

CITY OF DUBUQUE, IOWA

February 4, 2008

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Master Planning Services for Dubuque Warehouse District

INTRODUCTION

The City of Dubuque, Iowa is soliciting qualifications from consulting firms to provide master planning services for the Dubuque Warehouse District. The City adopted a strategy for the Warehouse District in August 2007. The City now desires to create a comprehensive Warehouse Master Plan that specifies the detailed action steps and resources that are needed to develop this strategy. We expect the master planning process will involve assessing the strategy for successful implementation, assessing the strategy against market conditions and opportunities, and then creating a warehouse master plan that uses the *Warehouse Strategy* as its foundation.

HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The Dubuque Warehouse District was selected as one of the Top 10 community projects through the Envision 2010 process. This collaborative community process engaged 12,000-15,000 area citizens in identifying the top 10 projects for the Dubuque area. The Warehouse District has over 1 million square feet of underdeveloped space which has the potential to be a neighborhood where citizens can live, work, and play all in one area. Since being selected as an Envision 2010 priority, many things have occurred which have led to the adoption of the Warehouse District Revitalization Strategy. The first was the formation of the Warehouse District Envision Committee in January 2006. This group, including major property owners, met on a monthly basis to create a shared vision for what the area is to become. The Vision Statement urges the creation of a vibrant Warehouse District that provides a diverse, user-friendly environment for residents, businesses, workers and visitors. The district will enhance the quality of life in the Dubuque area and create an active, spirited neighborhood and cultural destination for the city, its residents, and visitors. Ten members of this committee facilitated by Dubuque Main Street Ltd. continue to meet monthly to implement this vision.

The Envision 2010 process identified an opportunity to create a unique commercial and residential product not currently available in the market. The area defined as the Warehouse District involves converting buildings into multi-use structures that will contain businesses, restaurants, shops, recreation and residences that are located near the Mississippi River with views of the Tri-State area. The district's most character-defining buildings which consist of the industrial buildings that, at one time, made up the largest Millworking district in the United States should be preserved and reused. Preserving these existing buildings will be critical to retaining the district's unique character and maintaining a link to Dubuque's millwork industrial past.

Dubuque's historic millwork industries will be the major theme for revitalization of the district. The developmental plan will include uses and objectives that reflect opportunities

for new and existing markets that have the potential to drive public and private investment in the district.

The Warehouse District Plan should foster opportunities for retention of existing businesses as well as recruitment and expansion of new businesses. In addition, the Warehouse District Plan will create opportunities to drive destination employment for existing or emerging markets and supply and demand for employees of these markets.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

There have been many studies, plans and programs for revitalizing downtown Dubuque and various sub-areas within the central business district over the years. In March 2002, the City adopted the Port of Dubuque Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan was approved in 2004 and a committee made up of representatives from the City of Dubuque, Dubuque Main Street, the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce, and the local council of governments meet quarterly to measure progress on implementation of the plan. In October, 2007, the City hired a consultant to prepare a Downtown/Port of Dubuque/Warehouse District Parking Study.

Students from the University of Iowa Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning conducted a research project to analyze successful Warehouse Districts across the country and determine successful approaches to revitalization. The 37-page report looked at 8 different cities and provided analysis on Public Improvements, Land Use, Redevelopment Financing Tools, Special District Designation, Relocation Options, and the development of a Public-Private Organization as criteria necessary for the successful implementation of a warehouse plan.

The City has also begun the process to nominate a subarea of the Warehouse District to the National Register of Historic Places. This recognition will make several buildings eligible for State and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits. This financing program has been tremendously successful in Iowa and across the country and will need to be accessed to properly revitalize and preserve the area. Property owners in the area are also exploring New Market Tax Credits as a possible funding source in their revitalization projects.

With several projects addressing the vision of the Warehouse District underway, the property owners saw it was important to develop a strategy to implement the vision of the Envision 2010 Committee. These owners formed a partnership with the City of Dubuque, Dubuque Main Street, the Business Accelerator, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, and the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque to formulate the strategy.

In June 2007, the draft strategy was developed and sent to all property owners and stakeholders from the Envision 2010 Committee in the district. A meeting was scheduled where all property owners in the district were invited to attend and give their feedback and suggest any changes to the strategy. With the endorsement of the property owners and the

Warehouse Envision Committee, the City Council adopted the Warehouse Strategy in August, 2007.

The strategy has six goals:

- 1) Create a Master Plan for the Warehouse District
- 2) The creation of a thriving, mixed use neighborhood
- 3) The preservation and sustainability of the Warehouse District
- 4) The creation of a clean and attractive streetscape
- 5) Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic
- 6) Improved parking opportunities

Each of the goals has several objectives and defined tasks to accomplish the objectives.

There are several key components of the strategy that should be noted. They are as follows:

- Revitalizing over 1 million square feet of space over the next 5 years
- Leverage investment from the private and public sectors of \$200 million
- Expand the Greater Downtown Urban Renewal District to include the Warehouse District. Doing this will allow the use of Tax Increment Financing to assist with redevelopment, as well as make properties eligible for the Downtown Rehabilitation Loan Program, Façade Grant Program, and the Design Grant Program.
- Development of a Master Plan for the district. This plan will help define the timing, land use, and end result of the Warehouse District. The strategy also seeks inclusion of the Warehouse District in the Downtown Parking Study which will be done in the current Fiscal Year.

A copy of the complete strategy is attached.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The City of Dubuque is located on the Mississippi River in northeastern Iowa, adjacent to Illinois and Wisconsin. As Iowa's oldest city, Dubuque is a community well known for its historic and architectural beauty. The City is approximately 30 square miles in area, with a population of nearly 60,000 persons. The City's annual operating and capital budget is over \$116 million and funds a full range of services. The City's web site is www.cityofdubuque.org.

The community has a stable and diversified manufacturing base and a growing service sector. Dubuque is the major retail, medical, education and employment center for the tri-state area. Tourism continues to be a major economic force in the community. City government works in collaboration with the private sector to promote economic development. Downtown revitalization is a long-standing priority of the City Council.

The Warehouse District borders on the larger downtown area including the central business district, transitional mixed-use neighborhoods north, west and east of downtown, and the Port of Dubuque east of downtown. The Warehouse District contains many

industrial buildings that are architecturally significant and reflect a variety of styles and materials.

The City offers a variety of programs to support downtown revitalization, including tax increment financing, tax abatement, commercial rehabilitation loans, facade restoration grants, tax rebates for historic restoration, incentives for creation of upper story housing units, and incentives for job creation. The City provides a municipal parking system of surface lots, ramps, and metered on-street spaces. The City also operates a public transit system with the main transfer location in downtown Dubuque.

Dubuque has been designated as 2nd best in the country for retaining existing business and is ranked 22nd for its job growth rate; the only city in the Midwest in the top 25. Forbes Magazine has ranked Dubuque 15th in the nation for “Best Places for Small Business.” From February 2006 through February 2007, Dubuque County created 19.1% of the net new jobs in the entire State of Iowa (3,500 jobs), with only 3% of the State’s population.

In the past few years, the City has received many national awards including the following:



The prestigious Milken Institute released its latest list of “Best Performing Cities,” with Dubuque outperforming 386 other U.S. cities for job growth. The report shows Dubuque’s one-year job growth rate (March 2006 – March 2007) ranked 11th nationwide. The report separately analyzes the top 200 large and 179 small metros nationwide. Dubuque’s 5.26 percent job growth rate moves Dubuque to 8th nationally among small cities and 11th among all U.S. metros. (2007)



Dubuque is a 2007 All-America City, the oldest and most prestigious civic recognition competition in the nation. The winners are selected in part for their ability to engage a broad cross section of the community, including youth, business leaders, elected officials, city staff and nonprofit groups in civic dialogues leading to tangible results. (2007)



The magazine’s report, “Best Cities and Boomtowns”, based on employment growth over the past five years, notes Dubuque’s meteoric rise to the current rank of 22nd in the United States out of 393 cities. Inc. Magazine described Dubuque as the “biggest mover” among smaller cities. (2007)



Surging 60 places on Forbes Magazine’s annual “Best Small Places for Business,” Dubuque has moved-into 15th place in the

U.S. Dubuque's climb represents the 2nd biggest gain in the U.S. on Forbes' list of 179 small metro areas. Dubuque is the smallest city in the U.S. Top 15 list. In the same Forbes Magazine report, Dubuque's rank for job-growth led all other Iowa cities, according to the magazine's five-year, annualized figures. (2007)



Dubuque is one of the "10 low-cost locales where jobs are plenty" based on job prospects and quality of life. (2007)



Dubuque is one of the "Best Communities for Young People". This national competition includes applicants from hundreds of communities in all 50 states. (2007)



Moody's/Economy.com ranked Dubuque 22nd in the U.S. for job growth, ahead of giant cities like Dallas and Orlando. (2006)



Dubuque received the prestigious Phoenix Award in 2005 for Brownfields Redevelopment in the Port of Dubuque. (2005)



Inc. Magazine listed Dubuque as one of the "Best Places For Doing Business in America" from all cities reviewed in the large, medium, and small categories combined. The ranking measures job growth and diversity of industry using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics. (2005)



Dubuque is one of "10 Great Places to Discover Midwest Charm". (2005)



Dubuque is one of the "Dozen Distinctive Destinations" listed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. (2005)



Dubuque is ranked 6th nationwide in the "Quality of Life Quotient" and earned the highest acknowledgment—as one of the 50 named a "5-Star Community". The ranking is based on affordable housing, good schools, low crime rates, etc. Dubuque also took the top honor in the Housing Affordability category, while the City's schools placed 7th nationwide. (2005)

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN PROPOSAL

To simplify the review process and to obtain the maximum degree of comparability, the proposal shall include the following information and shall be organized in the manner specified below.

Letter of Transmittal

Provide a letter of transmittal briefly outlining the consultant's understanding of the work and the name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address of the consultant's primary contact person.

Profile of Firm

Provide general information about the firm and its area of expertise as regards this RFQ, including the qualifications of the project manager and other key personnel who would be assigned to the project. The City expects the project team to provide expertise relative to the Dubuque Warehouse Strategy, including the following areas:

- Economic Feasibility
- Market Analysis
- Land Use Suggestions
- Project Financing
- Real Estate Development
- Planning/ Urban Design
- Architecture/Landscape Architecture/Street Scape
- Site Design/Development Standards
- Transportation/Traffic Engineering
- Consensus Building/Public Relations
- Sustainable Redevelopment

Proposal Qualifications

- List the names of the anticipated project manager and other key personnel associated with the project and their qualifications and experience.
- Describe the experience of the firm in performing similar projects for cities comparable to Dubuque; ideally, cities that serve as regional market centers. Include at least 3 client references with similar projects that have been completed in the past 5 years. List the names of the key personnel proposed for Dubuque project who worked on the referenced projects.
- Describe the name and location of other sub-consulting firms that would be used by the firm in the project and the approximate percentage of the work that would be performed by each of these firms. Include the experience and qualifications of the sub-consultant firm and its key personnel in working on similar projects.
- Discuss the firm's ability to integrate this project into the firm's present workload.

Certificate of Insurance

The selected firm will be required to meet the City's insurance requirements for professional services (see attached Insurance Schedule C).

Scope of Services

Describe the means or strategy by which the consultant would satisfy the following scope of services, and/or an alternative or hybrid strategy recommended by the consultant – what process and outcomes the consultant would suggest to make the vision a reality.

1. Assessment

During this portion the consultant(s) will assess existing conditions and identify barriers and opportunities related to the revitalization of the warehouse district. The assessment, at a minimum, should include:

- Review existing plans for the warehouse, downtown and Port of Dubuque areas
- Analyze general physical conditions of the project area
- Consider all environmental factors that effect the development of the area and address those factors in the plan
- Highlight major building rehabilitation and redevelopment opportunities
- Review roadway, transit, parking, and pedestrian circulation systems

2. Real Estate Dynamics

During this portion the consultant(s) will assess the real estate conditions and identify barriers and opportunities related to market opportunities for the warehouse district. The assessment, at a minimum, should include:

- Document existing physical and market conditions
- Conduct a physical analysis of the major structures within the warehouse district.
- Identify the cost of building renovations for individual structures, including the incorporation of sustainable and energy initiatives, and a schedule for implementation of said improvements.
- Explore relationship between Warehouse District with adjacent downtown and Port of Dubuque.
- Assess development opportunities and constraints, including opportunities for residential, office and commercial/entertainment uses and a breakdown of each use for individual structures within the warehouse district.

3. Economic Opportunities

During this portion the consultant(s) evaluate economic opportunities for the warehouse district. It is anticipated that the majority of the consultant's time will be focused on this portion of the RFQ Scope of Services. The evaluation, at a minimum, should include:

- Quantify market demand for optimum land uses, including vertical land uses, for individual structures within the warehouse district.
- Identify targeted development opportunities

- Assess financial feasibility of market demand, land uses, development opportunities and provide economic modeling for each item.
- Identify the cost of public and private infrastructure improvements needed and a schedule for implementation of said improvements.
- Identify the financial feasibility of leasing and shared ownership opportunities to leverage financing for building.
- Identify potential developers and assess developer interest.
- Identify “master lease” and condo opportunities; and centralized business management.
- Create projections for economic development and develop recommendations for mixed use development size, amenities, occupancy mix (include retail) and phasing

4. **Financing**

During this portion the consultant(s) will identify barriers and opportunities related to financial needs for the warehouse district revitalization. The evaluation, at a minimum, should include:

- Identify local lending markets and climate for warehouse district revitalization.
- Identify financial incentives available for individual structures, infrastructure and public improvements including an assessment of funding interest.
- Identify any gap financing needed based upon ability to cash flow renovation of individual structures.
- Identify opportunities for local, state, regional and federal public/private partnerships.

5. **Community Involvement**

- Engage property owners, the community, decision makers and partners in the planning process
- Recommend a role for the warehouse strategy planning committee to create consensus building, community involvement and a public relations process for public outreach and engagement.

6. **Warehouse Master Plan**

- Create unified implementation strategy with master plan elements
- Cross reference Downtown Master Plan, and Port of Dubuque Master Plan with the Warehouse Master Plan
- Create an urban design with preferred uses by areas or districts (incorporate recommendations of downtown streetscape/landscape design guidelines)
- Create concept plans with transportation and traffic circulation (incorporate parking options identified by separate study)
- Create concept plans and cost estimates for public improvements related to the *Warehouse District*
- Create concept plans and cost estimates for buildings
- Create concept plans for land use, including a vertical land use for major

structures within the warehouse district.

7. **Recommend Action Plan**

- Identify and prioritize next steps
- Identify financing incentives, strategies and tools
- Identify strategies to attract development
- Develop a market strategy to attract and grow the support that will be critical for the success of the Warehouse District
- Propose a plan for marketing to strategic public and private partners

8. **Deliverables: Hard Copy and in Digital Formats**

- Economic Models
- List of potential Financial Incentives and Opportunities, including contacts
- Master Plan
- Site Development Plan, including bird's eye view perspective
- Development Standards

Proposed Project Schedule

Provide a project schedule outlining the time period and estimated completion date of the proposed scope of work. This should include a schedule for and description of all deliverable products throughout the period. Products should be delivered in hardcopy and electronic formats compatible with the City's computer software and hardware.

Fees and Compensation

Provide a proposed cost plus expenses budget for completion of the proposed scope of services with cost breakdowns by scope element. Quotation of fees and compensation shall remain firm for a period of at least 90 days from the submission deadline. **Please separate the proposed budget from the other portion of the RFQ submittal.** Initial screening will be done without knowing the consultant's proposed fee for services.

References

Provide at least three references of clients for whom the bidder has completed similar projects within the past five years.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

An original plus nine (9) copies of the proposal must be received in the office of the City of Dubuque's Economic Development Department, 50 W. 13th Street, Dubuque, Iowa 52001 by 5:00 p.m. CDT on **Tuesday, March 4, 2008.**

Proposals should be addressed to Aaron DeJong, Assistant Economic Development Director, at the above address. Questions can be directed to Aaron DeJong by telephone at (563) 589-4393, by fax at (563) 589-1733, or by email at adejong@cityofdubuque.org.

Each consultant assumes full responsibility for delivery and deposit of the completed

proposal package on or before the deadline. The City of Dubuque is not responsible for any loss or delay with respect to delivery of the proposals. The City of Dubuque reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to negotiate changes with any consultant. The City of Dubuque is not liable for any cost incurred by any consultant prior to the execution of an agreement or contract. Nor shall the City of Dubuque be liable for any costs incurred by the consultant that are not specified in any contract. The City of Dubuque is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be screened to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements of the proposal format. A selection committee will review qualifying proposals, and may interview the short-listed firms. Factors to be considered by the committee may include the following:

- X Qualifications and experience of the firm and any sub-consultants.
- X Qualifications and experience of the principal consulting staff and sub-consulting staff that will work on the project.
- X Information from references.
- X Grasp of project requirements and level of interest.
- X Design approach/methodology in completing scope of services, including sustainability; creativity and problem solving ability.
- X Responsiveness and compatibility between consultants and City; general attitude and ability to communicate.
- X Proposed schedule required to complete project.
- X Proposed cost to complete project (Master Plan).

Consultants may be invited to an interview with the selection committee.