit?

1. REGARDING OPERATIONS PLAN

To estimate the fees we would like to know the expected size of your staff

at the visitor center and your projected annual budget.

- A. *We are hoping you can tell us what is feasible, however we anticipate a small staff.*

2. 2. REGARDING OTHER INITIATIVES

How will the project link up in an experiential design sense with the Underground Heritage Area and the National Heritage Area?

- A. *the interpretative center should serve as the visitor center for both the UGRR commission and serve a small component of the Nat'l heritage areas mgt. plan.*

3. 3. PHOTOS OF CUSTOMS HOUSE

Do you have photos to share, especially interior shots?

- A. *Via the city We have as is, however the N.F. Library History dept. should have some as well as the bridge commission.*

4. 4. SHOP READY SPECIFICATIONS

We normally prepare production layouts, including type setting and other

graphic devices. Images are placed in these layouts "for position only",

with you and/or us providing the fabricator with originals for them to produce large scale scans for production. Is this what you anticipate

the

process being?

- A. *This sounds like what we'll need moving into phase IV.*

5. 5. TOURS

Are there any walking or driving tours or nearby venues associated with the

project?

- A. *Yes we anticipate walking tours outside of the building and up the Whirlpool Bridge and hopefully to the center of the same bridge.*

Please forward us Q and A's of others.

On page 8 you say that "the consultant is expected to provide with their proposal a schedule that facilitates the projected opening date", but the schedule is not mentioned in the Submittal Requirements. Which section do you want the schedule to be in?

A. *The phase III section would suffice.*

Re: the "writing samples" you requested on page 10-- Do you want entire plans or part of them? If you want entire documents, may we submit them on a CD?

A. *Whatever you thought would enhance your chances for selection. We are prepared to accept examples on CD's*

From Page 11-- Do you want one copy of the Cost Proposal or four, like the submission?

A. *4-like the submission*

Thank you for forwarding me the Q & A document. It does have a lot of useful information. I did not, however, see anything that really addressed the issues of the content that the museum has available (my question # 2 below) or development analysis (my question # 3 below).

**Ans. It is not a museum but an interpretative center. We are not interested housing artifacts and the NYS that deal with them.**

Specifically, I am trying to determine in terms of the exhibit interpretive content if our team will need to be responsible for doing the core base research for the project - do we need to find, contact, and research all information at various heritage sites?

**Ans. We have worked with scholars on the topic. It will be the responsibility of the selected bidder to contact and/or the the research necessary to craft the theme.**

Also, is it your expectation that the project should include an Economic Development Consultant for the plans, tourism, and commission analysis, and in particular for the visitorship trend analysis figures at all Underground Railroad interpretive centers. This task, while not unusual for a new project, is unusual for completion by an interpretive design team.

**Ans. For this type of request, most teams that I have talked with alluded that they would sub this portion out.**

We would like to understand your expectations for these tasks so that we better prepare our submittal. As I noted in my first email, your project's budget amount of \$200,000 relative to the scope is stretched pretty thin. Is the City open to receiving alternate scope proposals that would provide for a more fuller interpretive experience, and less economic development

services?

**We didn't see it as an economic dev. component but, more a operations component so that the centers operates effectively, with the potential of tapping into revenue generation.**

There is some confusion within our team as to what you are asking for #4 under section C – Experience and Personnel.

4. At least two references for the types of work requested in each phase in the RFP – Provide full contact information for each reference, the nature of the work performed, and the size and complexity of the project.

Does this refer to the samples submitted? For example, if we are using a subcontractor to analyze and report on the studies, and we submit a sample of their analysis (final product), do you want two references for that subcontractor? We think this is what you are asking for, but are not sure.

Will you please clarify for us.

**a. The latter will suffice. We don't need the references from the subcontractor as long as your firm is comfortable with that sub.**

1. We've just come across the RFP for the Niagara Underground RR project. Given that the pre-bid meeting has already occurred, a) was attendance at the pre-bid meeting mandatory? B) might we get a list of the individuals and firms attending, and c) can we receive a copy of any answers to questions that have been distributed to date? **Pre-bid mtg. attendance was not mandatory.**
2. The project budget does not include reimbursable expenses, correct? **Correct, you factor your cost in.**
3. So that we can gauge the level of effort necessary to design the exhibits, what is the anticipated fabrication budget? Cost will be generated by design - **We have an approximate cost.**
4. How would the designer monitor fabrication and installation, as that is not in this scope, and would occur after Phase I, II, and III were complete? **Phase IV will be a separate bid and NOT included in this RFP. Selected bidder under phase III will have designs and specifications ready for phase IV.**
5. Given the assumed scarcity of artifacts and images regarding this topic, a number of original illustrations would probably be needed. This would be part of the fabrication budget, and not part of this scope. However, as per item 4 above, how would art direction occur, given the phasing and schedule? **The schedule requested and submitted for center opening as outlined in phase III "Project Schedule" should address your question and concern. Remember phase IV is separate.**
6. Who are the proposed future tenants of the Customhouse? **See attached Q&A**
7. Regarding the research into relevant collections for graphics, information, and artifacts: the survey will need to identify, and presumably obtain reference images of all of these items, so that the subsequent exhibit design could be fully formed. Can you quantify the number of institutions that

would need to be contacted and searched in order to fulfill this requirement? **No I can't and would doubt anyone who could. There is so much new research on the topic in the public realm. We can make available contact info. with scholars we have been working with.**

8. Ditto, for academic authors and experts. Can you please quantify? **See #7**
  
9. The budget seems low for the amount of work requested. We would not want to contract for the liability of fulfilling expectations, and not be able to accomplish the work. Any guidance you can provide regarding expectations of scope and deliverables would be appreciated. **I can't, The RFP outlines what we want in the city of Niag. Falls with 18,000,000 untapped visitors and a city with a story to tell that incorporates two countries.- in a nut shell - enough said!!**