

**Request for Qualifications**

**Santa Monica Civic Auditorium Public/Private Partnership**

**June, 2009**



## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

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### INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Monica is seeking qualification statements from firms or organizations interested in entering into a public/private partnership for the use and programming of the historic Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in order to activate the Civic Center, provide expanded cultural/entertainment options, generate revenue and serve the needs of the Santa Monica community. The City envisions a revitalized Civic Auditorium as one component of a new multi-faceted civic and cultural core that extends several blocks along Main Street from Colorado to Pico Boulevards, and ultimately includes performing and visual arts venues, educational facilities, parks and open space, as well as housing and civic facilities.

### BACKGROUND

#### Venue History

The Santa Monica Civic Auditorium (“the Civic”) opened in June 1958. Designed by Welton Becket, the internationally renowned architect who also designed the Cinerama Dome, the Capitol Records building, and the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Civic was designated a City landmark in 2002. Conceived as a place for a variety of activities ranging from tradeshows and sporting events to rock concerts and plays, Welton Becket designed the Civic for functionality and flexibility, utilizing a hydraulic concrete floor which allows the facility to convert from a raked floor for performances to a flat floor for banquets and exhibitions.

The Civic quickly became a hot spot of the best musical acts of the day. The venue’s playlist reads like a timeline of the evolution of the American music scene starting in the 1950’s. Andre Previn, Duke Ellington, Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Lawrence Welk and the Los Angeles Philharmonic played to capacity crowds.

In 1964, Rock & Roll came to the Civic for the first time. The T.A.M.I. Show featured Chuck Berry, the Beach Boys, the Supremes and the Rolling Stones. Rock concerts dominated the schedule from the 1960’s through the early ‘80’s. Groups as diverse as the Doors, Bruce Springsteen, Elton John, U2, and the Dave Matthews Band filled the Auditorium with appreciative fans.

The Santa Monica Civic was chosen by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to host the annual Academy Awards ceremony from 1961 to 1968.



Other legendary award shows followed, including the American Music Awards, Soul Train Awards, the 1969 Emmy's, Peoples' Choice Awards, and the Screen Actors Guild Awards. Surf Films, lectures and sporting events ranging from basketball to boxing rounded out the event schedule.

### **Current Use**

Today the Civic is home to the popular Santa Monica Symphony and also hosts a variety of exhibit shows, concerts (Bob Dylan, My Bloody Valentine and Jackson Browne in 2008), the Critics' Choice Awards show, and community events.

Concert capacity for seated concerts is 3,000 and for general admission (no chairs on the main floor) 3,500. The Civic's banquet capacity is 720. A 4,189 square foot meeting room on the east side of the Auditorium has a seating capacity of 500 and is often used as a green room or production area for concerts. A full professional kitchen, lobby, dressing rooms and box office round out the amenities. The adjacent parking lot and Civic Center Parking Structure provide convenient parking for 1,600 vehicles.

## Relevant Plans

### Civic Center Specific Plan

In June 2005, the City of Santa Monica adopted the Civic Center Specific Plan (CCSP) setting forth planning policies and land use and development regulations for a 67 acre area bounded by Pico Boulevard on the south, Fourth Street on the east, Ocean Avenue on the west and Colorado Avenue on the north. The 2005 CCSP represents an update to the plan that was adopted in 1993 (see <http://www.smgov.net/planning/civiccenter.html>).

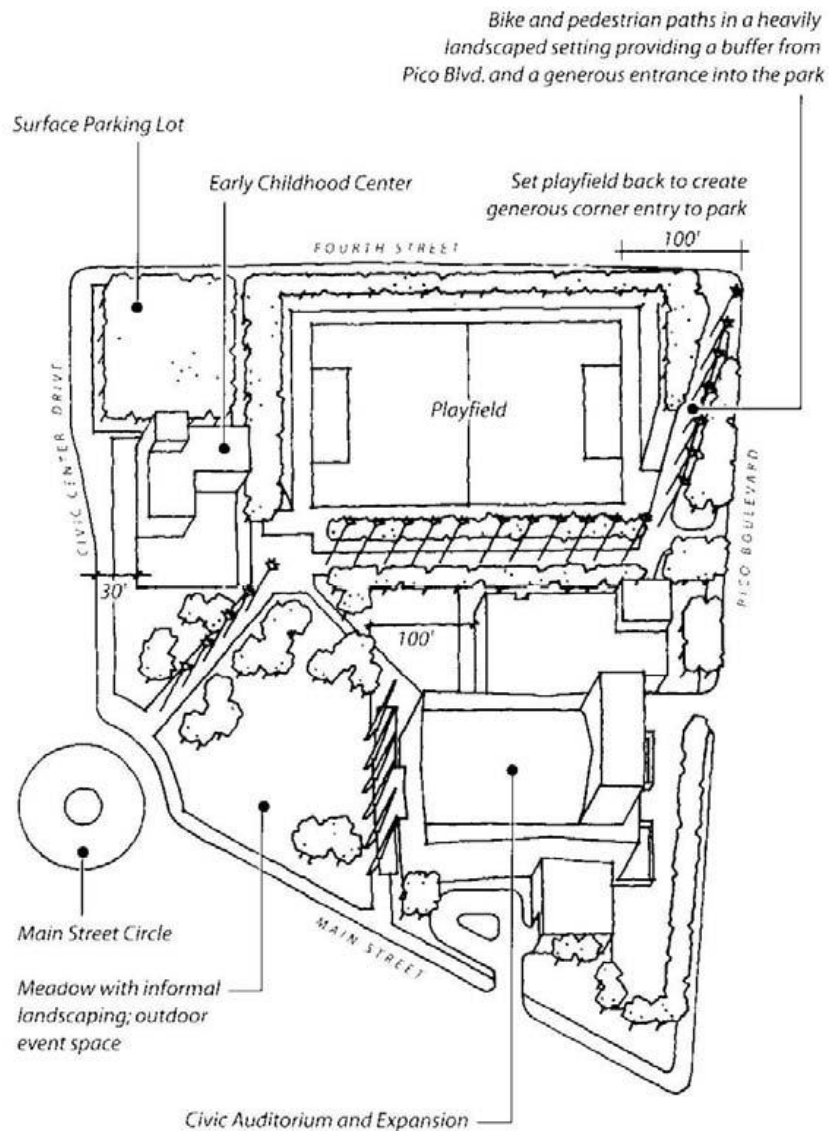


Figure 2: The Auditorium Special Use District, Civic Center Specific Plan, 2005

Policies in the CCSP call for the expansion and improvement of the landmark Civic Auditorium to support musical and cultural performances as well as exhibitions and community gatherings. The CCSP calls for the relocation of the surface parking surrounding the Auditorium and consolidation of public parking into above and below grade parking structures – thus freeing up the lot for park use including a sports playfield that was included as a result of community members advocating for increased fields for Santa Monica High School. The plan also calls for an early childhood center serving infants, toddlers and pre-school age children as well as support facilities for parent and professional development to be constructed within the park setting. The CCSP encourages the development of connections between the high school and Civic Center by strengthening open space linkages and recreational opportunities. The City's FY06-07 Capital Improvement Program included funding to refine the CCSP and proceed with programming and concept design including development of a final use plan for the Civic Auditorium and its surrounding campus.

The CCSP states that “*a more detailed analysis shall be undertaken to establish a specific activity program and financial plan for the ongoing operation and upkeep of the Civic Auditorium. Priority will be given to cultural, educational, and community-oriented activities while preserving opportunities for events that can contribute to the ongoing operation and upkeep of the facility.*”

### *Creative Capital*

In February 2007, the City Council adopted a long-range cultural plan, *Creative Capital* (see [http://arts.santa-monica.org/Santa%20Monica%20Creative%20Capital%20Plan%208-07\\_.pdf](http://arts.santa-monica.org/Santa%20Monica%20Creative%20Capital%20Plan%208-07_.pdf)). *Creative Capital* emphasizes the importance of retention, development and reuse of cultural facilities that reflect the community's unique identity.

*Creative Capital* also identified the need for small, flexible and affordable performance venues (under 500 seats) and visual arts spaces. It specifically labels a number of important cultural facilities/organizations within the City as “threatened” and opens up possible relocation of those facilities to the Civic Center.



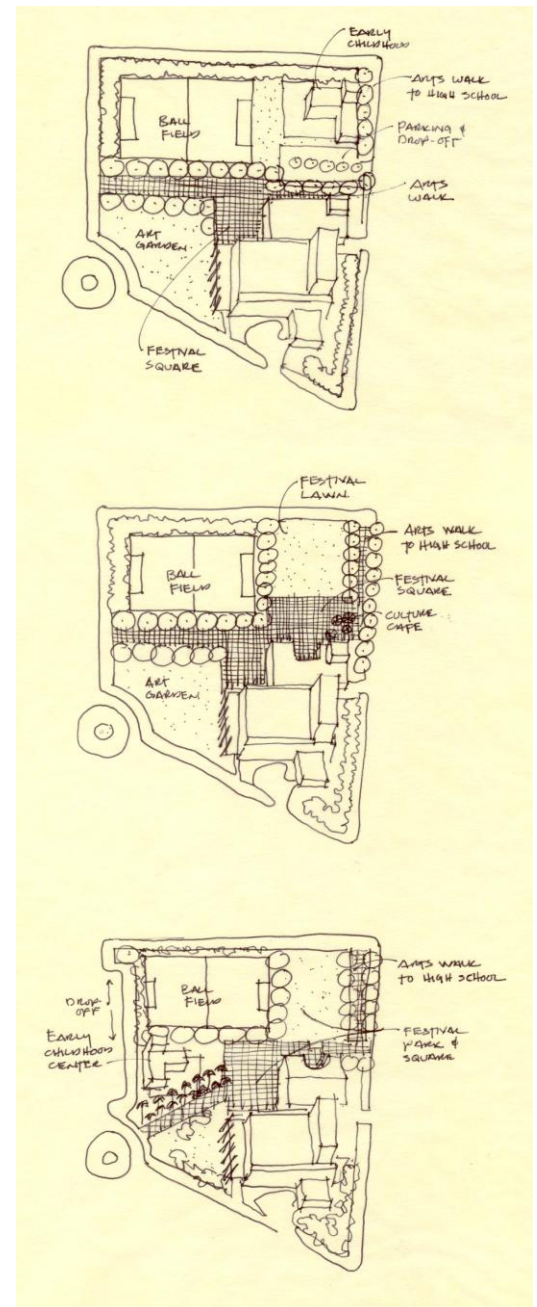
*Creative Capital* committed the City to a cultural use of the Civic Auditorium in line with the community’s vision for this facility. That vision includes the need for significant upgrades to the building and its technical equipment; a desire to see large and small spaces within the Civic Center area and the potential for educational uses.

In regards to the Civic Auditorium, *Creative Capital* suggests that options for its use be evaluated to aid in it what is described as a “complicated decision” regarding the future use of the building. Options for revenue generation and on-going public subsidy need to be considered in the decision-making process. A concert venue model where the Civic Auditorium is leased to a concert promoter was presented. The other model presented was a multi-disciplinary performing, visual arts and educational center. Whether a part of this new model, or just adjacent to, the Civic Auditorium was characterized as “an important anchor.”

*Creative Capital* suggests that the recommendations regarding the Civic Auditorium in the Civic Center Specific Plan be revisited to better accommodate the current cultural uses envisioned by the community. Specifically, it calls for the reevaluation of the 20,000 square foot Civic Auditorium East Wing addition and dedication of the nearby ball field to sports-use.

### ***A Cultural Campus—Land Use near the Civic Auditorium***

*These schematic diagrams illustrate the range of creative solutions available if the City revises the Civic Center Specific Plan to include a cultural campus surrounding the Civic Auditorium. They show ways to accommodate uses currently called for in the Civic Center Specific Plan.*



City of Santa Monica/Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District Joint Use Assessment Report

The 2008 Joint Use Assessment Report, prepared by KoningEizenberg Architecture, studies joint use opportunities on the Civic Center and Santa Monica High campuses with particular emphasis on the viability of cultural and recreational uses.

Key findings include

- Santa Monica High School (Samohi) houses three main cultural facilities including Barnum Hall, the Greek Amphitheater and the Roberts Art Gallery. The Greek, built in 1921, has a seating capacity of 2,500. Barnum Hall, built in 1938 and renovated at the beginning of this decade, seats 1,250.
- The Samohi facilities master plan calls for upgrades to the historic Greek Amphitheater to reinstate its visibility and enhance the venue.
- The Joint Use Report calls for enhanced cultural use for the civic core of Santa Monica.
- There is great deal of community support for the shared use of cultural venues and the links it could build between Samohi, the Civic Center and broader community. Preferred community uses on the Civic campus include art studios/classes, outdoor programming, a museum, and theater(s) (99-350 seats).
- The idea of a 'cultural consortium' akin to UCLA Live was identified – an entity that could establish a coordinated performance season using the Greek, Barnum Hall and the Civic Auditorium.

The entire report is available at:

<http://www01.smgov.net/cityclerk/council/agendas/2008/20080723/s2008072303-A-1.pdf>

## **PARTNERSHIP PARAMETERS**

The City is looking for a firm or organization to:

- Enter into a partnership agreement with the City to ensure ongoing cultural/entertainment programming at the Civic Auditorium.
- Make a capital investment in the Civic Auditorium to upgrade the facility.
- Reserve a certain number of dates for community use.
- Explore potential revenue generation strategies to support the Civic's primary use as a performing arts and concert venue, such as screening rooms, restaurants, facility rental, parking, etc. in order to maximize the public benefit to the community.

The City is interested in exploring the full continuum of options for the Civic Auditorium, from a simple programming partnership where the City would continue to operate the facility, to a much more extensive partnership or even a long-term lease agreement. Parties interested in any aspect of that continuum are encouraged to submit their qualifications.

If a viable partner is approved by the City Council, the City :

- May enter into a multi-year agreement with the qualified partner for the use of the Civic Auditorium
- May make a capital investment to support upgrades to the facility

## **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

The City is seeking outstanding firms or organizations with a demonstrated track record in developing and sustaining public/private partnerships, both fiscally and programmatically. Given that the Civic Auditorium is a local landmark, experience with historic facilities is also desired. Qualified respondents will demonstrate a high level of expertise in developing, programming and operating cultural facilities, as well as an understanding of the unique nature of cultural development, the associated costs, and potential revenue streams and will have a documented history of sound financial management. Qualified firms will demonstrate a clear understanding of this unique opportunity and a willingness to negotiate with the City a partnership agreement that accrues a clear public benefit to Santa Monica. Potential public benefits include but are not limited to a broad range of entertainment options, a strong revenue stream, and affordable access for local arts organizations and other community activities.



## **SELECTION PROCEDURE**

After review of the Qualification Statements, the City will identify the firm(s) or organization(s) whose qualifications and track-record indicate the most potential for a long-term partnership with the City. A staff review committee will evaluate the respondents submittals based on demonstrated experience and degree of innovation, abilities on recent comparable projects, and understanding of the needs of this project. The City may request additional information from respondents or schedule interviews to gather additional information.

Following review of the submittals, staff will report back to City Council on the next step in the process. During this second phase, detailed proposals may be requested from a short-list of qualified firms and/or organizations. Alternatively, staff may request authorization to enter directly into negotiations with one or more firm(s) or organization(s) that best meet the desired qualifications to further explore which partnership and type of management structure will yield the greatest potential public benefit.

The City of Santa Monica has the sole authority to select the firm(s) or organization(s) and reserves the right to reject any and all submittals. By submitting a response to this RFQ, prospective firms or organizations waive the right to protest or seek legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this RFQ. In addition, the City reserves the right to issue written notice to all participants of any changes in the submission schedule or submission requirements, should the City determine in its sole and absolute discretion that such changes are necessary.

### **Submittal Requirements**

The City, in compliance with its Sustainable City Program, encourages the use of recycled and tree-free products. Please do not use plastic bindings, plastic page covers, or laminated pages. To aid in the selection process, please submit eight (8) copies of the Qualifications Statement.

The content of your submittal should include the following in summary form:

#### Firm/Organization Identification

Identify the entity that would contract with the City, including all joint ventures/limited partners. Provide a complete listing of names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and fax numbers for all parties. State the intended role of each development partner.

Identify the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the primary contact person.

#### Project Understanding

Document the respondent's understanding of the opportunities provided by the Civic. Provide a summary of the respondent's approach to a potential partnership with the City. Please provide a description of the general concept of what is envisioned -- in adequate detail to reflect the degree to which the approach reflects the City's goals for the Civic (please refer to the planning documents referenced on pages 4, 5 & 7 of this RFQ in developing this description) and the interests and capabilities of the respondent. This summary should include potential programming options. Detailed proposals are not requested at this time and the requested description should not exceed more than two pages (single-spaced) in length.

#### Personnel / Certifications

List the personnel that would assume key leadership positions in implementing the project. Identify the names and roles of proposed team members who would be working with the City and their certifications/qualifications. Attach resumes and include an organizational chart that reflects reporting relationships.

#### Project Readiness

Provide a potential timeline for planning and implementation if a partnership agreement was reached between the City and the respondent.

#### Project Experience / Reference

Provide adequate examples of partnerships and/or cultural/entertainment venues developed or programmed by the respondent which exhibit the respondent's ability to approach this project with a high level of financial stability, collaboration and creativity. For these exemplary projects, indicate the title, size/scope, location, nature of the partnership, length of time on the project, names of the individuals involved in the project and their roles, name of the client, and e-mail address and telephone number of the client contact.

Detailed financial information or statements are not required at this time. As part of this RFQ please submit only public financial information which represents the firm(s) or organization(s) financial capability. Please do not submit any confidential information at this time.

### **Submission Questions & Due Date**

Questions regarding the RFQ should be directed in writing to Jessica Cusick, Cultural Affairs Manager, Community and Cultural Services; [jessica.cusick@smgov.net](mailto:jessica.cusick@smgov.net). Addenda to the RFQ will be issued with responses to all questions and may be accessed at <http://www01.smgov.net/ccs/projects//index.htm> as well as on the City's webpage where all solicitations are posted at <http://vendors.planetbids.com/SantaMonica/bidsearch4.cfm> up to the due date.

Interested firms can tour the facility on Tuesday June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 am or Monday June 29<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm.

Qualification Statements must be received by mail or hand delivered to the City no later than **5:00 PM on Thursday July 30th, 2009**. All submittals must be sealed and marked "Request for Qualifications for the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium." Qualifications received later than 5:00 pm will not be considered. Deliver to:

The City of Santa Monica  
Attention: Jessica Cusick, Cultural Affairs Manager  
Santa Monica Civic Auditorium  
1855 Main Street, Santa Monica, Ca. 90401  
(310) 458-8551