

New Attraction Market Analysis and Feasibility Study

Request for Qualifications

ISSUE DATE: October 25, 2016

DUE DATE: **11:00 a.m. on November 17, 2016** ("Submission Deadline")

INSTRUCTIONS: Please submit 5 paper copies and 1 electronic copy of the respondent's Statement of Qualifications ("SOQ") on a flash drive. Submittals must be delivered in a sealed envelope in person, via mail or courier. Please write "**New Attraction RFQ**" clearly on the outside of the sealed envelope. Submittals received by email, fax or after the Submission Deadline will be rejected.

SUBMIT TO: Houston First Corporation, Attn: General Counsel, 701 Avenida de las Americas, 6th Fl., Houston, TX 77010.

CONTACT INFO: Questions concerning this RFQ must be sent by e-mail to bids@houstonfirst.com no later than **noon on November 9, 2016**. Questions will be answered collectively, in the form of a Letter of Clarification, and made available online.

OVERVIEW. While the Houston region hosts a broad variety of museums and other attractions (both for-profit and not-for-profit ventures), for too long the City of Houston has been without an iconic, family-oriented attraction that provides entertainment and a quality experience at an affordable price. As a first step in addressing the matter, Houston First Corporation ("HFC") seeks to conduct a market analysis and explore the feasibility of developing a new attraction for the City in furtherance of these goals.

The effort will entail reviewing the current attractions in the City and the close-in perimeter markets and identify any "gaps" that might exist for the benefit of both residents and visitors. A survey should also be conducted on Houston's competitive set of cities to further refine the strengths and weaknesses of Houston as a preferred destination with a focus on quality of place amenities. This gap analysis and competitive analysis would lead to the definition of the type and scale of a possible attraction that has the potential to be successful in the City of Houston. It will also lead to recommendations for the path forward.

BACKGROUND. HFC is a local government corporation created by the City of Houston to enhance quality of life, advance economic prosperity and promote and position Houston as a premier destination for leisure tourism and major events. HFC is responsible for management and operation of more than ten city-owned buildings and plazas, including the George R. Brown Convention Center, Jones Hall, Wortham Theater, Miller Outdoor Theatre, Talento Bilingue de Houston, and outdoor facilities such as Jones Plaza, Sesquicentennial Park, Ray C. Fish Plaza, Root Memorial Square, and several other properties and parking facilities.

PROJECT OUTLINE. An effective market analysis would consist of a broad market study (market, attendance and financial) of surrounding developments, entertainment options and development opportunities. It would also include:

- Definition and analysis of the resident market area
- Estimation of potential tourist support

Key tasks in the feasibility study would include the following:

- Creation of a working group of local stakeholders and hospitality experts who can provide context and suggest resources to be accessed for the study
- Inventory of existing attractions in the close-in geography that offer affordable, family-oriented entertainment
- Inventory and preliminary assessment of proposed efforts already announced or underway (e.g., swimming hole; Astrodome re-use; public market, etc.)
- Interviews with the Mayor, City Council members, community leaders and organizations with an interest in promoting visitation and quality of place enhancements
- Interviews with well-respected theme park and attraction operators in other parts of the United States
- Assessment of Houston's relative strengths and weaknesses in offering quality attractions as compared to its competitive set of cities, particularly in Texas
- Analysis of what Millennials would look for in a new attraction
- Analysis of the need for and value of a new attraction in the City of Houston
- If viable, broad recommendations as to the type of attraction and its characteristics and next steps in progressing a plan for development
- If viable, qualities and attributes of potential locations

SOQ FORMAT. To be considered responsive, respondents are asked to include all of the following information in their SOQ:

- a. **Transmittal Letter** (1 page): Include a brief statement summarizing respondent's understanding of the work to be done signed by a person authorized to make representations on behalf of the respondent, including his or her direct phone number and email address.
- b. **Profile** (3 pages): Summarize respondent's history, structure, strengths, methodology, and experience in meeting the needs of its clients.
- c. **Experience** (3 pages): Identify three similar market analysis/feasibility studies completed primarily by respondent similar in scope to this project. Provide references for each such study.
- d. **Team** (3 pages): Identify the essential personnel who would be assigned to perform work on this project, such as the project manager, responsible corporate executive and any probable subcontractors; include a brief summary of their qualifications and note if any are certified as MWDBEs or HUBs.

MANNER OF SELECTION. HFC will rank every SOQ received in response to this RFQ based on the (i) Experience of respondent (40%); (ii) Proposed team (30%); (iii) Respondent firm profile (20%); and (iv) Transmittal letter (10%).

HFC anticipates issuing a contract to the top-ranked respondent. While a timeline has not been finalized, the selected respondent will have approximately 12 weeks to complete a market analysis and feasibility study.

If preliminary findings indicate the need for and clear benefits of a new attraction, a second phase – that may involve an RFP to potential developers – would then be undertaken to identify additional information that will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Broad concept evaluation with core attraction components and physical planning parameters
- Site review, evaluation and identification
- Detailed operational considerations (e.g., seasonal versus year-round; for-profit versus not-for-profit)
- Estimate of capital costs required
- Estimate of on-going operating income and expenses; pricing strategy
- Attendance analysis and projections
- Financial analysis; operating model and return on investment

RESTRICTIONS ON COMMUNICATIONS. From the date issued until the Submission Deadline, respondents are directed not to communicate with any HFC or City of Houston employee regarding any matter relating to this RFQ, other than through bids@houstonfirst.com. HFC reserves the right to reject any SOQ due to violation of this provision.

LETTERS OF CLARIFICATION. Any revisions to be incorporated into this Invitation to RFQ will be confirmed in a written letter to all potential respondents (“Letter of Clarification”) prior to the Submission Deadline. When issued by Houston First Corporation, Letters of Clarification automatically become part of this RFQ and shall supersede any previous specifications or provisions in conflict therewith. By submitting a SOQ, respondents shall be deemed to have received all Letters of Clarification and to have incorporated them into their SOQ. Verbal responses will not otherwise alter the specifications, terms and conditions as stated herein. It is the responsibility of each respondent to monitor www.houstonfirst.com/Do-Business to ensure they receive any such Letters of Clarification.

PRE-SUBMITTAL CONFERENCE. A pre-submittal conference will not be held as part of this RFQ.

DIVERSITY. Respondents should note in their SOQ if they (or their probable subcontractors) are diversity participants certified by one or more of the approved and identified certification agencies defined in the HFC Diversity Program (See www.houstonfirst.com/Do-Business). No specific goal has been established for this Project due to its limited scope. If additional services, such as other, similar projects are required by HFC, then respondents should expect that a diversity goal will be established by amendment or a separate agreement signed by both parties.

PUBLIC INFORMATION. As HFC is subject to the Texas Public Information Act (“TPIA”), all information submitted by respondents is subject to release under the provisions of the TPIA set forth in Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. Each page where confidential or proprietary information appears must be labeled as such clearly and unambiguously. Respondents will be advised of any request for public information that implicates their materials and will have the opportunity to raise objections to disclosure with the Texas Attorney General at their cost and expense.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. Respondents are advised that they have an obligation to disclose any affiliation or business relationship that might cause a conflict of interest with HFC. Those who need the disclosure form may find it online at: <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/forms/CIQ.pdf>. By submitting a SOQ, respondents represent that they are in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code.

WITHDRAWAL; ERROR. SOQ may be withdrawn due to errors or for any other reason by a written request received by bids@houstonfirst.com prior to the Submission Deadline.