

# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

*Building a Tactical Revitalization Plan for Downtown Albany, NY*

December 14, 2012

RFQ prepared by Capitalize Albany Corporation

“There is no comparison to the energy of Downtown. Our clients, who come from across the State, are always impressed with the character and vitality of our neighborhood.”

Ryan T. Donovan, Esq.  
Harris, Conway & Donovan  
Downtown Office Tenant



CAPITALIZE ALBANY  
CORPORATION

#### What is Capitalize Albany Corporation?

Capitalize Albany Corporation is a registered 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization which implements programs and resources that create, retain, and attract business in the City of Albany.

Capitalize Albany Corporation achieves this through its facilitation of transformational development projects identified as priorities by the corporation's planning efforts, such as the "Capitalize Albany" initiative - the City of Albany's economic development strategy.

Founded in 1979, as the Albany Local Development Corporation, the organization changed its name in 2009 to better reflect its role as an economic development engine in the capital city. Capitalize Albany Corporation is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of regional business, financial and academic leaders with the power to control and manage the affairs and assets of the Corporation.

The Corporation operates as a self-sufficient entity with funding for its activities derived from several sources including loan repayments and recapitalization, real estate and project development revenues, fees for services, grant proceeds, and membership dues.

# Introduction

Capitalize Albany Corporation, with the assistance of its project partners, is seeking an innovative multi-disciplinary consultant team to 1) craft a clear vision for the revitalization of downtown Albany, 2) develop a detailed tactical revitalization plan, and 3) provide preliminary assistance with the implementation of the plan to ensure the achievement of the vision.

The first step in the multi-step process to select the consultant team is the issuance of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The purpose of the RFQ is to 1) ascertain qualifications of each potential team as it pertains to their experience with detailed plan development and implementation for revitalizations of downtowns, and 2) obtain an expression of interest and general information from each potential team as it pertains to recommended strategies and processes for plan development and implementation. The information provided by each respondent will not only be used to select the finalists that will participate in a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP), but will ensure that the RFP has a solid framework – a major component that will affect the overall success of the endeavor.

Summertime event at the Hudson Riverfront Park



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# Welcome to Downtown Albany

The heart of the Capital District and New York's Tech Valley -  
Innovative Companies, Vibrant Activities, Valuable Opportunities

Albany, the capital of the Empire State and the heart of New York's Capital District, is much more than a star on a map. It is a collection of unique, vibrant neighborhoods with a deep rooted history and an exciting future. The historic City is an anchor of New York's Tech Valley and a global center of nanotechnology, situated along the beautiful Hudson River and conveniently amid the Northeast's largest and most economically promising cities. Along with state and local government, Albany – specifically downtown – is home to numerous world class businesses including regional headquarters of financial institutions, law firms, and Fortune 500 companies.

In recent years Downtown Albany has seen more than \$200 million in commercial development and a dramatic increase in vibrancy and foot traffic. This investment, in turn, has spurred the development of more than \$35 million of new residential units in the City's urban core.

Such growth, especially during one of the toughest economic times since the Great Depression, is the result of strong commitments made by both the public and private sector. Both sectors are redoubling their focus on the central business district and seeking ways to further their commitment to continue to grow Downtown Albany into a vibrant 24/7 urban neighborhood, a strong regional center of business, and an exciting entertainment destination.

While Downtown has been making significant and steady progress, it is undoubtedly at a pivotal moment in its transformation. City stakeholders have taken a significant step by recognizing that immediate action is necessary to obtain a unified vision, address underlying issues, and build upon opportunities as they relate to the revitalization of Downtown. Instituting an actionable tactical plan supported by City stakeholders would offer the necessary framework that would not only guide

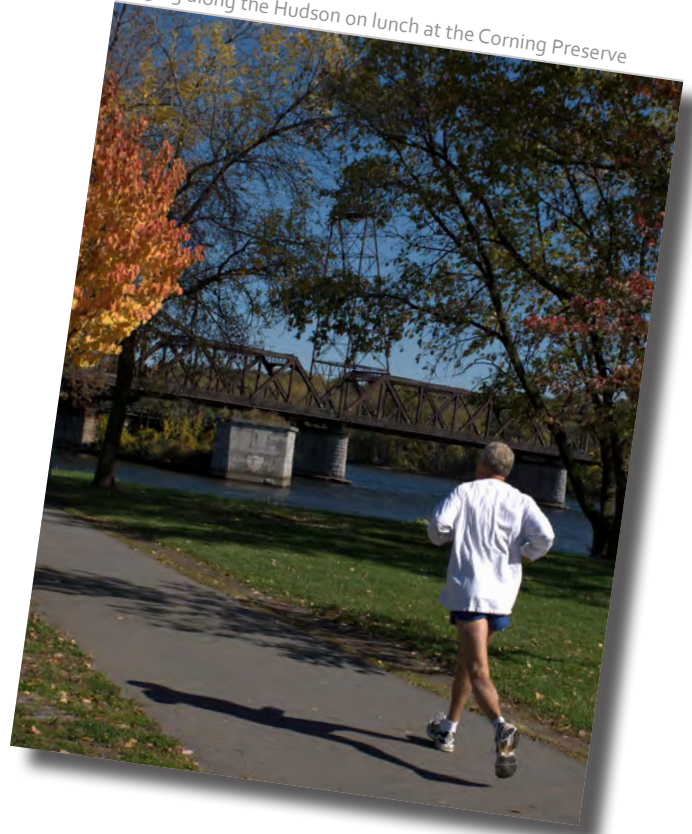
Lunch time on North Pearl St.



Painting in Tricentennial Park at Union Station



Jogging along the Hudson on lunch at the Corning Preserve



future revitalization efforts, but ensure that Downtown continues to move toward realizing its full potential as the Region's downtown.

To make this possible, Capitalize Albany Corporation and select key partners will oversee a process designed by the multi-disciplinary consultant team to engage multiple stakeholder groups – including local government, private sector, philanthropists and citizens. The appropriate type and amount of involvement by stakeholders is imperative to creating a truly comprehensive plan that will usher in the strong partnership necessary to ensure success during the implementation stage of the plan.

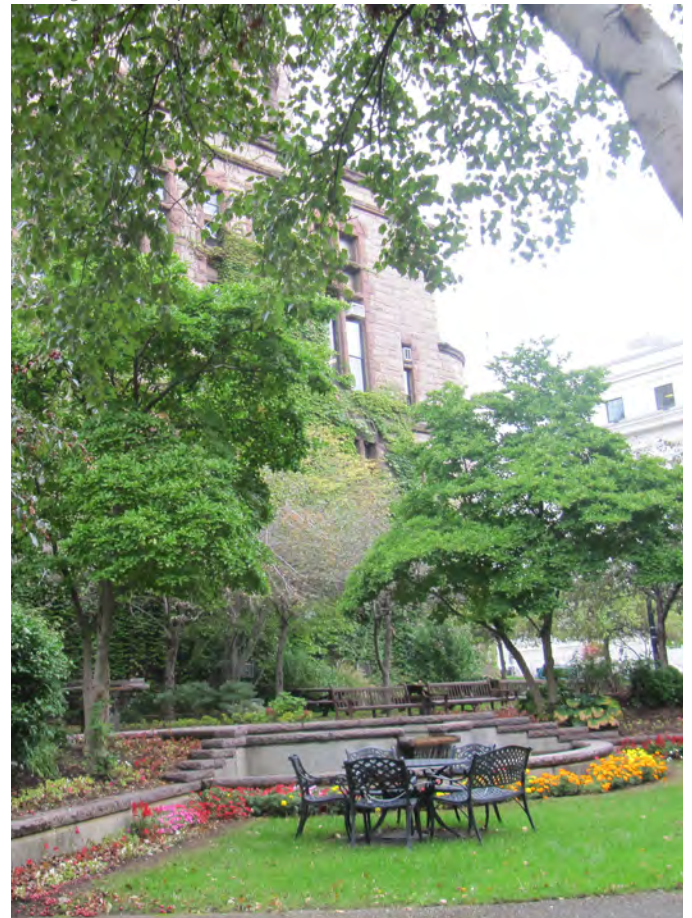
Therefore, it is crucial that the multi-disciplinary consultant team possess a clear understanding of the desired results set forth in this RFQ, and the RFP to follow, as it makes determinations on what is important, what solutions are

available, and what is feasible as it pertains to both the process to create the plan and the plan itself.

Alive at 5 concert at the Hudson Riverfront Park

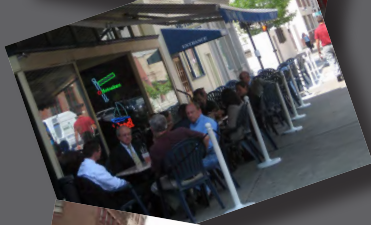


Corning Park at City Hall



# Downtown at a Glance

Everything you need to know about your Albany's newest neighborhood.



## Downtown Albany - Everything Here.

With more than 300 businesses and services - ranging from financial institutions, to architecture and engineering firms, to startup software companies, to independent retail shops, to government and finance - Downtown Albany has everything just steps away from your new front door.

### Diversify Lunch.

- 85+ Restaurants, taverns & eateries
- Seven coffee shops
- More than a dozen banks
- Ten salons and barbers
- Pedestrian bridge to Riverfront Park
- Specialty, clothing & retail stores
- Six art galleries

### Celebrate Convenience.

- More than a dozen banks
- US Post Office
- Copy centers
- Pharmacy
- Dry cleaning
- Six hotels and inns
- 17 public parking lots/garages

### Be Active.

- Hudson River Bike/Hike Trail
- Weekly farmer's market
- Albany Devils hockey
- Siena Basketball
- Four full-service fitness centers
- Two travel agencies
- Albany Rowing Center

### Get Out After Five.

- Alive at Five Concert Series
- Capital Repertory Theatre
- Palace Theatre
- Times Union Center
- Restaurant Week
- First Fridays gallery tours
- Sculpture in the Streets
- Networking events

## In Good Company

- 250 Companies
- 11 Fortune 500 Companies
- Top 3 SBA Lenders
- 3 of Top 5 CPA Firms
- 5 of Top 10 Financial Planning/Advisory Firms
- 4 of Top 10 Stockbrokerage Firms
- 2 of Top 5 Commercial Mortgage Lenders
- 6 of Top 10 & 17 of Top 50 Law Firms
- 3 of Top 8 Intellectual Property Law Firms
- 9 of the top 10 Lobbying Firms

## Superlatives

America's Best Places to Raise a Family : Forbes  
#9 - Albany-Schenectady-Troy

Best Bang-for-the-Buck Cities: Forbes  
#30 - Albany-Schenectady-Troy

Green Cities Index: American City Business Journals  
#10 - Albany

Best Markets for Young Adults: Portfolio.com  
#24 - Albany

Strongest Performing Metro Areas: Brookings  
Top 25 - Albany

### Did you know?

Located along the banks of the historic Hudson River, Downtown Albany is easily accessible via a system of major highways and state and local arterials, including I-787, I-87 and I-90 and Routes 9, 20 and 85. Albany boasts one of the shortest driving commutes, averaging 21 minutes.

Downtown Albany is the pulse of Tech Valley, a region ranked Number One for Green Jobs per Capita by The Business Review's Green Cities Index, Top 25 for small business vitality by American City Business Journals Inc., and Top 15 of America's Most Innovative Cities by Forbes Magazine.

With businesses ranging from regional headquarters of financial institutions and law firms to independently owned retail shops and startup software companies, downtown Albany offers a diverse and electrifying business atmosphere.

Whether you are starting a business, relocating, or expanding your current business, downtown Albany is ideally situated at the center of government, technology, entertainment, and culture.

Downtown Albany is where you will find unparalleled access to labor, transportation, technology, and services, as well as history, entertainment and fine dining making Downtown Albany the center of opportunity in New York State and the Northeast.

### Albany's Newest Neighborhood

Downtown is buzzing with new activity 24/7 due to the recent boom in residential development. The Capital City's central business district is home to more than 200 new residential units, with more in the pipeline - drawing young professionals, empty nesters and everyone in between.

Downtown apartments and condos are filling up as soon as they become available, with an impressive 97% occupancy rate and waiting lists for the most desirable addresses. Developers are looking for new opportunities to add to the \$35 million of private residential development recently invested.



“ARAMARK has made Downtown Albany our home for the last 21 years, as our office location is a convenient walk to all the amenities that we find important to a business. Our employees enjoy having a wide selection of dining, entertainment and hotel establishments a block or two away.”

John Mikullitz

Northeast Director, Engineering Solutions-ARAMARK  
Downtown Office Tenant



# Background

## Building upon a currently instituted framework

Up to this point, a detailed plan specific to only Downtown's boundaries has not been undertaken or instituted. Even without such a plan Downtown has been, and will continue to be, shaped by other local plans and previous successful initiatives. It is these plans and initiatives that have provided the general framework that has helped to guide new businesses and investment, along with other applicable resources, into Downtown.

A significant guiding force is the Capitalize Albany Plan – the Albany's citywide economic development strategy. The initial plan was released in 1996 after a two year committee-driven effort that involved the input of business and community leaders, as well as key City stakeholders. The Plan recognized the health of Downtown as being a significant factor in the overall welfare of the City. It called for the diversification of Downtown to include a more vibrant mix of businesses, residential, retail, cultural, and waterfront recreation. Since its release in the mid-nineties, the Capitalize Albany Committee has reconvened and updated the strategy twice.

The impact and results of the Capitalize Albany Plan have yielded tremendous benefits – with more than \$200 million of investment in Downtown to date. The Hudson waterfront, which due to the placement of Interstate 787 once required a trip by car from downtown, is now just a walk across the Hudson River Way Pedestrian Bridge. With the addition of such amenities as an 800 seat outdoor amphitheater, educational visitor center, and bike trails tens of thousands of people are finding their way back to this City treasure annually.

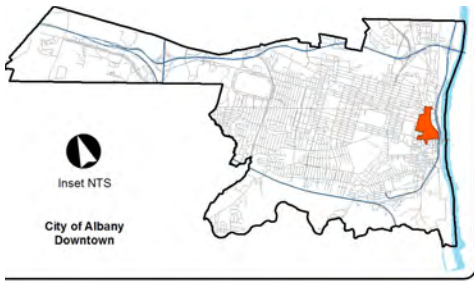
The Albany Plan brought thousands of daytime employees downtown through the construction of new class A office space and a renewed commitment from New York State. Another notable success story is downtown residential development which has seen remarkable progress over the past five years. Downtown is now home to more than 200 new residential units with an investment value of more than \$35 million. With these new apartments and condos filling up – boasting an impressive 97% occupancy rate – the pipeline of projects continues to grow. These pivotal projects and others are illustrated in the Downtown Investment Map on page 7.

Despite these positive trends, Downtown Albany still faces challenges similar to all mid-size northeastern cities. Because much of the building stock in Downtown is historic, it is difficult to accommodate modern floor plates and layouts, leaving Downtown with a glut of vacant Class B and C office space. While Class A space is performing well, the commercial market is competing with regional suburban amenities and lower costs - not the least of which are perceptions related to parking. Additionally, retail tenants, while increasing, have been slower than desired to move back into Downtown. Although a number of large projects that were stalled by the global financial collapse several years ago are back under development, the construction of Albany's convention center has yet to be green-lighted. This major project, and the significant development site assembled for it, presents challenges and opportunities for the next phase of Downtown transformation.

Going forward, Downtown will also be affected by the City's first comprehensive plan. Adopted in 2012, Albany 2030 built a framework for the City's future based on extensive research and innovative approaches to community input over a three-year advisory board-guided process. The Plan will be used to guide local (re)development and (re)investment in a manner that meets the needs of residents, businesses and other stakeholders while maintaining and elevating the City's character, quality of life, and environmental and fiscal health. In addition to the revitalization expected to occur as a result of Albany 2030's implementation, its guiding principles and goals must be taken into account for future initiatives and development throughout the City.

Therefore, it is important that the multi-disciplinary consultant team possess a clear understanding of these plans – as well as plans associated with the diverse neighborhoods surrounding Downtown – and their potential effect/ influence on the creation and implementation of the tactical plan for Downtown.





### Investment Map

- Commercial Investment (\$272 M)
- Residential / Mixed Use Investment (\$35 M)
- Other Public Investment
- Downtown
- Street Rehabilitation

# Tactical Plan Area

## Capturing the potential of Albany's urban core

The scope of this plan will include the greater Downtown Albany area, which builds upon the boundaries of the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District. The plan area includes the City's historic central business district as well as incorporating the Hudson riverfront and increasingly active North Warehouse district – two unique opportunities to increase the vitality of the plan area and grow the tax base.

Within the boundaries lie new commercial office buildings; significant historic architecture; centers of state, county and local government; diverse arts and entertainment destinations; world-class dining establishments; newly-developed residential offerings; parks and recreation facilities; and access to the Hudson River. The plan area also includes several exciting development opportunity sites and underutilized buildings with potential for re-use. The plan will identify these sites and suggest strategies for their redevelopment.

Downtown Albany is surrounded by the historic, mixed-use neighborhoods of Arbor Hill, Sheridan Hollow, Capitol Hill, Center Square and the South End. The connections between these neighborhoods and Downtown will be recognized by the plan, and recommendations for maximizing the neighborhoods' relationships to the plan area will be made.

The Downtown Albany tactical plan Preliminary Map (page 9) illustrates the study area, surrounding neighborhoods, and key nodes and corridors within the district. The Downtown Investment Map (page 7) highlights major projects developed or underway throughout Downtown that will serve as the foundation for future revitalization.

Convention Center site



Merry Monk Pub



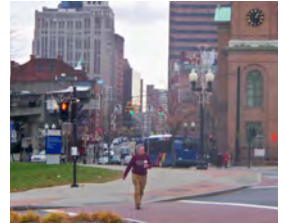
Historic State St.



C.H. Evans Pump Station Brewery



North Pearl St.



Aerial view of Downtown looking west


# Preliminary Map

 Downtown Albany Tactical Plan Area

 Key Node  
Significant Site/  
Area of Interest

 Connection of Interest

*Neighborhood* Surrounding Neighborhood

 Neighborhood Connection



# Expectations for the Tactical Plan

Building inspiring strategies for maximizing & achieving Downtown's potential

It is expected that the breadth and depth desired for this plan will require a dynamic, multi-disciplinary team capable of providing bold, creative and actionable recommendations that honor Downtown Albany's rich history, capitalize on current momentum and maximize its future potential as the heart of New York State's "Tech Valley." The plan will bring Downtown's diverse stakeholders together to build a vision for the plan area's future and commit to strategies that will achieve cross-sector success.

The tactical plan will be an inspiring document that, through its implementation, will position Downtown's future as the ideal, sustainable urban center – a strong economic hub, a vibrant neighborhood and a modern, dynamic destination. The objectives and strategies built into the plan should target attracting a new generation of talent and organizations in addition to its focus on the strengthening and revitalizing the built environment. The plan will capitalize on the City's 400-year history and its inherent assets, while identifying a target niche that appeals to modern, urban sensibilities and maximizes local impact of Tech Valley's technological boom.

Implementation of the plan will create a sustainable environment that grows the tax base and attracts and retains workforce talent and commercial enterprises; young professionals, families and empty-nesters; residential developers; new businesses and retailers; and entertainment venues. The action-oriented plan will strengthen Downtown's identity and economic vitality through the following key components:

## Long-Range Vision

While the majority of this plan's focus is expected to be on detailed, action-oriented strategies to achieve the goals developed by the planning process, the plan should include and be guided by a long-range vision for Downtown Albany. Since the inception of the Capitalize Albany economic development strategy nearly 20 years ago, revitalization efforts in Downtown have shown tremendous results. This plan should serve as the blueprint of how to build from these successes and define what Downtown should be striving toward throughout the next decade. In other words, this plan should not only show Downtown Albany how to take its renaissance to the next level – it will also define what the next level should be.

One of Downtown's premier galleries



State St. offices



Palace Theatre marquee



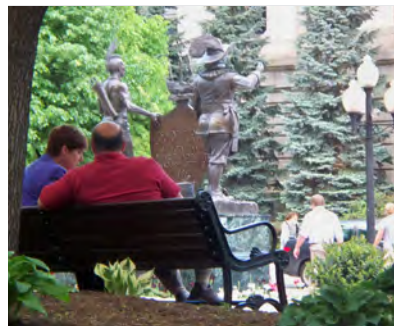
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Jack's Oyster House on historic State Street



Broadway



Tricentennial Park



Olde English Pub at Quackenbush Square

## Market Driven Recommendations

While public sector involvement remains a critical component of Downtown's revitalization, the private sector has been identified as the main driver for future efforts. The plan will assess current market conditions and existing stakeholders and provide development options for ambitious, large-scale anchor projects on sites identified as opportunities. The plan will also identify ways to jump-start private sector investment through the development of incentives that will maximize return on public investment. These projects and incentives must be based on realistic market capture rates and sound market research.

## Community Engagement

Like any central business district, Downtown Albany is composed of diverse stakeholders in all sectors. The success of this plan will depend on buy-in from these stakeholders earned through a transparent and participatory process. It is anticipated that the process will be guided by both a steering committee as well as a diverse advisory committee selected for their expertise, however efforts must be made to include the insight of the wider downtown community. The vision for Downtown should be built from the input of these stakeholders, and proposed strategies should include defined roles for these constituents. Creative opportunities for stakeholder input should be available throughout the planning process.

## Clear and Concise Objectives and Strategies

The completed plan will incorporate best practices in economic development and downtown revitalization, but should also provide an assessment of regional competitors for retail, office, residential and destination tenants. This analysis should include assessments of assistance and incentives offered; parking availability, cost and structure; promotional and marketing efforts; and cross-sector performance. The plan will describe lessons to be learned from this assessment as well as niches that can be filled in a region saturated with revitalizing downtowns.

## Comparative Analysis of the Competition

The plan is expected to have both breadth and depth in order to set a vision to strive for, as well as clear actionable objectives and strategies that will help Downtown's stakeholders reach that vision. The strategies outlined in the final plan must go beyond generalized suggestions. These detailed strategies will have a significant level of buy-in from the community, generated through the engagement process, and will be presented in an understandable and results-oriented manner enabling them to be executed swiftly and efficiently.

## Implementation Plan

The implementation plan is a critical component of the final product. The implementation plan will outline prioritized, actionable strategies that define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. The implementation plan will be results-oriented and detail a step-by-step framework for execution of the strategies. This element will also define any ongoing development role for the consultant team in plan implementation.

### Desired Potential Components

Financial Assistance Options: tax incentives, project financing, grants

Development Projects: infrastructure, commercial, residential and public space

Marketing and Promotion Strategies: placemaking, attraction, identity

Quality of Life Strategies: safety, maintenance, arts, entertainment and events

Labor & Talent Objectives: target market attraction, retention, development

## Fiscal Responsibilities

This plan will be a bold, aggressive and creative roadmap to achieve dramatic and transformational results in Downtown Albany, while proposing an executable, action-oriented strategy for implementation. It, therefore, must strategically plan for efficient use of limited public resources and maximize leveraging of private investment. The plan will develop a funding strategy for the proposed objectives, projects and strategies through analysis of existing tools and development resources and recommendations for the type and structure of future financing tools and development incentives.

# Submittal Requirements

All responses to the RFQ shall include the following information:

- Profile of multi-disciplinary team, including indication of the lead firm, the role of each firm on the team, and an organizational chart
- Information on each firm of multi-disciplinary team, including the name of the firm, year established, and a brief resume for the firm's principals
- Description of multi-disciplinary teams qualifications for the development of a downtown revitalization tactical plan, including a description of relevant experience on similar projects for each firm on the team
- Names and contact information for specific staff members who are anticipated to be assigned to the project by each firm, their role in the project, and a detailed resume listing their individual work experience in this role on similar projects
- A minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last three (3) years
- General description of recommended approaches, processes and deliverables for the tactical plan based on the premises described above, including a recommended general timeline for the completion of the consultant team's recommended deliverables.

All information submitted becomes property of Capitalize Albany Corporation. The Corporation reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFQ as well as make modifications to the RFQ during the proposal preparation period. Once submitted, the consultant team (including specific staff assigned to the project) may not be changed without written notice to and consent of the Corporation. All costs incurred in the preparation of the submittal and participation in the selection process is the sole responsibility of the consultant team.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the consultant, its agents and assigns shall defend, indemnify, and save harmless Capitalize Albany Corporation, its officers, employees and agents, from and against all claims, actions, causes of action, injuries, damages, losses, liabilities, and expenses (including, without limitation, reasonable attorney's fees and court costs) or other liabilities of any kind and character which arise out of or result from work under this engagement, other than claims for Capitalize Albany Corporation's own negligence. This indemnification shall survive the expiration or earlier termination of this engagement.

Respondents should submit one (1) digital copy (PDF), one (1) printed original and fifteen (15) printed copies of the submittal by 5:00 p.m., Friday, January 11, 2013 to:

Sarah M. Reginelli  
Director of Economic Development  
Capitalize Albany Corporation  
21 Lodge Street  
Albany, NY 12207  
518.434.2532

## Conditions for Submittal

Respondents are responsible for reviewing and certifying compliance with the Capitalize Albany Corporation conditions of submittal. Full conditions for submittal can be found at [www.CapitalizeAlbany.com](http://www.CapitalizeAlbany.com). Any supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFQ will be posted to this link, and respondents are responsible for checking this link for updates.

# Evaluation & Selection Process

Respondents to the RFQ will be evaluated based upon:

- The consultant team's qualifications and experience with similar projects, including experience with both detailed plan development and plan implementation
- The qualifications and experience of the specific staff assigned to the project
- Demonstrated capacity to be creative and innovative, and use strategic and effective approaches that result in an implementation-ready plan
- Demonstrated capacity to creatively, efficiently and effectively involve and communicate with diverse stakeholders
- Demonstrated understanding of the project and awareness of the project area
- The consultant team's recommended strategies and processes for tactical plan development and implementation

The most qualified teams will be selected for further participation in the selection process and will be invited to submit a detailed proposal with an itemized scope of work, finalized team and staff assignments, specific deliverables, budget and time schedule. The teams selected for further participation in the selection process are tentatively scheduled to be notified and distributed a Request for Proposals (RFP) on January 25, 2012. Responses to the RFP are tentatively scheduled to be due by February 18, 2013.

The top-rated respondents to the Request for Proposals will be invited to Albany for interviews. Notification for these respondents is tentatively scheduled for February 26, 2013. The interviews are tentatively scheduled for the week of March 11, 2013. The interviews will be conducted by a selection team comprised of representatives from the project partners.

Following the interviews, one team will be selected to negotiate a final contract for services. The final scope of work with specified deliverables may be modified through negotiation of the final contract. Final contract approval by the Capitalize Albany Corporation Board and Steering Committee is tentatively scheduled for April 3, 2013.

## Information Available

Information regarding project partners, downtown Albany, destinations within downtown, and neighborhoods surrounding downtown can be found at the following links:

- Capitalize Albany Corporation
- City of Albany
- Downtown Albany BID
- Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Albany Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Albany Convention Center Authority
- Times Union Center
- Palace Theatre
- Capital Repertory Theatre
- Center Square Neighborhood Association
- Mansion Neighborhood Association
- South End Neighborhood Association
- Washington Square Neighborhood Association
- Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)

Information regarding plans and/ or research completed on the city, downtown Albany, and neighborhoods surrounding downtown can be found at Capitalize Albany Corporation's website [www.CapitalizeAlbany.com](http://www.CapitalizeAlbany.com).

- Capitalize Albany Plan
- Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan
- Downtown Residential Market Analysis
- Corning Preserve & Albany Riverfront Plan
- Brownfield Opportunity Area Assessment
- Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan
- South End Neighborhood Plan (Capital South Plan)

Downtown Albany is at a pivotal moment in its transformation. Recent years have brought more than \$200 million in commercial development to Albany's central business district, investment which has spurred more than \$35 million of new residential units in the City's urban core. This growth was generated by strong commitments by both the public and private sectors to ensure that the heart of the Capital District becomes a vibrant 24/7 neighborhood, a thriving center of business and an exciting entertainment destination.

While Downtown is showing remarkable progress, the partners championing Downtown's revitalization continue to work toward realizing the full potential of Tech Valley's Main Street.



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Development@CapitalizeAlbany.com  
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