

CITY OF TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA



**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND RELATED SERVICES FOR
The Gateway Improvements Project**

OCA File Number: OCA-24-0333

Issued by:
City of Tuscaloosa
Office of Operations
2201 University Boulevard
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401

Date Issued: 04/02/2024
Deadline for Proposals: 04/29/2024

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

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PART 1 – OVERVIEW

The City of Tuscaloosa is requesting qualifications submissions from firms for Professional Architectural and Related Services for The Gateway Improvements Project. Part 2 of this RFQ provides a general description and abbreviated scope of work for the project.

This is a procurement of professional services and will be conducted in a manner to provide full and open competition. A select group of City staff will review all proposals and will evaluate firms based on criteria identified in Part 5. The criteria may include but are not limited to: Experience; Licensing and Professional Standing; Conflicts of Interest; Project Understanding and Approach and Quality Assurance and Quality Control. Upon selection by City staff, the City will start contract negotiations with the selected firm. Pending successful negotiations, the selected firm will enter into a contract for professional architectural and design services with the City.

PART 2 – THE PROJECT AND SCOPE OF WORK

The City of Tuscaloosa seeks the services of a professional firm that has the knowledge, experience, and expertise to perform the services as requested.

The firm must be able to perform the following types of services upon request from the City:

Professional architectural and related services improvements to The Gateway city facility including basic architectural and design services, 3D renderings, schematic and final drawings, plans and specifications, estimates of construction costs, bid phase services and services during construction. Additional professional services may also include studies, investigations, evaluations, and engineering services such as sitework if required.

The firm must comply with all applicable state, local, and federal regulations related to the services provided to the City. The City reserves the right to either expand or limit the scope of services as needed subject to negotiation and agreement in writing with the selected firm.

PART 3 – CONTENT OF RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

In order to facilitate City staff evaluation of responses to this RFQ, each firm shall include the following content, in the following order in their submission to this RFQ:

- Experience
- Licensing and Professional Standing
- Conflicts of Interest
- Project Understanding and Approach
- Quality Assurance and Quality Control

Each of these items is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

3.1 Experience

a. Please provide a brief narrative about the firm's experience, history, ownership and primary clients served by the firm.

b. Include a statement as to whether the firm is a Disadvantaged Owned Business Enterprise (DBE)¹.

c. List of the firm's proposed project team and those team member's qualifications, experience, and capacity to take on this project.

d. Recently Completed Projects. Evidence of satisfactory performance from at least three (3) recently completed projects of the type indicated above (projects completed within the last five (5) years.) Relevant experience will be judged based on the design experience of those individuals named to the firm's project team for this project. Elements of recently completed projects are as follows:

1. Title of Project
2. Address
3. Contact person for reference including position/title, telephone number and email
4. Construction cost
5. Status as lead designer, subconsultant, other (please elaborate.)

3.2 Licensing and Professional Standing

a. Please include a brief statement confirming that the firm is legally authorized to do business in Alabama and in the City of Tuscaloosa, and that all staff assigned to perform services for the project are licensed or certified to perform such services in Alabama.

b. In addition, please include a statement confirming that the firm is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation by any state or federal department or agency.

c. Finally, for the five (5) year period preceding submission of the response for this RFQ the firm shall please identify:

(1) All contracts terminated (in whole or in part) to which the firm was a party- for convenience or default, by either the firm or by another party to the contract with the firm, including:

- contract value

¹ Definition of a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

DBEs are for-profit small business concerns where socially and economically disadvantaged individuals own at least a 51% interest and also control management and daily business operations. African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific and Subcontinent Asian Americans, and women are presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Other individuals can also qualify as socially and economically disadvantaged on a case-by-case basis. See 49 CFR 26.5 "Socially and economically disadvantaged individual."

- description of work
- project owner and contract number and/or name and telephone number for a representative of the project owner

(2) All claims made against the firm arising out of the firm's professional services; and

(3) All litigation (including any arbitration or mediation proceedings) to which the firm has been a party.² If no contracts have been terminated, or if the firm has not been a party to any claims or litigation, please include a statement to that effect.

(4) Any sale, merger, acquisition, assignment of contracts, business reorganization or name change that the firm has undergone in the previous five (5) years.

3.3 Conflicts of Interest

Please identify all actual or potential conflicts of interest that would prevent the firm from entering into a professional relationship with the City generally, or for this project specifically. If no such conflicts exist, please include a statement to that effect.

3.4 Project Understanding and Approach

Discuss the proposed approach to completing the needed services and how your firm will coordinate the development of design solutions, the production of contract documents, and construction administration all within time deadlines and budget.

3.5 Quality Assurance and Quality Control

a. The proposal should describe how the firm will provide quality assurance ("QA") and quality control ("QC") for the project. Identify the individuals that will be involved in QA/QC services. If your firm has a structured QA/QC program, briefly describe the program and how it will be applied to the project.

b. Discuss the firm's approach/method of designing to budget and deadline.

PART 4 – INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSALS

Before submitting a response to this RFQ, the firm should carefully review the entire RFQ and be familiar with its contents. The firm's submission shall be considered evidence that the firm has fully studied the RFQ and is familiar with the general conditions to be encountered in performing the services requested.

² The disclosure of terminated contracts, claims, or litigation will not automatically disqualify a Respondent from consideration. The Selection Committee will review any matter disclosed, and make an independent determination as to whether the matter should disqualify the Respondent from consideration.

4.1 Format of Proposals

Proposals shall be 8.5" x 11" in size. General brochure type information is to be kept to a minimum, and the proposal shall be a maximum of 12 one-sided pages or 6 two-sided pages. Proposals may be written in either Times New Roman or Calibri font, and the font size must be 12-point or larger.

4.2 Questions

The City will accept questions on the contents and requirements of the RFQ in electronic form only. Questions may only be submitted by email and should be submitted to:

Dakota Whitten, Operations Manager
City of Tuscaloosa, Office of Operations
dwhitten@tuscaloosa.com

Questions must be submitted at least seven (7) days before the deadline for submission of proposals. For this RFQ, the deadline for questions is 04/22/2024 at 12:00 Midnight Central Time, after which time no further questions or inquiries will be addressed by the City.

The City may choose not to respond to any questions. If the City chooses to respond to any questions, the City will do so in writing, in the form of an addendum to this RFQ. The addendum will be posted to the City's website at www.tuscaloosa.com/bids and no addendum will be issued or posted less than 72 hours before the deadline for submission of responses to this RFQ.

4.3 Submissions

Firm submissions must be received by the City by 12:00 Midnight Central Time on 04/29/2024. Late proposals will not be accepted or reviewed. It is the firm's responsibility to ensure that their submission is received within the time required by this RFQ.

Firms must submit proposals electronically. Electronic submissions should be made in Portable Document Format (PDF) file format, and should be sent to via email to:

Dakota Whitten, Operations Manager
City of Tuscaloosa, Office of Operations
dwhitten@tuscaloosa.com

The firm's email should reference "RFQ Response for Professional Architectural and Related Services for The Gateway Improvements Project". The firm is responsible for obtaining confirmation that the City received the Respondent's proposal.

4.4 Additional items related to submissions by firms

- a. **Submission rejection/costs**

By issuing this RFQ, the City does not commit to entering into a contract, to paying any costs incurred in the preparation of a submission, proposal, or to procuring or contracting for services. The City reserves the right to cancel this RFQ in whole or in part, to reject any and/or all submissions and proposals, to accept the submission and proposal it considers the most favorable to the City's interests in its sole discretion, and to waive irregularities or informalities in any submissions/proposals or in the submission procedures. The City reserves the right to reject all submissions or proposals and issue a new RFQ, at its sole discretion. All submissions and proposals and other materials submitted in response to this RFQ will become property of the City.

b. Contract and Insurance Requirements

The City has standard contract and insurance requirements for professional services contracts and is unable to make substantial changes to the requirements for the contract to be used for this project.

The laws of the State of Alabama shall govern the contract executed between the successful Consultant and the City, as well as any interpretations or constructions thereof. Further, the place of performance and transaction of business shall be deemed to be in the City of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and in the event of litigation, the exclusive venue and place of jurisdiction shall be in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama.

c. Requests for Additional Information

The City reserves the right to request additional information from firms to clarify their submissions in response to the RFQ.

4.5 Public Records

Upon submission by any firm of its proposal to the City in response to this RFQ, the proposal becomes the property of the City.

Unless otherwise compelled by a court order, the City will not disclose any submissions while the City conducts its deliberative process in accordance with the procedures identified in this RFQ. However, after the City either awards an agreement to a firm, or after the City rejects all submissions, the City shall consider each submission from firms subject to the public disclosure requirements of the Alabama Open Records Act (Ala. Code § 36-12-40) and Tuscaloosa City Code § 2-4, unless there is a legal exception to public disclosure.

If a firm believes that any portion of its proposal is subject to a legal exception to public disclosure, the firm shall: (1) clearly mark the relevant portions of its proposal "Confidential"; (2) upon request from the City, identify the legal basis for exception from disclosure under the Open Records Act; and (3) defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City regarding any claim by any third party for the public disclosure of the "Confidential" portion of the qualifications submittal.

PART 5 – SELECTION PROCEDURE

A select group of City staff will review firm submissions to this RFQ and evaluate all timely submissions. This is a qualifications-based procurement for professional services, in which the qualifications of the responding firms will be reviewed and evaluated, and the most qualified firm will be selected, subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation.

City staff reviewing and valuating RFQs will review the submissions based upon on criteria including the following factors, which include pass/fail criteria:

Criteria	Weight
Experience, DBE Status, Similar Projects	50
Professional Reputation and Staff Capacity	20
Project Understanding and Approach	20
Quality Assurance and Quality Control	10
<u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u>	
• Compliance with RFQ Instructions	P/F
• Licensing and Professional Standing	P/F
• Conflicts of Interest	P/F

The Selection Committee will eliminate from consideration any firm submission which receives a “Fail” grade on any one or more of the pass/fail criteria for evaluation.

After review and evaluation of the submissions, City staff may select one or more firms for interviews. However, City staff are not required to conduct interviews as they may determine that interviews are not necessary for the selection process, and such decision is within the sole discretion of the City staff charged with selecting and recommending a firm to the City Council Public Projects Committee.

When City staff evaluating firms concludes their work, they will make a recommendation to the City Council’s Public Projects Committee and request authority to begin negotiating an agreement which includes the final scope of work and fees for services with the firm. If the negotiations are unsuccessful, or if an agreement cannot be reached within a reasonable time as determined by the City, then City staff will terminate negotiations the firm and will request authority from the Public Projects Committee to begin negotiations with another firm. Any compensation discussed with one firm will not be disclosed or discussed with any other firm.

Once an agreement between City staff and the firm is reached, the Tuscaloosa City Council will authorize a contract with the chosen firm for professional services with the City for this project. This contract shall not be in force until it is authorized by the Tuscaloosa City Council and it is signed by the Mayor. The City cannot pay for any work or services performed prior to the approval of the contract by the City Council, execution by the Mayor and the issuance of a notice to proceed by the City.

END OF RFQ DOCUMENT