



95 Perry Street, Suite 500
Buffalo, NY 14203-3030

P: (716) 846-8200

F: (716) 846-8260

www.eriecanalharbor.com

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Contact:

Erich Weyant (ECHDC) | eweyant@empire.state.ny.us | 716.846.8258

ECHDC Maintains Momentum at Canalside

*Waterfront development agency moves forward with permanent extension of the Central Wharf,
provides update on cultural study*

The Board of Directors of the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) today voted to enter into a contract with PB Americas to provide design and engineering services for a permanent extension of the Central Wharf. A temporary extension of the Central Wharf was constructed for the summer of 2011 and received with great enthusiasm by the public. The extension will connect the current wharf to Main Street and will provide an additional 490 feet of waterfront access, connecting Canalside to the Outer Harbor.

“This permanent extension of the Central Wharf is a sign that ECHDC is committed to building off of the tremendous success that was achieved this summer,” said ECHDC Chairman Jordan Levy. “During our extensive public outreach sessions, the public asked for increased access to the waterfront, and once this project is completed, they will be able to enjoy a beautiful, permanent connection to our region’s greatest natural asset.”

The contract will run for approximately 18 months and will not exceed \$322,052, plus a 15% contingency. The funding source for the proposed contract is the remaining balance of Inner Harbor funds transferred from Empire State Development and/or proceeds payable to ECHDC pursuant to the New York Power Authority agreement.

On August 22, 2011, ECHDC issued a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) seeking to retain an Architectural Engineering (“A/E”) firm, and/or teams with specific experience in architecture and engineering, to design and implement the Central Wharf Boardwalk Extension along with other site amenities such as permanent restrooms with shower facilities, extension of docks and playgrounds. The A/E team will provide services beginning with the Schematic Design Phase, continuing through completion of construction. The project shall include architectural and engineering services (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, marine and civil), lighting, landscaping, sustainability, cost estimating, ADA , and construction administration.

A total of five bids were received by September 12, 2011. A selection committee consisting of ECHDC employees reviewed the proposals and shortlisted two applicants for interviews due to the quality of the proposal and the experience in similar projects. The submitted proposals were reviewed using the following factors:

- Demonstrated experience in completing projects of a similar nature
- Ability to successfully complete projects of this type on schedule and within budget
- Cost of consultant services
- References

Based on review of the above criteria as well as the interview performance, the ECHDC review committee believes PB Americas, Inc. is best qualified to complete the work and provides the best value for the project due to their significant experience in similar projects, including Phase 1 of the Central Wharf project.

In addition to the above action, Canalside Cultural Steering Group Chair Maureen Hurley provided a verbal report of the status of the Canalside Cultural Master Plan. The Cultural Advisory Group draws its membership from the region’s leading cultural organizations and has been tasked with determining the cultural mix at Canalside. The final report is expected to be released later this year.

“The Cultural Advisory Group has done extensive public outreach in order to determine the best mix of cultural offerings at Canalside,” said Ms. Hurley. “I am confident that the final report will reflect the public’s desire to integrate our region’s rich heritage into the waterfront.”

Lord Cultural Resources and Ralph Applebaum Associates are preparing the report in consultation with ECHDC board members and staff, representatives from Western New York’s leading cultural organizations, and almost 150 community members.

Ms. Hurley has spearheaded the cultural aspects of Canalside since 2007, guided by the following vision statement:

“To transform the Canalside District into an indoor/outdoor space offering an array of appealing activities integrating museum and cultural experiences, recreational activities, a public market, waterside and special events, creating a portal to all resources of the region.”

The ECHDC Cultural Advisory Group emerged from a meeting held in June 2010 with representatives from Western New York’s leading cultural institutions. The leaders of these organizations stressed the need for authenticity and the importance of telling Buffalo’s own story in the very place where the city began. The cultural steering committee is comprised of:

- Peter B. Dow, Co-Chair First Hand Learning
- Cindy Abbott-Letro Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
- Ted Bickford Descendent of George Coit
- Melissa Brown Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society
- Kevin Cottrell Motherland Connexions

- Donna Fernandes Buffalo Zoo
- Dottie Gallagher-Cohen Visit Buffalo Niagara
- Duncan Hay NPS, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
- Paul Hogan Oshei Foundation
- Michael Kimmelberg Seneca Nation
- John S. Montague Buffalo Maritime Center
- Christopher Schoepflin USA Niagara
- Catherine Schweitzer Baird Foundation
- Al Parker Tonawanda-Seneca Nation
- Daryl Rasuli The Collective Buffalo

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation is a subsidiary agency of Empire State Development whose vision is to revitalize Western New York's waterfront and restore economic growth to Buffalo based on the region's legacy of pride, urban significance and natural beauty.

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