



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

for

PERMITTING CONSULTANT SERVICES: Commissioners Landing on the Esplanade

Proposals are to be e-mailed to:

Esplanade Association, Inc.

Projects & ADA Accessibility Coordinator, [Brenda Hernandez](mailto:bhernandez@esplanade.org); bhernandez@esplanade.org

By 4:00 P.M. EDT March 24th, 2026



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SECTION I - GENERAL INFORMATION

A. INTENT

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks submittals for professional permitting consultant services as necessary for the project to restore Commissioners Landing on the Charles River Esplanade (“the Project”). Those submitting proposals (“Proponents”) may refer to details in **Section II Scope of Work and Anticipated Services**.

Key Project Information

Project Name	Description	Anticipated Delivery Method	Estimated Cost to Construct	Phase I Completion Target
Commissioners Landing on the Esplanade	Restoration of historic granite boat landing	Traditional / Design-Bid-Build	See Enclosure 2	Late Summer 2026

PLEASE NOTE: Construction phase is contingent upon successful application for grant funding, to be submitted by EA summer 2026. Phase 1 funding for design and permitting is secured. The successful Proponent will be expected to continue to consult on the project through Construction if Phase 2 funding is secured.

Phase 2 Continuation

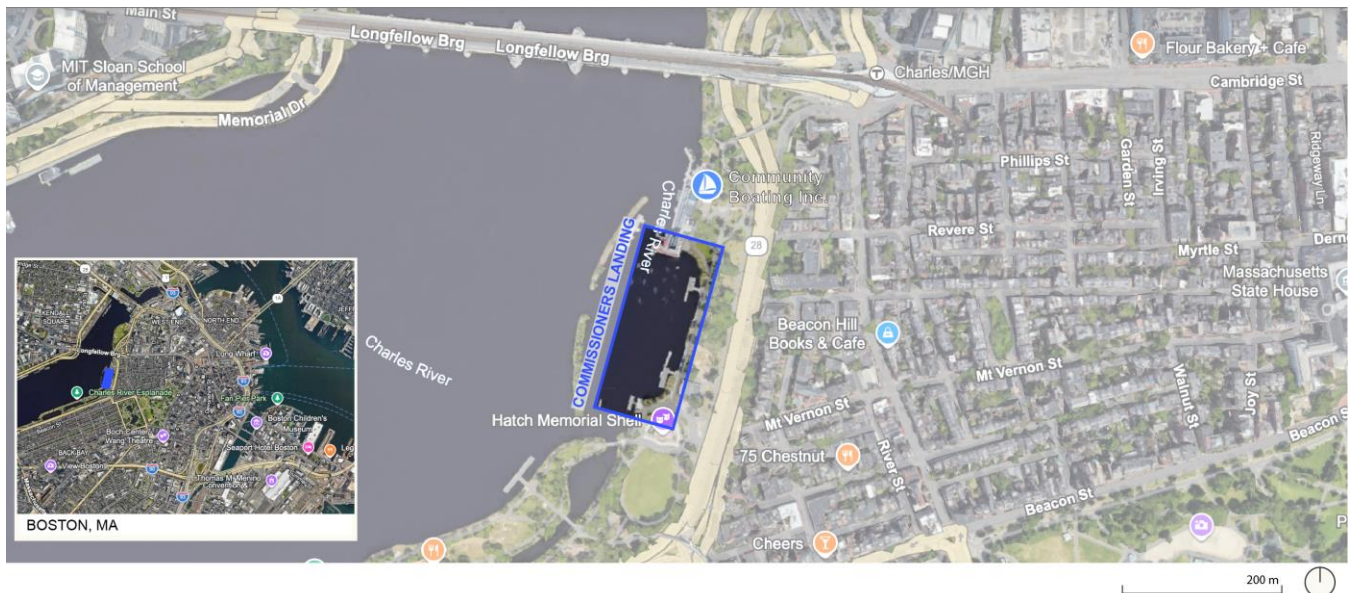
This RFP is being issued for Phase 1 services only. Phase 2 construction support services are contingent on successful fundraising and grant awards.

If Phase 2 funding is secured, EA expects to build on the Phase 1 relationship and negotiate Phase 2 services with the selected Permit Consultant, provided Phase 1 work is progressing well. Phase 2 scope and approach would be defined at that time.

B. PROJECT BACKGROUND and DESCRIPTION

[The Esplanade Association, Inc.](#) (“EA” or the “Owner”), under a public-private partnership agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through its [Department of Conservation and Recreation](#) (“DCR”), proposes to restore a historic feature of the Charles River Esplanade park (the “Esplanade”) in Boston known as Commissioners Landing.

Founded in 2001, the Esplanade Association is a community-supported non-profit whose mission and singular purpose is to revitalize and enhance the Charles River Esplanade, sustain its natural green space, and build community in the park by providing educational, cultural, and recreational programs for all. In collaboration with DCR, the Esplanade Association is dedicated to improving the experiences of the millions of annual visitors who enjoy Boston’s iconic riverside park. More information can be found on our website at www.esplanade.org.



Commissioners Landing was built on the Charles River Esplanade in the 1930s as part of the Arthur Shurcliff design to widen the park, along with the Dartmouth and Gloucester Street Landings. The landings serve as access to the water for small boats and visitors, as well as gathering spots. The landings are major focal and design elements of the park, and Commissioners Landing, positioned between the Hatch Shell and Community Boating and facing two long curved islands that form “Boat Haven,” is a prominently placed “character defining” feature of the Esplanade. It is approximately 210 feet long, with a central section of monumental granite stairs approximately 100 feet in length. At the north and south ends of Commissioners Landing are bastions that project out beyond the wall and terminate at wooden boat landings down a set of granite steps. Alternating baluster sections and parapet wall sections with integral benches form the link between the central steps and the bastions.

Commissioners Landing is currently highly deteriorated, with broken stairs, missing facing stones, gaping joints, stains to the stones caused by freeze and thaw cycles, mortar loss, inappropriate repairs, and organic growth. The stairs became such a hazard, collapsing into the river, that in 2016 DCR placed concrete barriers to limit access to the steps, a safety precaution that further impacted public access to and the aesthetic quality of the landing. The 2002 Charles River Basin Master Plan, commissioned by Metropolitan District Commission (predecessor to DCR), ranked Commissioners Landing among the granite landings as “highest priority on the preservation list”. In 2003, Preservation Mass listed Commissioners Landing as one of the 10 most endangered historic resources in the state, and since 2005 it has been on EA’s list of priority capital projects.

The Project seeks to:

- Reconstruct the foundation of Commissioners Landing
- Reset/replace the granite steps, balustrades, faces, caps and benches
- Repoint and repair mortar work and cracks
- Remove/restore past inappropriate repairs
- Clean granite with consideration of antique patina
- Restore associated timber piers as needed
- Restore/repaint cast iron railings
- Resetting of riprap along two shoreline areas
- Replace paving and asphalt of adjacent pathway as remediation
- Restore greenspace of laydown area as remediation
- Any state mandated accessibility improvements

Potential additional scope may include:

- Funder-approved improvements to the adjacent multimodal pathway
- Any additional project updates required for permit approval

Prior work on the project includes:

- 2008, DCR construction drawings for restoration of the park’s granite landings (Commissioners Landing, Dartmouth Landing, and Gloucester Landing), as well as the Esplanade’s Storrow Lagoon, with project consultants Bourne Consulting Engineers (Waterfront Engineers), McGinley Kalsow (Architects & Preservation Planners), and Brown Richardson Rowe (Landscape Architects).
- 2009, EA used the 2008 DCR Granite Landings construction drawings to create cost estimates for the restoration of Commissioners Landing.
- 2009, the Charles River Esplanade Study Report completed as part of the process to designate the park as a historic City of Boston landmark included these granite landings as “character defining” features of the Esplanade’s landmarked landscape.
- 2016, DCR updated the Commissioners Landing construction drawings and cost estimates.
- 2023, EA hired GEI Consultants (which had acquired Bourne Consulting Engineers, the 2008 consultant firm) to provide updated cost estimates. A site walk was conducted which did not reveal any major changes that would warrant updating the 2016 construction drawings in order to provide such updated cost estimates, though it was determined that construction drawings would need to be finalized prior to seeking permits for construction.
- 2024, DCR and EA committed to entering into a public-private agreement to give EA permission to execute the project on DCR property. EA secured Phase 1 funding to update and complete the 2016 construction documents, prepare and submit permit applications, and prepare a bid packet for construction.

- 2025, As prior determined with our partners at DCR, EA is releasing this RFP in parallel to reviewing initial drafts of a project MOU, which outlines phase 1 and phase 2 of this work
 - Phase 2 execution of the project according to construction documents and permits is contingent upon further funding
- 2026, Assuming Phase 1 progresses on schedule, EA anticipates finalizing Construction Documents and cost estimates in 2026 to support a Phase 2 funding application as early as August 2026, with a funding decision expected by October 2026.

Prior project resources are attached for reference [\(Section VI, Attachments\)](#).

Under the direction of the Esplanade Association, the permitting consultant chosen will work with various Esplanade Association staff, as well as consultants in the various design and construction disciplines, and those agencies having jurisdiction over the Project, to coordinate, prepare, and submit a complete set of permit applications as may be necessary to restore Commissioners Landing. The capability of firms or individuals submitting proposals shall include permit consultant services that cover the full list outlined on page 9.

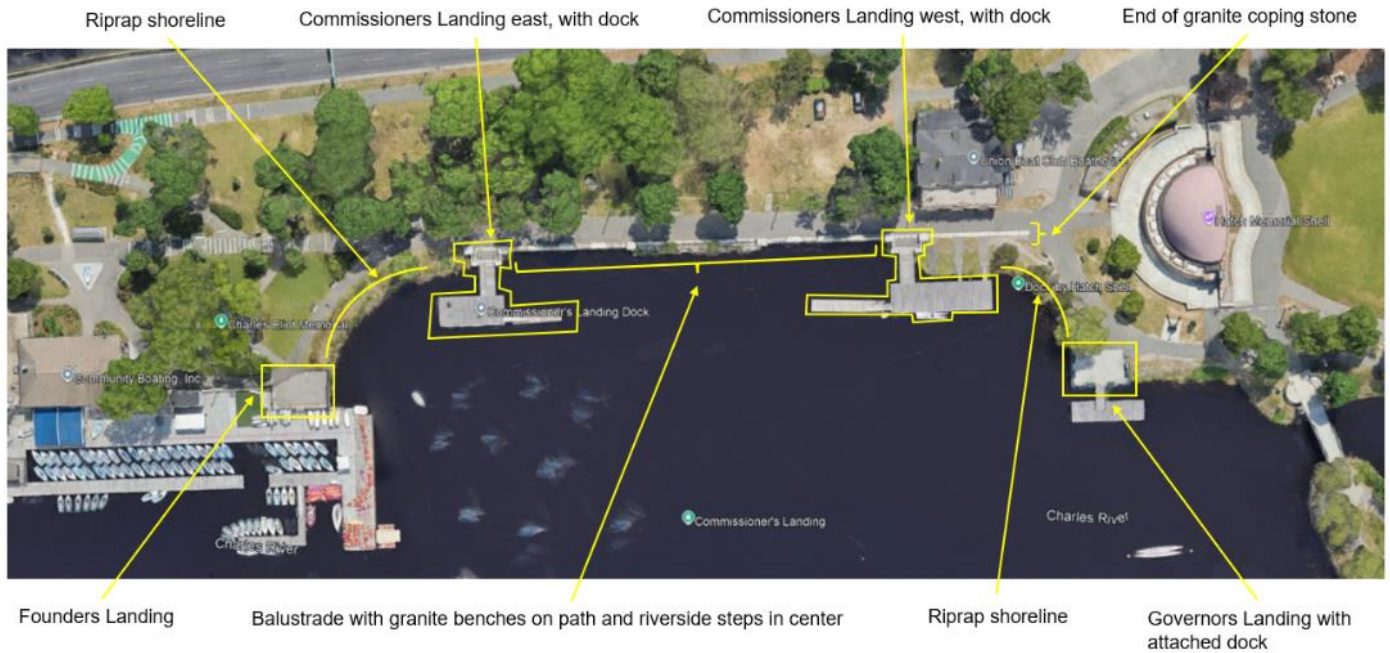
C. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Entity	Role
Esplanade Association	Project Owner / Client
Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)	Project Partner / Land Owner
TBD	Owner’s Project Manager
TBD	Project Engineer
TBD	Landscape Architect
TBD	Historic Preservationist

Proposals are underway for the roles listed. Other consultants may be added to the project if needed to complete the construction documents and permit applications. The permitting consultant may be asked to support EA and the Project Implementation Team in sourcing and/or onboarding such other consultants.

D. SITE OVERVIEW and CURRENT CONDITIONS

SITE OVERVIEW



Commissioners Landing east.



Commissioners Landing west.



Commissioners Landing balustrade.



Riverside steps.



Deteriorated riprap shoreline.



Founders Landing.

SECTION II – SCOPE OF WORK and ANTICIPATED SERVICES

The proposed Agreement anticipated by this RFP is intended to comprehensively include services (not limited to) some or all of the following permit applications and coordination with associated regulatory bodies if deemed necessary to advance the project:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Self-Verification Form and Pre-Construction Notification
- Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Environmental Notification Form
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Minor Modification
- Massachusetts Historical Commission Project Notification Form
- Massachusetts Water Resources Authority 8M Permit
- MassDEP / Boston Conservation Commission Notice of Intent
- Boston Landmarks Commission Design Review
- Other permits as necessary

Step 1 of this consultation is to verify essential and non-essential regulation steps. Refer to Attachment #3 to verify permit assumption notes.

Permit Submission Target Timing:

The goal for Phase 1 is to progress the above permits over 4-5 months as follows:

In coordination with the Owner's Project Manager, the permitting consultant will need to maintain an efficient and fast project pace to submit initial agency inquiries and if possible filings for all required permits between June and August 2026 in order to enable refinement of project scope, CDs and project cost estimates to apply for Phase 2 funding by later summer 2026, August or September. When active construction begins in Phase 2, permit consulting work would likely be limited to ensuring all required permit filings are made in appropriate timeframes and being available if questions in the critical path of construction arise.

Firms with the ability to conduct services in addition to permitting preparation are invited to include the following scope add-ons in their proposal, though these are not necessary conditions to obtain a favorable response to this RFP:

- Permit-related project management, oversight, and coordination between project consultants, partners, and subcontractors
- Climate resilience and storm water management conceptual design and engineering services
- Community engagement to meet all DEP Environmental Justice community outreach protocols
- Oversight of exploratory work to sample and characterize existing worksite conditions to know what's necessary for permitting.
- Oversight of site testing and ultimately remediation services (should Phase 2 funding be secured)

The Esplanade Association may request from the Permitting Consultant any and all of the above tasks as needed for the success of the Project.

The selected Permitting Consultant will become an integral member of the Esplanade Association's Project Implementation Team, shown on page 6.

BUDGET & PAYMENT

Proponents should include in their proposal a breakdown of costs for permit preparation and any other available add-on pre-construction services. Proponents may also include in their proposal an initial estimate of costs for any construction phase services (consulting and filing follow through) should the project be awarded such Phase 2 funding to continue.

Upon successful execution of a consultant contract for these services, payment will be provided in monthly installments as approved by the Executive Director in accordance with time and charges billing by the consultant subject to an upset for each scope of work task.

GENERAL CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

If selected, the Permit Consultant shall:

- Provide EA with a draft contract or service agreement and Form W-9
- Provide Proof of Insurance, including, but not limited to
 - Workman's Compensation Insurance
 - General Liability Insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 in the aggregate.
 - Automobile Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability Insurance in an amount not less than the compulsory coverage required in Massachusetts. Such insurance shall extend to owned, non-owned and hired automobiles used in the performance of the work in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 combined single limit.
 - Certificates of Insurance naming The Esplanade Association, Inc. and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation as additional insureds.
- Take appropriate precautions to avoid damage to the river, buildings, vehicles and other properties, as well as people. Damages done by the Consultant to any person or property, public or private, are the total responsibility of the Consultant and are repaired or compensated for by the Consultant to the satisfaction of both injured party and EA at no cost to EA

SECTION III - RFP PROCESS

A. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

As of: February 24, 2026

EVENT	TARGET DATE
RFP Release Date	February 24
Deadline to Submit Written Questions	March 9 at 4:00pm
Release of Responses to Written Questions	March 11 at 4:00pm
Proposers confirm intent to submit a proposal	March 13 at 4:00pm
Proposal Deadline; submit via email	March 24 at 4:00pm
Candidate Interviews	Week of March 31
Notice to Proponents and Commencement of Contract Negotiation	By April 10 at 4:00pm

B. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals will be considered only from consultants who can demonstrate the following minimum qualifications:

1. Consultant has demonstrated experience as well as in-house resources necessary to effectively provide the required services. The consultant's personnel assigned shall have experience in permit planning, permit application drafting and submission processes, and permit agency coordination on projects similar to the type listed in the Key Project Information table on page 3, within the last five years in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
2. Consultant and any consultant staff shall be knowledgeable of all applicable building codes, American with Disabilities Act, federal, state and local by-laws as applicable, including sustainability and conservation.
3. Consultant shall be capable of meeting the schedule set by the Esplanade Association. The anticipated duration of the agreement is tied to the Project, which has a goal of pre-construction permitting completion in summer 2026 and, pending Phase 2 funding, construction completion in spring 2028.

Please email a digital proposal to the Esplanade Association by **no later than 4:00 p.m. on March 24, 2026**, per **Section III. A Tentative Schedule of Events**. There will be no public

opening of proposals. All proposals shall be firm offers, though the Esplanade Association reserves the right to negotiate terms upon evaluation of the proposals. Proposals shall remain valid for a period of ninety days following the close of the RFP. Proposal documents may be corrected, modified or withdrawn at any time prior to the proposal due date, when the proposal packages will be opened at EA. Modifications should be submitted in writing via e-mail to bhernandez@esplanade.org.

All proposals must be delivered to Esplanade Association Projects & ADA Accessibility Coordinator Brenda Hernandez bhernandez@esplanade.org in an e-mail with the subject line: **Proposal Submission: Permitting Consultant Services.**

An independent visit to Commissioners Landing is strongly encouraged. All proposals shall be deemed to be made with full knowledge and understanding of the Commissioners Landing location and visible features.

C. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

All proposals will be evaluated by the Esplanade Association. During the evaluation process, the Esplanade Association may require a proposer's representative to answer specific questions orally and/or in writing. Once a finalist or group of finalists is selected, additional interactions or information may be required. The most qualified proposal will be recommended to the Esplanade Association Board of Directors based on the overall strength of each proposal. Execution of agreements is tentatively scheduled for the week of **April 13, 2026** following the initial selection of a consultant by **April 10 2026**.

Responses to this RFP must adhere to the format for proposals detailed in **Section V Proposal Submission Requirements**.

The Esplanade Association values [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility](#) and actively seeks and encourages participation by Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office Certified Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), Women Business Enterprises (WBE), Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises (SDVOBE), Veteran Business Enterprises (VBE), Portuguese Business Enterprises (PBE), LGBT Business Enterprises (LGBTBE), and Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE) on its contracts. Research has shown that women and other people who are systematically marginalized tend to only apply for jobs or project roles if they meet every requirement. If you believe that you could excel as a member of the Project Implementation Team, we encourage you to reply to this RFP and/or other aspects of the project.

D. PROPOSAL RECOMMENDATION

Proposals received will be evaluated by a Panel of EA's selected representatives. Interviews may be held or questions to Proposers may be posed in person, by phone or electronically to Proposers by the Evaluation Panel. The Panel will accept one Proposal based upon the results of its evaluation of competitive and qualifying proposals. Upon final approval, the winning Proposer will be required to sign a Letter of Intent and send in any certificates of insurance, and other documents as requested. Upon receipt of all required items a Service Agreement must be signed by the Proposer. The Proposer may recommend a Service Agreement format. Should the Proposer fail to meet the requirements of the RFP or any other related EA requirements, EA may make an award to the next available Proposer.

SECTION IV – GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. **Proposal Includes RFP.** The details/requirements enclosed in this RFP must constitute part of each proposal, and the proposal must describe how the proponent will meet the Esplanade Association's needs, which must be met in their entirety unless otherwise agreed.
2. **Proposal Costs.** Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be charged to the Esplanade Association.
3. **Proposal Becomes Esplanade Association Property.** The RFP and all materials submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the Esplanade Association.
4. **Clarification Process.** Submit all questions relating to this RFP by e-mail to bhernandez@esplanade.org. All questions must be received no later than **4:00 p.m. on March 9, 2026**. The Esplanade Association will email prospective Proponents with clarifications by **March 11, 2026**. If changes to the RFP are warranted, they will be made in writing and clearly marked as changes or addenda to the original RFP.
5. **Alteration of Terms and Clarifications.** No alteration or variations of the terms of this RFP are valid unless made or confirmed in writing by the Esplanade Association. Likewise, oral understandings or agreements not incorporated into any final agreement are not binding.
6. **Selection of Consultant.** Selection of a proposal for negotiation of contract terms and eventual submission to Esplanade Association leadership of an Agreement does not constitute an offer or agreement, and proposers acknowledge by submission of a proposal that no agreement is final unless and until it is signed by the Executive Director.
7. **Proposals May be Rejected.** If a Proponent fails to satisfy any of the requirements identified in this RFP, the Proponent may be considered non-responsive, and the proposal may be rejected.
8. **Travel Costs.** If the services being requested require travel to the Boston Area, the Esplanade Association will review any proposed expenses which will be allowed if pre-approved.
9. **No Contract.** This RFP is not a commitment or contract of any kind. The Esplanade Association reserves the right to pursue any and/or all ideas generated by this RFP. The Esplanade Association reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and/or terminate the RFP process if deemed in the best interest of the Project.

SECTION V – PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. **General Instructions.** Submit one complete electronic version via e-mail to bhernandez@esplanade.org. All proposals should follow the content and sequence of information described by this RFP.
2. **Cover Letter.** Provide a one-page cover letter on company letterhead which includes the address, telephone numbers, e-mail address of the contact person, and indicating authorized representative(s) for clarifications and/or negotiation. Proposals must be signed with a firm/company/partnership/entity name and by a responsible officer or employee. This letter should highlight the firm's experience and authority with complex project regulations across jurisdictions (City and State) and should outline how simultaneous deadlines for multiple permits may be managed, in coordination with DCR review, to efficiently meet project deadlines. Demonstrated knowledge of DCR and Commission review processes and dynamics is important to the success of this project.
3. **Specified Content and Detailed Sequence of Information in the RFP.** Each proposal should include sections addressing the following information in the listed order. The proposer should be sure to include all information that it feels will enable the Evaluation Committee and the Esplanade Association to make its decision. Any other information deemed appropriate should be attached to the end of the proposal.
4. **Sections.** Ensure proposal includes the following sections:

I. Qualifications and Experience:

Provide a statement of qualifications and description of experience in providing the services requested by this RFP. The proposal shall describe in detail how the Proponent plans to manage the Project if selected. This should include the Proponent's management approach, and, where applicable, an organization chart and/or a list of personnel to be assigned to the project.

II. Services:

Provide a complete list of services to be provided, especially noting any additions or exceptions to those requested in Section II Scope of Work.

III. Project Team:

List the qualifications of the individual(s) that would be assigned to provide those services as requested by this RFP, including any applicable degrees, any additional training, or professional certifications and licensing. In lieu of listing this information, the resume(s) or curriculum vitae (CV) including all the requested information on individual(s) may be submitted.

IV. Project Experience:

Prospective consultants shall provide the Esplanade Association with a listing of relevant projects completed in the past five years. The list should include:

- a. Name of the client entity
- b. Location
- c. Brief description of the project
- d. Cost
- e. Project completion date

f. Client's name and contact information

V. Fee Estimate and Professional Rates:

Include an estimate of the total cost to the Owner for the services requested (as may be adjusted by the Proposal), stating any qualifications thought to be necessary by the Proponent. The proposal should also include a schedule of fees, including the classification of personnel assigned to projects, and the hourly rate for each classification. Any hourly rates should be capped. If unforeseen issues cause the project to require more work than the Fee Estimate, EA and the winning Proponent will discuss how to accomplish and fund any remaining aspects of the work. Please indicate costs associated with Phase 1 permitting separately from costs associated with Phase 2 construction, which is contingent upon successful completion of Phase 1 and subsequent application for Phase 2 funding.

VI. References:

List at least three professional client references for which you have recently provided similar services. Include contact names, email addresses, and phone numbers.

VII. Legal Standing:

Firms or individuals submitting for this RFP shall disclose pertinent and relevant information concerning recent participation as a party to any litigation related to the services offered and, if any, the resulting disposition.

Please submit proposals by **4pm on March 24** to: Brenda Hernandez, Esplanade Association Projects & ADA Accessibility Coordinator: bhernandez@esplanade.org

Questions may be sent in advance to bhernandez@esplanade.org. Answers to questions will be circulated to all proponents according to the Schedule of Events on page 11.

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to receiving your proposal!

Brenda Hernandez (*she/her*)
Projects & ADA Accessibility Coordinator



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Boston, MA 02116
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SECTION VI – ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Project drawings as of May 2016.

Attachment B - Construction cost estimate as of March 13, 2024
(based on 2016 drawings)

Attachment C - Permitting Assumptions and Detailed Notes