

Request for Proposal (RFP) for Visioning and Financial Pro Forma Consulting Services for the Omaha Inland Port Authority Innovation District

Issuing Entity:
Omaha Inland Port Authority

Issue Date:
11/7/24

Proposal Due Date:
12/5/24

Introduction

The Omaha Inland Port Authority is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to assist in the creation of a comprehensive vision and financial pro forma for the development of an Innovation District within the inland port authority's jurisdiction. This district aims to address the economic challenges faced by the North Omaha community by integrating leading-edge institutions, companies, startups, and business incubators, ultimately fostering job creation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic development.

This RFP seeks to identify a consultant who will conduct visioning exercises, recommend strategic approaches, and produce a financial pro forma aligned with the Innovation District models outlined in the Nebraska Revised Statutes and the Municipal Inland Port Authority Act.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Visioning and Strategic Planning

- Facilitate a visioning process with stakeholders, including community members, local businesses, research institutions, startups, and governmental entities, to develop a shared vision for the Innovation District.
- Analyze the unique opportunities and challenges within the Omaha Inland Port Authority's geographic area, with a focus on revitalizing the Omaha Inland Port Authority Area
- Identify and recommend a specific innovation district model or a blended approach from the following models:
 - **Anchor-Plus Model:** Focus on mixed-use development centered around major institutions and entrepreneurial ventures.
 - **Re-imagined Urban Areas Model:** Focus on redeveloping industrial or warehouse districts with strong transit connections and proximity to high-demand areas.
 - **Urbanized Science Park Model:** Focus on densifying traditionally isolated innovation areas with new retail, restaurants, and mixed-use activities.
- Provide updates to the Community Advisory Committee for them to review project milestones and provide strategic input.

- Identify a process to implement a participatory budgeting process where community members are empowered to vote on specific projects or priorities within the district, to ensure their voices directly influence how funds are allocated to address district needs.
- Provide recommendations for positioning the district as a hub for cutting-edge industries and future economic opportunities.

2. Financial Pro Forma

- Create a detailed financial pro forma outlining projected costs, potential revenue streams, and the long-term financial sustainability of the proposed Innovation District models. This pro forma will serve as a key tool for guiding strategic investment decisions
- Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure long-term financial sustainability, focusing on local employment growth, five-year business incubation success rates, and revenue generated by local businesses. These KPIs will track the district's impact and guide adjustments to ensure sustained economic vitality.
- Identify and analyze funding opportunities—including grants, private investments, and public-private partnerships—with a focus on supporting businesses within the Innovation District.
- Implement social and environmental sustainability initiatives, including affordable office spaces, energy-efficient infrastructure, and job creation targets focused on benefiting low-income residents of North Omaha.
- Secure at least 50% of district funding from sustainable revenue sources (e.g., rents, private investments, public-private partnerships) by year three, significantly reducing reliance on external grants.
- Ensure the pro forma includes critical infrastructure investments, mixed-use development plans, and the integration of light industrial spaces to enhance the district's functionality and economic potential.

3. Technical and Regulatory Guidance

- Provide guidance on aligning the vision with existing regulations and local development plans, with an emphasis on equitable access to infrastructure and resources for local entrepreneurs, small businesses, and historically marginalized populations.
- Identify opportunities for integrating advanced infrastructure, such as high-speed internet, smart technologies, and public transportation improvements.

4. Customized Visioning for North Omaha

- Craft a vision that honors North Omaha's unique social, cultural, and economic strengths. This vision should assess the community's assets, demographics, and economic potential while prioritizing local entrepreneurs, small businesses, and historically marginalized populations through technical assistance, favorable leasing terms, and dedicated support programs.
- Elevate the inclusion of historically marginalized groups and minority-owned businesses through targeted outreach, meaningful dialogue, and strategic partnerships with local advocacy organizations.
- Design a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) that formalizes inclusivity commitments, guaranteeing that historically marginalized groups gain from long-term job creation, business opportunities, and sustained community investment.

5. Barrier Analysis and Solutions

- Conduct a detailed analysis of the barriers faced by local entrepreneurs and propose tailored solutions to address capital, technical assistance, and business formalization challenges.
- Evaluate best practices nationally and internationally for Innovation Hubs that will support small businesses, foster innovation, promote entrepreneurship, create jobs, and build wealth within the community.

6. Community Engagement and Accountability

- Facilitate deep community involvement in the design of the innovation district, ensuring that the project remains accountable to local stakeholders and meets the needs of residents. A mechanism for continuous feedback shall also be established such as:
 - **Month 1:** Initial stakeholder workshop.
 - **Month 3:** Public visioning forum.
 - **Month 5:** Draft presentation of the financial pro forma to the Community Advisory Committee.
 - **Month 6:** Final community event for participatory budgeting.
- Provide incentives for participation, such as stipends for Community Advisory Committee members and community members.

7. Policy Alignment and Financial Strategy

- Align the district's development with national and local innovation policies, identifying opportunities for political and financial support, including grants and public-private partnerships.

8. Sustainability and Market Strategy

- Integrate the innovation district into the broader regional economy by fostering partnerships with educational institutions and industries. Create a long-term governance plan, including an example of what the establishment of a District Management Board would look like to oversee operations, business support services, and community engagement.
- Set a five-year financial review process to evaluate the district's sustainability, identifying areas for reinvestment and securing additional funding sources.

9. Physical Infrastructure Planning

- Recommend plans for physical spaces in the Omaha Inland Port Authority Area for an Innovation District, which shall include an innovation hub, office spaces, community spaces, and retail areas, ensuring that local entrepreneurs have access to affordable, well-equipped facilities for business incubation.

10. Monitoring and Impact Measurement

- Establish a framework for ongoing monitoring, with metrics focused on economic impact, job creation, and business success in the community. That a District Management Board could periodically review and adjust based on these metrics.

11. Best Practices for Innovation Districts: Nationwide and Internationally

- Provide the board with insights into national and international best practices for Innovation Districts, focusing on community engagement, financial sustainability, and business incubation. The goal is to guide the board in successfully implementing an Innovation District tailored to North Omaha's unique needs.
 - The consultant should present at least five case studies of successful districts in comparable communities, highlighting strategies for preventing gentrification and ensuring local residents are the primary beneficiaries of economic development.
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Proposal Requirements

Consultants interested in responding to this RFP should include the following in their proposals:

- **Cover Letter**
 - a. A brief introduction to the consultant or consulting firm, highlighting relevant experience and key qualifications. (1 page)
 - **Qualifications and Experience**
 - a. A detailed description of the firm's experience in working with innovation districts, inland port authorities, economically disadvantaged communities, or similar development projects. Include examples of previous projects, including outcomes and references. (2 pages)
 - **Proposed Approach and Methodology**
 - a. A detailed description of the consultant's approach to visioning, strategic planning, and financial pro forma development. This should include key milestones, stakeholder engagement strategies, and expected deliverables. Additionally, proposals may include appendices for supporting materials or relevant case studies, which will not count toward the page limit. (2 pages)
 - **Team Composition and Resumes**
 - a. A list of team members who will be assigned to the project, including their roles and relevant experience. (1 page)
 - **Timeline**
 - a. A proposed timeline for the completion of the visioning process, strategic recommendations, and the financial pro forma, not exceeding six months from the project start date. Include key milestones and deliverable deadlines. (1 page)
 - **Cost Proposal**
 - a. A detailed cost estimate for the consulting services, including hourly rates, anticipated expenses, and a total project cost. (1 page)
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Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Demonstrated Experience and Expertise:**
 - Proven track record in innovation district planning, with specific emphasis on projects in historically impoverished and culturally diverse communities. Include examples of previous work and outcomes achieved.
- **Local Context Knowledge:**
 - Depth of understanding of the Omaha Inland Port Authority's operations and local economic conditions. The consultant should demonstrate familiarity with the challenges and opportunities unique to the area.
- **Proposed Approach and Feasibility:**
 - Evaluation of the quality, creativity, and feasibility of the proposed visioning and planning approach. Proposals should clearly outline methodologies, stakeholder engagement strategies, and specific deliverables, including timelines for each phase of the project. Additionally, outlines how the approach addresses community needs and integrates feedback from local stakeholders.
- **Alignment with Community Goals:**
 - Clear alignment with the strategic goals of the Omaha Inland Port Authority and the broader community. Proposals should reflect an understanding of community needs and aspirations ensuring marginalized groups benefit from economic development.
- **Overall Proposal Quality:**
 - Clarity, organization, and professionalism of the proposal. This includes the responsiveness to the RFP requirements, comprehensiveness of the submission, and the quality of supporting documentation (e.g., resumes, case studies).
- **Innovation and Sustainability Focus:**
 - Innovation and sustainability elements, including how the approach integrates community input and addresses long-term economic viability.

Submission Instructions

- Proposals must be submitted by December 5, 2024, to the Omaha Inland Port Authority. Proposals submitted after the deadline may not be considered.
 - All inquiries regarding this RFP should be directed to Terrell McKinney - Chair of the Omaha Inland Port Authority Board. (Tmckinney@leg.ne.gov)
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Terms and Conditions

Intellectual Property Rights

1. **Ownership of Deliverables:**

All materials, reports, data, and any other deliverables produced as part of this consulting engagement shall be considered "works for hire" and will be the sole property of the Omaha Inland Port Authority upon payment for services rendered. The consultant shall retain no ownership rights to any deliverables.

2. **License for Consultant's Tools and Methodologies:**

If the consultant utilizes proprietary tools, methodologies, or software in the course of providing services, the consultant shall grant the Omaha Inland Port Authority a non-exclusive, perpetual, and royalty-free license to use, reproduce, and modify such tools or methodologies as part of the deliverables.

3. **Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure:**

The consultant agrees to treat all information provided by the Omaha Inland Port Authority, as well as any findings, results, or other data generated during the engagement, as confidential. This information shall not be disclosed to any third parties without the prior written consent of the Omaha Inland Port Authority.

4. **Attribution and Acknowledgment:**

The consultant agrees to acknowledge the Omaha Inland Port Authority in any publications, presentations, or other materials where the deliverables are used, provided that such acknowledgment is reasonable and not misleading.

5. **Indemnification:**

The consultant shall indemnify and hold harmless the Omaha Inland Port Authority from any claims, losses, or damages resulting from any infringement of intellectual property rights related to deliverables produced under this contract. Additionally, the consultant is responsible for ensuring compliance with all relevant data protection and privacy laws while handling community members' information collected during the engagement. Disputes regarding deliverables or intellectual property rights shall be resolved through mediation before resorting to legal action.