



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

GREATER DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH PUBLIC REALM ACTIVATION STUDY THROUGH LIGHT AND ART

Issue Date:

March 6, 2026, 1:00 PM EST

Q&A Session:

March 27, 2026, 1:00 PM EST

Proposal Due Date:

April 27, 2026 - 5:00 PM EST

1. OBJECTIVE

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) is seeking qualified multidisciplinary consultant teams (the “Consultant” or “Respondent”) to conduct a comprehensive analysis focused on improving safety, visibility, and experiential quality on all streets in Pittsburgh’s Golden Triangle and adjacent Greater Downtown Pittsburgh neighborhoods (including the Strip District, North Shore, South Shore, Uptown, and Hill District). The analysis will include alleyways, underpasses, and other low-visibility public realm corridors.

The goal of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to select a consultant team capable of conducting a rigorous, data-informed assessment of existing lighting and environmental conditions across varying times of day, comprehensively identifying all locations with diminished visibility and perceived safety concerns where the use of light and art will create a sense of place, safety, wonder and beauty. The URA seeks responses demonstrating a strong understanding of public realm safety, human-scale lighting design, creative placemaking, and interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as the ability to translate analysis into clear recommendations that can inform future pilot projects and phased implementation by the URA, the City of Pittsburgh, and partner organizations.

Sustainable and context-sensitive practices are encouraged throughout the study and shall include consideration of energy-efficient lighting strategies, reduction of light pollution, durable and low-maintenance materials, accessibility, and approaches that enhance pedestrian comfort, orientation, and quality of life. Examples of best practices worldwide for the use of lighting and art to activate spaces with an emphasis on the achievable, the practical, the cost-effective, as well as more ambitious and costly efforts, should be provided.

The URA reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, to waive informalities, and to award the contract in the best interest of the Authority. There is no commitment by the URA to fund implementation or pilot projects as part of this RFP.

2. URA INFORMATION

Established and existing under the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law, 35 P.S. §§ 1701, et seq., and incorporated in 1946 as one of the first redevelopment authorities in the United States, the URA is the City of Pittsburgh’s economic development enterprise. The URA is committed to building a prosperous and equitable economy for all of Pittsburgh. It helps to bridge public and private interests to invest in meaningful equitable developments that promote housing affordability, economic mobility, entrepreneurship, and neighborhood revitalization. The URA’s work creates and sustains quality jobs, thriving neighborhoods, healthy communities and sustainable businesses for the benefit of all Pittsburghers. Additional information regarding the URA may be found on the URA’s website at www.ura.org.

3. URA INTENT

The intent of this RFP is to select a consultant to conduct a comprehensive site assessment and make design recommendations with the goal of transforming

underutilized, poorly lit, or negatively perceived Downtown spaces into safe, welcoming, and educational environments, while advancing the URA's goals related to placemaking, equity, sustainability, economic vitality, and civic engagement.

For purposes of this RFP, these goals are defined as follows:

- A. Placemaking: Strengthening Downtown's identity and sense of place through high-quality design that enhances public spaces, supports activation, and reinforces cultural and architectural character.
- B. Equity: Ensuring improvements are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of diverse users.
- C. Sustainability: Promoting energy-efficient, durable, and environmentally responsible lighting strategies that reduce long-term environmental impact.
- D. Economic Vitality: Supporting increased foot traffic, extended evening activity, business retention and attraction, and overall Downtown competitiveness through strategic public realm investment.
- E. Civic Engagement: Encouraging public interaction, community participation, and educational opportunities through thoughtful design, stakeholder collaboration, and transparent implementation processes.

The URA seeks proposals that move beyond designs for conventional lighting upgrades and instead employ multi-sensory, technology-enabled experiences that combine light, sound, arts and AR (Augmented Reality) storytelling to: Improve perceived and actual safety; Encourage pedestrian activity; and Celebrate Pittsburgh's history, culture, rivers, and natural resources.

4. PUBLIC REALM OBJECTIVES

Proposals should clearly address the following objectives: Enhance nighttime safety and comfort in Greater Downtown public spaces; Activate dark or underutilized locations through creative placemaking; Educate the public on Pittsburgh's historical, cultural, and environmental narratives; Engage local artists, students, academic institutions, and community groups; Generate data and feedback to inform long-term public realm strategies.

5. SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Site Identification and Analysis

- Identify all site-specific locations within the Greater Downtown Pittsburgh neighborhoods and other connecting locations between the Golden Triangle and adjacent Greater Downtown Pittsburgh neighborhoods through field observations conducted at multiple times of day and night.
- Assess existing lighting conditions, pedestrian volumes, and perceived safety.

B. Community Engagement

- Conduct on-street surveys and interviews as well as interviews with Greater Downtown stakeholders.
- Engage students and local institutions in fieldwork and data collection.

C. Evaluation and Reporting

- Measure usage of illuminated corridors, perception of safety, and public response to lighting improvements and art installations.
- Provide recommendations for scaling and implementation.
- Provide examples of best practices worldwide for the use of lighting and art to activate spaces with an emphasis on the achievable, the practical, the cost-effective, as well as more ambitious and costly efforts.

D. Deliverables

The selected consultant will produce clear and actionable deliverables that document the study findings and provide a framework for future implementation of lighting and public art improvements in Greater Downtown Pittsburgh.

- Conceptual Lighting and Public Art Recommendations
- Site Inventory and Existing Conditions Analysis
- Priority Opportunity Map and Project List
- Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary
- Implementation Framework and Strategy Recommendation
- Best Practices Report

6. STAKEHOLDER OVERVIEW

The URA strongly encourages engagement with local organizations, including but not limited to the following:

- **BOMA Pittsburgh** – Mobilize building owners/managers; coordinate access to façades/power/easements; facilitate maintenance commitments and after-hours operations; and help recruit corporate sponsors.
- **Point Park University** – Provide access to field surveys, site analysis, public engagement, and student research.
- **Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership** – Provide information around coordination and maintenance alignment.
- **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** – Provide data around programming and cultural integration.
- **Downtown Pittsburgh employers and property owners** – Provide site access and operational coordination.
- **NAIOP** – Engage commercial real estate developers and investors.

7. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals shall include:

- A. RFP Summary Page

- B. All responses should include the RFP Summary Page, which can be found at the end of this document (Exhibit 'H'), as the cover page of the proposal package
- C. Project understanding and approach
- D. Team qualifications and relevant experience
- E. Description of local partnerships
- F. Preliminary schedule and budget
- G. Examples of similar work
- H. Fee proposal and budget detail

At a minimum, the final study shall provide:

- A. Comprehensive site analysis report
- B. Community engagement summary
- C. Best practice report
- D. Design recommendations
- E. Recommended next steps

8. RESPONSE SUBMISSIONS

Respondents should submit their proposal package using Ion Wave Technologies, the URA's online procurement platform, at <https://ura.ionwave.net/Login.aspx>.

The proposal should be combined into one file in bookmarked PDF format. Do not send hard copies to the URA.

The proposal submission and questions concerning the content of this RFP must be submitted via Ion Wave Technologies only. For assistance with Ion Wave, please contact Ivy Coleman, URA Program Assistant, at 412-255-6691 or icoleman@ura.org.

9. SELECTION CRITERIA

A. Process: The selection of any firm(s) will be made by the URA Board of Directors after receiving recommendations from URA staff and/or any applicable review committee. Such selection will be based on the nature and quality of the responding firm's responses to the Scope of Services and Submission Requirements described above. Proposals will be evaluated based on: Quality and creativity of approach; Technical feasibility; Strength of community engagement; Inclusion of local partners; Cost effectiveness and scalability; and Alignment with URA goals.

The URA reserves the right to request that any respondent meet with URA staff and/or a review committee in a formal interview. The URA reserves the right to select or reject any proposal at its sole discretion. The URA is not obligated to select any proposal as a result of this RFP.

B. Preferences: The URA, in recommending proposals to the URA Board of Directors, shall show preference toward proposals that include local development partners, local MWBE partners, and partners with demonstrated expertise in art, lighting design, and public realm activation.

- C. Conflicts of Interest: Responsive firms and their team members must have no conflicts of interest regarding any other work performed by the respondent for the URA, the City of Pittsburgh, or any related entity.

10. LEGAL INFORMATION

- A. The URA shall have the right to verify the accuracy of all information submitted and to make such investigation as it deems necessary to determine the ability of each Respondent to perform the obligations in the response. The URA in its discretion reserves the right to reject any response when the available evidence or information does not satisfy the URA that the Respondent is qualified to carry out properly the obligations of the response.
- B. The URA shall be the sole judge as to which, if any, Respondent best meets the selection criteria. The cost of the proposal will be a consideration but may not be controlling when choosing the successful Respondent.
- C. The URA reserves the right to reject any or all responses, to waive any submission requirements contained within this response, and to waive any irregularities in any submitted response.
- D. All responses, including attachments, supplementary materials, addenda, etc. shall become the property of the URA and will not be returned.
- E. Respondent and team members must disclose any conflict of interest with regard to any other work performed by the Respondent for the URA, the City of Pittsburgh, or any related entity.
- F. The URA is not responsible for proposal preparation costs.
- G. Selected firms shall be required to enter into a professional services agreement with the URA, or such other entity as may be designated, following final selection.
- H. All work must comply with applicable City, State, and Federal regulations.