City of Perth Amboy Waterfront Redevelopment and Natural Hazard Mitigation Community Planning Assistance Program Application

Applicant
City of Perth Amboy

Contact
Leigh Anne Hindenlang
Senior Planner
City of Perth Amboy
Office of Economic and Community Development
260 High Street
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861
Phone: 732-826-0290 ext 4028
Fax: 732-826-1160
Email: ahindenlang@perthamboynj.org

Record of Addressing Community Issues

Perth Amboy is a very unique and beautiful city, but it does have issues that the City has been working to address through the work of all of its departments and by seeking any available funding and help. The City is densely populated with at least 60% of residents falling below the low/moderate income level range. Additionally, as a historic industrial hub, the City has a significant number of brownfield sites and is almost entirely built out. This makes careful and well-thought redevelopment and planning a high priority for the City. The Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD) has a record of successfully undertaking and completing projects to address these, as well as other, community issues. Through working with the redevelopment agency, the OECD has been able to remediate and redevelop numerous brownfields throughout the City to create housing, commercial and industrial uses and job opportunities and bring these properties back into working sites that benefit the City. In the past year, the City has been able to engage and secure several new large corporations to move into or expand within the City. Through its CDBG/HOME program, the OECD has managed and provided public services and improvements to the neediest populations within the City including senior services, afterschool programs, public infrastructure improvements, affordable housing, and façade improvements. Additionally, the OECD is one of the most active departments within the City for seeking out grant opportunities to address issues within the City and create new or expanding existing opportunities and services. This includes historic preservation, clean energy, infrastructure expansion, arts and cultural activities, and transportation improvements.

Project

As a result of super storm Sandy, the City's waterfront experienced millions of dollars of damage including large portions of the esplanade washing away and all its features and
amenities, the loss of the City’s marina, significant damage to waterfront businesses and homes, and damages to public parks, access points and fishing piers. This resulted in the closure of almost the entire key portion of our popular waterfront walkway. Beyond that, there are several brownfield sites that still need developing and some sites already underway seeking direction for public improvements. There are great opportunities for park and public access expansion, creation of bicycling infrastructure and planning, and redesign of previously existing resources.

In order to develop a recovery plan for the City’s most valuable and threatened asset, an advisory committee of interested and concerned residents and business people was created that will provide recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on the recovery, repair and renewal of the City’s waterfront. Under the direction of this Waterfront Recovery and Redevelopment Advisory Committee, and with the help of the OECD and the Community Planning Assistance Program, the City would like to develop a waterfront area plan that will lead the repair and redevelopment of the waterfront. The City would like the CPAP to contribute their expertise in reviewing existing conditions, conducting a public input process, and aiding in the recommendations of the Waterfront Recovery and Redevelopment Advisory Committee for the future of the waterfront to the City Council. While the events and losses experienced as a result of Sandy are horrific, the City sees this as an opportunity to make intelligent and publicly supported plans for one of the City’s most valuable resources.

Additionally, damages to the waterfront from a Nor-Easter in a March 2010 and Hurricane Irene damaged the waterfront and parts of the waterfront were closed and only to reopen not long before Hurricane Sandy. Therefore, we would also like to look at strategies to mitigate damages from another storm, as well as designate and organize the future development of the area.

This importance of this project to the community cannot be overstated. As an older, densely developed, industrial city, Perth Amboy has limited open space. The waterfront area includes beaches, parks, picnic areas, walking trails and esplanade, a marina, and fishing piers. It serves as both a passive and active recreational resource for residents of all ages. In fact, within days of the super storm Sandy, over a 1,000 city residents turned out on a Saturday to volunteer their time to clean up the debris and destruction in an effort to restore order to a resource so precious to the community. Additionally, some of the most famous restaurants and businesses that attract visitors from outside of the City are located on the waterfront and were significantly damaged. For tourism and community enjoyment, the waterfront needs to be reopened, and now is the perfect opportunity to make the plans and changes to enhance this resource for future residents and visitors. Furthermore, proper mitigation planning can help design this park and waterfront area to make it more resilient so that another natural disaster does not leave the waterfront closed off to the public again and cost more public dollars.
Project Outcome (Goals)

As a result of CPAP assistance, the City would like to produce a plan for the recovery, repair, and redevelopment of the waterfront, taking into consideration the need for mitigation measures to reduce the damages from future storms. Specifically:

- Planning for public improvements including the expansion of the esplanade and the bulk head and public improvements
- Design strategies and design options that will be resilient to natural disaster
- Bringing together stakeholders to provide input on the waterfront redevelopment and consider concerns of the public and advisory committee
- Create clear objectives and strategies for redevelopment of the waterfront

Open Public Planning Process

This effort is being driven by a local resident and business owner committee effort. The City wanted to ensure that the product that is produced will reflect the needs and desires of its residents. The City is willing to provide public meeting space and aid in the creation, promotion and carrying out of the public meetings. The first public meeting is scheduled to take place on February 4th.

Stipend and In-Kind Contributions

The City is requesting a waiver for the required stipend. There are no extra funds in the OECD’s budget to cover this fee, and most of the administrative funds the office has are restricted by the granting agency for use. However, the OECD is willing to provide in-kind services to CPAP in terms of resident and business volunteers, and with assistance from OECD staff for the planning process.

Need for Services

The City is in need of planning services because the budget is severely constricted due to extensive debt and limited financial resources, particularly grant funding that has become less prevalent. In order to not raise taxes and stay within the 2% tax levy cap, the City has had to reduce staff and rely on those who are already employed to take on more roles and responsibilities. There is insufficient staff to conduct such a plan in-house. There is one full time planner in the City within the understaffed Office of Economic and Community Development. The Waterfront Recovery and Redevelopment Advisory Committee is a citizen driven project that does not have planning expertise and could benefit from Planning Assistance from the Community Planning Assistance Program.
Documentation to Support that the Project Meets Qualifications

Appendix A: Photos of Damages
Appendix B: Waterfront Recovery Redevelopment Advisory Committee letter
Appendix C: Project Manager’s Business Card
Appendix D: Resolution (See Appendix E)
Appendix E: Mayoral Letter of Support
Appendix F: Documentation that Services Could Not be Provided in House/Consulting
Appendix A: Photos of Damages
15 January 2013
PROGRAM OUTLINE
WATERFRONT RECOVERY AND REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In order to develop a recovery plan for the City’s most valuable and threatened asset, its waterfront, an advisory committee of interested and concerned residents and business people is hereby created that will provide recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on the recovery, repair and renewal of the City’s waterfront, also taking into consideration the possible need for mitigation measures to reduce the impact of possible future storms.

The City has entered into a contract with Trevcon Contracting Co. to implement plans prepared by Hatch Mott MacDonald Engineers to repair the damage caused by the March 2010 Nor’easter. This follows lengthy processing of damage requests by FEMA and permit approval reviews by NJDEP and the US Army Corps of Engineers. This work has finally begun.

With the added damage to the waterfront by Super Storm Sandy, the City is presented with yet another challenge to properly and adequately repair and redevelop this significant City asset as part of the ongoing recovery from the storm. To assist this office and the City Council and the Mayor in our joint endeavor to restore this treasure, I am creating a WATERFRONT RECOVERY AND REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE. While all decisions must in the end be made by the City’s governing body, this committee shall provide the governing body with its best recommendations to advance the best interest of the entire City. It shall consist of seven (7) public members and have various department heads as ex-officio members. The membership shall be:

- Robert Bunten
- Michael George
- Michael Keller
- Alan Jacobs, Chair
- Barry Rosengarten, Vice Chair
- Anthony Seabra
- Noelle J Zaleski, Royal Garden Club

Mr. Jacobs will serve as the chair of this committee and Mr. Rosengarten will serve as the vice chair.

Staff who will serve as ex-officio members of the Committee include:

- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Public Works Director
- Chief Financial Officer
- Human Resources Director
- City Administrator

In order to assist the Committee in its deliberations it will require the services of an administrative assistant who shall maintain minutes and “to do” lists for the committee and a consulting engineer
(Hatch Mott MacDonald) familiar with the waterfront issues, limitations and needs. (The City Council will be asked to authorize a contract for these services soon.) We are also seeking the assistance of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association to provide technical planning assistance to the committee.

It is the mission of the Advisory Committee to investigate ways to:

- Recover from the damage inflicted on the Waterfront by Super Storm Sandy,
- Develop appropriate concepts for reuse and redevelopment of the City's waterfront,
- Maximize the use of the waterfront to engage its full potential and thereby invigorate the entire community

and transmit these concepts and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council.

The work program of the Committee should consist of at least the following:

- Plan to issue a report and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council within 4 months of the first meeting regarding recovery plans and actions.
- Conduct an initial organizational meeting at which the members should express their concerns and set forth their objectives for the anticipated achievements of the committee. Some of these might include the following:
  - Rebuild Harborside Marina.
  - Create additional uses along the Raritan River and Arthur Kill (much of which property is in the Redevelopment District and some of which is under the jurisdiction of the Brownfields Development Area Committee in cooperation with NJDEP).
  - Expand park use and the pedestrian walk (Harbor-walk and River-walk) along the entire waterfront.
  - Assure compliance with the public access plan requirements of the NJDEP.
  - Provide additional facilities for boating and marina use.
  - Attract upscale and boutique retail uses, restaurants and hotels to the waterfront area.
  - Create opportunities for other appropriate development.
- Conduct at least two public hearings:
  - The first hearing should be the second meeting of the committee at which the committee would receive suggestions, recommendations, comments and concerns from city residents and taxpayers. These would need to be chronicled and maintained.
  - The second public hearing would be one at which the committee will present to the public their proposals and reasons therefore and receive public comment on same.
- Hold not less than three additional meetings at which the members will receive reports from staff and consultants regarding issues identified by committee members.
- The committee will need to balance objectives of being thorough, yet expeditious in their deliberations and determinations regarding recovery. NB: Too much time cannot be spent of the planning portion of this endeavor, so design and implementation of the work can be pursued while administrative details are worked out with FEMA and insurance coverage. The public needs to see progress and achievement.
- Regarding longer term redevelopment of this resource, the Committee will continue to pursue this inquiry within resource constraints.
- During the design and implementation stages of the project, the Committee should be available to review and comment on the work being conducted. During this stage, meetings might take place as often as monthly or every 6 weeks.

Limits on resources and work of committee:

**Area in question:** Regarding the recovery (short term) effort the area in question would be from the North Jersey Coast Line Bridge to the Tottenville Ferry Slip. Regarding longer term attention, the area in question can be from the Victory Bridge to the Outer Bridge Crossing.

**Term:** Improvement recommendations should be for both short (less than one year) and long (one to ten or more years) terms.

**Consulting Services:** Current financial constraints dictate that HMM is available to the committee in its deliberation up to but not to exceed that which is set forth in the proposal and the contract authorized by City Council resolution.
Appendix C: Project Manager's Business Card
Annie Hindenlang
Senior Planner
Economic & Community Development

CITY OF PERTH AMBOY
260 High Street
Perth Amboy, New Jersey 08861

Phone (732) 826-0290 Ext. 4028
Fax (732) 826-1160
ahindenlang@perthamboynj.org
Appendix D: Resolution (See Appendix E)
Appendix E: Mayoral Letter of Support
January 30, 2013

American Planning Association – NJ Chapter
CPAP
PO Box 813
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

Dear CPAP Representative,

The City of Perth Amboy’s beautiful waterfront is one of the City’s most important assets for recreation, industry and tourism. Super storm Sandy caused millions of dollars of damage and rendered the majority of the waterfront used for recreation and public access destroyed and fenced off. Planning for the redevelopment and mitigation of this area for future use is of the utmost important to the City.

In order to create a vision for how the waterfront will be redeveloped, the City created the Waterfront Recovery and Redevelopment Advisory Committee to assist in bringing forth the concerns of citizens, the business community, and the City. However, the City is in desperate need of technical and professional assistance. With the help of the Community Planning Assistance Program, we believe this project has a high potential to create an admirable public area that will accentuate the character and potential of our waterfront.

Since the committee has already begun meeting, the City wishes to submit the proposal for planning assistance early. We have not yet had a chance to pass a resolution that authorizes the submission of the application and agrees to the terms of the Request for Proposals. This will be completed at our next opportunity which is a City Council Meeting on Feb 13th. Until then, I am writing this letter to show the support of the Mayor’s Office in moving this project along.

We hope you choose to assist us with this project and look forward to the potential opportunity to work together.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Mayor Wilda Diaz
Appendix F: Documentation that Services Could Not be Provided in House/Consulting
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPT NO</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>CY 2011 BUDGET</th>
<th>CY 2012 BUDGET</th>
<th>MAYOR'S BUDGET</th>
<th>CY 2012 ADOPTED BUD</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>57,401.00</td>
<td>57,976.00</td>
<td>57,976.00</td>
<td>Current (PT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coord. Fed &amp; State Aid</td>
<td>77,262.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clerk Typist</td>
<td>42,804.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clerk Typist</td>
<td>37,517.00</td>
<td>37,517.00</td>
<td>Current (FT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>P/T Seasonal (1/1-6/30)</td>
<td>6,240.00</td>
<td>6,240.00</td>
<td>Current (FT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crd Fed&amp;StateAid(7/1)</td>
<td>30,004.00</td>
<td>25,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Director PARA</td>
<td>129,688.00</td>
<td>132,295.00</td>
<td>44,100.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reimb from UEZ</td>
<td>(33,073.75)</td>
<td>(30,000.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reimb from BID</td>
<td>(33,073.75)</td>
<td>(25,000.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summer Intern</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>Current (PT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>OECD Director</td>
<td>75,000.00</td>
<td>75,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Assistant</td>
<td>77,051.00</td>
<td>77,051.00</td>
<td>Current (FT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reimb from UEZ</td>
<td>(38,525.50)</td>
<td>(18,750.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reimb from BID</td>
<td>(38,525.50)</td>
<td>(38,525.50)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sick Incentive</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Part-Time</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>CDBG FUNDING</td>
<td>(153,592.00)</td>
<td>(101,862.80)</td>
<td>(113,285.80)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>EECBG Funding</td>
<td>(19,620.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>BID Funding (see above)</td>
<td>(22,234.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>UEZ Funding (see above)</td>
<td>(33,057.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(18,750.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-170</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>HOME Funding</td>
<td>(50,683.00)</td>
<td>(25,482.10)</td>
<td>(33,532.90)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic Development Total**: 28,639.00 167,835.00 57,039.70