

# BOROUGH OF CARTERET

## Request for Qualifications Performing Arts Center Operations and Management Services

**RESPONSES DUE BY FEBRUARY 19, 2016 AS DESCRIBED BELOW**



### OVERVIEW

The Borough of Carteret (the “**Borough**”) has issued this Request for Qualifications (this “**RFQ**”) in accordance with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq., for an operator for the proposed Carteret Performing Arts Center (the “**PAC**”), as further described herein.

The Borough is seeking proposals (“**Responses**”) from qualified firms with proven experience in management and operations to provide programming, day to day general management and operational supervision of all activities of the PAC. The firm will **not** be responsible for the food and beverage service concession for the PAC but may oversee the Borough’s vendor responsible for same. The PAC is currently under design and the Borough seeks the input of the selected firm regarding lighting, sound, acoustical, seating layout and other relevant systems of the PAC.

All Responses will be at the sole cost and expense of the respondents (“**Respondent**”). The Borough will not be responsible for paying any of the costs or expenses associated with the preparation or

submission of Responses and any subsequent presentations by the Respondents as requested by the Borough.

This RFQ constitutes an invitation to submit Responses to the Borough. It does not represent an offer, obligation or agreement on the part of the Borough. The Mayor and Council reserve the right to protect the best interests of the Borough, to waive any informalities, to reject any Response (or any part thereof) for any reason whatsoever, to reject all proposals for any reason whatsoever or to accept the Response(s) which in their judgment, will best serve the interest of the Borough.

All Responses, supporting materials and correspondence relating to this RFQ will become the property of the Borough once received.

The Borough may request that the Respondents provide satisfactory evidence that they have the necessary financial resources to accomplish the requirements of the RFQ.

The Borough, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to:

- Cancel or terminate this RFQ at any time and issue a notice of cancellation. If the RFQ is cancelled the Borough will not reimburse any Respondent for preparation of its Response.
- Reject any or all Responses received, make a contract award based directly on the Responses received, or enter into further discussions with one or more Respondents.
- Waive and/or amend any provisions/specifications of this RFQ.
- Make a partial award or no award if it is in the best interest of the Borough to do so.

Interested parties (“**Interested Parties**”) should indicate same by emailing the “**Project Representative**”: Joseph P. Baumann Jr., Esq. at [jbaumann@msbnj.com](mailto:jbaumann@msbnj.com). All Interested Parties will be granted access to a document sharing site where additional information concerning the PAC and this RFQ has been uploaded. Interested Parties will also receive updates, if any, concerning this RFQ.

A non-mandatory pre-response meeting will be held **Wednesday, January 13, 2016 at 10 a.m.**, at 61 Cooke Ave, Carteret, NJ 07008 followed directly by a tour of the property. The pre-response meeting will not be a condition required by those desiring to submit a Response but is highly recommended.

Any questions, requests for clarification, interpretation and concerns regarding this RFQ must be called to the attention of the Borough prior to the submission deadline set forth herein. All questions regarding the RFQ must be submitted via email to the Project Representative. Inquiries are due no later than **Friday, January 29, 2016 at 5 p.m.** All questions will be answered by electronic mail and will be forwarded to all Interested Parties.

Proposals are due by **February 19, 2016 at 5 p.m.** as described below.

Responses will be evaluated by a selection committee appointed by the Mayor (the “**Evaluation Committee**”). The Evaluation Committee will review each Response, and may, if necessary, conduct interviews with one or more of the Respondents as part of the final selection process.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Borough recently acquired title to the former Vallone's Bakery building that from 1928 to 1965 housed the Ritz Theater. The Ritz Theater, which served as a stop on the vaudeville performance circuit in the 1930s, was opened on September 1, 1927, and was designed by local architect John Gliva. The Borough intends to construct a new performing arts center at the site of the Ritz Theater using components of same in the construction. The PAC is part of a \$27 million investment being made by the Borough in the arts district. Once restored, the PAC will house an approximately 1500 seat auditorium to host theatrical, comedic, musical, dance and other performances. The PAC will also provide gallery space and opportunities for local and regional arts education initiatives by local performing arts groups as well as corporate meeting and training space. The operation of the art gallery may or may not be the responsibility of the Respondent.

The PAC will be located in the heart of a vibrant, stable community with 24,000 residents with a regional population of over 1 million within 20 miles. The population proximate to the PAC is over 3 times more dense than the State's average density. The PAC is within close proximity of several New Jersey major thruways including Exit 12 of the New Jersey Turnpike which is 1.5 miles from the PAC.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN ARTS DISTRICT AND SURROUNDING AREAS**

As depicted below, the site is located at the corner of Washington Avenue and Cooke Avenue, at the heart of the Washington Avenue Arts/Redevelopment District.

In addition to the Borough's investment in the arts district, there is over \$100 million of additional private investment currently taking place in the area including:

- The Cosmopolitan: A 267 unit residential building with artist lofts, a 7,000 sf restaurant/bar with a 2,000 sf rooftop lounge with views of the Manhattan skyline and 5,000 sf of commercial space located across from the PAC.
- Parking Garage: A 450 car parking facility surrounded by 60 residential units and 12,500 sf of commercial space located a block from the PAC.
- Movie Theater: The Borough is in discussions with several companies interested in constructing a 12 screen movie theater adjacent to the PAC. It is expected that the movie theater will show indie films, foreign films and first run Hollywood films.
- Residential Projects: 500-1,000 additional residential units are planned within a 4 block radius of the PAC.
- Ferry Terminal: Design and permitting is underway for a Ferry to/from Manhattan within 1 mile of the PAC with shuttle service throughout the Borough.
- Municipal Marina: Final design and permitting is complete for a 200 slip marina to be constructed in July 2016.

The following illustration identifies the PAC site along with certain of the projects currently planned and/or under development within the immediate vicinity of the PAC.



## SCOPE OF WORK

The selected firm will manage, in an efficient and customer oriented manner, all aspects of the operations of the PAC including sales and marketing, customer service, security, event services (i.e., event setup/take-down, scheduling, promotion, audience development, and ticket related services) and financial services. Specific expectations may include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Develop grand opening, operating and pre-operating budgets and timeline for operational benchmarks.
- Recruit and employ all full time and part-time staff and develop a staffing plan that includes an organizational chart showing key management personnel and identification of onsite management personnel.
  - Note: All on-site manager(s) must have a minimum of 5 years' experience in entertainment management and/or facility experience and an adequate technical background.
- Develop standard operating procedures.

- Maintain the PAC and assume responsibility for repairs, general maintenance and utilities.
- Ensure operation of the PAC is compliant with state and local laws.
- Book, schedule and service events in the PAC. This includes: securing and managing the ticketing contracts, hiring and overseeing event and production staff, performing sales and marketing duties.
- Provide a variety of entertainment genres. Manage and produce all appropriate rental agreements for the venue with attention to a “for-profit” and “non-profit” rate structure.
- Meet with and solicit producers, presenters, promoters, agents, managers, tour production managers, and artists for performances, productions and events.
- Secure local, regional, national and international productions, and artists.
- Assist with securing concert series and programmatic sponsors and naming opportunity sponsors.
- Negotiate agreements with presenters of touring musicals and plays.
- Develop fundraising strategies and sponsorship/advertising programs.
- Work closely with the local hospitality industry to market and promote the PAC.
- Create promotional packages for presentation to producers, agents, managers and artists.
- Develop and maintain positive community relationships by efficiently utilizing the PAC to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and government through creative marketing and promotion.
- Submit certified financials on an annual basis.
- Submit an annual fiscal year budget for the PAC.
- Provide monthly expenditure and management reports. These reports should include a financial analysis, list of upcoming events, a discussion of operating and maintenance issues and concerns, notification of changes in management, operations or maintenance activities and other information as appropriate or requested by the Borough.
- Provide public economic benefit to the community as a whole.

## **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

Respondents will possess a minimum of 5 years of continuous experience in the operation and management of a performing arts center and/or facilities of similar size and scale.

## **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Qualified Respondents will submit detailed responses to this solicitation including the following:

### Identification of the Respondent

Identify and describe the Respondent. Indicate its form of business organization, (e.g., corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, limited liability company or non-profit organization). If the Respondent is a subsidiary or direct or indirect affiliate of any other organization, it must indicate in its proposal the name of the related organization and the relationship. If the Respondent is a partnership, it will list the names of all partners. If the Respondent is a limited liability company, it will list the names of all members. If the Respondent is a corporation, it will list the names of those stockholders holding 10% or more of the outstanding stock. Identify the size of the staff and length of operation as a company. Identify

key individuals, their roles and responsibilities, and the percentage of employees that they expect to hire from the local community. The Borough will view more favorably proposals that will employ members of the community.

Financial Model:

Responses will include an explanation of the Respondent's desired financial model. The Borough's expectation is that the operator will pay the Borough for the right to operate the PAC and retain certain revenues. The Borough will consider alternative fee arrangements to be paid to the Borough such as an annual flat fee or a fee based on a percentage of gross receipts. However, a specific fee proposal is not required at this time.

Programming:

Responses will include a discussion of types of programming for the PAC. Specifically address your approach to programming. Discuss past experience programming these types of facilities. Discuss your firm's experience and approach to making the PAC the venue of choice in central New Jersey, the State and the northeast region for organizations, performers and promoters who utilize these types of facilities.

Sales, Marketing and Event Promotion:

Discuss your firm's experience and approach to marketing events to audiences. Describe your firm's approach to connecting potential audiences to potential programs.

Event Day Management:

Address your firm's experience and approach in managing the day of the event. The successful facility will make the event day experience enjoyable and memorable for performers and patrons alike. Discuss approaches to parking management, pedestrian flow, security, logistics, set-up, take-down, and everything else your firm considers important to a successful experience for all participants.

Participation in Design and Construction:

Design activities are nearly complete but many design and construction decisions have yet to be made. The selected firm has a unique opportunity to provide input to the Borough, the designers and the construction manager. Discuss your approach and past experience working with owners, architects, engineers and construction managers in a collaborative, ground-up opportunity.

Pre-Opening Schedule and Services:

Provide a schedule and description of services leading up to the opening of the facility currently anticipated to be in the fall of 2017.

Staffing Plan:

Discuss your firm's plan to provide full-time and part-time staff to the PAC. The plan should include the Respondent's role in the design and construction phases, the ramp up during pre-opening, and the day-to-day operations once the PAC is open.

Customer Service:

Customer service plays an important role in the success of the PAC. From that perspective, customer service should be included as part of an overall approach to management. Describe your firm's approach and philosophy to customer service.

Performance Metrics:

Recommend key performance metrics for success for the PAC and your firm. Discuss them in relationship to your proposed financial model.

**SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE**

Each Response to this RFQ will address the elements described in the Scope of Work and Proposal Submission Requirements sections. The Respondent will describe its approach and experience in each area. Please include experience managing similar facilities.

Responses should be delivered via email to Joseph P. Baumann Jr., Esq. at [jbaumann@msbnj.com](mailto:jbaumann@msbnj.com) with the subject heading: "Proposal - Performing Arts Center Programming and Management Services" no later than **February 19, 2016 at 5 p.m.**

**GENERAL EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA**

General Information:

This RFQ is the first step in a process aimed at gathering additional information and identifying one or more qualified firms to perform the services described in the Scope of Work. The Borough will conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation of all Responses received. The Evaluation Committee will evaluate the Responses. The Evaluation Committee may invite the most qualified Respondents to interview; however, the Borough retains the right to select only one Respondent and negotiate a contract. The Borough may also determine that no qualified Responses have been received and reject all Responses.

Interviews:

At the Borough's discretion, Respondents may be interviewed and re-evaluated based upon the criteria set out in the RFQ, or other criteria to be determined by the Evaluation Committee (i.e. unique qualities, methodologies, or approaches taken to differentiate from other Respondents). Those Respondents may be asked to provide additional information to the Evaluation Committee regarding demonstrated competence and qualifications, feasibility of implementing the project as proposed, ability to meet schedules, or other factors as appropriate.

Any information received by the Evaluation Committee subsequent to the Respondent's Response will be used to further evaluate the Respondents to determine a rank-order. Final approval of a selected Respondent is subject to the determination of the Administration.

Past Performance – References:

The Borough, at its discretion, may review past performance of the Respondent. Respondent will include 2 to 3 reference projects from the past 5 to 10 years. Projects should be of a similar scope to the PAC. References should include the following: name of the organization, contact information, description of the project, brief summary of services provided and period of performance.

Negotiation of Financial Offer:

If the Borough deems it is in its best interest to retain the services of one or more Respondents, it is anticipated that a final scope of work and fee schedule will be negotiated.

Evaluation Criteria:

The Responses will be evaluated in light of the goals set forth by the Evaluation Committee and approved by the Administration.

The successful Response should therefore:

- Clearly provide all of the information requested.
- Support a diversity and frequency of programming that will maximize the economic impact for the arts district and the Borough.
- Demonstrate a focus on preservation of the venue as a long-term legacy for future generations.
- Alleviate the operational involvement of the Borough in the venue, while remaining accountable to the Borough regarding booking activity, long-term maintenance, finances, viability and governance.
- Provide examples of experience and the financial and organizational capacity of the Respondent in successfully managing and promoting similar venues.
- Demonstrate financial capacity to perform Respondent's duties and obligations.
- Demonstrate conciseness and clarity in understanding the Borough's needs and defining standard operating procedures for training, maintenance, customer service and marketing.