

**Request for Proposal**  
**Exhibit Planning and Design**  
Proposals due May 4, 2007

Introduction

The Tourism Council of Frederick County (TCFC), Inc. seeks a firm or team to enhance the new Frederick, Maryland Visitor Center. The new center will operate in a rehabilitated 1899 brick cannery warehouse located at the future gateway to Historic Downtown Frederick along the East Street extension to a new I-70 interchange, currently under construction.

*Who we are:*

TCFC is the recognized destination marketing organization for the City of Frederick and Frederick County, Maryland. TCFC is a public-private partnership dedicated to enhancing the economic benefit of tourism for Frederick County's businesses, attractions, local governments, and residents. Key functions include destination marketing, group tour marketing, and operation of the Frederick Visitor Center. Product development activities of TCFC include the Frederick Historic Sites Consortium, the state-certified Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, and management of the Catoctin Mountain National Scenic Byway. TCFC also partners with a variety of other entities on the development and promotion of multi-jurisdictionally heritage tourism product initiatives.

*Purpose of the proposed Visitor Center:*

The Visitor Center is where visitors get information, directions, make reservations and find suggestions on themed travel opportunities and things to do and see in Frederick County. TCFC desires that, in addition to the requisite brochure racks and welcome desk, the new center will include exhibits to highlight attractions, services and amenities of interest to visitors, and help them “get their bearings” with a directional orientation to these sites. The exhibits will help travelers to:

1. Become aware of interesting attractions, recreation, lodging, dining and shopping destinations in Frederick County.
2. Discover enticing stories about Frederick County’s natural and cultural history and the role of the County in the development of the nation – prompting visitors to stay and learn more at the County’s museums, historic sites, parks and other attractions;
3. Think of Frederick County as a destination in itself.
4. Decide to extend their stay in Frederick County, as a base camp for day trips to such nearby destinations as Washington D.C., Baltimore, Gettysburg, Harpers Ferry, and attractions in neighboring counties of the *Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area*.
5. Ask the Visitor Center staff for additional information about areas of interest.

*What has been accomplished to date:*

The Tourism Council purchased the property to be developed as the new Visitor Center from the City of Frederick in December of 2005. Prior to that time, a construction management firm and an architect were hired. Design meetings and public informational/input meetings were held and plans began for adaptive reuse of a 107-year old industrial warehouse to become the new Frederick Visitor Center. State Highway Administration Transportation Enhancement Program funds were secured for building renovation and construction costs.

Concurrent with the development of plans for the structure, a Visitor Center Committee, comprised of Tourism Board members and staff and professionals from the local museum community, has met regularly to conceptualize and fine tune ideas for the exhibits to be installed in the Visitor Center. This process included opportunities for Visitor Center input at public meetings, tours of other Visitor Centers having interpretive elements, and a stakeholders' retreat held in early 2007. The exhibit concept, and a plan for the site, is provided as addenda to this document.

Some funds for exhibit design and fabrication have been secured, which TCFC hopes to augment with grants that are now pending. The final exhibit budget will be determined as plans are finalized and grant funds secured.

Further background information is provided in an addendum to this document.

*What is needed now?*

The Tourism Council of Frederick County seeks to work with a qualified firm or team to plan and design interior and exterior exhibit installations at the new Frederick Visitor Center. The main interior exhibit space is 2,200 square feet. While an exhibit concept exists, we seek the consultant's expertise as the concept is finalized and remain open to suggestions. The exhibit consultant will proactively direct and manage exhibit design, development, fabrication and installation for exhibits highlighting geographic features, cultural and heritage attractions, as well as visitor services and amenities in Frederick County. The Visitor Center exhibit will capitalize on the location of the Visitor Center along two National Scenic Byways, the Historic National Road and the Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway, and several other heritage routes including more State Scenic Byways and Civil War Trails. This exhibit will provide context for visitor opportunities throughout the City of Frederick and Frederick County.

The exhibit planner/designer will work under the direction of the TCFC, specifically guided by the Visitor Center Committee to achieve project goals while coordinating successfully with the Visitor Center architect and construction manager.

## Scope of Work

- ② Work with the Visitor Center Committee to finalize the exhibit concept, including desired multi-media components, design exhibits, and produce specifications for exhibit design.
- ② Work with TCFC staff and the Visitor Center committee to identify content to identify and verify content assets (text, images and objects) for exhibits; exhibit content will be compatible with the orientation video now in development for the multi-media center.
- ② While TCFC staff and/or selected volunteers will write exhibit text, as agreed upon in consultation with the exhibit consultant, the exhibit consultant will edit all text for style and re-write as necessary for the exhibit text to project a consistent voice.
- ② Act on behalf of TCFC to procure image rights as necessary.
- ② Create and manage a master schedule, coordinated with the designer, architect and construction project manager, to identify, create, review, approve and deliver content assets to the exhibit fabricator.
- ② Requirements for exhibit design include:
  - Besides the main exhibit space, consideration should be given to interpretive or display elements to be displayed in the restroom corridor, and on wall space in the multimedia room.
  - Plan interpretive and display elements to be aesthetically compatible with the Visitor Center reception desk and a small area to be developed for retail display.
  - The design plan will include detailed floor plans, perspective drawings, and a written description of the space with specific information regarding any proposed technology. The exhibit space is 2,200 square feet.
  - Exterior building signage should ideally be coordinated with the wayfinding consultant soon to be engaged to develop a downtown Frederick wayfinding signage plan.
  - Exterior interpretive panels, to be placed in the Visitor Center pedestrian plaza, highlighting the industrial history of the neighborhood, will also be included.
  - The “Frederick County History Bell,” a 23” diameter, 250 lb bronze bell must also be incorporated into the pedestrian plaza design, including the construction of a bell tower, gazebo, or some other protective shelter for the bell.
  - Exhibit components will be available to the public daily and will include brochure racks, illustrated interpretive panels, murals, interactive displays, three dimensional props and/or artifacts and touch screens, computer kiosks and other display technology.
  - Provide all graphics, including reproductions, illustrations, banners or headings.
  - Develop detailed cost estimates for the exhibit that are specific to design features and technologies.

- Provide information on materials used in the exhibit, including manufacture, color, lot numbers, etc. as well as users guides and maintenance information. List requirements to keep the exhibit up to date with interactive elements running properly.
- ② Work with TCFC to accept bids for exhibit fabrication and installation, and oversee same.
- ② Oversee subcontractors, exhibit fabrication and installation.
- ② Provide renderings suitable for fundraising, grant proposals and public awareness campaigns.
- ② Provide information sufficient to assist in creating RFP's for technology components, including audio/video equipment.
- ② Plan for the following meetings, and provide cost for additional meetings:
  - Introductory meeting with staff and Visitor Center Committee; concept to date will be explained.
  - Meeting subsequent to arrival of the first deliverable, draft specifications with placeholders for exhibit text.
  - Meeting to finalize exhibit specifications.
- ② Be available by telephone and email to support management of the exhibit project.
- ② Document the exhibit project with a written report including before, during and after photographs.

#### Project Schedule:

Proposals are due May 4, 2007 and will be reviewed no later than May 18, 2007. The Exhibit consultant must be available to begin work by July 1, 2007. This exhibit must be open to the public in early 2009. Revisions, repairs, and adjustments must be completed no later than 120-days after the opening of the exhibit.

#### Proposal Submission Requirements:

All proposals submitted for evaluation must include, but are not limited to, the following information:

- ② Firm or individual's qualifications – Provide a brief description of background, focus of work, scope and nature of services routinely provided to clients, resumes for key personnel, particularly those involved in this project; Listing of completed projects – Provide the name of the client, contact person, current contact information, brief description of the project and services performed.
- ② Knowledge of developing tourism-related exhibits - address your qualifications for designing a tourist experience that will highlight tourism attractions.
- ② A statement describing the firm or individual's familiarity with the Mid-Atlantic region, particularly the history and geography of Frederick County, Maryland.
- ② Proposed approach – Describe how this project will be approached according to the scope of work listed here. Describe design philosophy and how it will be

- applied to this project. Describe how you will work with TCFC staff to meet the needs of the project.
- ② Project management – Describe your past project management experience and how you are qualified to manage an exhibit project in the context of a larger construction project. List organizations and partners that will help facilitate the building and installation of this exhibit.
  - ② Project schedule – Describe the past experience in meeting tight deadlines. Explain how challenges were met in order to meet deadlines on a previous project.
  - ② Fee
    - Please provide a proposed fee for all services based on the scope of work described in this RFP, inclusive of all subcontractors' costs.
    - Provide a fee schedule.
    - Provide the normal hourly rate for all principals and staff who would be designated to work on this project. If different, provide the hourly rate used in the calculation of the fee proposed for this project.
    - List anticipated reimbursable expenses and the rate charged for each without markup.
    - If any, indicate other fees or charges not included above
  - ② Sample of an actual agreement (with proposal) for a comparable project you have worked on in the past.

Proposals may have written material but may also include illustrations, photographs, PowerPoint presentation, or video.

Submission of Proposals:

Proposals will be accepted until noon, Monday, May 4, 2007. Five bound copies and one unbound copy of the proposal must be sent to:

Visitor Center Exhibit Planning Committee  
Tourism Council of Frederick County  
19 E. Church Street  
Frederick, MD 21701

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to John Fieseler at (301) 600-4041, [jfieseler@freco-md.net](mailto:jfieseler@freco-md.net), or Elizabeth Scott Shatto (301) 600-4042, [lshatto@fredco-md.net](mailto:lshatto@fredco-md.net).

All costs associated with preparing and submitting this proposal will be borne by the bidder and will become the property of the Tourism Council of Frederick County, Inc. TCFC reserves the right to stop the selection process at any time if it is considered to be in the best interests of the Tourism Council. TCFC also reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted. A binding agreement between TCFC and any bidder shall be dependent upon the negotiation, drafting and execution of a formal contract.

Late submissions will be returned to submitter unopened.

### Evaluation

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the Tourism Council Executive Director and designated Visitor Center Committee members on or before May 18, 2007. Bidders are asked to be available for discussions on May 18, 2007. Discussions may be conducted with bidders but proposals may be accepted without such discussions.

### ADDENDA

#### Background and Goals:

The Tourism Council of Frederick County will carry out rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of an approximately 105-year old industrial warehouse to be converted into a new Frederick Visitor Center along the Historic National Road corridor. Construction will begin in mid-2007 and is anticipated by late 2008.

The structure fronts on the extension of East Street in Frederick being constructed by the MD State Highway Administration to link downtown Frederick, including the MARC commuter rail station across East Street from the project site, to a planned new interchange at I-70/US 40 just south of the Frederick Towne Historic District. The project is planned to coincide with the opening of the new access road and interchange currently planned for late 2008.

The brick structure was built on the site of the Frederick Spoke Factory at the end of the 19th century, just as the spoke manufacturing facility was ceasing operation and the Monocacy Valley Canning Company was being established on the property. For most of its existence the structure served as warehouse for the packing company. The site is on the section of South East Street that serves as a segment of the eastbound route of the Historic National Road (HNR), designated by the Federal Highway Administration as an All American Road in the National Scenic Byways program. This portion of South East Street connects the eastbound HNR byway, which follows South Street in Frederick parallel to the downtown portion of Patrick Street (which carries HNR traffic one-way westbound), back with East Patrick Street at the point where two-way traffic resumes at the eastern edge of the Frederick Towne Historic District.

The site's 19th-century heritage as home of a spoke factory, coupled with Frederick's location as the hub from which regional Scenic Byways and other heritage tourism routes emerge like spokes on a wheel, inspired the initial design concept and organizational framework for the informational exhibits and displays that will be the focal point of the project. The main interior exhibit space is a 2,200 square foot area. Other interior spaces that may include interpretive or display elements are the restroom corridor, and wall space in the multimedia room. Outside, a pedestrian plaza, partially walled, may be used for interpretive markers or plaques concerning the industrial history of the Visitor Center

neighborhood. This is where the Frederick County History Bell will be installed in a protective structure to be designed and constructed as a part of this project.

The building contractor will provide wiring to the exhibition spaces.

### Exhibit Content

The location of the Visitor Center and the history of the site, suggest the focus of exhibit content. The exhibit will capitalize on Frederick's location at the hub of a network of highways that fan out like the spokes of a wheel, including the other National Scenic Byway that passes through Frederick - the *Catoctin Mountain Highway* (US15), which is part of a larger heritage corridor dubbed the *Journey Through Hallowed Ground* extending from Gettysburg, PA to Charlottesville, VA; and the *Old Main Streets* State Scenic Byway. Through these byways the center is linked to the C & O Canal Route, the *Catoctin Mountain Loop*, and the *Atlantic to Appalachians* State Scenic Byways.

Through these routes, access is provided to a great range of historic, cultural and natural resources, including State and National parks, battlefields, and more. Likewise, two of Maryland's Civil War Trails, the *Antietam Campaign – Lee Invades Maryland and Gettysburg – Invasion & Retreat (Union Advance)* driving tours pass through downtown Frederick and the site is central to the three-county *Heart of the Civil War Maryland Heritage Area* recently certified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. As such, the site is an ideal location from which to provide tourist information for travelers along these Scenic Byways and heritage routes.

The center will also provide information related to the State-designated *Arts & Entertainment District* in Frederick; the *Maryland Main Street* program communities of Brunswick, Mount Airy, Thurmont and Frederick; the *Monocacy River Water Trails* that are part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network; and regional parks and attractions.

In addition to maps, brochures, and displays highlighting regional attractions and amenities, the center will provide interpretation relevant to the industrial heritage of the site and historic transportation networks. For example, the historic use of the site marked the point where, for decades, local agricultural produce was brought in by wagon along the National Road, packed and shipped out by railroad or truck. Adjacent canneries, tanneries, a stockyard, coal yards, shutter fastener manufacturing, and the Frederick Brick Works made up this industrial neighborhood just south of the Historic National Road along Carroll Creek and the B & O Railroad.

### Exhibit Concept and Exhibit Treatment Ideas

The information and display area will be laid out like spokes on a wheel. This arrangement will not only evoke the site's early industrial heritage, it also facilitates a geographic representation of the many Scenic Byways and heritage routes that converge at Frederick, like spokes, plus the surrounding communities and attractions.

Each of seven spokes will represent a byway, road or corridor in Frederick County. The spokes will be aligned as closely as possible to the true geographic orientation of the road they represent. Spokes will provide interpretive text and graphics, and may represent topography or other compelling features of the landscape in both two and three-dimensional form. Additionally, they may be inset with cases to display appropriate artifacts or props. The spoke design should include a method for displaying attraction brochures in proximity of where the attraction is located along each byway, road or corridor. Additionally, spokes will be designed to store visitor center literature.

At the center of the spokes, a circular hub will interpret the City of Frederick, including the historic downtown with museums, historic sites, and other attractions. Various treatments are being considered, ranging from a static three-dimensional model or a simple interactive map utilizing LEDs and pushbuttons, to a video display.

Wedge-shaped exhibit components will be interspersed between the spokes and provide an opportunity to group literature and other information according to topic or theme, such as dining, lodging, outdoor recreation, museums, etc. (topics to be determined). They will be more brochure-heavy than the spokes, which will include more interpretive elements. Like the spokes, the wedges will be designed with space to store literature.

Together, the spokes, hub and wedges will provide the opportunity for exhibits and displays interpreting and providing tourist information, brochures, maps, etc. to motorists traveling the Scenic Byways, heritage routes, and driving tours, or intercepting them as they arrive in Frederick. The exhibit should help to orient the visitor who, having arrived in Frederick, will be enticed to stay longer and explore further. Cross-promotion will also be an outcome of the exhibition. For example, motorists traveling one scenic byway route will not only become aware of all that there is to see and do along the way, they will also learn about the other routes that intersect in Frederick.

The height of the exhibit space should be taken into consideration in selecting props, artifacts and other display objects. In addition to smaller objects that may be encased in the spoke elements, some larger props may be suspended or installed. For example, several covered bridge models are available and life-size models or cut out figures could be planned. Iconic images, such as the figure of Francis Scott Key from the FSK Monument at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, or Barbara Fritchie waving the U.S. flag from an upper window should be considered.

Upon entering the Visitor Center, visitors should be immersed in a scene that immediately engages them. Wall murals may help to accomplish this. One option is to place images on the wall that serve as extensions of the corresponding spokes and suggest how Frederick is a hub for byways that ultimately reach other destinations such as Washington DC, Baltimore, Gettysburg, etc. A compass rose motif is also suggested, perhaps set into the floor.

The architect and construction manager are responsible for design and installation of the Visitor Center reception desk and a limited retail display area to be located along the

curved wall that separates the multi-media room from the exhibit space. This wall will be devoted to a small retail display, for books, postcards, small souvenirs, tote bags and tee shirts. The exhibit planner/designer will coordinate with the architect and construction manager to assure that the exhibit is aesthetically compatible with the desk and retail space.

For the pedestrian plaza, one or more interpretive markers telling the story of the industrial history of the neighborhood should be planned. In design, they should be compatible with the National Road and Civil War Trails Markers that are already installed throughout the City of Frederick.

Finally, the exhibit should reflect the rustic feel of this 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial site. The rehabilitation of the structure is planned with this goal in mind. For example, the trusses will be cleaned and refinished as they will be exposed over the display and exhibit area of the visitor center. Ceilings and attic flooring will be removed to architecturally expose and articulate the roof trusses of the building. In addition to the exposed wood trusses, the proposed adaptive reuse of the interior calls for cleaning, repairing and exposing the interiors of the brick walls of the structure. Exhibit design should be compatible with the exposed brick walls and roof trusses of this former warehouse.