

Request for Proposals

I-75/85 Connector Transformation Project: Atlanta Bridgescape Competition

Public Relations and Communications Services

September 29, 2014

Contact:

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I. Project Summary

A. Introduction

Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID) in collaboration with the Midtown Alliance and the Atlanta Design Center (a program of the Atlanta Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA)) are seeking qualified individuals, consultants, firms or teams to provide comprehensive public relations and communication services in support of the I-75/85 Connector Transformation Project: Atlanta Bridgescape Competition.

The Atlanta Bridgescape Competition is a design competition that seeks to solicit conceptual design proposals for two bridge enhancement projects in Downtown and Midtown Atlanta. The Competition is part of a larger, phased effort to enhance the I-75/85 Connector in a way that improves its appearance and creates a positive economic impact for the City, nearby businesses, institutions, and destinations.

B. Connector Transformation Background

Context

From its inception, the City of Atlanta has been defined by transportation. Atlanta was founded as a railroad terminus, came to prominence by developing the world's busiest airport, and relies upon an extensive network of interstate highways and public transportation. While the City's infrastructure is a key strength, the condition and experience of the "I-75/85 Connector" from the Brookwood interchange to Turner Field belies Atlanta's position as a leader in transportation, business, and tourism. The 5-mile stretch of highway through Midtown and Downtown Atlanta includes long expanses of pavement, imposing retaining walls, limited landscaping, and a myriad of steel and concrete crossings that leave residents, commuters, and visitors with a negative impression of the City. A team of local public/private partners is hoping to change that perception.

Recognizing that the condition of our Interstate reflects negatively on our State, our City and our urban districts, Midtown Alliance and Central Atlanta Progress/Atlanta Downtown Improvement District have joined forces to transform the Connector into a more positive, memorable experience that can attract new investment to the corridor and the city.

In the most basic terms, Midtown and Downtown stakeholders intend to give our front door a major facelift. Through a series of small and sweeping changes, we will make one of the most visible corridors in Atlanta more attractive, enhance the identity of our city, and improve the experience for hundreds of thousands of citizens who travel the Connector each day.

The Vision Plan

Midtown Alliance and Central Atlanta Progress/Atlanta Downtown Improvement District engaged the SWA Group to assist in developing a bold vision for the Connector through a process that included public sector leaders from the City of Atlanta and Georgia Department of Transportation, a Leadership Team of Downtown and Midtown stakeholders, and a Creative

Team of local design professionals. See the vision plan here
http://www.atlantadowntown.com/initiatives/I-75_85_Connector_Vision

The Connector Transformation Project was initiated in order to enhance the visual appearance of the Connector, create a positive economic impact for the City, and to improve the experience of the motorists who travel along the roadway each day. Specific goals of the ongoing implementation efforts include:

- Developing innovative approaches that go beyond beautification to address multiple issues concurrently – connectivity, pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and sustainability
- Enhancing the image and identity of Atlanta as perceived by residents, employees and visitors
- Incorporating sustainable design elements that will mitigate the corridor’s environmental impact and become a national model for urban infrastructure
- Identifying and prioritizing short-term and long-term design concepts, improvement strategies, and projects
- Producing an action plan to fund and advance swift implementation of short-term improvements

The vision is focused first and foremost on the environmental and urban design of I-75/85. At its core, this effort is not a congestion mitigation effort. We recognize that traffic congestion is one of our region’s most pressing issues and these issues will no doubt be a factor. However, while the districts will make reasonable attempts to explore and improve traffic as part of any enhancement, the goal of the transformation effort is to improve the visual appearance, human experience, and economic potential of our urban Interstate.

Phase One

Completed in early 2012, the first phase of the Connector Transformation process developed a strategic plan that defined immediate opportunities to enhance the Connector. The Phase One projects that were identified for priority implementation are gateway bridge enhancements.

Funds have been raised to support the design, engineering and construction of improvements to the two Peachtree Street bridges that cross I-75/85 - one in Midtown and one in Downtown. The enhancements will ensure that these bridges are visible and attractive gateways for travelers along the Connector and will also improve the pedestrian and cyclist experience above. The design enhancements include the construction of monumental arches that will be visible from the interstate, will span over the sidewalks atop the bridge and will be lit at night. Additionally, the project includes new sidewalks, landscaping and fencing.

In addition to funding from ADID and Midtown Alliance, generous support has also been provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation Gateway Initiative, the Georgia State Road and Tollway Authority Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank and the Woodruff Foundation. The project design is complete and construction bidding is anticipated to begin Fall 2014 with a construction start in early 2015.

Next Steps

The initial work of enhancing and beautifying these two bridges is just the beginning. Over several years, the Connector Transformation Project aims to improve additional bridges, and to positively impact the development of parcels and structures surrounding the Connector. The project will re-imagine the interstate's concrete retaining walls and nondescript overpasses with visually appealing creations that will encourage motorists to take a pit stop and explore what lies beyond the exterior of the Connector to experience the true Atlanta. This initiative is more than sprucing up bridges or grabbing the attention of a few motorists. It's about building something that can make us all proud. The Connector is our gateway – it takes us home, to places familiar and new, and beyond Georgia's boundaries –and we should be putting our best face forward to the millions who experience it each year.

C. Atlanta Bridgescape Competition Project Details

In order to develop design concepts for the next phase of gateway bridge enhancements, Midtown Alliance and CAP/ADID are pursuing a bridgescape design competition. The "Atlanta Bridgescape Design Competition" is a partnership between the Midtown Alliance, CAP/ADID and the Atlanta Design Center (a program of the Atlanta Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).) The competition will also be conducted in collaboration with the 2015 National Conference of the American Institute of Architects which will be held in Atlanta May 14 through 18, 2015.

The Competition seeks to solicit a broad range of conceptual design submissions for two bridges – one in Midtown, 10th Street and one in Downtown, Courtland Street/Ralph McGill Boulevard. The Competition brief defining the parameters of requested entries will be posted and advertised in publications and websites across the United States to encourage broad participation from a range of multi-disciplinary design fields. All submissions and payments of entry fees will be handled on-line via a competition website.

There Competition will be executed in two phases:

- Phase I – Strategy and Application – Teams will develop their strategy and application which will be voted upon by a jury of local professionals and by the general public.
- Phase II – A short list of three teams for each bridge will be identified. Stipends will be provided for the teams to develop "kit of parts/components" and further identify their application in the design.

The timeline for the Competition is as follows:

- November 7 – Call for entries launched
- March 3 – Entries due
- March 7 – Local Jury
- March 10 – Short list of finalists announced
- May 5 – Finalist entries due
- May 9th – Final Jury
- May 14 - 16 – Winning entries announced (one for each bridge)

II. Scope of Services

The Competition project partners are seeking proposals for comprehensive public relations and communication services to include the following scope of services, deliverables and schedule:

A. Project Scope

Develop and implement a robust, comprehensive 8 month public relations campaign for the Competition, in the context of the broader Connector Transformation project that targets the following objectives:

- Cultivates and promotes positive awareness of the Competition
- Supports the submission of a sufficient number of qualified entries to the Competition to generate successful designs. A goal has been set of 50 submissions from a range of local, national and international professional teams and student groups.
- Encourages and ensures the public's involvement in the "people's choice" voting portion of the Competition
- Promotes the vision and implementation of the bridge projects and the Connector Transformation as a groundbreaking and forward-looking project of national prominence. This should be accomplished in conjunction with communications regarding the start of construction of the Phase One – Peachtree Bridges project expected to occur during the first quarter of 2015
- Fosters positive perceptions of the Connector Transformation enhancements as a beneficial project for the city among a local Atlanta audience and is prepared to address potential criticism that the projects are not addressing congestion along the Connector

The scope of work includes coordination with marketing and communications professionals of the Competition project partners including CAP/ADID, Midtown Alliance and the American Institute of Architects, local Atlanta Chapter and the National Conference team.

B. Project Deliverables

Deliverables should include, but not be limited to the following:

- Public Relations plan and schedule, to include social media strategy
- Design and development of a Competition website to be the one and only on-line information source for the Competition that beyond the basic landing page and document downloads must also include functionality for on-line application form and document submission, entry fee payment and "people's choice" public on-line voting.
- Media pitching strategy to include:
 - local and national media targets
 - Media releases and targeted pitches
 - Talking points for Project spokespersons and others as needed
- Weekly activity report

Note: the selected consultant will be provided at with a Competition logo and color scheme for use within all deliverables.

C. Project Schedule

- September 29, 2014 - RFP Issued
- October 14, 2014 - Proposals Due by 5:00 p.m.
- October 17, 2014 - Successful Bidder Notified
- October 21, 2014 - Contract commences
- November 5, 2014 – Competition website launched
- June 30, 2015 - Contract completion

III. Submission Requirements and Process

Submittals must include the following items to be considered complete and responsive to this Request for Proposals:

A. Organizational Overview

- Provide a firm profile indicating length of time the firm has been in operation and describe the firm's core competencies.
- Provide a brief history of the firm. Include the firm's mission statement and values, if applicable.
- Provide the firm's organizational structure, together with the number of full-time, part-time and contract employees. List any contractors or third-parties which will be potentially involved in providing services.

B. Project Understanding/Scope

- Provide a project approach and detailed scope of services, and any additional information that demonstrates understanding and insights related to the Competition and design competitions in general.

C. Project Activities and Timeline

- Provide a detailed summary of anticipated work tasks and deliverables to be completed within the 8-month contract period, including tactics to measure the success of the public relations campaign.
- It is anticipated that the volume of work will fluctuate with the activities of the competition process. The project timeline should anticipate busier months in November (competition launch), February (submission deadline approaching), March (first jury, public voting and finalists announced) and May (second jury and winners) ; with the other months more focused on general messaging and media relationship support.

D. Client Services and Partnership

- Describe in detail the team that will be involved on a day-to-day basis.
- Describe each person's role. Provide a resume or biography for key individuals, including tenure with the firm.

E. Budget and Fees

- Include the firm's proposed budget and fees. Provide a detailed list specific to the objectives provided herein. Total budget for the duration of the contract should not exceed \$20,000.

F. Relevant Experience and References

- Statement of experience detailing a minimum of three recent, relevant projects in similar size and scope. Summaries should include a narrative on the projects, the associated fees, and references.
- Provide three references including the company name, address, phone number and contact name for each.

The body of the submittal shall include a maximum of fifteen (15) double-sided pages (equivalent to 30 single-sided pages). Every effort should be made to make proposals as concise as possible. Proposals utilizing sustainable materials and delivery methods are encouraged.

One (1) PDF copy of the submittal must be received by 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 14, 2014. Submittals received after this date and time will not be considered.

Address the submittal to:

Wilma Sothern
Vice President of Marketing
Central Atlanta Progress/Atlanta Downtown Improvement District
84 Walton Street, NW, Suite 500, Atlanta, GA 30303
404-658-5910
wilmas@atlantadowntown.com

Please address any questions in writing via email at wilmas@atlantadowntown.com

IV. Selection and Evaluation Criteria

It is the intent to select directly from information gained from the review of submitted proposals. However, we reserve the right to call references provided and to require phone or personal interviews with a short list of firms.

The following criteria will be used in evaluating submittals. The list is not shown in any prioritized order:

- Clear understating of project objectives
- Qualifications of the firm
- Portfolio of similar past work
- Project activities and timeline
- Budget

Central Atlanta Progress/Atlanta Downtown Improvement District and Midtown Alliance are equal opportunity employers and will select a consultant without regard to age, disability, religion, creed or belief, political affiliation, race, sex or ethnicity.