Request for Proposals
Raise-Op Housing Cooperative
Blake Street Housing Design

Request Issued: 07/10/2019
Proposals Due: 08/15/2019

Contact

Organization: Raise-Op Housing Cooperative
Agent: Craig Saddlemire, Cooperative Manager
Address: 145 Pierce St, Office 102, Lewiston, ME 04240
Email: raiseop207@gmail.com
Website: www.raiseop.com
Phone: 207-956-0508

Addendum 1
Issued August 5th, 2019

The following questions were received from prospective architects for the Blake Street Housing Design RFP as of August 5th, 2019. Duplicate questions were combined into a single question for the purpose of this addendum.

Question 1: Can you please provide more information about the make-up of the "client" at all the mentioned meetings? Will all meetings be open to all Raise-Op members, or will they be open only to a committee, or only the executive director. Any information you can predict on this will help us to understand the nature of the meetings and the kind of preparation that will be required. Also, what will be the experience level of the client or client group? Will meetings generally begin with an education session, or could the design team be expected to circulate educational materials ahead of the client meetings?

Response 1: Throughout the design process, the Consultant will correspond with the Raise-Op Manager, Craig Saddlemire, on behalf of the Client. A Building Committee of 3 to 6 people, including staff, will be established by the Client's board of directors. This Building Committee will direct the project and meet with the Consultant at the design meetings specified in the scope of work. Staff and members of this committee have experience with building renovation, but have limited knowledge of new building construction. A local architect is also volunteering his time to advise and educate the Building Committee. Consultant will also be expected to educate the Building Committee throughout the design process. Educational materials may be submitted in advance for the Committee to review. The Raise-Op membership at-large, which consists of 15 members, may be invited to select meetings as deemed appropriate by the Client and Consultant.

Question 2: Pre-design services like the Survey, Geotechnical Investigation, and Environmental Review are typically contracted directly by the client as the resulting documents can be considered "assets" or the property and can be sold with it. I would recommend clarifying that the design team coordinate procurement of these services, but not contract them.

Response 2: To clarify items in Pre-Design 1b and 1c, the Consultant shall coordinate procurement of services for environmental review and report, site survey, and subsurface investigation report. Client will then contract for those services directly with respective vendors.

Question 3: Can you please clarify is Part 1.c. asking for a Phase I ESA or something else?

Response 3: Consultant's research shall include determining what type of environmental review is required for this project. Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment, NEPA, or other reviews may be necessary for new construction. Consultant should assume a portion of funding for construction will come from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), therefore the extent of environmental review should satisfy HUD requirements for funding.

Question 4: I would recommend that the number of apartments, unit sizes, and number of parking spaces be determined as part of the Pre-Design Phase, and not be up for debate during the Schematic Design Phase. This would make the schematic design discussion more focused and productive.

Response 4: Client will seek to specify as many project details in the pre-design phase as possible with the assistance of the Consultant in understanding the options available, and how those choices interact with one another. Consultant should be prepared to actively facilitate this process, including the use of visuals to help the Client imagine what is possible, and raising issues for consideration, such as thresholds for building size, orientation, or massing that substantially impact other aspects of the project, such as the efficiency of energy systems, construction cost, space for parking, and space for private yard.

Question 5: The decision of how much parking to include appears to be part of the planning process. This is a good thing, but if there are any preconceived notions about the number of spaces/unit please include.

Response 5: This site exists within a ¼ mile radius of municipal parking garages and is therefore exempt from any required parking spaces. It is also located across from 3 large parking areas with under-utilized parking space. Options for parking and massing, therefore, are more flexible than typical developments. While off-street parking is highly valued, so is private green space, especially for families who desire safe places for their children to play. There is likely some size at which a green space is too small to provide much benefit. However, there may be a size at which residents would value complete green coverage in place of on-site parking. There may also be creative options for parking, including the parking being underneath the building, or surface parking that is green and permeable. Our typical demand has been 1 parking space per unit. This will likely be a subject of great discussion, and Consultant will be expected to help Client understand and imagine their options clearly.

Question 6: Is Passive House certification (or any other certification) being considered? If so, should the related fee be integrated into the phases or separated out?

Response 6: The Client seeks to contract with a firm that can successfully design a low-impact, energy-efficient, and cost-effective residential building. Client will consider Passive House certification favorably in its review of the proposals. Related fee for such certification - or similar certifications - should be included as a built-in cost of each phase.

Question 7: Is there a mandatory site walk scheduled for all interested Architects? If not, can we schedule a time to meet someone on site, to see the property, and to learn a bit more about your project goals.

Response 7: There is no mandatory site walk for architects submitting proposals. Architects are welcome to visit the site at any time. Each firm should use the RFP and Addendum with Client's responses for drafting written proposals. Upon reviewing proposals, the Client may choose to conduct interviews, during which time additional details of the project may be discussed.

Question 8: How long do you anticipate that the fundraising effort will take? We realize that this can be difficult to predict.

Response 8: We estimate that fundraising for construction will take approximately 12 months. We are motivated to raise the funds as quickly as possible, but we cannot guarantee how long the process will take.

Question 9: What is required for fundraising? We realize that you will have everything that is being generated during the Phase One Scope of Services, however, will you require any 3D renderings? And will you need the Architect & Engineering team available for any fundraising events?

Response 9: One attractive 3D rendering, accompanied by more basic renderings that convey enough visual information to inspire our supporters and make the project feel real. Architects and Engineers will not be expected to be involved in fundraising events.

Question 10: Is the Architect responsible for applying and securing all required permits before the bidding process begins?

Response 10: No, the permits do not need to be secured before bidding starts.

Question 11: Have you considered selecting a Construction Manager (CM) or General Contractor (GC) during Phase One, instead of waiting until the Bidding Phase? They could help with cost estimating through-out the Schematic Design and/or Design Development phase. Alternatively a cost estimator can be hired to provide cost estimating services during phase 1.

Response 11: For the purpose of your written proposal, assume that the Client is not selecting a Construction Manager nor General Contractor during Phase 1. After a proposal is selected, we may discuss such options with the chosen Consultant.

Question 12: What level of pricing is required during the schematic design phase? Are you looking for a cost per square foot analysis of options, or a detailed breakdown of cost?

Response 12: Only cost per square foot pricing is required during the schematic design phase.

Question 13: Just confirming, do you have a boundary and topography survey, or is that something you would expect the Consultant to procure for you?

Response 13: The only boundary information we currently have is the information contained in the deeds and the print lots available from the city's GIS system. We do not currently have any topography surveys of the land.

Question 14: The Growing Our Tree Streets plan, it appears that this is still in draft form. Is that your understanding too?

Response 14: The document is in final draft form and is unlikely to change in any way that would affect the scope of this project. The latest draft can be found on the city's website at https://www.lewistonmaine.gov/933/Choice-Neighborhood-Grant.

Question 15: For Proposal evaluation, you note that the proposals may not be selected based on lowest cost. Can you elaborate on the selection criteria? Have you or do you plan to develop and share the selection criteria with allocations of level of importance? For instance, one criteria such as "Experience working with diverse communities: 15%," etc.

Response 15: At this time, we cannot provide any more information on selection criteria.

Question 16: Are any of your current apartment buildings able to serve as models for the new development, or is this proposal to address a new prototype unlike your current buildings?

Response 16: This purpose of this proposal is to develop a new prototype that exceeds the quality, function, and performance of our current properties, which are approximately 100 years old. Throughout the design process, our existing buildings will likely be referenced with regards to what is good and what is not good about them, and what would make for better design.

Question 17: For contractors you indicate a desire to have the Consultant develop a list of qualified contractors. Given the potential for federal funding, should we assume that the bidding would be a public bid?

Response 17: Yes, assume a public bid would be required in a manner consistent with guidelines for projects that receive federal funds through various HUD programs.

Question 18: Is the land currently owned by Raise-Op?

Response 18: Yes, Raise-Op currently owns the land corresponding to this design process. There is an additional parcel of land at 186 Blake Street (.07 acres) which is adjacent to Raise-Op's property, and which currently belongs to the City of Lewiston. The design process will seek to maximize use of Raise-Op's property, but this additional parcel could be considered for acquisition if project possibilities are significantly enhanced.

Question 19: Given the range in number of units, what is the target construction budget? What is the anticipated budget for phase 1 work?

Response 19: We do not have a target construction budget at this time. Part of this process will involve exploring and discussing the Client's priorities and helping the Client to understand how each decision affects the overall budget. As this is ultimately an affordable housing project that will need to compete for federal funds, the cost to construct should be comparable to other affordable housing developments in Maine. At the same time, choices to make our project unique and advanced with regards to energy systems, accessibility, and quality of life may help with private fundraising. A third consideration is whether our project can be a replicable prototype for future infill development in the neighborhood, of which cost to construct is an important factor. Proposals should demonstrate a willingness to work with the Client as they learn about their options and explore these choices, and proposal prices should account for the architect's time to participate in this more deeply engaged process. We are not specifying the anticipated budget for phase 1 at this time.

Question 20: Has the owner considered bringing a contractor on-board at the beginning of phase 2?

Response 20: This is being considered, and will be discussed further with the chosen Consultant.

Question 21: Will this project be subject to administrative requirements of MSHA, or are the best building practices referenced as design guidelines only?

Response 21: At this time, there is not an expectation that the project would be subject to administrative requirements of the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA). The design guidelines are only a reference. Consideration should be given as to whether any design decisions would greatly help or harm the chances of receiving funding from the MHSA, if the Client chooses to pursue that route.

Question 22: Could you describe your short-listing process and the make-up of your selection committee?

Response 22: This RFP has been circulated to various architect associations in Maine, and emailed to specific architects who were recommended to the Client by trusted sources. For more information about the Raise-Op board of directors and staff, please visit www.raiseop.com.