

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Mount Moriah Cemetery Strategic Plan

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: April 17, 2017

Approach

1. *Are there any basic assumptions concerning the physical or organizational attributes of Mount Moriah that you consider non-negotiable or beyond investigation or interrogation (“off-limits”) as part of the planning process?*

The perpetual care of the individuals who have and will be interred at Mount Moriah is a non-negotiable. There should be sensitivity applied to the religious, ethnic, and other affiliations of persons buried in the cemetery.

2. *Does the membership of MMPC and FOMMCI serve to reflect the full diversity of community stakeholders or would the process need to identify additional members to perhaps join a Strategic Planning Advisory Committee?*
3. *How many members are on the advisory committee, FOMMCI, and MMPC?*
4. *What groups and group members do you want included in the planning meetings? Advisory committee, FOMMCI, MMPC.*

The membership of FOMMCI is made of ten community leaders, and the MMPC is made of seven members that represent FOMMCI, both Yeadon borough and Philadelphia municipality, and citizen appointees.

We have identified an ad hoc strategic plan committee of four people (two members from each organization) to be direct liaisons to the consultant, and will work with the consultant to schedule meetings at key points with an advisory group made of members of FOMMCI, MMPC, and three or four additional peers, knowledge experts, and community stakeholders. Invitations to the advisory group have been extended and will be finalized as we develop a schedule with the selected consultant.

5. *There is a statement in the RFP to the effect that more funding is being sought to address the historic preservation planning aspects of the site. What is the envisioned scope of that funding, how much is being sought, and when do you anticipate funding notice?*

We have submitted a \$25,000 request to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to perform a preservation analysis and plan for a targeted list of significant structures, markers, and landscapes of the site, as part of the strategic plan process. We will be notified in July 2017.

Information Available

6. *The RFP calls for an analysis and documentation of existing conditions (1-1.7). To what extent should this analysis be grounded in principles of historic preservation and to what extent is the analysis more of a social history?*

We are looking for an environmental scan that includes aspects of both, but with a focus on providing a social context. We have more documentation available on the landscape and structures, but not as much information on how the cemetery fits within its current context.

7. *In our experience, the time it takes to develop a strategic plan is a function of the participants' clarity of mission. What work has been done to date around stakeholder engagement, vetting options for ensuring that Mount Moriah continues to function as a cemetery in perpetuity, and considering and testing what else might happen on the site?*

Clarity of mission is the most essential question of the strategic plan. Public and volunteer engagement is primarily a function of the FOMMCI. Pilot programs such as outdoor theater performances, and vetting options for earned income opportunities such as growing medicinal plants with a for-profit partner, have been tested and/or evaluated through the lens of Mount Moriah as a working cemetery. Much of this information can be gathered by the consultant through targeted interviews with FOMMCI leadership.

Additionally, a working group of environmental stakeholders has met several times over the past two years, including representatives from Heinz Wildlife Refuge, Audubon Society, University of Pennsylvania Ornithology, the Philadelphia Water Department, and others. This group has discussed potential partnerships for future use as an environmental asset as well as shared maintenance.

A local cemetery working group, made up of cemetery operators has met sporadically in Philadelphia for the past several years as well. This group is not formal, but it has given Mount Moriah Cemetery access to ideas that are used in other cemeteries.

And finally, the board of the MMCP includes members from both Yeadon Borough and Philadelphia County, implying that work will be supported and/or vetted by both entities.

8. *Please provide more detail about the level of documentation of important historical structures, markers, and plots that is expected to be produced under the contract. Is the expectation of the scope to be basic mapping, or do you expect comprehensive inventories and physical condition assessments of all monuments, structures, and landscapes? Could you provide an order-of-magnitude quantity of structures, markers, and plots involved?*

We hope that this particular scope will be within the purview of the pending \$25,000 preservation grant.

If FOMMCI is not awarded the grant, the expectation is that the consultant will provide basic mapping and recommendations for historic structures and plots, and that a more detailed conditions assessment, and estimated maintenance/restoration costs will be limited to priority preservation opportunities, such as the gatehouse and Mason's Circle.

9. *What sources of information are currently identified related to the history of the cemetery and its link to the Philadelphia and Yeadon communities?*
- Historic Resource Survey Form that was submitted to the Philadelphia Historical and Museum Commission and the determination of eligibility
 - Determination of eligibility notification for the Naval Plot
 - University of Pennsylvania Graduate Program Report on the Conditions and Conservation of the Gatehouse
 - Various documents provided by FOMMCI

10. Are there existing governance and/or charter documents for the governing organizations?

Yes. The MMCPCC has by-laws and articles of incorporation from its establishment in 2012. We can share the original Mount Moriah Association's 1855 by-laws. The FOMMCI was incorporated in April of 2011 with articles of incorporation and by-laws. It is also registered with the state as a charitable organization and has a tax exempt certificate.

11. Is the Mount Moriah team aware of existing plans and studies related to historic preservation, environment, operations, open space, and recreation in the area?

One member of the MMCPCC is also a member of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. Plans for the area include the Phila2035 University Southwest District Plan, the Phila2035 Citywide Vision, 2017 Update to the Trails Masterplan, which includes connections along the East Coast Greenway, Cobbs Creek Watershed Partnership, evaluating the streambank and watershed, and work of the flood risk management task force. We are also aware of interest by the Audubon Society, and Heinz Wildlife Refuge. Nearby open space connections on which to capitalize include Bartram's Gardens, Woodlands Cemetery, and Heinz Wildlife Refuge.

12. Is there any geographic information already collected for existing monuments, graves, etc.?

Yes, there are cemetery maps available online at the FOMMCI website:

<http://friendsofmountmoriahcemetery.org/maps/>

13. Does MMCPCC have access to the city's ArcGIS online license?

Yes, but most layers are available on opendataphilly.org. Please let us know if there are layers that are needed that are not available, and we can see if these can be provided.

14. Does the city or either organization have resources that can support updating a GIS system with data collected during the project?

The city can update GIS files; however, we generally only do so for city-collected data. We can receive information in the form of shapefiles, excel tables, or other formats that can be geocoded. Please explain why there is a need for the city to update GIS information.

15. Does Mount Moriah Cemetery have good records of past operations including historic burial rates, sources of revenue, and operating costs?

The cemetery records are housed at the City of Philadelphia Archives. There is documentation of more recent fee schedules for burials, perpetual care and special care. There are tax documents also in the stored files which may provide an overview of revenue and operating costs.

16. Has the Mount Moriah team reviewed, or does it have access to, operating models and budgets for similar size cemeteries?

We have had ongoing discussions with The Woodlands Cemetery about operational issues and could ask for financial information.

17. *Do Mount Moriah Cemetery stakeholders have any agreement on the scale of continued cemetery operations (number of annual burials, acreage open for new burials, etc.)*

This is a discussion that has happened informally as part of a Temple University landscape architecture study in 2016, and a book was produced with several options that the stakeholders feel are worth investigating.

Outcomes

18. *We understand this work to be comprised of two broad components: (1) a strategic plan that articulates the mission, operational plan, organizational structure, and business model for Mount Moriah Cemetery, and (2) a site plan that reflects these. The RFP calls for a 20-year vision for the former and a 3- to 5- year plan for the latter. In our experience, those timeframes would likely be swapped. Are the project managers open to that approach, namely a 3- to 5-year strategic plan and a longer-term vision for site planning?*

We are looking for a 3- to 5-year strategic plan and a 20-year vision and broad process for future strategic and site planning.

19. *Does the Mount Moriah team view the 20-year vision and plan as an essential part of this project?*

Yes, a 20-year vision statement and a description of a longer-term planning process is an essential outcome of this project. We understand that a 20-year strategic plan may not be possible within this scope, but 20-year vision, and a preliminary roadmap to achieving that vision is required.

Community Participation

20. *We'd want to ensure community stakeholder engagement from the beginning, which would include the process to determine the viability of Mount Moriah as a revenue producing, working cemetery (Milestone 1), since we understand this to be a critical mission question with implications for the rest of the process and relevance to a range of stakeholders (e.g. plot owners and family member of individuals interred at Mount Moriah, MMPC, the Friends group, local residents of Yeadon and Philadelphia, et al). Does this align with the project manager's' expectations?*

Yes, we agree about the implications of community stakeholders on the mission of Mount Moriah, and we would like their feedback at the beginning of this project. We have invited several stakeholders to join an advisory panel to help streamline the process.

21. *We understand that describing, engaging, and potentially expanding community stakeholders are integral activities of the desired scope. What communities have been involved in the conversation to date and what has been the nature of their involvement?*

FOMMCI has a very active Facebook group page with over 5,000 members. The organization utilizes social media to stay in direct contact with a diverse community of individuals and organization that have direct familial connections to Mount Moriah, preservationists, nature lovers as well as those who champion the underdog. Working with the local community is key to sustainability and the FOMMCI is very much involved with community organizations as well as the MDO and local police department. Both organizations have a working relationship with the Yeadon Borough City Council and supporting departments.

22. *How do you see the future support and stakeholdership of Yeadon Borough evolving? Since this project is being supported in large part (or exclusively) by the City of Philadelphia, are there balance of ownership, buy-in, or other dynamics that may need attention or special considerations for this planning process?*

Yeadon Borough has two members on the MMCP. These members are active participants in board meetings and will provide feedback on the planning effort. The Borough has resurfaced one of the main roads of the cemetery. Officers from the police force patrol that side of the cemetery on a regular bases. Until this year, Delaware County Animal Control patrolled daily to capture stray and feral cats and dogs wandering in the cemetery.

Timeline and Logistics

23. *Are MMPC and FOMMCI open to a shorter timeline for plan development than the one suggested in the RFP?*

Yes, absolutely.

24. *Our project team will visit Mount Moriah in advance of preparing our response to the RFP. Do the project managers intend to provide a guided tour to respondents?*

Paulette Rhones will provide a tour on **April 25 at 9 am**. All are invited, and please let us know if you can attend by emailing Stephanie Phillips at spmmasonwasp@gmail.com.