

Request for Proposal

Project: City of Buffalo Downtown Main Street Business District (MSBD) Study

Client: City of Buffalo
46 N Main St
Buffalo WY 82834

Contact: Colin Betzler, City Planner
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Steering Committee

The Main Street Business District (MSBD) Steering Committee with members from Arts Along the Bighorns, Johnson County, Johnson County Economic Development Association (JEDA), Johnson County Tourism Association, City of Buffalo, Discover Historic Buffalo, Main Street Association, and the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, will select a consulting team that will include an economic development consultant and an architect for this study.

Requests for proposals are being sent to planning consultants with a request for each responder to team with an architect for the project.

Various MSBD property owners, business owners, and other organizations will be included in the project but will not serve on the MSBD steering committee.

MSBD Steering Committee Members:

Margi Schroth – Arts Along the Bighorns (AAB)
Christy Washut – Main Street Association (MSA)
Patty Reid – AAB
M L Vogel – AAB
Jerry Osborne – Johnson County
Michael Johnson – City Council, Johnson County Tourism Association, MSA
Russ Humphrey – City Council
Margaret Dunfee – Chamber of Commerce, Discover Historic Buffalo, AAB, MSA
Paul Brunkhorst – Bank of Buffalo
Dave Spencer – Wyoming Business Council NE Wyoming Director, AAB
Colin Betzler – City of Buffalo Planning Department, JEDA

Background

The City of Buffalo is currently going through a very unique time of sustained growth with more challenging growth looming on the horizon. It is a critical time for our city's Planning Department, with our new Comprehensive Plan completed spring of 2007 (last updated in 1975), and the increased pressure to see that all growth within the confines of our city is properly planned and compatible with the high quality of life expected by the citizens of Buffalo. One issue that threatens this quality of life and the overall health of our community has been the shifting of our commercial center from its historic residence in our MSBD, to the interstate off-ramps and main travel arteries near the I-25 and I-90 corridors. This "retail leakage" has resulted in the vacancy of downtown storefronts and has shifted the focus of our MSBD from a retail and service-oriented multi-tiered hub to a professional office atmosphere, and revolving storefront businesses unable to make a sustainable income. It is apparent that the time is now to act on this perceived transition, so that by careful planning and focused action, the city of Buffalo will be able to curtail the current trends and re-create a MSBD that will serve as the retail cornerstone and overall economic and cultural foundation in Buffalo's bright future.

Taking Ownership

Because of the intense interest in our Main Street Business District, the City has a cohesive team of interested parties all of whom have valuable ideas to offer the selected consultant in terms of what our MSBD is lacking, as well as what kind of form this study needs to take. The following is a summary of what these folks bring to the table in terms of ideas and long-term plans for the future of our MSBD.

The City of Buffalo is about to undergo a Study for the Planning and Development of the Downtown Historic District, which is no longer the economic hub it once was despite the fact that Buffalo is in the midst of an economic boom. The purpose of the study, therefore is to access:

1. The problem(s) from the perspective of a Development Consultant, Downtown Merchants, and the General Citizenry that keep the Downtown District and especially the Retail Businesses from sustainable economic prosperity;
2. The assets – both physical and socio-cultural to the Historic Downtown District – that affect it's lack of economic success and that, additionally, hold the greatest potential for it's economic and socio-cultural growth;
3. The possible solutions and development ideas that will help return economic and socio-cultural health to Buffalo's Historic Downtown District. These may relate to any combination of infrastructure needs, historic preservation and/or rehabilitation, new ideas for on-going development in marketing and management of the various approved downtown development projects, job and business development, "relandscaping" the downtown, economic development through co-ventures of the MSBD, tax relief incentives for those MSBD investing in their historic buildings (including but not limited to City and County Tax Rebates and

- Incentives – and no new taxes), Involvement in the National Main Street Program, an Associate City Planner to help Manage the Main Street District with Tax Planning and Other Economic Incentives, etc.
4. Production of a Final Study that can be used for a blue Print for Development over the Next 10 Years.

Given the above goals, The City of Buffalo is asking for Proposals by qualified Development Consultants with expertise and experience in the areas listed above and in this document who can spearhead this Study – working with the MSBD Steering Committee and Buffalo City Planner in Creating a Work Document that can be used for the development of The City’s Historic Downtown District over the next 10 Years.

Scope of Services

Task 1. Citizen Involvement Structure/Project Initiation

Objective: To establish a complete community involvement process that assures that the voices of Main Street Business District stakeholders and community residents contribute to the planning process.

Steering Committee membership will be reviewed to insure representation of all stakeholders. In addition to working directly with the steering committee, the following stakeholder involvement components will be utilized:

Participatory design workshops
Public workshops and open houses
Stakeholder focus groups

1.1 Kick-off Meeting

This initial meeting will help refine the specific objectives and areas of investigation of the new MSBD Development Plan

Task 2. Demographic/Economic Information Collection and Analysis

Objective: To determine the potential market areas of Buffalo’s MSBD and to identify current and future demographic and economic trends for this area.

2.1 Market Area Definition

Working with the MSBD Steering Committee, the consultant will define the primary MSBD market area and boundary.

2.2 Demographic/Economic Analysis

A review of population trends and forecast of population futures will be completed for the respective market area. A review of economic and income characteristics will also be completed for each market segment.

2.3 Economic Base

Review and analyze retail sales patterns in Buffalo's MSBD.

Deliverable: Working Paper to be incorporated into Master Plan document.

Task 3. Physical Information Collection and Analysis

Objective:

- 1. To evaluate the quality and condition of the MSBD's physical systems.*
- 2. To identify major development opportunities to be tested against future demand defined by the economic analysis.*

3.1 Land/Building Use Inventory

Land use/building use inventory within the MSBD, tabulated and presented in graphic format, distinguishing between first floor and upper level usage. Inventory addressing the quality of use, identifying:

- Buildings in full, multi-level use.
- Buildings with street level use, with vacant upper levels
- Single-level buildings in full use.
- Buildings with street level vacancy and upper level use.
- Vacant single and multi-level buildings.

3.2 Building/Infrastructure Condition Survey

Exterior assessment for building conditions. This will also address parking associated with the MSBD, and water/sewer infrastructure of buildings located within the MSBD

Categories for assessment include:

- Building in good or excellent condition, with little apparent need for rehabilitation or reinvestment.
- Buildings with minor rehabilitation/infrastructure needs.
- Buildings in substantially sound condition with major rehabilitation/infrastructure needs.
- Buildings with apparent structural issues that nevertheless may be rehabilitated.
- Buildings in poor structural condition, with poor rehabilitation/infrastructure prospects.

3.3 Historic Assessment

This step assesses the historic and architectural importance of all properties in the MSBD area. The rating system defines:

- Structures worthy of individual listing on the National Register.
- Buildings that strongly contribute to the fabric of their context.
- Background” buildings consistent in scale and materials with their context.
- Significant contemporary buildings.
- Buildings that because of condition or design do not contribute to the MSBD’s character
- Buildings that have undergone major alteration.
- Buildings that detract form the MSBD’s character because of condition or appearance.

3.4 Transportation and Infrastructure Evaluation

- Inventory of parking and transportation.
- Inventory and evaluation of pedestrian system, identifying key pedestrian patterns.
- Identification of any infrastructure an public facility issues

3.5. Development Opportunity Analysis and Map

Development opportunities will be identified and categorized based upon the physical inventory.

Potential opportunities will include:

- Identification of specific redevelopment sites for detailed study
- Adaptive reuse opportunities, including upper story office/residential
- Residential development demands and opportunities
- Office development
- Retailing and other commercial development
- Light industrial/business park uses
- Secondary education/College extension uses

Deliverables: Draft Plan Section, including land/building use and transportation charts and maps, and development opportunities/analyses maps for downtown and potential development sub-districts.

Task 4: Market Analysis

Objective:

1. *To evaluate the existing strategic position of the MSBD.*
2. *To identify market potential for key MSBD uses and activities*

4.1 Strategic Planning Workshops with Committees

Strategic planning workshops including the MSBD Steering Committee and focus groups of stakeholders. The workshop process will involve X individual group meetings, discussing the potential markets and development objectives for the MSBD.

Deliverable: Strategic Planning Proceedings and Findings

4.2 Retail and Service Markets

- Estimates of sales on both an aggregate and per square foot basis in the MSBD.
- Calculation of probable sales potential and retail area in the MSBD area.
- Comparison of potential sales and retail area to actual MSBD retail space and uses.
- Definition of market potential.
- Evaluation of the downtown business mix and identification of potential niches and opportunities.
- Examination of prevailing retail and service rent levels.

4.3 Office Markets

- Calculation of office space and absorption in the MSBD area.
- Use of major employer interviews (including public agencies) to identify demand for proprietary office space.
- Projection of total office space demand.
- Examination of current office rent levels in the study area.

4.4 Housing Markets

- Inventorying the existing housing supply in the MSBD.
- Defining potential of additional rental and owner-occupied (including seasonal) housing in the MSBD.
- Using the income distribution of the overall market area to establish feasible price points for housing.
- Analyzing existing housing rents and values in the MSBD.

Deliverable: Draft Market Analysis Plan Section

Task 5: Downtown Concept

Objective: To define the “destination” after ten years, including identification of specific projects and initiatives for the MSBD.

5.1 MSBD Charrette

(An intensive design process that involves the collaboration of all project stakeholders at the beginning of a project to develop a comprehensive plan or design)

This/These will include government official, MSBD Steering Committee, focus group participants, and other stakeholders in defining overall visions and directions for the MSBD. This/these sessions will address:

- The guiding vision and brand.

- Key market focuses and opportunities.
- Major functional/infrastructure issues and public investment needs.
- General design concepts for the public environment.
- Identification of specific redevelopment opportunities and preparation for specific site development concepts.
- Development and financing strategies.
- Linkage concepts, including trails and pedestrian linkages, environmental graphics, way finding techniques and street connections.

5.2 Charrete Refinement/Presentation

Deliverable: Report on MSBD Concept

Task 6: Plan Development

Objective: To expand the design charrette results into detailed plan elements.

Development of the existing conditions inventory, market study, and charrette concepts into complete plan sections. These sections include:

6.1 Image and branding of MSBD.

6.2 Land and building use, including definition and programming of redevelopment sites.

6.3 Design of specific plans for redevelopment sites. Design plans will include a review of development potential and conceptual project budgets and proformas, to identify the level of private and public participation necessary for implementation.

6.4 Infrastructure improvement, including relationships to redevelopment.

6.5 Parking and transportation systems, including street, pedestrian, and trail linkages; parking concepts and directional graphics.

6.6 Streetscape and urban design plan, including streetscape improvements and features in the public environment; relationship of projects to the public environment.

6.7 Architectural and design guidelines for redevelopment and new construction.

6.8 Historic preservation and building conservation, including potential designations, interpretation, and design guidelines for historic or contributing buildings and sites.

The plan sections will include appropriate graphics, such as maps, plans and character sketches.

Task 7: Implementation Strategies

Objective: To develop the implementation tools necessary to realize the strategic MSBD development program.

7.1 Organizational and Marketing Review

Analysis of the current downtown promotional and organizational structure through a process that will include interviews with staff and businesses. Recommendations will be made for future:

- Organizational framework
- Focus for activity
- Organizational role: district management, promotions, advocacy
- Marketing and promotional activities

7.2 Financing Review

Review of the financing environment for projects in the MSBD, including:

- Past public sector participation
- Analysis of available resources
- Recommendations for project financing
- Financial proformas of redevelopment sites to determine required levels of public participation

Deliverable: Draft Implementation Strategies Plan Section, including reports on Organization Review, Marketing Review, and Financing Review

Task 8: Developing the Roadmap

Objective: To create a phased timetable for downtown development, defining projects, priorities, costs and responsibilities.

8.1 Priority Criteria

Criteria for setting priorities will be established with the MSBD Steering Committee. Priorities will then be established to develop a long-term capital program (including human and financial capital).

8.2 Implementation Program

Project phasing will be determined, allowing each phase to be self-sustaining and to build incrementally on previous efforts

Deliverable: Report on Priority Criteria and Implementation Program

Task 9. Public Presentation

Objective: To provide for full public review, comment, and “buy in” of the MSBD Redevelopment Plan.

9.1 Public Workshop

Community workshop consisting of a presentation of the entire plan and opportunity for comment by the public. This will include preparation of handouts for public review and a PowerPoint presentation that will be provided to the City for use by local presenters.

9.2 Formal Approval

The consultant will present the plan at formal Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

Deliverables: Preliminary and final plan drafts in written and electronic formats, PowerPoint presentation.

Budget

-Not to exceed \$33,000

Instructions to Respondents

1. All proposals must be received at Buffalo City Hall, Buffalo, Wyoming prior to 4:00 PM MST October 5th, 2007. Bid opening will take place on October 5th at 4:15 PM MST.
2. The envelope or container transmitting the proposals must be sealed, labeled and addressed as follows:

Colin Betzler
Planning Department
City Hall
46 N Main Street
Buffalo, WY 82801

3. One reproducible hard copy of each proposal must be submitted. An additional electronic copy must be email to cityplanner@vcn.com

4. Any person, firm or corporation qualified to meet the requirements of this RFP is invited to respond. The provisions contained in this RFP unless an amendment or deviation is formally approved and distributed by the City of Buffalo will bind proposals.
5. This RFP represents in writing to all respondents the most comprehensive and definitive statement that the City of Buffalo is able to make as to the requirements, terms and conditions for this proposal process and performance of the project. Information and understandings, verbal or written, which are not contained either in the RFP or in subsequent written addenda to this RFP will not be considered in evaluating proposals.
6. The specifications listed are to be interpreted as meeting the minimum acceptable by the City of Buffalo.
7. All proposals must include all Federal, State and Local taxes. Any such levies shall be the responsibility of the respondent.
8. As part of the negotiation process leading to the selection of a contractor, the City of Buffalo may request additions or modifications to the proposal. It is the present intent of the City of Buffalo not to negotiate substantive portions of any applicant's proposal and to rely on the information submitted in these proposals in awarding a contract.
9. The City of Buffalo reserves the right to award the contract without further discussion on the proposals submitted. The City of Buffalo also reserves the right to reject and/or accept any and all proposals received or parts thereof.
10. This solicitation does not commit the City of Buffalo to pay any costs incurred in preparing and submitting the proposal or to contract for the services specified.
11. Any questions concerning proposals should be directed to Colin Betzler, 307-684-5566 Ext. 3 or cityplanner@vcn.com
12. Requests for clarification of any items, requirements or specifications contained herein must be received by the City of Buffalo, IN WRITING, no later than the close of business on September 28th, 2007. Questions may be emailed to cityplanner@vcn.com. Updates will be sent by fax or email to those that have contacted the City of Buffalo's Planning Office and provided a fax number or email address.
13. Proposals must be signed by a corporate officer authorized to commit the submitting firm and shall remain in full force and effect for sixty (60) calendar days following the date of opening. The MSBD Steering Committee expects to make their decision in October and be able to award a contract by November 1, 2007.
14. Respondents should be available for presentations and interviews if such are deemed necessary to determine the preferred firm.

On-site Requirements

The consultants will be expected to spend time on-site in Buffalo. Please include in the proposals which tasks will be performed in Buffalo, with approximate dates.

Proposal Contents

Qualifications, Experience and Competence

Respondents must provide information indicating their qualifications, experience, and competence in accomplishing projects of this nature.

1. Identify the specific personnel to be assigned to this project by name, title and area of expertise; identify the assigned personnel's position in the organization.
2. List the assigned personnel's qualifications, including formal education, professional certifications and practical training;
3. Explain past experience in projects of this nature and the direct experience of the assigned personnel. Include a description of tasks performed in similar projects. Respondents must include a list of clients for similar work with contact names, phone numbers and addresses.
4. Describe the Consultant's experience in planning related to revitalization within historically commercial districts.
5. Describe the Consultant's experience working with colleges, cities, chambers, economic development organizations and art groups.
6. Include references for at least two previously and similar projects.
7. Include any other information that will assist the City of Buffalo in determining the firm's qualifications, experience and competence.

Proposed Methodology

1. The proposal should include suggested roles and responsibilities for the MSBD Steering Committee and City Staff.

Pricing

The proposal should include:

1. Cost for project and associated expenses.

Please recommend a payment tied to deliverables or completion of tasks.

Schedule

The proposal shall include a schedule of activities for the Consultant and others supporting the project. November 1st, 2007 should be used as a start date. The Consultant should plan to update this schedule as the project is performed.

Availability for Service

Respondents must provide a statement in the proposal that the consultant's present work load will allow for the time required for this project within the proposed schedule.

Progress Reporting

The Consultant will include a plan for keeping the MSBD Steering Committee informed on the project status. This plan should include written reports to the City's point of contact on the process of the project.

Selection Process

The City's purpose in soliciting proposals is to determine and select the best qualified firm. In order to accomplish this objective, the following evaluation criteria and procedure will be used.

Criteria Points

Qualifications, Experience and Competence 25
Proposed Method of Doing Work 25
Pricing versus level of services proposed 10
Experience on similar projects 15
Recommendations and interview 25

The proposals will be reviewed by the MSBD Steering Committee. The Committee will conduct interviews and make recommendations to the City Council to issue the award and manage the contract. The responding consulting firms may be required to meet with the Steering Committee prior to the contract being awarded. Please provide availability for phone and in-person interviews.

Award of the Contract

The Mayor of the City of Buffalo is authorized to award or negotiate a contract with one of the respondents, based on recommendation of the Steering Committee. The City reserves the right to request modification of any and all proposals and/or reject all proposals.

No documents produced under this project shall be the subject of an application for copyright or patent by the City or by the Consultant.

Contract Form

The City is amenable to the use of a standard contract used by the consulting firm that incorporates the requirements outlined in the Request for Proposal or the City will draft a contract that covers the work outlined in this request

