

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CONSULTANT FOR DUDLEY SQUARE/ELIOT SQUARE CULTURAL DISTRICT PLANNING

Overview

In 2010, the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Cultural District Initiative was authorized by an act of the Massachusetts State Legislature. Since it launched in 2011, 30 communities across the Commonwealth have established districts that reflect the unique assets and needs of their communities. The City of Boston currently has two cultural districts, Fenway Cultural District and Boston Literary Cultural District.

In Roxbury, two loosely knitted grassroots cultural associations, the Roxbury Cultural Network and Common Thread Coalition, as well as other neighborhood stakeholders have identified cultural district status as an important, long-term goal. In August 2015, [Madison Park Development Corporation](#) (MPDC), [Haley House](#), and [The American City Coalition](#) (TACC) partnered in support of these ongoing efforts to establish a cultural district in Roxbury by researching regional and national best practices, identifying technical assistance needs, and seeking funding. In December 2015, the project was awarded \$25,000 in funding from The Catalyst Fund (pooled funding from The Boston Foundation, Boston LISC, The Hyams Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley).

The collaborative venture now seeks to hire a consultant to convene and work with all stakeholders in implementing an inclusive planning process for a cultural district in Dudley Square/Eliot Square and to take the necessary steps to complete the application for cultural district designation to the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) no later than July 31, 2016.

What is a Massachusetts Cultural District?

According to the MCC, a cultural district is a specific geographical area in a city or town that has a concentration of cultural facilities, activities, and assets. It is a walkable, compact area that is easily identifiable to visitors and residents and serves as an epicenter of cultural, artistic, and economic activity.

The goals associated with the establishment of a cultural district are to:

- 1) Attract artists and cultural enterprises;
- 2) Encourage business and job development;
- 3) Establish the district as a tourist destination;
- 4) Preserve and reuse historic buildings;
- 5) Enhance property values; and,
- 6) Foster local cultural development.

Additional information regarding the MCC program can be found at www.massculturalcouncil.org.

In Dudley Square/Eliot Square, these goals will be tailored to meet the unique history and conditions of the community, including the preservation and amplification of the neighborhood's rich African-American and immigrant culture, both past and present, and capacity building for coordinated public programming and cultural planning; this strategy connects arts and culture to large-scale projects and ongoing community planning to better ensure that the distinct history and culture of Roxbury informs physical development and economic development strategy.

Consultant Role and Key Tasks:

The consultant will work part-time (approximately 10 hours per week) from February 2016 through July 2016, taking responsibility for a range of tasks that lead to cultural district designation by the state, including community engagement, baseline data collection, and preparation of application materials. The consultant will accomplish the following key tasks, at first reporting to the consortium of MPDC, Haley House, and TACC and then to a broader governing board, once established:

1. Refine and implement an inclusive engagement strategy.
2. Facilitate the establishment of a governing body consisting of local stakeholders who will provide oversight and management for district planning by identifying key partners who will play a significant role in the cultural district planning process. This will include local arts and cultural organizations, artists, residents, educational institutions, local businesses, other stakeholders, and a representative of the City of Boston.
3. Encourage community investment in the planning process, by regularly convening stakeholders, gaining consensus around fundamental planning questions including the boundaries of the proposed cultural district, as well as the proposed governance and administrative structure; this will result in a management plan for the partnership that will prioritize tasks, identify sources of revenue and other resources, establish timelines, and develop a mechanism for measuring the district's objectives and success.
4. In concert with other stakeholders, undertake a range of MCC-required tasks, which will include some or all of the following: Working with the City of Boston on the cultural district planning effort; scheduling City Council hearing regarding the cultural district effort; developing a map of the proposed district with an asset key; completing an online application to MCC and submitting any supplemental documents; assisting with coordination of a site visit by MCC.

Qualifications:

The consultant will be able to leverage her/his existing relationships in Roxbury for the success of the project; s/he will have knowledge of Roxbury's current cultural assets and a commitment to the continued development of the Dudley Square/Eliot Square neighborhood. S/he will have successful experience advising or participating in nonprofit collaborations. S/he will have community engagement experience that is consistent with best practices in the field, appropriate administrative skills, strong oral and written communication skills, and preferably, a connection to the arts and culture as practitioner or manager.

How to Submit a Proposal:

Interested consultants should submit a two-page proposal that outlines his/her approach, qualifications, and compensation (not to exceed \$25,000); a resume; and the names and contact information of three references to Kay Mathew, Resource Development Manager at KMathew@madison-park.org by February 8, 2016.