REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Lexington Historic District Design Guidelines

Issued: December 20, 2018

I. INTRODUCTION

It is the intent of this "RFP" to secure a qualified preservation, preservation-planning, or design professional to create a set of Design Guidelines for the Downtown Historic Preservation and Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts in Lexington, Virginia. The City of Lexington, a historic community located in Rockbridge County, Virginia, is a Certified Local Government and has been awarded a Cost-Share grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to create a set of Design Guidelines for the Downtown Historic Preservation and Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts. The two local districts include the nationally recognized Lexington Historic District as well as a significant number of individually listed properties. Buildings in the districts include a variety of architectural styles and date from the early 19th to the early 20th century. The Districts are also in close proximity to the historic Washington & Lee University and Virginia Military Institute campuses.

The updated design guidelines will ensure consistency in the design review process, reinforce the character of the historic districts, and provide the basis for clear and fair decision-making in the district. The City's expectation is that this project will bring Lexington into alignment with historic preservation best practices and streamline design review procedures for the City.

The selected consultant will prepare design guidelines that are user-friendly and consistent with current preservation standards. This will be accomplished through plain English descriptions, non-technical drawings and images, and contrasting "do's" and "don'ts" that illustrate the principles of the guidelines. The consultant will prepare the document and assist with outreach to the community.

II. BACKGROUND

The Lexington community values its past and understands the importance of historic preservation. Over the last three years, City staff and public officials have worked hard to update and improve Lexington’s historic preservation program. In 2015, through a cost-share grant, the City of Lexington funded a reconnaissance-level survey of the Lexington Historic District, (DHR ID# 117-0027), a Virginia Landmark and a national historic district. The survey is the basis for the National Register Nomination update, currently underway. The city updated their local historic preservation ordinance for the Downtown Historic Preservation and Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts in 2016 and followed this up with a multi-part Architectural Review Board (ARB) training in 2016-2017. The logical next step is the creation of a set of design guidelines for projects occurring within the Downtown Historic Preservation and Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

A well-crafted set of design guidelines will provide the City with a much-needed administrative and educational tool. Lexington staff and ARB members currently rely on the limited content of their preservation ordinance to review projects in Lexington’s Historic Districts. Residents and property owners have few local resources available to them as guidance on appropriate treatments for the specific resources, building types and architectural styles found in Lexington. The result has been a general lack of understanding regarding the historic districts and inconsistency in decision-making. It is the city’s hope that design guidelines will promote projects that preserve and strengthen the character of Lexington’s Historic Districts; serve as a public education tool; provide predictability in the interpretation and implementation of design standards; and promote consistency during the ARB design review process. Design guidelines will strengthen the ability of staff and ARB members to provide consistent design review and provide property owners with a clear and understandable guide to rehabilitating their property, designing a new building, or installing signage. To that end, the guidelines must be graphically oriented and define the architectural styles found in Lexington.
Lexington with appropriate treatment types in terms that are understood by all users.

The chosen consultant will be expected to conduct a thorough analysis to assess the preservation issues specific to Lexington’s Historic Districts; hold a workshop with public officials to assess issues and needs; facilitate a community outreach component to ensure historic district residents and property owners support and understand the design guidelines as well as Lexington’s community preservation program as a whole; develop a graphically oriented, easy to use guidelines document that conforms to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards while meeting the unique preservation needs of Lexington; and present the Design Guidelines at ARB and/or City Council meetings as necessary. The City of Lexington will provide assistance collecting data and advertising public meetings, as appropriate.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The Downtown Historic Preservation and Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts design guidelines preparation shall include the following services:

A. Conduct a Kick-Off meeting with City Staff and Officials.
B. Conduct field review and documentation to understand the property conditions and particular areas of focus and concern.
C. Conduct at least three (3) workshop with the Architectural Review Board and City Council Members as appropriate.
D. Conduct at least one (1) community survey to assess resident and property owner concerns and issues.
F. Conduct at least one (1) community town hall to present the draft guidelines for public review.
G. Provide ten (10) professionally bound copies of the Design Guidelines.
I. Additional Services may be added as project progresses, scope and fees will be negotiated.
J. Attendance and presentations at Architectural review Board and/or City Council meetings as may be required.

IV. PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals should include the following information in the order detailed.

A. Letter of Transmittal. Limit two (2) pages. Make a positive commitment to perform the required work within the 9 month time period provided. Also, give the name(s) of the person(s) who will be authorized to make representation for your firm, their title, and telephone number.
B. Firm Experience. Indicate prior experience of your firm in performing work of this nature especially for public agencies (include references). Provide resumes for key personnel who would be assigned to this project.
C. Project Approach. Indicate your understanding as to the scope of the work requested and describe your firm’s approach and give specific illustrations of the procedures, which will be employed.
D. Time Projection. Proposals shall include a manpower availability chart to show the ability of the firm to initiate and complete the work on this project within a 9 month time period.
E. Special Work. Indicate any special work your firm perceives as potentially necessary to successfully complete the project.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA & PROCESS

Criteria
A. Overall qualification of the firm.
B. Prior experience of the firm in creating design guidelines, historic preservation, preservation planning, and/or urban design.
C. Qualifications and experience of key personnel to be assigned to the project.
D. The overall structure and quality of the proposal.
E. The ability of the firm to initiate work on this project in a timely manner and the firm’s ability to provide its services within the project budget established by the City.
F. Proposed methodology for performing the work.
G. Results of reference checks on past work.

Process

A. Preliminary Review
   A Selection Committee, consisting of the City Manager, Director of Planning, a representative from the Architectural Review Board, and the Finance Director will review all proposals and select three for interviews.

B. Interviews
   The Selection Committee will interview the three selected firms and rank them according to the selection criteria. At this time, firms will be asked to provide non-binding estimates of cost for the project and man-hours to perform the work tasks.

C. Final Selection
   The Selection Committee will provide a recommendation to City Council and the selected firms may be required to make a public presentation to City Council. City Council will rank the selected firms according to the selection criteria. A contract will be negotiated with the firm ranked highest by City Council, and if an agreement cannot be reached with the highest ranked firm, a contract will be negotiated with the next highest ranked firm. All contracts will be negotiated pursuant to the procedures set forth in the State Public Procurement Act.

VI. DEADLINE

Interested firms must submit five hard copies of the proposal to:

Arne Glaeser
Planning and Development Director
300 East Washington Street
Lexington, VA 24450

Deadline: 4:00 p.m., Friday, March 1, 2019.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Any request for clarification of any of the information contained in this RFP must be made to Arne Glaeser by email at aglaeser@lexingtonva.gov. Any substantive clarifications will be mailed to all firms requesting the RFP.

B. Individual contacts (except as outlined above) with members of the Selection Committee concerning this RFP following its issuance will be considered grounds for disqualification from the selection process.

C. Firms submitting a proposal in response to this RFP may be required to give an oral presentation of their proposal. Additional technical and/or cost information may be requested for clarification purposes, but in no way will change the original proposal submitted. Interviews are optional and may or may not be conducted.

D. For proposal purposes, proposers must certify they have insurance for general liability and workers compensation. The successful contractor must provide original certificates prior to contract negotiations.

E. The contract period for the successful firm will be from the date of award for one year with renewable options up to three additional one year terms. The contract may be terminated by either party with 60 (sixty) days prior notice.
F. Issuance of this RFP and receipt of proposals does not commit the City to award a contract. The City reserves the right to postpone receipt date, accepting or rejecting any or all proposals received in response to this RFP, or to negotiate with any of the brokers/firms submitting an RFP, or to cancel all or part of this RFP.

G. Location maps of the Downtown Historic Preservation and Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts are attached.