

Summit Neighborhood Association Request for consultant proposals

Issued: April 28, 2009

Please submit proposals by: June 1, 2009

Background

The Summit Neighborhood Association, in collaboration with the Mt. Hope Neighborhood Association, and others is seeking professional project management for our North Main Street Project to stimulate community-enhancing development on the North Main Street corridor. The consultant will act as professional staff to the presently all-volunteer Project and shall represent the interests and goals of the Summit Neighborhood Association.

Additional information about the project may be found at www.northmain.wordpress.com.

Project purpose:

Consultant will undertake work to pursue, support and organize efforts to stimulate public or private investments in North Main Street that align with the identified goals of the project (attached). The consultant will try to develop plans for areas identified of interest such as the under utilized and vacant buildings, on North Main street and the Tar hill site at the corner of Ninth street and North Main street. Project's area begins at the intersection of Branch Avenue and continues north to the Pawtucket city line. However, adjacent properties impacting this area, including those beyond the city line in Pawtucket, may also be considered.

Client:

Consultant will work under contract to the Summit Neighborhood Association (SNA) and will undertake to represent and promote the goals and directions of the SNA Board of Directors. The consultant will report to and work directly with a the North Main Street Project steering committee consisting of representatives of SNA, the Mt. Hope Neighborhood Association and other stakeholders who may join us from time to time. The decisions and directions of the steering committee will be assumed to be consistent with the intentions of the SNA Board unless the SNA Board or Board President inform him/her otherwise.

Scope of work:

The consultant will act as a facilitator of public or private investments in North Main which promote the North Main Street Project's broad goals and development priorities as described in the attached Project Overview (October 2008) and specific objectives developed by the Project steering committee.

Consultant services will vary as opportunities and needs arise, but may include:

- With a special interest in trying to develop under utilized sites and vacant buildings and the Tar hill site at the corner of N Main Street and Ninth Street.
- Factual research and information gathering on properties, stakeholders, law and regulation and development models.
- Outreach, follow up and cultivation of individuals and groups to understand their goals and needs and secure their cooperation.
- Facilitation of stakeholder meetings to share information, develop agreements and plans.
- Documentation of findings, notes and analysis.
- Strategic advice and counsel to the project steering committee.
- Minimum of six written records, with a dates and time log, with a description of work done each month. Reports to be summated to the North Main street steering committee and the SNA board.
- Project management securing and managing the assistance of additional consultants

Consultant services shall begin as soon as possible, preferably by July 1, 2009. Proposal should assume a six-month initial service agreement with potential to renew for a second six-month term.

Consultant deliverables

- Minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 hours per month of services to the project within the scope above.
- Regular (monthly or more often) analysis, advice and verbal reports on consultant activity to the steering group or group coordinator and additional verbal or written reports to the steering group and/or SNA Board upon request.
- Written reports, studies, presentations and graphics upon request.

Consultant qualifications

- Advanced training and minimum of two years professional experience in urban planning, architecture, real estate development, public development policy or related fields.
- Personal commitment to community-based development planning and an ability to advocate for the needs and goals of the communities represented by SNA and the Mt Hope Neighborhood Association when other interests are asserted.
- Ability to synthesize and reconcile conflicting positions by finding common interests.
- Ability to manage projects and specifically the hiring and oversight of other consultants in planning, real estate, facilitation or other fields as authorized by the steering committee and SNA Board.
- Strong ability to communicate in writing and in person with individuals and groups.

Compensation

- Consultant shall be paid on an hourly basis for actual services rendered to a maximum of 15 hours per any single month.
- Additional hours of services within the scope of this agreement may be contracted by mutual written agreement of the consultant, the North Main Street Project coordinator and by a vote of the SNA. Such agreements may be documented via email.
- Consultant shall invoice the SNA Treasurer each month for the prior month's services.

Selection process

- Interested candidates should submit a professional resume, three pertinent references and a one-page letter of interest focusing on their specific qualifications for this opportunity to the project coordinator no later than June 1, 2009.
- A selection committee made up of equal number of project members, and an equal number of SNA committee board members, and the North Main Street project coordinator shall interview selected candidates.
- This selection committee will then make a recommendation to the SNA board that will then vote on the new N Main street consultant.
- The President of SNA shall sign the contract on behalf of SNA.

Partial selection considerations

We believe the following qualities and considerations will be important to our choice of consultant.

- Demonstrated ability to organize and manage ongoing projects.
- Knowledge and experience with multi-party, mixed-use development plans and projects.
- Understanding of and commitment to client's development objectives.
- Readiness and ability to work with volunteer group as client.
- Creativity and initiative in engaging multiple stakeholders and partners.
- Cost-effectiveness of proposals.

Proposal submission

Proposals should include your resume, your hourly fee and a cover letter of no more than two pages addressing the scope of work and qualifications above. Qualifying candidates will be contacted to arrange an interview.

Contact the project coordinator, Jonathan Howard, if you have questions: 401-331-2272. Please submit applications in PDF format via email to the project coordinator, Jonathan Howard: jonathanhoward@cox.net

**Summit Neighborhood Association
Background on SNA North Main Street Group Project – Oct. 2008**

Why has SNA taken this project on?

North Main affects our neighborhood

- Ongoing top neighborhood problem expressed to SNA meetings, surveys, contacts.
- Untapped economic and community opportunity to grow tax base, jobs, services and affordable housing for Providence residents.
- Residents want a safe and attractive urban-style gateway that enhances the value of our neighborhoods.
- Neighbors want to replace undesirable uses with family-oriented entertainment, shopping and services.

North Main development fits in a larger picture

- Perfect fit with RI Economic Development Commission development scorecard
- Ideal for denser, taller, transit-oriented land use called for by city and state planning.
- Goals align directly with City's Comp Plan, neighborhood plan and statewide land use plan.

North Main has major unused assets

- High volume mass transit and auto intercity connector and with highway access.
- Underused privately owned land available, potential for large projects.
- Major medical institution acts as economic anchor and investor.
- Large, but underused public park at North Burial Ground.
- At center of dense consumer base and work force.

What does the neighborhood want on North Main Street?

Lots of people: new residents, new workers who live, work and shop on the street and public places and spaces where people living in the existing neighborhood also each other as we do business and enjoy ourselves. Parks, paths, public events and entertainment will attract families, workers, diners and shoppers well into the evening hours.

An great urban streetscape: A variety of store fronts, landscaping and vitality along the entire street that are organized by common design standards. We envision a “street wall” of taller buildings to the west, while keeping the east side to 4 stories or lower to protect the edge of the residential neighborhood. Rationalized intersections (especially at Smithfield Ave.) and safer pedestrian crossings will make it safe and inviting to cross the street.

Businesses that build the community: We want to balance national chains with a large presence of distinctive owner-operated and Rhode Island owned businesses. The creation of reasonably priced office space, affordable housing and live-work studios and an industry focus such as medical, design, etc. attracts inventors, artists, entrepreneurs, restaurants and special interest shops. We particularly want to create an opportunity for people to both live and work in our city and our neighborhood.

Distinctive public amenities: Convenient and attractive public transit options delivering a steady stream of visitors without cars from Providence and Pawtucket. Once here, they enjoy an urban boulevard with attractive and well-maintained street furniture, signage, trees and plantings as well as access points to urban paths and parks, including North Burial Ground.

What kinds of projects do we want?

We identified **business incubators**, **green spaces** and **mixed-use residential** development including **affordable workforce housing** as priority objectives, often in combination (such as a green business incubator or a dog park with retail). We also strongly support **mixed use** with office or residential above street-level retail, a **restaurant district** and **structured parking** (possibly from the street level down on the west side).

Surface parking lots must be minimized and moved away from the street front. **National retailers** are welcome if they will accommodate our needs – a “vertical Target” for instance, but locally-owned enterprises would be preferred. The abandoned **Sears/Anderson Little** site’s continued neglect discourages action; development could spark the whole corridor.

Public investments should include a new **entrance to North Burial Ground**, an improved **intersection at Smithfield**, more visible, more attractive **street signage**, a **greener streetscape** and safe **pedestrian crossings and stopping points**.

What have we done about it?

2005

- Meeting on Summit business districts leads to North Main kickoff at Javaspeed

2006

- 32 neighbors create broad vision of future North Main Street
- Project teams form to hire planner, find funding, build our contact list
- Key stakeholder interviews, RFP released, funding applied for

2007

- Key grants awarded, steering group expanded, consultant hired
- Outreach to business owners, community members
- Envisioning Development visuals completed
- Providence Planning Dept’s Neighborhood Charette sessions on North Main agree with and expand on key elements of the North Main vision developed by the project.

2008

- Detailed base plans of ownership, use, values and parking completed
- Expanded base plan of area north of Smithfield completed
- Interviews with key stakeholders conducted.
- Web site created
- Series of six public workshops held from September to December
- Survey on changes to Smithfield Avenue supports making intersection two-way.
- Providence, Pawtucket and major landholders agree to participate in master planning for the Sears/Shaws area.

2009

- City Councilman Jackson and Representative Fox initiate Smithfield Ave. changes.
- Workshops scheduled for March, May, July, Sept, November and January 2010.
- SNA to request proposals for part time professional project management.

What do we want next?

- A collaborative community/stakeholder process to commit to specific development.
- “Shovels in the ground” on a significant public or private project.
- Active coalition of partners pursuing our vision.