



CITY OF HOUSTON

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Subject: Clarification Letter No. 3
Consulting Services Related to 1-Stop Permitting

References: Q23630

To All Prospective respondents:

This Letter of Clarification is being issued for the following reasons:

- To answer the following questions:

1. If awarded the services from this RFQ, will that preclude the vendor from providing services in the next phase (Phase 1 - outlined in this RFQ)?

A. The vendor awarded in this RFQ process will be precluded from bidding on any RFP used to purchase hardware and/or software.

2. Is the City looking for self serve channels like Kiosk or IVR as well as internet?

A. Yes, the City wants to provide all 3 self serve channels to minimize the amount of trips needed by our customers to any City facility.

3. Can you please explain 'automated queuing system' in more detail?

Is this expected to be a custom built solution?

Is it expected to be available self serve? (i.e. a citizen goes to a Kiosk to get the information and requirements to complete their permitting process)?

How does integration to the existing permitting applications play a role in this solution? Can you give an example?

A. We need the queuing system to provide guidance to our customers for all the permits that will be required to be in compliance eliminating any guess work. The solution will need to provide a "Turbo Tax" like experience to our customers, so for example a customer wants to open a convenience store we will need to know things like location and products/service to be sold. The queuing system will then direct the customer to all the areas/departments they will need to visit to buy and submit documents to complete their project.

4. Is it the City's intention to go out for bid (RFP) for all phase 1 requirements combined (POS system, Queuing System, Business Process Redesign for Code Enforcement,)? The RFQ mentions a 'Plan Review Solution'. Will a 'Plan Review solution' be purchased or is the City intending on using a document management solution like Onbase that they already own and the vendor would integrate to that?

A. The vendor awarded in this RFQ process will be precluded from bidding on any RFP used to purchase hardware and/or software.

Plan Review: Changes to the Plan Review processes & technologies are still under consideration. Onbase is a potential solution and it will be evaluated.

5. Can you provide detail on the different permitting applications that the City currently uses?

A. Determining all the different applications and how to integrate them all is part of the requirements of this RFQ. We will have project managers assisting the chosen consultant to direct them to all departments needing to be on the system.

6. Can we get the sign-in sheet from today's meeting?

A. Yes, it is posted on our website.

7. Will you be providing a recap of the questions and answers from today's meeting by email?

A. No, we requested that all vendors submit their questions in writing and are being answered via this clarification letter.

8. What is the projected opening date for the Houston Permitting Center?

A. April/May of 2011.

9. Are the floor plans for the Permitting Center complete or can some modifications be made, particularly in relation to the intake functions?

A. The design drawings are complete therefore no modifications can be made.

10. What are the nine departments, the 34 divisions and the 250 types of permits?

A. 95% of the permits are from the following: Public Works, Administration and Regulatory Affairs, Police, Fire and Health departments. However, a list will be provided to the awarded vendor at the start of the project.

11. What key software is currently being used by any of the above?

A. The major software components being used are ILMS, GovPartners, Garrison Health Systems and others. However a complete list of software being used by permitting divisions will be identified and provide to the awarded contactor at the start of the project.

12. Do you anticipate any customer involvement in this process?

A. Not for the vendor selection of the RFQ. However, if by customer, you mean citizens/business conducting business with the Permitting Center, we believe our regular customers can provide valuable insight into the best way to implement a Permitting Center and its supporting technologies.

13. What other applications are expected to interface with the Permit System?

A. The City makes use of many technologies, not specifically mentioned in the RFQ, that may be integrated into the final solution (refer to the discussion about standard technologies for a more complete list). The City will rely on the chosen service provider to help determine which of these applications/technologies can and should be integrated into the final solution.

14. What organizations are involved or affected by this RFQ?

A. 95% of the permits are from the following: Public Works, Administration and Regulatory Affairs, Police, Fire and Health departments.

15. What technologies are currently in use?

A. The City has established standards for:

- i. Clients: HP desktops/laptops running Microsoft Windows (mostly XP) and Office (mostly 2003)
- ii. Servers: HP servers/blades running Microsoft Windows Server (increasingly 2008) with NetIQ
- iii. WAN/LAN: Cisco switches & routers with Solar Winds
- iv. Databases: Microsoft SQL Server (increasingly 2008)
- v. EDMS: Microsoft SharePoint (early adoption stages) for document storage & retrieval and Hyland's OnBase for complex, document-centric workflows
- vi. E-Mail Services: Microsoft Exchange 2007
- vii. Telephony: Cisco VoIP with a significant legacy Avaya PBX installed base
- viii. Contact Center: Avaya contact center/IVR solutions riding on Cisco voice/data
- ix. Programming: Microsoft's "2010" development stack

Note: City standards are intended to be guidelines for future purchases. Different, non-standard, solutions that provide the best value for the City are routinely considered and purchased.

16. What are the current processes for permitting? *

A. It ranges from a hand written notepad to an online hosted solution.

17. Can we get an inventory of systems and platforms involved with permitting? *

A. A list will be provided to the awarded vendor at the start of the project.

18. What aspects of workflow are required in a Queuing solution?

A. See question 36.

19. Who are the permitting process groups?

A. See question 10.

20. What is the state of process definitions and documentation?

A. Initial process definitions have been completed but a more complete review is anticipated as part of this RFQ.

21. We are debating the 5th bullet on page 4 of the RFQ “limitation of liability clause”, as it is similar language to the Case Management RFQ that we responded to last year. Ultimately the City Attorney backed off the “no limitation of liability” - are we to expect the same here?

A. Each RFQ is treated on a case-by-case basis. However your organization needs to aware that the City may not agree to a limitation of liability clause in the award of a contract.

22. This project has an aggressive schedule; however, evaluating “as is” procedures will require significant interaction/information sharing with affected City staff. What mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the successful consultant will have ready access to staff and information will be forth coming?

A. The City will create a project team that will make every effort to ensure that all information is provided according to contracted scope of work and the project plan developed by and managed by the awarded vendor. Additionally this project has full support of the Administration.

23. Can we access some historic data that is a fair representation of the types of cases/submissions PWE receives and processes? The City’s web site has a query engine that allows users to access information pertaining to the types of permits issued over the last 3 years but I wonder if there is a consolidated report.

A. .No. However this information will be provided to the awarded vendor.

24. How many departments/divisions are impacted by this project?

A. See question10.

25. When permits are issued by a department/division is that department/division exclusively responsible for all follow-up work (e.g., inspections, issuance of a certificate of occupancy, etc.), or does the department interact with other departments?

A. Certain permits require interdepartmental cooperation; however the issuing department/division is responsible for the permit’s release/sale.

26. Page 2, bullet #8 of the RFQ references “Ordinance Review” – which ordinances (development only)? Also, what are the principle issues/concerns about the status of relevant ordinances?

A. Many of the permitting ordinances have not been reviewed for many years so process, relevance and pricing may need to be adjusted to improve both the City’s and customer ‘s needs.

27. Page 2, item 7) "Facilitate recruiting for both full-time and contract positions required to complete the Project." Does this facilitation include recruiting for City of Houston employees?

A. The intent of the statement is to include within the scope of services the skills and experiences needed to ensure that the project is fully and properly staffed. All City personnel are hired according to City policy.

28. Does the City have any specific technical standards that the vendor must follow?

A. Refer to question 15.

29. Will there be a separate RFP for the hardware/software side?

A. The hardware and software may be purchased through an RFP or another purchasing vehicle.

30. Is the Letter of Interest, SOQ and Statement of Understanding all part of one document?

A. These should be 3 different sections within your response.

31. Who has to provide the “performance bond or letter of credit to cover potential damages if the firm fails to perform in accordance with the contract”? The consulting/professional services vendor?

A. Any vendor awarded (RFQ or RFP) may need to provide a performance bond or a letter of credit for the contracted services and/or products.

32. Are there existing applications that are being replaced for the POS, Queuing Solutions, Electronic Plan Review, Document Management, and Permit Portal? If so, what is the technology for each application?

A. See Question 36. The City does not currently have an enterprise point of sale capability – each operation does its own cashing. Some divisions use a queuing solution and the City will expect the chosen provider to assess the feasibility of extending that solution to meet the needs of the Center. Each division has its own permitting solution – the City does not expect to replace or consolidate those solutions, only to integrate them into Center-focused systems. The City has on-line portal and payment capabilities and the City will expect the chosen provider to assess the feasibility of extending these solutions to meet the needs of the Center.

33. Can you explain the timeline for the project? Go-live? Are we looking at September of 2011?

A. The official target date for opening the Houston Permitting Center is 1 April 2011. The City will make every effort to have all operations and technologies fully operational on that date, but recognizes that occupancy may be phased for a variety of reasons.

34. We are assuming this is a funded project, correct?

A. Yes.

35. Do the current 34 permitting divisions/9 departments mentioned in the Vision document section of the RFQ have associated call center/IVR functionality that is in scope to be consolidated into one call center/IVR support function with the implementation of the new One-Stop Houston Permitting Center?

A. Each permitting operation has a process by which in-bound communications are handled. None of these operations is currently using the City’s enterprise contact center platform. To the extent possible, the occupants of the Houston Permitting Center may leverage the enterprise platform, but this is not a critical requirement for the initial phases of this project.

36. Can you explain the relationship between the current various permitting center applications (POS, Queuing) and the back-office systems such as Integrated Land Management System (ILMS)? What functions are covered by the ILMS? What is the technology platform for the ILMS?

A. The vision for the Permitting Center includes:

- i. Customers may interact, on-line, with the various Center systems
- ii. Customers may initiate a “project” by working through a questionnaire that will identify all permits, inspections, plan reviews, etc. that will be compiled into a “manifest” customers can use to complete their business with the City.
- iii. The Queuing system may use this manifest to help customers navigate the stops they need to make at the Center in the most efficient way.
- iv. Center staff will use permit-specific, back-office applications to transact business with customers.
- v. Each back-office application may produce a bar-coded “invoice,” “suspend” the customer transaction, “post” a transaction into the POS system, and post a “deliverable” into a document management system.
- vi. When their business is complete, customers may take their collection of invoices to a cashier and make one payment (whether by cash, check or credit card)
- vii. As the cashiers read the bar-code on each “invoice,” the POS will retrieve the related transactions, compile a final receipt, accept payment, and “post” transactions, to the
 - a. Back-office system (to release the suspended transaction)
 - b. Document management system (to release the waiting deliverables)
 - c. SAP financial system (to record the payment received).
- viii. Customers may receive their deliverables before leaving the building.

Note: The vision outlined above reflects the City’s best thinking, but may not represent the best available solution. The City will rely on the chosen provider to help determine the extent to which each of these elements can/should be implemented and the costs & timelines required.

ILMS is a three-tier web based application. The interfaces usually involve xml communication to the middle server and uses Oracle as relational database. The following business functions are supported by ILMS:

- ix. Permitting
 - a. Issuance
 - b. Projects Receipts Financials
 - c. Non Project Receipts Financials
- x. Inspections
 - a. Schedule and Approvals
- xi. Land Management
 - a. Property Information
- xii. Planning
 - a. Plan Review/Approvals
 - b. Status Reporting
- xiii. Contractor Maintenance
 - a. Insurance Validation
 - b. Expiration dates

37. How does the city plan to integrate the 311 information system into the new One-Stop Houston Permitting Center?

A. See Question 35.

38. Do the current 34 permitting divisions/9 departments have legacy applications (ex: The Telework hand held unit application that is part of the building inspection department) that will need to be integrated/interfaced into the new One-Stop Houston Permitting Center application topology? If so, please list those applications, their functions and their relevant technologies.

A. This is part of the discovery and the subsequent solution that the chosen consultant will have to determine.

39. Can you provide a volume based breakdown on how many permits are issued per year by each of the 9 departments in scope?

A. They range from single digits to hundreds of thousands annually. This is part of the discovery and the subsequent solution that the chosen consultant will have to determine.

40. Please provide a list of the 34 permitting divisions/9 departments in scope.

A. See question 10.

41. How many current customer service representatives are associated with the 34 permitting divisions/9 departments? Is there a projected number of customer service representatives that will staff the new One-Stop Houston Permitting Center?

A. The Houston Permitting Center will have approximately 550 administrative employees and 250 inspectors, so about 800 employees in total.

42. RFQ speaks about estimated hours on page 4, during the meeting yesterday we spoke about having hourly rate in RFQ and no estimated hours required. Would you please like to clarify the same in your response to vendors?

A. Both. Please indicate your hourly rates; however, please, also indicate the estimated number of hours that will be required to undertake this engagement.

43. Will the successful winner of Q23630 provide all of the work necessary for the City to have a Permitting solution less hardware and software? I.E., will the winner set the strategy with the City, provide queuing, POS, back-end integration, and then direct the City to select the appropriate software/hardware solution etc?

A. It is our intent that the vendor selected will help with the mentioned activities however the vendor that provides the hardware and software may also have significant roles in the back-end integration.

44. On Page 2, number 5 – there is a requirement for integration into ‘multiple back office permitting solutions’. Is the new permitting system intended to replace or augment current permitting systems?

A. See Question 36. The City does not currently have an enterprise point of sale capability – each operation does its own cashiering. Some divisions use a queuing solution and the City will expect the chosen provider to assess the feasibility of extending that solution to meet the needs of the Center. Each division has its own permitting solution – the City does not expect to replace or consolidate those solutions, only to integrate them into Center-focused systems. The City has on-line portal and payment capabilities and the City will expect the chosen provider to assess the feasibility of extending these solutions to meet the needs of the Center.

- 45. Is workflow an expected software solution for which requirements will be defined and be implemented in addition to designing the actual 'process'? (page 6)**
- A. Workflow understanding is part of any process change. Please make your recommendation in your RFQ response.
- 46. Have current permit process flows been documented? Are current processes supported by any electronic solutions today?**
- A. Initial process definitions have been completed but a more complete review is anticipated as part of this RFQ.
- 47. Can you share the number of departments and the types of permits that are that are to be addressed?**
- A. See question 10.
- 48. Are there enterprise hardware or software standards that must be adhered to?**
- A. See Question 15.
- 49. Is there an IT Governance model for review and approval of architectures recommended outside of any existing software standards?**
- A. Yes. The Chief Information Officer leads a director-level IT Management Committee that provides governance for enterprise technology investments. The city-wide Chief Technology Officer leads a Technology Steering Committee that coordinates the efforts of the departmental CTOs to standardize technologies. Oversight for large projects is provided by a steering committee made up of executives and senior managers knowledgeable in the subject area.
- 50. Is there a PMO or internal methodology utilized for deployment of enterprise projects?**
- A. There is not a specific, approved methodology. The City relies on its service providers to supply and follow a proven methodology for delivering the contracted services.
- 51. Is there a primary contractor involved for the overall project of the program that includes the building construction and technology development? Or are these separate management functions that will need to be coordinated?**
- A. The awarded vendor will be responsible for coordinating deployment of all technologies with the City's Infrastructure Group and the Building General Contractor.
- 52. Is this a key business objective for 2010?**
- A. Yes for both 2010 and 2011.
- 53. Is there a business sponsor (not IT) and is the steering committee cross-functional?**
- A. Yes.
- 54. How many locations, and / or users at each of those locations affected by this change?**
- A. See question 10.

55. Will the point of sale solution be provided from City of Houston facilities only? Or will the point of sale also be provided as a virtual service via the Internet?

A. Ideally the point of sale solution will service both the physical locations and the internet, however getting the Houston Permitting Center running is priority 1.

56. Is it safe to assume that permit payment will need to support credit card payments?

A. Yes.

57. Does the city see the Houston Permitting Center as the location for a positioning of permit "self fulfillment" that would need some type of client access area and could also be used as a showcase for Houston's vision for efficient government?

A. Yes.

58. On page 2 there is a mention that "No product will be purchased through the contract covering the professional services defined by this Request for Qualification. Has the City included consideration for the timing required to conduct total software and hardware selection and contract completion?"

A. Yes. We have a very aggressive timeline; however, we are very confident that it is achievable.

59. What is the amount of bandwidth that currently exists or is planned for the Houston Permitting Center? Are there any plans to move to an MPLS circuit? If not, how do you currently prioritize the transmission of email, data, and voice packets in your network?

A. The Houston Permitting Center is not an operational facility and has no current connectivity to City networks. The City will rely on the chosen provider to ensure that sufficient bandwidth is available to support all Houston Permitting Center operations, and to ensure that the proper protocols and standards are adopted.

60. In terms of workflow and document routing, does the city plan to move towards a set of enterprise-based solutions which will enforce standardization for one or more of the proposed components areas? Do you plan to use these adopted standards in other institutions?

A. Yes. Standardization of other institutions is not a part of this RFQ.

61. What type of contract vehicle will be used for the bidding process?

A. The bidding process for these professional services is a Request for Qualification which will result into a legal contract signed by the awarded vendor and City of Houston directors and officials.

62. What is the thought or scope behind the business process re-engineering? Is this limited to the Houston Permitting Center and its satellite facilities or is it a process to determine how this agency interacts with other city-wide organizations?

A. The primary objective of this RFQ is to deliver the technologies required to support the Houston Permitting Center. The focus of any process re-engineering should be to support this primary objective.

63. Will there be an effort to share information among other city-wide organizations?

A. Yes.

64. Is your current SOA (service-oriented architecture) implementation fully developed in terms of protocols that define how service pass and parse messages? Is this information available for this part of the process to help in determining how the new components will talk to your existing platforms?

A. The City is in the process of deploying a SOA architecture. Only the pilot application currently utilizes any aspects of this architecture. The chosen provider will have access to the team leading the SOA effort and may be able to utilize this technology.

65. Do you have an estimate as to the volume of requests and submissions that the city receives on a daily basis?

A. 1,500 – 2,500 per business day.

66. What are the planned budget constraints? Do you foresee carrying annual maintenance agreements on proposed software components? If so, what is the normal or accepted fee that you would expect?

A. There are no planned budget constraints. Software components are not being purchase through this purchasing vehicle.

67. Based on you current security policies, how would this proposed system fit within this concept of a shared environment? Who would handle the setup for authentication and security permissions? Are there current procedures that can be utilized as a basis?

A. The City will use its standard security policies, standards, and tools.

68. Given the fact that newer technologies such as virtualization and application services exist which can reduce the overall level of support and hardware obsolescence, do you object to building a solution that takes advantage of this type of architecture?

A. The City is willing to consider any solution that satisfies its goals and objectives and that provides the best value.

69. Does the city standardize on specific database technologies such as Oracle or SQL Server? In addition, are there specific operating system environments that are not supported?

A. See Question 15.

70. At the end of the day, would you like the ability to monitor activity in a real-time scenario? This would include alerts when specific areas require operator attention.

A. Yes. Real-time reporting would be ideal.

71. Our company not only provides the consulting services to do a vendor selection, assessment, implementation, and the change management around the solution, we also have a software solution that fits in this space (a COTS POS solution). So the question that we had was if we participated in the software assessment process (the RFQ) does that mean that our software solution be removed from consideration. I know most companies either have a software solution or the consulting capability (but not both), however in our case we do offer both to many of our City clients and they use us in both areas because of the cost and time savings we can provide.

A. Yes. If you are awarded a contract on this RFQ you will be precluded from providing hardware and software.

When issued, Letter(s) of Clarification shall automatically become a part of the RFQ documents and shall supersede any previous specification(s) and/or provision(s) in conflict with the Letter(s) of Clarification. It is the responsibility of the respondents to ensure that they have obtained all such letter(s). By submitting a response on this project, respondents shall be deemed to have received all Letter(s) of Clarification and to have incorporated them into their response.

Thank you,

Frank Rodriguez

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