

# ATLANTIC AVENUE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL CONCEPT DESIGN FOR ATLANTIC AVENUE GATEWAY

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Atlantic Avenue District Management Association, Inc., (AADMA) a not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York which manages the Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District ("BID" or "District"), is inviting responses from a selected short list of firms ("Proposers") by this request ("Request") to provide design services ("Design Services") for the Atlantic Avenue underpass, more particularly hereinafter described.

Proposers are invited to submit a proposal (each, a "Proposal") to perform the services (the "Work") more particularly described in the "Scope of Work" attached hereto as Appendix A and by this reference incorporated herein.

If a satisfactory Proposal is received, it is anticipated that the AADMA will enter into a contract (the "Contract") with the successful Proposer. Consultant will complete the Scope of Work for a fee not to exceed \$50,000 (fifty thousand dollars) with no additional payment or other reimbursement for expenses incurred.

## II. PERTINENT DATES

- Release of RFP: **Tuesday February 5**
- Deadline for receipt of Proposals: **Tuesday February 26** (the "Closing Date")
- Notice to selected designer: **Tuesday March 5**
- Public consultation/research phase: **Two public charettes from March - May**
- Presentation to Public Design Commission: **July 15 (PDC submission due 06/25/13)**
- Second Presentation to Public Design Commission: **Sept 9 (PDC submission due 08/06/13)**
- Approximate project duration: **30 weeks**

## III. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

A. Three (3) copies of a written Proposal must be received by the AADMA by the Closing Date. Proposals received after the Closing Date may not be accepted by the AADMA and, if accepted, may not be considered in response to this solicitation.

Proposals shall be addressed as follows:

**Atlantic Avenue District Management Association, Inc.  
c/o Pacheco and Lugo, LLC  
340 Atlantic Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Attention: Josef Szende**

The AADMA will not accept oral Proposals or Proposals by fax, electronic mail, etc.

All questions regarding the Request must be in writing and should be directed to Josef Szende, Executive Director, Planning, via electronic mail ([jszende@atlanticavebid.org](mailto:jszende@atlanticavebid.org)). Questions and responses from the AADMA will be shared with all other Proposers at <http://bit.ly/WOL2Jc>.

Questions submitted after Friday, February 8th will not be responded to until on or after Wednesday February 20th 2013.

B. Proposals are to contain the following:

- 1) Project team including lead designer, and sub-consultants if any.
- 2) Demonstrate an understanding of program, site and project intent.
- 3) Diagram(s) to illustrate preliminary awareness of the constraints and opportunities presented by the project site. The intent should not be to propose a design concept but rather to concisely demonstrate possible analysis and program definition. Images from prior projects may also be referenced to illustrate this process.
- 4) Statement of Qualifications, including three examples of landscape-type work, parks, or plazas done by Proposer.
- 5) Explicit statement of experience shepherding projects through the public design commission
- 6) A statement of acceptance. Include assumptions and exceptions, if any, which the Proposer takes to any terms and conditions contained in the "Scope of Work".
- 7) Two (2) reference contacts for previous clients of similar project type (landscape-type work, parks, or plazas, not underpasses per se).
- 8) A detailed budget for all expenses including accounting for subcontracts - if any. Funding from AADMA will not exceed that which is outlined in this budget.

#### **IV. TERMS GOVERNING REQUEST AND SELECTION**

##### **A. Review of Proposals**

The AADMA will review all Proposals for completeness and compliance with the terms and conditions hereof. The AADMA reserves the right to request additional materials, including those it may deem useful or appropriate to evaluate each Proposer's qualifications and past experience, or clarification or modification of any submitted Proposal. Such requests will be responded to in a timely manner, as determined by the AADMA. Submission of a Proposal shall constitute the Proposer's permission to the AADMA to make such inquiries concerning the Proposer as the AADMA in its discretion deems useful or appropriate. The AADMA is not obligated to make any such request or to accept any unsolicited additional materials, clarification, modification or background information.

The AADMA reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject at any time any or all Proposals, to withdraw this Request without notice and to negotiate with one or more Proposers submitting Proposals on terms other than those set forth herein.

The AADMA will select the Proposer which, in the sole judgment of the AADMA, most successfully demonstrates the necessary qualities to undertake the project, and best meets the other needs and goals of the District and the AADMA. The AADMA reserves full right to reject all proposals if it so chooses.

Under no circumstances will the AADMA pay any costs incurred by a Proposer in responding to this Request.

The review or selection of a Proposal submitted by a Proposer will create no legal submission or equitable rights in favor of the Proposer, including without limitation, rights of enforcement or reimbursement.

Failure by the AADMA for any reason to select a Proposer or to enter into the Contract with a Proposer once selected as a result of this Request will not create any liability on the part of the

AADMA or any of its members, officers, employees, agents, consultants or other Proposers. Submission of a Proposal by a Proposer in response to this Request will constitute a waiver by such Proposer of any claim against any of the foregoing for any costs incurred or for any matters arising there under or in connection with the review of such Proposal by the AADMA.

#### B. Execution of the Contract

The submission of a Proposal shall constitute an agreement by the Proposer to execute the Contract with the AADMA. If the AADMA notifies the Proposer that it has been selected, then Proposer shall execute the Contract with the AADMA within ten business days of such notification and receipt of an execution copy. In the event that the Proposer fails to execute the Contract expeditiously for any reason within such period, the AADMA may void the selection of the Proposer and negotiate and execute a Contract with another party (or no party, if it so chooses). Work will begin immediately upon execution of the Contract.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

Design services to be provided shall include, at a minimum:

#### **Deliverables:**

- Plan of existing conditions
- Comprehensive, annotated illustrative site plan, showing functional streetscape enhancements such as standard lighting upgrades, pedestrian circulation improvements, pigeon debris eradication, and wayfinding as well as distinctive design treatments such as decorative lighting, and public art; the plan should include key dimensions and program opportunities.
- Breaking the full design up into at least two stages where stage one includes elements within DOT's regular street design manual vocabulary that may be implemented immediately and a stage two that details elements that will create a unique solution for this area with non-standard elements
- Signed, technical, ready-to-build designs for lighting, pigeon and pigeon debris eradication, and art
- An area map relating the design concept to relevant contextual influences
- A maintenance plan illustrating what maintenance will be required and detailing its annual cost
- A minimum of three rendered perspective views
- Approvals from NYSDOT; NYCDOT; Community Board 2; NYC Public Design Commission; and any other agencies that need sign off on this project.

#### **Community Meetings:**

- Participation in project meetings with the AADMA for the duration of the project - once every two months
- Organization and coordination at a minimum of one meeting/charette with community stakeholders; meet with NYC/NYS DOT as necessary to address technical questions regarding the design.

#### **Creative Added Value**

- Strong consideration will be given to projects that are able to add more value to the project by presenting innovative design solutions for the site

#### **Project Context**

The Atlantic Avenue Gateway project is AADMA's proposal to transform the BQE underpass at Atlantic Avenue and Pier 6 into a new public space connecting Brooklyn Bridge Park and the Atlantic Avenue commercial corridor. This new gateway will help strengthen businesses that today are cut off from the Park's activity, while also establishing a precedent that City officials

and BIDs can use to address the millions of square feet of underutilized space beneath elevated structures citywide.

Brooklyn Bridge Park is one of the city's most treasured new open spaces, attracting thousands of visitors daily. However, the passage under the BQE cuts off Atlantic Avenue visually, and creates a dark and foreboding environment to walk through. Atlantic Avenue merchants are missing out on a potential 70,000 customers and shoppers who do not know what lies beyond the underpass just to the east and do not want to traverse the underpass. There is a need for an improved pedestrian environment and stronger connectivity to link Atlantic Avenue with Brooklyn Bridge Park.

AADMA proposes to redesign and program the underpass to create a gateway to draw people to the destinations on either side and provide amenities for visitors and local residents alike. AABID is commissioning a design team through this request to enhance the underpass through improved lighting of the pedestrian passage; addressing a pigeon infestation; providing signage for way-finding that highlights both the Atlantic Avenue BID and Brooklyn Bridge Park; and art. To draw attention to and enhance the underpass in the near term, the BID is collaborating with Groundswell (<http://www.groundswellmural.org/>) to create a mural on the south side of the underpass area as an immediate improvement for this site.

By transforming an underutilized space into a neighborhood amenity and connecting the Park to the commercial corridor, this proposal aims to increase foot traffic and business receipts along Atlantic Avenue, decrease storefront vacancies, and highlight the underpass redesign as an innovative solution to a citywide problem. Equally important, we want to improve access from upland areas to Brooklyn Bridge Park. We already have received support from impacted elected officials and constituents including Brooklyn Bridge Park, the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, Downstate Long Island College Hospital (LICH), merchants, and residents in the surrounding neighborhoods – all of whom we would like to engage as part of the design and planning process. We also will be taking these designs to our local elected officials and foundations for funding support to see the project built as soon as possible.

The BID also will make an effort to bring its street activities, fairs, concerts, and events that we host – such as the Atlantic Avenue Extravaganza - down to the gateway area.

In recent years, Brooklyn Bridge Park has catalyzed a transformation of the western end of Atlantic Avenue from a very quiet, sleepy street to the energetic gateway to a park of regional significance. This project presents an opportunity for catalytic design to activate the underutilized heart of a growing neighborhood. Atlantic Avenue Gateway should be viewed as an opportunity to trigger and support the following Five Principles for Atlantic Avenue (these are not listed in order of importance):

- **Creating a seamless, exciting experience between Atlantic Avenue and Brooklyn Bridge Park**
- **Improving business for stores and restaurants on and around Atlantic Avenue**
- **Increasing foot traffic on Atlantic Avenue**
- **Creating a truly pleasant, safe, and beautiful pedestrian environment under the Brooklyn Queens Expressway**

- **Designing for everyone - senior-friendly, kid-friendly, dog-friendly**

Furthermore the eventual design concept should confront and mitigate the following constraints of the site:

- **Pedestrian safety and access particularly surrounding the BQE on-ramp**
- **Mitigation of environmental forces from noise, pollution, darkness, wind**
- **Lack of continuity in the pedestrian realm between BK Bridge Park and Atlantic Ave.**
- **Deficient street lighting under the highway**

Working with and complementing the NYC DOT Street Design Manual, and DDC Active Design Guidelines the Concept Design should integrate wayfinding, lighting and art in an appropriate manner for the 21<sup>st</sup> century central business district.

To ensure the implementation of essential streetscape improvements within the project's short timeframe, the designer should aim to employ NYCDOT standard streetscape elements set forth in the Street Design Manual wherever possible, both to promote consistency with the established vocabulary of streetscapes citywide and to streamline the approval process.

Distinctive treatments should be applied creatively and judiciously. For instance, elements should be attached to the sidewalk rather than the bridge structure wherever possible to expedite NYSDOT and NYCDOT Bridges review and approvals.

## **Site Synopsis**

The Atlantic Avenue BID and this site in particular helps to connect the neighborhoods of Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill, and Boerum Hill. This project will act as one of the gateways to the Atlantic commercial corridor, the other being Times Plaza at 4th Avenue and Atlantic.

## **The Atlantic Avenue BID**

Our BID, known as the AABID, was signed into law in September 2011 after garnering overwhelming support from stakeholders, Community Boards 2 & 6, and various City Council committees and City agencies. Operations launched in April 2012 to meet our Mission & Vision.

Atlantic Avenue is characterized by its diverse mix of arts/design related businesses, cultures, history, and its neighborhoods (Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill, and Boerum Hill).

### **Our Mission & Vision**

Representing over 300 businesses in Brooklyn's vibrant Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill and Cobble Hill neighborhoods, the Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District (AABID) is dedicated to promoting the Avenue's long-term economic development thereby creating a thriving boulevard that attracts both residents and visitors to its vast array of services, shops and dining, while preserving the Avenue's rich history and diverse character.

To accomplish our mission, the AABID provides the following services to local businesses:

- Marketing and promotion of the business boulevard

- Supplemental sanitation services, capital improvements, streetscape and beautification projects aimed at creating a clean and attractive environment for living, shopping, dining and sightseeing
- Advocacy programs and business services that improve economic conditions and support a high quality of life for local businesses and residents.

### **Brooklyn Bridge Park**

Brooklyn Bridge Park is an 85-acre park on Brooklyn's East River Shoreline. The park has revitalized 1.3-mile of Brooklyn's post-industrial waterfront from Atlantic Avenue in the south, under the Brooklyn Bridge, to Jay Street north of the Manhattan Bridge.[1] The site includes Brooklyn Piers 1–6, the historic Fulton Ferry Landing, and the preexisting Empire Fulton Ferry Park and Main Street Park. Two Civil War-era structures, Empire Stores and the Tobacco Warehouse, will also be integrated into the park.

The park is characterized its beautiful views of the water, its connection to the East River and Manhattan, and its destination activities for people of all ages. Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6 lies immediately to the west of the site.

Brooklyn Bridge Park's mission is to create and maintain a world class park that is a recreational, environmental and cultural destination enjoyed by the residents of, and visitors to, New York City. The Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation operates under a mandate, embodied by its General Project Plan, to be financially self-sustaining, which includes the activation of certain development sites within the project's footprint.

Currently, Pier 6 includes the following amenities:

- Sand Volleyball Courts: Three regulation sized volleyball courts are located on Pier 6. Visitors can come for open play, check out a tournament or join a public clinic.
- Swing Valley: This playground features ten swing sets of varying sizes, as well as Tarzan ropes.
- Slide Mountain: Slides, jungle gyms and climbing structures are all included at this playground.
- The Water Lab: One of the Park's most popular playgrounds, the Water Lab features a water-jet field and water channel that will keep children entertained for hours.
- Sandbox Village: Possibly the largest of its kind in New York City, this giant sandbox is great for toddlers.
- Dog Run: Located on the uplands of Pier 6, this dog run is open daily.

A ferry to Governor's Island runs from Pier 6 from June to September each year.

We encourage respondents to research the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and other important neighborhood constituencies in Brooklyn.

### **Groundswell**

The AADMA has already contracted with Groundswell to paint a mural on the south wall of the Atlantic Avenue Gateway site. The respondent will need to coordinate with this organization to implement this project. Groundswell is an award-winning Brooklyn-based non-profit that teams up high school students with artists to make murals and provide them with valuable life experience. Many examples of their work are available on their website: <http://www.groundswellmural.org/>. They have a proven method to deliver high quality murals within the tight timeframe of their students' summer schedule. Groundswell has a longstanding partnership with the NYC Department of Transportation to use art to help create safer streets. Over their sixteen year history, Groundswell has created murals on private and public properties including city sites owned by Parks Department, Department of Corrections, Department of Transportation, Department of Education, and the Department of Environmental Protection. They are currently in development with NYS Parks Department to create public art for two state parks.

The AADMA wants the respondents' processes to be as integrated as possible with the Groundswell process and for both parties to be able to accommodate each others' needs for their respective projects. This may mean for both parties re-positioning and adjusting design elements to accommodate the other for the purpose of creating the best holistic design possible.

### **Programming**

The AADMA is interested in designs that will enable the plaza to take on the following identities:

#### **A Clear and Inviting Pathway**

The space should resolve both real and perceived barriers to access between Brooklyn Bridge Park and Atlantic Avenue by enhancing the pedestrian passage from East to West. It should define and demarcate a safe and, inviting and memorable circulation sequence.

#### **Potential passive uses**

- Visual Art – installation serving multiple purposes of shade, marker, backstop for performance or display
- Lighting – should address practical needs and conceptual potential for safety and
- Identity of the preferred pedestrian pathway
- Public safety – signage, sight lines and materials should ensure appropriate separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic

#### **Potential active uses**

- Interactive art
- Information booth and community board

Further consideration should also be given to the following design drivers:

#### **Programming flexibility**

How does the space transform through temporal cycles of the day, week, month and season based on different use scenarios?

#### **Accessibility and legibility**

What signage, street treatments, lighting and way finding is necessary to create efficient and commodious access to and from the underpass space?

#### **Reframing**

Underpasses are currently written off as lost space in cities. How can this place transform the perception of what an underpass can be?

### **District-wide influence**

How can the design and programming of the underpass have an impact on adjacent retail and businesses? Can it have an impact on the whole district down to Fourth Avenue? How can it affect the experience of visitors one block away? Ten blocks away?

### **Transitional Amenities**

Brooklyn Bridge Park has a standardized roster of lighting, seating and other elements that appear throughout the Park. Similarly, Atlantic Avenue has a vocabulary of streetscape elements (historic streetlight fixtures, tree plantings, and other amenities) that appear consistently along the avenue. These amenities differ in each area and end at the prescribed boundaries of the Park and AABID. An inventory of these elements should be made. How might any of these components, if at all, serve the underpass area or provide a visual connector to the Park and/or AABID?

### **Maintenance**

Atlantic Avenue - in terms of a roadbed and sidewalks are under the jurisdiction of NYCDOT. The BQE - including the roof of the underpass and its walls - is under the jurisdiction of NYSDOT. In practice, the AADMA seeks a maintenance partner to address sanitation and landscape pruning for the underpass area. These maintenance issues and any others should be addressed in the maintenance plan.

### **Funding**

What opportunities can the underpass design present for alternative funding and revenue streams? How can innovative programming be achieved with an economy of operational or managerial investment?

**Appendix B: Please note 2nd attached file - Photo Appendix**