



## RFP/RFQ City of Utica One World Garden Planning, Design & Engineering Services June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Conference Call Question and Answers

### RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS: One World Garden Project, Utica NY

- *Compiled from questions posed on the 06/07/18 conference call-in as well as emailed questions.*
- *In reference to RFP/RFQ City of Utica, One World Garden (OWG) Planning, Design & Engineering Services.*

**1. How shovel ready is this site? - Any city permitting process? site plan review? If needed will these be part of the scope of work?**

The One World Garden (OWG) site is a vacant lot at this time, has been through initial SHPO review and is city-owned property. It is covered by grass and has some vegetation at its edges and some asphalt driveway surfaces. The site is located within a designated Scenic and Historic district. Anticipated permitting/review will include City of Utica Scenic and Historic District review and review and coordination with the City of Utica Engineering, Public Works and Parks Departments. There is no requirement for Site Plan Review by the Planning Board. Regarding the NY State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES), it will not be needed. Regarding the Stormwater Pollution Prevention plan, the 'garden area' is under one acre so a full SWPP would normally not be needed but a plan of action will be. On the other hand, since there will be subsequent phases to the project that will put it over an acre, there will likely need to be a SWPP for the entire project before the first phase parts are built or we will then have to wait five years in between development.

**2. There's already been such a robust amount of design work completed. How much in the way of structural components have been designed such as the living stories wall and spiral shelter?**

Schematic design has been done for the entire project to create general cost estimates, but no detailed design development and engineering has taken place for the garden and its structural component. Conceptually, the spirit of the spiral shelter is the Iroquois longhouse and the spiral form, but exactly how it will be realized and what material form it will take is all in need to development. The living stories scroll wall was created with the idea of an infrastructure fence/post framework that integrates with the entire garden fence and in the area of the living stories wall would be designed to receive individual panels along the 90'+ length. This strategy would enable the wall to be built as part of the gardens' larger fence enclosure in a kind of modular manner so that pieces could be added over time. The best strategy needs to be undertaken during the design development process with the team.

**3. Please expand on the range of stakeholders, who or how wide of a net are we casting and who would be involved?**

The major partners on the project are the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees, the City of Utica and Rust2Green Utica. A large group of initial stakeholders including representatives from organizations and groups with the refugee community, arts and culture were part of the initial design and we want to continue to build and expand relationships through the project's implementation

phases. A goal moving forward is therefore to both maintain and also generate new relationships and build community engagement in the short and the long term to ensure sustainability for the garden. Firms are not expected to have a lot of stakeholder engagement in the design development which will take place with a smaller ‘client group’ including members of the original design team. We (the Rust2Green team) will be dedicating a lot of time to identifying and engaging stakeholders who will be contributors, for example, to things like the living stories scroll wall and other specific artistic creations or features that call for contributions. We would like a firm that can offer creative ideas and strategies to engage diverse stakeholders in participation and contributing to aspects of the project along the way. A measure of the project’s success will be the degree to which it “grows community” and a sense of ownership and attachment by the community. Presumably the consultant firm and the client team will co-conceive strategies that enable construction to move forward in concert with an engagement process that serves mutual needs and progresses the project on schedule.

**4. Do you anticipate disturbing more than an acre for this project?**

OWG’s main garden will be located on Utica, Park Avenue and transform 3 City-owned vacant lots, which are currently covered with lawn and some asphalt remains from driveways that were located there. The lots include:

- 1016 Park Ave: 31 x 203’ lot
- 1018 Park Ave: 55 x 161’ lot
- 1022 Park Ave: 62 x 170’ lot
- Total OWG site: 25,688 sf (.59 acres)

In the drawings you also see the multi-colored pavement called the ‘Tapestry/Festival Plaza’ which is meant to be an activity space/place for event programming (market, performances) as well as a parking area when needed. The adjoining parking/Tapestry and Festival Plaza site (Phase 2) lying to the northwest is about 25,200 sf in size (.57 acres) and is also owned by the City of Utica. It is accessed from both Genesee and King Streets where it sits directly adjacent (west side) to the Lotus Garden Restaurant at 1011 King Street. This area is also to be considered part of the 2nd phase of the project. The concept is to reconstruct this parking lot as a green infrastructure practice of porous pavement and stormwater reservoir and to create it as an aesthetically attractive paved plaza (for both events and parking). It could also become a geothermal field supplying energy to the block and garden. We presented this concept to the State in Phase One and also prepared concept plans and for this in an earlier 2014 grant which includes a Feasibility Study for green infrastructure (see attached 2014 Report). This information is useful to review in relationship to Phase 1.

In addition to the above land area, we are currently in discussions with an adjoining property owner to acquire the lot on the corner of Clark Place and Park Avenue. We are thinking that this adjacent land would be optimal for expansion of the garden and particularly for added programming (visitor center, restrooms, storage). The property is not acquired yet, but progress could be made in the upcoming months to make that happen. In the meantime, we will want to consider expandability in Phase 1 design development, so we can plan ahead, anticipate expansion and have plans and strategies ready

for seeking funding in this or next year's round of CFA applications. Conversations with the owner have begun but there are no promises.

**5. Regarding funding: You had mentioned this phase one was funded by the State and in the application, you noted looking for a team that has innovative funding strategies - How do you foresee the process of gaining additional funding throughout this process for future phases to impact the design process, do you foresee any interaction with that?**

This is a smaller piece of a larger redevelopment objective centered around the 'One World Utica' theme. We're being very careful to think about the concept of this larger picture while developing smaller pieces that are able to be financed and implemented along the way. In addition to the One World Garden, we have other smaller projects related to streetscapes (also financed by the State) including a grant to do work on Genesee Street. And we have future initiatives related to Bagg's Square and Artspace and these projects we hope to be connected by funding and to be part of this larger picture as well. As we are submitting these projects we are including the larger narrative, so the State is aware of this (One World theme) and how each project is connected. We will be submitting a second application to this round of CFAs for Phase 2 of One World Garden. We've been setting the stage the last couple of years to tie these things together as an economic development strategy for the city. This ultimately makes us more competitive for funding. The city has stepped up to apply funds for the OWG project from CDBG and the local Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties is a big supporter of initiatives like this. We also have very strong interest from the national Artspace organization to do an artist live-work space housing project in the area immediately around the OWG.

We would like the consultant to think ahead and support future proposals and anticipate or have ideas for fund-raising and for engaging in grant applications. The OWG project will have a fundraising component and anticipate that the consultant will attend events and prepare materials to disseminate in different formats to promote the project to funders. The heavy lifting around fundraising will be up to Rust2Green, but we would like to develop a relationship with a firm that is interested in expanding their involvement to other areas and other related projects like the streetscape or Artspace. Because this is a catalyst project with the aim of connecting a lot of things together, we'd like to see cohesion and consistency in design and thinking to move things along.

**6. Please clarify the scope. As far as I can tell you have a schematic plan you would like to use for the Garden. The consultant will provide assistance with finalizing the elements included on that plan and create site plans and presentation materials for site plan review? After approval. The consultant will create the construction documents and specs, a cost estimate, and assist with bidding process for Phase 1 construction? Finally, we will provide construction administration as needed. Is this correct?**

Yes, this we have a schematic plan and design development needs to happen based on that plan as well as the general program for subsequent phases, so we can undertake as well as anticipated the best

immediate and long-term implementation approaches. Moving quickly into design development is our aim, so there is a limited need to make new presentation materials as we can use the ones we have currently generated for fund-raising and communications purposes. The goal is to undertake final design development, generate best construction strategies (full of partial contracted and possibly % of volunteer/donated in some combination) along with docs and specs, final cost estimates, bidding and construction admin - as needed.

**7. Will this be a phased project? Will Construction Documents be for all phases or only Phase 1?**

This is a phased project with construction docs relating only to Phase 1 but also anticipating subsequent Phases so that they can be implemented with little or no disruption to constructed components and with the ability to have the garden accessible and in operation.

**8. Has anything been done for stormwater management?**

The recommended green infrastructure practice(s) for stormwater management are outlined in the 2014 Feasibility Report (p. 5) and include:

- 1) *Porous Pavement for OWG Parking Lot/Festival Plaza:* The principal green infrastructure practice being proposed is porous pavement with a storage reservoir beneath what is to become a combined OWG parking area and festival plaza site. This practice will replace an existing impermeable asphalt parking lot that drains entirely into the city's CSO system. Either porous asphalt or permeable interlocking concrete pavers or some combination of the two, will be considered as alternatives.
- 2) *Bioretention rain garden:* Much of the OWG garden area will include permeable ornamental garden beds with trees, perennials, annuals and lawn vegetation. The garden's *Renewal Garden* will be designed as a rain garden for bioretention/filtration purposes. It will accommodate water flowing off the eastern side of OWG in the area of the *Flourish Garden*.
- 3) *Permeable pavement walkways:* permeable pavement will also be used on the pedestrian walkway known as the Passage of Cultures, connecting Park Avenue to the garden entrance near the parking lot and then further along to King Street.
- 4) *Street trees/urban forestry:* Street trees will be planted along Park Avenue and the Passage of Cultures between Genesee and Park Avenue, as well as on the larger streetscape connecting to the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees and Oneida Square.
- 5) *Bioretention area/cells:* Bioretention areas/cells are proposed in two locations, one to accommodate overflow from the OWG porous parking area and the other to accommodate stormwater generated by Drainage Area #2 consisting of the properties upslope on the corner of South Street and Park Avenue.\

**9. Would we need to provide a stormwater pollution prevention plan?**

In regard to the Stormwater Pollution Prevention plan, the 'garden area' is under one acre so a full SWPP would normally not be needed but a plan of action will be. On the other hand, since there will be subsequent phases to the project that will put it over an acre, there will likely need to be a SWPP for the entire project before the first phase parts are built or we will then have to wait five years in between development.

**10. Has any testing been done on site for infiltration rates, soils, water table etc.?**

No, testing has not been done as of yet.

**11. Would we need to procure a survey or has one already been done?**

A survey has been completed for the immediate area of the garden (please see attached). This will be available in AutoCAD. There may be the need to expand the area of the survey to cover immediately adjoining areas and sites and also to plan for subsequent phases.

**12. Is the Architecture for the Spiral Shelter part of this scope of work?**

The Spiral Shelter is not currently being considered as part of Phase 1 but if funding/sponsorship is able to be secured in the near term, this major feature and focal element could be added into Phase 1. If funding/sponsorship is not attainable, the shelter would be built in a subsequent phase. This means that considerable design development would still need to happen in Phase 1 to ensure that the structure could in fact be built at a future date with minimal disturbance to the already constructed surroundings. For example, structural footers or anchors to receive the future Spiral Shelter could be installed in Phase 1 and then in a later phase, the Shelter could be craned in or assembled on site by being attached and anchored to the previously installed infrastructure.

**13. Has there been any subsurface testing been conducted on the site? If not, Is subsurface investigation part of this scope of work? Test pitting for stormwater purposes only? Or Geotech investigation required for structural purposes?**

No there has not been any subsurface investigation and that should be included, if required, as part of the project to enable design development and construction to proceed.

**R2G added remarks:**

As you gather resources we encourage you to look at the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees' website as the Refugee center has been an important partner on the project. Utica is a United Nations resettlement city - we are celebrating World Refugee Day here on June 16<sup>th</sup> – and the significance and meaning of this project is important to the community and the City's identity and of revitalization. The OWG's location and relationship to downtown, surrounding arts and culture institutions, proximity to the Refugee Center (which has moved to Bleecker Street) physically and conceptually is important. We are seeing the OWG as being catalytic of a larger 'One World Utica' theme in the city of Utica. The Refugee Center has recently received funding to develop a project called the 'One World Welcome and Opportunity Center' at their facility. There is an emerging theme around this 'One World Utica' concept and how all these projects will connect with one another as well as develop to influence new projects to unfold. OWG is in effect inoculating the One World theme and can be understood as a first step of a much larger initiative which is building on the inherent strengths and identity of Utica. There is a potential for the firm (or firms) to be involved with future projects under this initiative and some of those include creative placemaking on Genesee Street related to the One World Utica theme as well as other public space improvements on Bleecker Street (adjacent to Refugee Center) and in nearby Oneida Square (heart of arts district).

