



Downtown Seattle Association Request for Proposals

Third Avenue Design Vision

Date Issued

October 30, 2017

Deadline

November 20, 2017 by 4 p.m.

Project Contact

For questions related to the RFP, please contact Jacqueline Gruber, AICP at jacquelineg@downtownseattle.org.

Project Purpose

Third Avenue is one of the most important north-south transportation corridors in downtown Seattle. It is the gateway to downtown, carrying approximately 52,000 people per day. Yet conditions on Third Avenue are inconsistent and sub-par. Many people perceive Third Avenue as unwelcoming and unsafe, some avoiding walking there at all. Over the past decade, several planning efforts have yielded incremental improvements, but the underlying challenges remain. This project will set a long-term vision and consider changes to make Third Avenue a great street that is an inviting, safe, and attractive place for all. Solutions will consider improvements to urban design, transportation, public space, and private buildings and storefronts, as well as examine new models for the long-term management and stewardship of the corridor.

Background

For decades, DSA, the City of Seattle, King County, and other partners have collaborated to improve conditions along Third Avenue. While modest improvements have been made, significant sections of the corridor still feel unsafe and unwelcoming. Crowding on the sidewalks during rush hour creates disorder. Street furniture and other sidewalk amenities

are in poor condition. Large blank walls dominate certain sections of the corridor, and some storefronts are poorly maintained. Transit activity dominates the corridor; approximately 220 buses pass at peak hours, in some places constraining positive pedestrian and retail activity. On certain blocks, the sidewalks are overwhelmed with transit customers waiting for buses, creating an environment that is difficult to navigate and one that provides cover for illicit activity, including drug deals and shoplifting. The large volumes of waiting transit riders obscures ground floor entrances, creating a challenging retail environment.

Adequate bus service is paramount for the downtown and regional transportation network, and demand for service is high. The significant amount of bus service concentrated on Third Avenue is a unique condition for an urban street in North America. In addition, relatively narrow sidewalks make for constrained pedestrian clearance zones. Preliminary research conducted by the DSA shows that transit streets in cities like Denver; Minneapolis; Portland, Oregon; and Vancouver, B.C provide a greater ratio of sidewalk to street space, and a more manageable volume of transit vehicles. This work will attempt to mitigate existing transportation challenges while recognizing the lack of alternative north-south routes that service downtown.

The quality and availability of open space also contribute to this challenge. There are just two parks along the 1.7 miles of Third Avenue from Denny Way to Jackson Street: Bell Street Park on the north end and City Hall Park on the south end. City Hall Park, in particular, has taken on a hostile environment that discourages pedestrians from passing through or stopping by the park. There is no open space through the center of the corridor, although opportunities exist to connect the corridor to successful spaces like Westlake Park and McGraw Square.

The City of Seattle and King County must play an important role in improving Third Avenue, but this work will not be successful without the support of private property owners and businesses. Currently, the businesses that front Third Avenue tend to weigh heavily towards convenience shopping, fast food establishments, tobacco shops, and short-term lending. Some storefronts lack clear sightlines and design features that would invite patrons inside. Poorly maintained facades are a common sight.

Finally, the corridor suffers from a tragedy of the commons. Fractured ownership and inconsistent maintenance have left Third Avenue in a state of disrepair. The vision must consider potential models for long-term stewardship and coordination among a plethora of agencies and organizations to ensure high quality maintenance over time.

A comprehensive vision for Third Avenue must address each of these challenges: urban design, transportation, public space, private buildings and retail, and alternative management strategies.

Project Description

DSA is proposing a two-part strategy that will pursue near-term wins with public agencies, while developing a long-term vision with private and public stakeholders. The work with the consultant team will focus on the long-term vision and strategy, but must integrate and respond to concurrent work for near-term wins.

Near-term Wins: DSA will work with public sector stakeholders at the City and County to implement quick wins, including maintenance and beautification. DSA will conduct this work independent of the consultant team.

Long-term Vision: With the help of the consultant team, DSA will lead a design vision for Third Avenue between Denny Way and Jackson Street with a planning horizon of 2035. The vision will account for the challenges described above: urban design, transportation, private properties and retail, public space, and management and stewardship.

To oversee this work, DSA will convene a Task Force comprising government agency staff and nearby businesses, residents, and property owners to inspire a new vision for Third Avenue. The Task Force will explore opportunities to accommodate transit service on Third Avenue while increasing right-of-way dedicated to pedestrians and providing greater separation for transit boarding from pedestrian clearance zones and retail areas. The Task Force will also weigh in on improvements to the public realm and build a case for encouraging private property owners to enhance storefronts. The consultant will facilitate these meetings and provide content for discussion.

In addition to the vision, the planning process should result in the following outcomes:

- Engagement and buy-in from partner agencies, including the Seattle Department of Transportation, the Office of Planning and Community Development, the Office of Economic Development, Seattle Parks Department, King County Metro, and others.
- Agency commitments to near-term improvements along the corridor—primarily led by DSA staff.
- Interest and engagement from DSA stakeholders, inspiring investment in private properties.
- Potential consideration from transportation agencies for modifications to traffic operations.

Consultant Scope

Task 1. Facilitation & Meeting Preparation

The DSA is a non-profit agency that prides itself in cultivating effective partnerships between the public and private sectors. Incorporating feedback from its stakeholders is an

important part of this process. As such, the consultant team should be prepared to present to several advisory bodies.

- 1.1. Project Management—Regular check-in meetings will be scheduled between the DSA staff and the consultant lead staff. Meetings may occur every two weeks.
- 1.2. Facilitation of Task Force—The Task Force will provide advisory input and will be the driving force behind the visioning process. The consultant will facilitate six meetings of the Task Force between January 2018 and September 2018, each about 90 minutes in length. The Task Force will consist of private property owners, business, residents, and agency staff.
- 1.3. DSA Board Presentation—The DSA may require up to 3 presentations to the DSA Board and board committees.
- 1.4. Downtown Transportation Alliance—The consultant will present at 3 meetings of the Downtown Transportation Alliance to share the status of the long-range vision and solicit agency feedback.

Task 2. Corridor Assessment

To understand the streetscape elements in the public realm, the consultant will conduct a cursory, high-level assessment of the study area. This will provide a baseline of information for facilitating discussion about existing conditions. The assessment should document key issues and geographic focus areas to build consensus for next steps. It will not include a detailed block-by-block analysis and should build on information already compiled by the DSA.

Elements of interest include:

- Sidewalk width and materials
- Street furnishings and other physical objects in the pedestrian pathway
- Signage and wayfinding (in conjunction with City's current wayfinding planning)
- Alternative designs for right-of-way
- Bus queuing areas and pedestrian clearance zones
- Other transportation operations, including bottleneck and rideshare pick-up/drop-off
- Parks and pedestrian open space
- Quality of retail storefronts
- Land use and future development potential

Task 3. Transit Street Case Studies

A selection of comparable transit streets should be considered to understand how peer cities have successfully integrated transit into a people-first design. Case studies should build on information already collected by the DSA, but may be supplemented with other examples or expertise. The ideal candidate will already have expertise in this area so as to expedite this phase.

Examples of other transit streets include but are not limited to:

- 16th Street Mall, Denver, Colorado
- Granville Mall, Vancouver, B.C.
- Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 5th/6th Avenues, Portland, Oregon
- Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.
- Fulton Street, Brooklyn, New York
- Chestnut/Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Market Street, San Francisco, California
- Broadway, New York City, New York
- Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California
- State Street, Chicago, Illinois
- C Street, San Diego, California

Task 4. Design Vision

Through an interactive design process, the consultant will prepare a visual concept for Third Avenue from Denny Way to Jackson Street, providing more detail for key intersections at Pike, Pine, Union, Cherry, and Yesler. The plan may include renderings to help stakeholders better visualize the intended effect of new design elements. The design should be aspirational in nature, but grounded in the realities of transportation needs and operations. Coordination with transportation planners at the City of Seattle and King County Metro is required.

Task 5. Priorities and Action Strategy

The consultant will determine a list of key priorities for the corridor that have the most stakeholder and agency support and will render the greatest impact. These priorities will be determined with input from the DSA staff and members, the Downtown Transportation Alliance, Metro and other agency leadership, and the Third Avenue Task Force.

The final plan should address the following topic areas.

Urban Design	Transportation	Private Properties & Retail	Public Space
<p>What are the opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment?</p> <p>How can the street be redesigned to prioritize pedestrians in context of the transportation needs?</p> <p>What changes to the physical environment could encourage positive behavior?</p> <p>How can agencies work together to maintain and improve street furniture and other sidewalk amenities?</p>	<p>How can Third Avenue be designed to maximize the number of people who can travel through the area while providing a great user experience?</p> <p>Are there other street configurations that could accommodate transportation needs?</p> <p>How can bus stops be safe, welcoming, delightful places?</p> <p>What design modifications can mitigate noise and other overwhelming qualities of a busy transit street?</p>	<p>What role can private property play in activating the streetscape?</p> <p>What design and façade improvements can be made to enhance the retail environment?</p> <p>How can the adjacent retail positively support the needs of transit customers along the corridor?</p>	<p>Where can additional public space be captured, repurposed, or better utilized?</p> <p>How can successes with downtown activation projects inform work along Third Avenue?</p> <p>How can placemaking and art be incorporated to make the corridor feel welcoming to all?</p>
<p>Management & Stewardship</p> <p>What management models can be used to oversee operations, quality, and maintenance along the corridor?</p>			

Key Deliverables

Final deliverables shall include:

- Design vision document that speaks to the give topic areas
- Renderings of key cross sections
- Insights from other successful transit streets nationwide
- Visual presentations and meeting materials for each meeting in the project schedule
- List of key priorities and high-level action strategy

Budget

Not to exceed \$100,000 including contingency. Budget may not include travel expenses.

Project Schedule

The DSA proposes the following project schedule. DSA Board and DTA Presentations will be scheduled at key milestones, as appropriate. The consultant team may propose a modified or more detailed schedule as part of the proposal package.

December 2017	Task Force #1: Project Context & Background	DSA hosts first task force meeting to set project context. No consultant involvement.
December 2017-January 2018	Execute Contract	Initiate Work
February 2018	Task Force #2: Kick-off	Task force reconvenes. Project formally kicks off. Introduce project goals, set project priorities. Corridor assessment discussion: challenges & opportunities.
March 2018	Task Force #3	Visioning
May 2018	Task Force #4	Visioning
June 2018	DSA Annual Meeting	Have visual rendering for display at DSA Annual Meeting.
July 2018	Task Force #5	Visioning
September 2018	Task Force #6	Draft vision presentation, solicit feedback, and set priorities.
October-December 2018	Presentations & Modifications to Vision, Optional DSA Member Event	Finalize vision.

Proposal Components

Please address each of these sections.

Letter of interest: One page, identify lead firm, project manager, and key staff proposed to work on the project.

Proposal: 16 pages maximum (or 8 sheets, double-sided). Page limit excludes letter of interest, cover page, and resumes. Proposals are encouraged to be printed double-sided and shall include the following:

- a. *Firm Profile & Team Description* – Firm profile to include number of employees, office locations, number of years in business, relevant expertise, and identification of any sub-consultants. Please specify the home office location of the principal in charge, lead project manager, and intended facilitator for meetings and presentations. Team may include transportation expert in an advisory capacity.
- b. *Project Approach* - Description of the project understanding and team's approach to satisfying the requirements of this RFP.
- c. *Team Qualifications* - Qualifications of principal in charge, project manager, designated facilitator, and key staff assigned to work on the project. Qualifications should address design expertise in the context of a busy transportation corridor.
- d. *Relevant Project Descriptions & References* - Description of similar recent projects completed, including the year completed, how well the project met the scope, timeline, and budget, and how well the project performed over time, if implemented. Projects should include professional references for a project stakeholder.
- e. *Detailed Scope of Work*- Scope of work based on the description provided in this RFP, including any sub-tasks, additional tasks, scope revisions, and/or recommended efficiencies.
- f. *Cost Estimate*- Cost estimate per task. Consultant may suggest edits to the scope to accommodate the allotted budget. Travel costs are not an eligible expense and may not be included in the cost proposal.
- g. *Schedule*- Response to proposed project schedule with any suggested edits, additions, or amendments.
- h. *Resumes*- Provided for each member of the project team. Limit each resume to two pages (1 sheet, double-sided).

Submittal Requirements

Please provide 8 copies of the submittal in an 8 ½ x 11, double-sided format with legible font size. Copies may be delivered by mail or hand delivered to:

Downtown Seattle Association
Attention: Jacqueline Gruber, AICP
1809 7th Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101

Also provide an electronic copy in PDF format to: jacquelineg@downtownseattle.org.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation team will rate and select the winning contractor based on the following criteria.

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Points</i>
Exceptional facilitation and problem-solving skills, with the ability to understand the concerns of various interest groups, inspire, and build consensus around common goals.	30
Urban design and landscape architecture expertise with a focus on people-first design that balances placemaking and the pedestrian realm with needs of the larger transportation network. Expertise in transit street design that draws on insights from national best practices.	25
Experience working across public and private sectors to solve unique problems under creative finance and management schemes.	20
Sophisticated understanding and experience deploying tools to create vibrant street life, e.g. curating vibrant retail, programmed activation.	15
Enthusiasm and excitement for the project, quality of presentation, and specificity of submittal for this project.	10
Total Points	100

About the Downtown Seattle Association

Established 60 years ago, the DSA is a non-profit 501(c)(4) organization focused exclusively on making downtown Seattle a great place to live, work, shop, and play through public policy advocacy, economic development, and marketing. The DSA administers the Metropolitan Improvement District (MID), among other programs, to provide cleaning and safety services that promote a vibrant, urban core for Seattle. With the support of our 2,200 corporate, non-profit, and residential members, the DSA works to keep downtown economically competitive, address transportation challenges, and ensure a safe, clean and inviting urban experience for workers, residents, and visitors.

The DSA plays a key role in activating and maintaining public spaces in downtown. Since 2015, DSA has managed Westlake and Occidental Parks. With support from its partners, DSA implements a steady stream of events, art installations, and improvement projects within downtown parks and other public spaces.

In 2013, DSA worked with the City and community to create the Pike Pine Renaissance Design Vision. That effort engaged voices of property owners, businesses, residents, and downtown organizations and resulted in a broad design framework for public realm investments in the downtown retail core. Because of that work, the City of Seattle and the DSA have now partnered to design, and later construct, high-quality pedestrian improvements through an effort called Pike Pine Renaissance: Act One. The 2013 planning effort is a model for the Third Avenue Design Vision, and can be viewed at <https://waterfrontseattle.org/Media/Default/PikePine/Pike-Pine-Renaissance-Design-Vision.pdf>.