



# City of Highland Park

1707 St. Johns Avenue  
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## **ADDENDUM A**

Date: March 12, 2021

Re: City of Highland Park Solar PV RFQ

This Addendum serves to answer any questions submitted related to the City of Highland Park's Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") for Rooftop Solar Panel Installation and Operations issued by the City of Highland Park on February 8, 2021. This Addendum is being posted on the City's website in the same location as the RFQ at the following link [City of Highland Park website](#).

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE PERIOD OF 2/8/2021 – 3/1/2021**

**Question 1:** Would the City be able to share the annual energy (kWh) usage (last 24 months), utility invoices, and account numbers/number of utility meters for each proposed site?

**Answer Q1:** An Excel file with the electricity usage information from the sites (excluding account numbers and meter numbers at this time) has been posted on the City website at the following link:  
<http://cms6.revize.com/revize/highlandparkil/HP%20WTP%20&%20NSR%20Elec%20use%20PUBLIC%20VERSION.xlsx>

Please note that at this time, the City is removing the Highland Park Country Club property from the procurement process. The City intends to work with the Park District of Highland Park in a future year to install roof top solar at the facility in conjunction with the neighboring Recreation Center of Highland Park.

**Question 2:** Did the City go through an initial assessment for solar?

**Answer Q2:** No. The City has had vendors previously approach the City about installing solar panels on the Water Treatment Plant but has not conducted a formal assessment of either site.



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**Question 3:** Has the City completed an 'interconnection study' with the Utility?

**Answer Q3:** No. The City has not completed an interconnection study with the Utility.

**Question 4:** Why does the City want to go solar, and why those locations?

**Answer Q4:** The City has an ambitious and aggressive [Sustainability Plan](#). In 2019, the City signed onto the Mayor's Compact for Climate and Energy and set a greenhouse gas reduction target of 5% by 2023. We have been making progress towards our goal and one of the methods we are looking for is to install solar on the properties that we've identified. The objective of this project is to serve as an example to the community of the current possibilities in solar technology, to achieve electricity cost savings, and to utilize as much solar energy generated on site to power the City's Water Treatment Plant and North Side Reservoir. The locations were chosen given their flat surfaces and ample sunlight exposure. These sites also operate under paid electricity accounts compared to other City facilities which are non-paid Franchise accounts through ComEd. With those sites having electricity expenses, we felt a solar installation could help reduce energy costs in these 24/7 facilities.

**Question 5:** Can firms receive a sample of the Professional Services Agreement?

**Answer Q5:** The City intends to include a Professional Services Agreement sample in the RFP. The RFP will follow the RFQ, and those firms selected to move forward to the RFP will receive that documentation.

**Question 6:** PPA or ownership model?

**Answer Q6:** PPA. The City does not have funds budgeted to procure solar panels at this time. Further, as a government entity, the City cannot claim tax credits for the purchase of solar panels. The method we have observed to work optimally for municipal governments is a PPA.





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**Question 10:** Can firms come onsite to view the facilities, and what is the process for on-site visits?

**Answer Q10:** The City will conduct onsite visits with qualified firms that we've identified to move forward during the request for proposals process.

**Question 11:** Are there any plans to replace the roofs of the proposed sites?

**Answer Q11:** There are no planned roof replacements at this time.

**Question 12:** Can firms receive structural, mechanical, or electrical drawings before submitting the RFQ? A set of plans/specs?

**Answer Q12:** The City will share drawings as necessary for preparing proposals during the request for proposals stage of the project.

**Question 13:** Who will be on the interview committee?

**Answer Q13:** The Interview Committee will be comprised of representatives of the Public Works Department, including Water Plant staff, and staff from the City Manager's Office. The City may also bring in an outside energy consultant to assist with the RFP and interview process as well.

**Question 14:** Which areas of the RFQ does your team want us to address versus what would be required for the RFP later on?

**Answer Q14:** The RFQ's purpose is to detail a firm's background and experience, so we recommend completing all the sections to the best of your ability. There may be some overlap in the RFP, but the RFQ will determine who the City invites to the RFP and ultimately is awarded the project.

**Question 15:** What is the estimated construction budget?

**Answer Q15:** There is no construction budget for this project. We are looking for a Power Purchase Agreement rather than an upfront purchase of solar panels.



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**Question 16:** Is the City considering other services the firm has to offer?

**Answer Q16:** The City is open to evaluating other services that firms may offer. The purpose of this RFQ is to identify firms that are interested in submitting a proposal to install solar at the identified sites of the RFQ. Note that the City is not moving forward with solar at the Highland Park Country Club at this time.

**Question 17:** Would you be able to send me a list of bidders the city has?

**Answer Q17:** At this time, we do not have a bidders list for this project. We posted the RFQ on our website and emailed the RFQ to businesses that we found via a Google search that seemed to do the work we are seeking. Once we receive qualifications submittals, we will qualify vendors and then proceed to an RFP process thereafter.

**Question 18:** What funding does the City expect to obtain with the Adjustable Block Program running out? When will the RFP be posted and if there isn't funding available what responses is the City expecting to receive?

**Answer Q18:** The City desires to enter into a PPA for the solar panels and through this RFQ and subsequent RFP process to identify firms that are able to provide the desired deliverables. The City defers to the firms that are submitting proposals to have financing mechanisms to help make the project possible. If financing is not possible at this time, the City desires to receive proposals for the installation of the system being ready to go at a time when financing becomes favorable. If construction of the system is not feasible within this year, then the City desires to have all specifications in place and the project be ready to go right away when financing mechanisms are in place to ensure the PPA provides for costs to be at or below the current rates paid by the City for electricity at the Water Treatment Plant and North Side Reservoir. As previously stated, it is the City's desire to undertake this project in 2021 if possible to do so via a PPA.

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**Question 19:** Can you please designate the specific property on which solar will be installed for the Half Day Road Reservoir Facility? The RFQ gives an address, but that appears to be a fire station. Is the intention to install a ground-mounted solution within the actual reservoir, or is that entire Public Works facility the goal for a roof-mounted system?

**Answer Q19:** These would be ground mounted upon the locations denoted in the map below



(behind the fire station).



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**Question 20:** You are not in a Low Income nor Environmental Justice Community. As such, you don't qualify for the IL Solar For All program (ILSFA). The ILSFA is the only program currently operating. The broader Adjustable Block program which your city would have qualified under, has run out of funding. The funding won't be replenished until and unless new legislation is passed. As such, I am curious why you are planning to issue an RFP now? Solar is not viable without incentives.

**Answer Q20:** The City desires to enter into a PPA for the solar panels and through this RFQ and subsequent RFP process to identify firms that are able to provide the desired deliverables. The City defers to the firms that are submitting proposals to have financing mechanisms to help make the project financially viable. If financing is not possible at this time, the City desires to receive proposals for the installation of the system being ready to go at a time when financing becomes favorable. If construction of the system is not feasible within this year, then the City desires to have all specifications in place and the project be ready to go right away when financing mechanisms are in place to ensure the PPA provides for costs to be at or below the current rates paid by the City for electricity at the Water Treatment Plant and North Side Reservoir. As previously stated, it is the City's desire to undertake this project in 2021 if possible to do so via a PPA.

**Question 21:** Would the City consider carports (canopy) on your Water Treatment Facility and Highland Park Country Club along with ground mount and rooftop.

**Answer Q21:** The City is open to considering carports for the Water Treatment Facility however funds do not exist in the City budget at this time to construct carports. We are removing the Highland Park Country Club from this RFP at this time.

**Question 22:** Has the City obtained Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) from the Illinois Adjustable Block Program?

**Answer Q22:** No.



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**Question 23:** There are several roofs at the Water Treatment Facility – should we show solar on all these?

**Answer Q23:** Yes, vendors will be allowed to utilize the entire roof space at the Water Treatment Plant for submitting a proposal.

**Question 24:** The Half Day Road Reservoir shows a very small roof, but it is next to a very large roof which belongs to the City's Building Department. Is the Building Department also a spot where solar can go? There is also a field right there too, so were you thinking the solar array for the Reservoir would be a ground-mounted array in that grassy area to the South of the building?

**Answer Q24:** The City is not looking at roof top solar on the Public Services Building at this time. Please see the answer to Question 19 for information on the Reservoir site.

**Question 25:** The Highland Park Country Club facility seems to be joined together into the same building as the Recreation Center. Should we assume the City will want solar on the Rec Center's roof as well?

**Answer Q25:** At this time, we are removing the Highland Park Country Club facility from this procurement process. The City intends to work with the Park District of Highland Park in the future to install solar on the roofs of both facilities.

**Question 26:** Is there land available at each of these sites where the City would like to place a solar array as well? Please point out exactly which ground areas at each location that the City would make available for a ground-mounted array.

**Answer Q26:** The Reservoir facility would be a ground mounted array. The Water Plant would be entirely a rooftop installation.





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**Question 27:** For ground-mounted arrays, will the bidders be able to remove and/or trim trees to improve the solar performance?

**Answer Q27:** Proposals should identify which trees would need to be removed for the ground mounted solar the Reservoir. The City will evaluate requests to remove trees to the greatest extent that they do not reduce any buffers next to residential property.

**Question 28:** For responding to the RFQ, there appear to be several areas in the document that outline how you'd like the response to look. I am confused about what areas to address, for example: Section 3-3 shows the "Contents of submittal of Qualifications. This appears to be the outline of what you would like in our response. However, there is also Evaluation Criteria in Section 4.1. Should we address each one of these to address all the areas that you are evaluating? Or was this section just to show what you will be evaluating IF we are to move forward into the RFP phase? Finally, there is the Response Form Template in Section 4.2. Is this again the template you want to see for the RFQ response? Or was it posted to show the more detailed response and scoring you would be evaluating should we move on to the RFP phase?

**Answer Q28:** The RFQ's purpose is to detail a firm's background and experience, so we recommend completing all the sections to the best of your ability. The City is less focused on template and format and more focused on the firm providing the requested information to the greatest extent possible as part of the RFQ. The RFP will hone in on specifics that the City will be looking for from the qualified vendors. At this time, we are looking to qualify firms and evaluate work they have performed and their ability and desire to perform the solar work for the City under this procurement.

**Question 29:** Does the City require the labor on this project to be paid using Prevailing Wage rates?

**Answer Q29:** Yes



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**Question 30:** What is the purpose of the batteries at each location: load shifting? Peak Shaving? Power availability due to frequent brown/black outs? A combination of reasons?

**Answer Q30:** A combination of reasons including load shifting and power availability in the event of a brown/black out.

**Question 31:** The outline asks for experience for wall-mounted systems. Which sites have appreciable space for a wall-mounted system?

**Answer Q31:** At this time, the Water Treatment Plant and the Reservoir do not have wall mounted applications. This was a consideration for the Highland Park Country Club which is being removed from this procurement at this time.

**Question 32:** What is meant under Section III of the RFQ, "Project Approach" where it asks for a summary of estimated timeline of project(s) to be developed pursuant to this RFQ, including duration of the contract?

**Answer Q32:** We are seeking a general overview of the timeline for installing solar at the Water Plant and the Reservoir. We are seeking to understand your firm's perspective on how long it will take for the systems that we are seeking to go from initial design to electrification. This does not need to be exact as that will be developed in the contract with the final selected vendor but a summary is sufficient.

**Question 33:** The RFQ mentions a "Sample Professional Services Agreement (PSA) attached. I did not see anything attached, so can you please provide? The RFQ also says that all terms of the PSA cannot be changed, so does that mean if we don't agree with any PSA terms we should not submit for the RFQ because there will be no negotiations on the terms?

**Answer Q33:** The City will be providing a Sample Professional Services Agreement during the RFP process. The City is open to negotiation of the terms of the PSA as part of the RFP process and retract any statements contained within the RFQ that state that the PSA cannot be changed.



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**Question 34:** Would the city be interested in evaluating a variance to the installation? Specifically, Community Solar would offer the ability to participate in solar savings without actually installing solar panels.

**Answer Q34:** The City currently has municipal accounts subscribed to community solar. We are looking at this time to procure onsite solar panels for the noted facilities.