

Solicitation Amendment 2
Solicitation no. #1160319

August 3, 2023

PAGE 1 of 5 FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF: Pike District Marketing and Branding Services

DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENT - THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS APPLICABLE TO THE SOLICITATION:

The following information is provided in response to vendor inquiries:

Offeror's Question and Answer

THERE ARE NO OTHER CHANGES.

THE CHANGES SET FORTH BELOW ARE HEREBY INCORPORATED INTO THE ABOVE-CITED SOLICITATION.

THE DATE SPECIFIED FOR RECEIPT OF OFFERS HAS NOT BEEN EXTENDED.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT AMELIA MARIAN AT

CEC.Procurement@montgomerycountymd.gov

Question 1: *Can you describe the Contractor's specific responsibilities under this Solicitation and how they match with the guiding principles mentioned?*

Answer: When the selected contractor performs the specific responsibilities described under "Section C – Scope of Services", they should do so following a deliberate plan for marketing the Pike District (Section C, 1, a), with the understanding that the Pike District faces a unique set of local challenges (Section C, 1, b), and with the purpose of building community between residents and stakeholder organizations (Section C, 1, c).

Question 2: *How will the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services (BCCRS), Pike District Partnership Inc. (PDP), and the Contractor collaborate?*

Answer: The contractor will have the opportunity to engage and work collaboratively with Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services (BCCRS), Pike District Partnership Inc. (PDP) through a series of formal and informal engagement outlets. After the contract for Pike District Marketing and Branding services is fully executed, the contractor will be invited to participate in periodic meetings with both BCCRS and PDP staff, as well as will have flexibility to engage with staff on a need basis.

Question 3: *What are the expectations for social capital development and community participation in the Pike District?*

Answer: The prospective contractor is expected to develop and foster a network of relationships between residents, developers, businesses, and government stakeholders to achieve participation in elevating the Pike District into a more vibrant livable community and viable location for economic development.

Question 4: *Could you elaborate on the planned strategy for branding, marketing, and identification inside the Pike District?*

Answer: Bethesda Regional Services will work collaboratively with the Pike District Partnership and the contractor to develop a strategy for branding, marketing, and identity for the duration of this contract.

Question 5: *What specific duties will be necessary for social media and marketing updates, and how will effectiveness be measured?*

Answer: The anticipated specific duties for social media and marketing updates are listed in “Section C – Scope of Services” which includes:

- Weekly social media and marketing updates including email marketing.
- Pike District website hosting, enhancements, increased functionality, updates, and management.
- Social media management, content creation, post and page promotion, games and contests.
- Email marketing content creation, design and coding, list management and expansion.
- Development of a sustained and consistent promotion of Pike District and other local events, to include local businesses.

Effectiveness will be measured on a quarterly basis by Bethesda Regional Services through programmatic and financial reports provided by the contractor, as well as frequent reviews of produced content (See Section G, Reporting and Payment Schedule). Bethesda Regional Services staff and the contractor will meet regularly where there will be opportunities to evaluate and discuss effectiveness and program performance.

Question 6.: *What are the goals and plans for the Pike District website and social media channels' growth and promotion?*

Answer: The website and social media channels will promote the goal of the Pike District to increase public awareness for Pike District, as a vibrant livable community and viable location for increased economic development.

Question 7: *The Solicitation mentions stakeholder groups and partner agencies. Who are, or what kinds of stakeholder groups, are included? Is there a standard way to communicate with these groups?*

Answer: Stakeholders include: Internal Montgomery County Govt Departments and stakeholders such as, Regional Services, County Executive, Assistance Chief Administrative Officer, Development Ombudsman, Department of Transportation, Public Information Office, Councilmembers and their staff, etc. External Montgomery County Govt Stakeholders such as, WMATA, State Delegates and their staff, Montgomery Planning Department, Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, etc. There is not a standard form or process for communicating with these groups. Communication may happen through email, phone, or in-person. Topics of importance from a political or public relations perspective should be cleared with the Regional Services Director.

Question 8: *How will the Contractor cooperate with stakeholders such as the Montgomery County Planning Department, property owners, and others named in the contract?*

Answer: The contractor is expected to develop a cooperation plan, streamlining opportunities to engage with key stakeholders. For example, the contractor may coordinate with the Montgomery County Planning Department on gathering updates on development in the Pike District and distributing those updates to community members. Another example could include coordinating with the Montgomery County Office of Public Information and Montgomery County Department of Transportation on a press release and community engagement event regarding a major infrastructure project in the Pike District.

Another example could include collaborating with Montgomery County Parks to plan or market events at a park within the Pike District.

Question 9: What forms of streetscape assets and landscaping are being examined for improving the feeling of place and area identification?

Answer: Gateway signage installed in the median of 355 is currently being considered. Recommendations for other placemaking assets may be requested by Bethesda Regional Services on an as needed basis.

Question 10: Are there any rules or regulations regarding the installation of street furniture, innovative lighting, banners, or art?

Answer: There is a potential for the installation of placemaking assets to require a regulatory process depending on the location and asset. For example, Gateway signage installed in the medians of 355 will require permit approval from the Maryland State Highway Administration. Bethesda Regional Services will assist with connecting the contractor to stakeholders if regulatory approval is required.

Question 11: What kinds of public relations services will the Contractor be expected to offer on an as-needed basis to BCCRS?

Answer: Public relations services may include the creation and dissemination of press releases, media statements, and handling of media inquiries.

Question 12: How will the Contractor aid in the expansion of Pike District-branded events as well as the coordination of partnerships and sponsorships?

Answer: The contractor will support the implementation of events throughout the entire project cycle from planning to execution. It is also expected that efforts are made to leverage sponsorship and partnership opportunities. For example, if we produced a Beer Garden event there will be opportunities for sponsorship from local breweries. We would expect the contractor to identify these opportunities, create a plan to capitalize on them, and execute where possible.

Question 13: Could you explain your method for implementing "Pop up" and "Signature" events or activations?

Answer: A "Pop up" event is of a smaller scale, such as our salsa in the park series, or outdoor concert nights. A "Signature Event" is larger scale event requiring more planning and funding which may only happen once or twice a year, such as a Beer Garden. Bethesda Regional Services, the Pike District Partnership, and the contractor will collaborate to plan a schedule of events. The contractor may contribute significant creative input, planning, and project management to the implementation of events.

Question 14: What is the main key performance indicator (KPI) or "North Star" for the engagement for the next year? In other words, what is the statement or metric that will be talked about by the team as the measure of success? For example, "our followers grew by over 300%" or "we did 3 times the number of events."

Answer: Example measures of success for this solicitation would be: number of contacts with businesses and residents in the pike district, successful events completed, number of social media and email marketing content published.

Question 15: What are the current metrics for the following and how much have they grown in the last year:

- a. *Social media accounts: engagement metrics (we can get followers from the accounts themselves)*
- b. *Email marketing: subscribers*
- c. *Visits per month on the website*

Answer: Given the short turnaround time, unfortunately we were not able to pull the metrics requested.

Question 16: *Is the organization open to establishing a collective/association of the vendors in the Pike District? We've found through feedback with other "area" districts that a strong vendor community can help and accelerate the efforts to promote the district.*

Answer: We partner and work closely with the Pike District Partnership (PDP), who is currently establishing an association of residents and businesses within the Pike District (North Bethesda) for the promotion, placemaking, and economic development of the area. The awarded contractor will work closely with the PDP to market, build relationships with stakeholders, and execute events to create awareness and build membership in the partnership.

Question 17: *Has the district performed any analysis or the target audience for the Pike District's branding and marketing efforts? Are there particular demographic priorities for this upcoming year?*

Answer: Yes, a placemaking, marketing, and branding study has been completed. Our target audience are residents, small and large businesses, developers, and property owners within the Pike District boundaries in North Bethesda. In this upcoming year we will be targeting building and expanding relationships with businesses, developers, and property owners.

Question 18: *Collection of economic data and metrics. Can you supply examples of the kind of economic data and metrics that would be requested to ensure we can find that make this type of data available?*

Answer: Examples of Data: Demographics, List of businesses in the Pike District, List of new developments in the Pike District, metrics related to the health of the commercial real estate and rental market. There will be opportunities to work with Montgomery County Govt and the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation for the gathering of economic data.

Question 19: *The solicitation mentions sponsorships. Are the sales of sponsorships expected to be a part of this role?*

Answer: Coordinating event partnership and sponsorship is expected. There will not be a hard sales quota for sponsorship. However, it is expected that efforts are made to leverage sponsorship opportunities. For example, if we produced a Beer Garden event there will be opportunities for sponsorship from local breweries. We would expect the contractor to identify these opportunities, create a plan to capitalize on them, and execute where possible.

Question 20: *Could you please describe the contract's expectations and deliverables for the one-year period, as well as how performance will be evaluated?*

Answer: During contract negotiations, The County will communicate expectations and work collaboratively with the selected contractor to develop a set of deliverables in accordance with the scope of services and approved budget.

Question 21: *Is there any advertising or other budget associated with this role that is available to fund promotional efforts?*

Answer: This is an informal solicitation under Montgomery County procurement regulations, and as such, the budget will be under \$99,999.

Question 22: Could you please elaborate on the total remuneration limit of \$99,999 for the whole performance period? How was this figure arrived at?

Answer: Solicitation no. 1160319 was issued as an informal solicitation. The County's budget for the entire duration of the contract is \$99,999.

Question 22: How will the budget's adherence be maintained, and what are the procedures for any budget changes?

Answer: Before awarding the contract, County representatives will work with the top offeror to develop a budget in line with the scope of services outlined in the Solicitation no. 1160319 and within the limits set forth in Section D. The final budget will be incorporated as part of the final executed contract with the selected contractor.

All invoices submitted by the contractor will be reviewed by the contract monitor and contract administrator and will be reconciled with the approved scope of services and budget. If a provider intends to propose any budget modifications, they need to submit an updated budget indicating changes proposed compared with the final approved budget. The budget proposal is reviewed by the appropriate internal stakeholders and the contract administrator will communicate whether the budget proposal is approved or denied. If the budget is approved, the contract administrator will coordinate with internal stakeholders and issue a contract amendment to reflect the updated budget. Additional details will be provided during contract negotiations, as necessary.

Question 23: What safeguards are in place to guarantee that the Contractor follows the authorized budget, and what are the procedures for budget changes?

Answer: The final contract includes a detailed budget for the period of performance. The contractor is expected to perform services within the scope of services detailed in the final executed contract and in alignment with the final approved budget. All invoices submitted by the contractor are reviewed for compliance with the scope of services and alignment with the budgeted expenses. The County employs multiple lines of review when processing invoices.

Question 24: What are the exact evaluation criteria for Contractor selection, and how will written proposals be scored?

Answer: Please see Section E for details on the method of award, evaluation criteria and scoring.

Question 25: What procedures will be followed if the solicitation is canceled, and how will the offerors be notified?

Answer: In the event the solicitation is canceled, all prospective offerors who submitted proposals in response to Solicitation no. 1160319 will be notified via email, utilizing the email address provided in their formal proposal.