

Pre-Proposal Meeting – Buffalo Avenue Heritage District Revitalization Study
September 14, 2006
Conference Center Niagara Falls
2:00pm-3:00pm
Questions and Answers

Additional questions will be accepted until Wednesday – October 4, 2006 (only via email to Paul Tronolone at ptronolone@empire.state.ny.us).

Q. Will the City of Niagara Falls put the new proposed zoning guidelines on their website?

A. *An excerpt of the zoning pertinent to the Buffalo Avenue area will be made available on the USA Niagara webpage for the RFP on Tuesday, September 19, 2006.*

Q. Will large volumes of information be made available for use – information such as the Intensive Level Historic Resource Survey and other resources of collected data pertaining to the district?

A. *Yes – but because of the large volume of documents and information available, only excerpts of the Intensive Level pertinent to the Buffalo Avenue area have been made available on the USA Niagara webpage for the RFP.*

Q. Are there any identified groups of business owners located within the district?

A. *Yes – currently there are members of the Buffalo Ave. district who are also members of the Downtown Niagara Falls Business Association. USA Niagara is currently working to put together a stakeholder group of business operators and property owners in the district – trying to form a steering committee to assist in the procurement of this project.*

Q. Will the City of Niagara Falls have GIS resources and information available throughout the course of this project?

A. *Yes – for the City of Niagara Falls GIS information please contact the Planning Office at 716.286.4477*

Q. Will the City of Niagara Falls be taking part in this project?

A. *Yes – the City of Niagara Falls will be working in collaboration with USA Niagara Development throughout this project. Tom DeSantis, Senior Planner for the City of Niagara Falls will be part of the selection committee. The Buffalo Ave. district project stems from the City's Strategic Master Plan and was identified as a strategic part of revitalization for the entire downtown City of Niagara Falls.*

Q. What are your expectations for the market research component of this project?

A. *Basically reviewing and assessing existing data that current is available for the district and downtown area. Existing data includes: Tourism information surveys, Economic Research Associates (ERA) market analysis survey of the Niagara region (conducted in 2004), annual market surveys conducted by Niagara University, as well as census data. The selection committee is not expecting any consultant team to conduct surveys or collect primary data but to assimilate existing data to the study area to the extent you can – to develop an economic context.*

- Q. Since we are doing a street level survey, will consultants have to access only from existing rights-of-way or will there have to be any form of permission to conduct survey within properties?
- A. *Consultants will conduct the survey only from public rights of way. It should be noted that the neighborhood has mid-block alleyways that are public, so observers could get a good look at all sides of most of the properties in the study area.*
- Q. Please describe in more detail the proto-type development when addressing the rough operating pro-forma and taking into consideration existing development incentives – how would the selection team interpret that? What type of model should be developed?
- A. *The proto-type developments are intended to illustrate and test the various elements developed in the workshops—such as applying the design principle in the design standards to illustrate model developments, and to work up typical construction and operating costs to suggest components of a possible incentive grant program. The pro-forma should include typical construction costs, operations/maintenance costs, and factor in existing incentive programs such as the Empire Zone benefits with other tax incentives, possibility of any project being available for historic tax credits. The pro forma analysis may demonstrate that there is not sufficient return on the development investment, indicating the potential direction of a targeted grant program.*
- Q. When will today's questions be available to the rest of the members present today and will the sign in sheet be available as well?
- A. *Questions along with the sign-in sheet will be available on USA Niagara's website by Monday – September 18, 2006.*
- Q. Are there currently any projects within the Buffalo District that are located on the National Historic Register?
- A. *Currently the Whitney Manson is the only property listed on the Register – but there are several eligible properties. Currently the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) does not believe the entire Buffalo Ave. area is eligible for the National Register as an historic district, but SHPO is working with the local historic commission to determine if a smaller part of the neighborhood can be eligible as a district. If properties are eligible for the Register, they are eligible for tax credits.*
- Q. Should the projects listed under project experience demonstrate individual experience or firm experience?
- A. *The projects listed should include firm experience, however, individual experience can be demonstrated in the resumes of key project members.*