

HSBID Public Relations RFP - 2025

Questions + Answers

HSBID received numerous questions regarding our Public Relations RFP. We have organized responses by topic and included multiple questions where possible.

As a reminder, all responses are due by **Friday, January 31, 2025**

Topic: AGENCIES, PROCESS, EVALUATION

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Answer</u>
When the proposal says that a certified MBE or WBE will be looked upon favorably, how will that be scored/impacted in the overall proposal?	<i>We consider this along with experience, cost, understanding of our goals, and many other factors.</i>
Who is the branding agency with which the selected PR agency could potentially collaborate?	<u>Our branding agency is Six + One.</u>
For the submission - Is there a preference on format for the proposal ie. deck or memo?	No – we seek submissions that offer a clear proposal, offer us insight into how your agency would handle our account, and why you are the best firm for this job.
Will your current agency be participating in this RFP process? If so, will they be evaluated using the same criteria as other agencies?	<i>All responding agencies will be evaluated using the same criteria.</i>

TOPIC: BUDGET

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Answer</u>
Can you provide any budget parameters for the monthly retainer or budget range for this engagement?	This is an open RFP, and we will consider cost, ability, and responsiveness to our needs.
Would it be possible to share general budget parameters to help tailor our proposal effectively?	
Does HSBID have any budget parameters for the monthly retainer? What activities are the biggest priority for 2025 (such as thought leadership, earned media, stakeholder engagement, social media, etc.)?	This is an open RFP, and we will consider cost, ability, and responsiveness to our needs. Please review the goals and objectives in the RFP. Our campaigns tend to be focused on policies and capital projects. We work with our retailers to get coverage for them and thus highlight the unique character of our neighborhood and its strengths.
<i>For the fee, the proposal asks for the total cost of the project, expressed as a monthly retainer but then asks for an hourly fee for each team member under additional services not covered. Is that hourly rate only for additional services? Or do you need an hourly breakdown as part of the monthly retainer?</i>	For additional services, we are seeking a breakdown of what would not be included in the monthly fee. Note that our annual spending has certain limitations due to New York City procurement agreements.
Is there potential incremental budget (outside the monthly retainer) for big ideas/activations?	

TOPIC: ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY VIA SOCIAL MEDIA/INFLUENCERS

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Answer</u>
Do you have a dedicated social media team?	Yes.
What are your thoughts on influencer relations and content creators? Is this an area you'd like the PR firm to handle and include in the proposal?	We would like our PR firm to advise us on our social media strategy to complement our PR strategy. We produce our own content including polls and contests.
<i>For engaging the community, is the selected agency expected to develop social media content through contests, polls and so forth?</i>	
Under section 3 of objectives and services it says “Encourage dialogue and engagement through social media and other channels” will the agency be responsible for developing the content and managing the day-to-day operations of social media or other channels? If so can you please identify which channels the agency will be responsible for?	We have a dedicated staffer who coordinates our digital communications across channels such as Instagram, X, newsletters, and YouTube. We are looking to have a coordinated digital strategy with PR
Have you ever worked with paid influencers, is that something you would be open to? (We’ve seen some great success with these types of partnerships!)	We have explored working with paid influencers; we consider cost/benefit analysis for influencers and whether it helps us achieve our overall PR goals. We would like our PR firm to advise us on our social media strategy to complement our PR strategy. We produce our own content
Do you already have influencers and neighborhood “champions” a part of their strategy? Or are you looking for guidance in securing and engaging with them?	
The RFP lists that we should help to engage the community through engagement and dialogue on social media. Do you see this more as complementary to our Public Relations role? Or would you like us to include recommendations from a social media perspective as well?	We would like our PR firm to advise us on our social media strategy to complement our PR strategy. We produce our own content.

**TOPIC: ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY VIA EVENTS,
PUBLIC SPACES**

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Answer</u>
<i>Is Hudson Square planning any events to celebrate the 400th birthday of NYC and the 250th anniversary of the country in 2026?</i>	HSBID events tend to be around big project items (i.e. ground breaking, public art, capital improvement project milestones). We are open to collaborating with other organizations to celebrate the 400 th birthday of New York City; we do not have an events team or a large budget for events.
What opportunities exist for improving Hudson Square BID's tentpole moments/programming?	We are hoping you will talk about new opportunities in your proposal.
Outside of existing tentpole moments/programming, what other cultural or neighborhood events during the year could benefit most from PR support?	It varies. At a minimum, we have our Annual Meeting, an evening event, and an opening party when the season starts for Freeman Plaza East + West . A few times a year, we have press initiatives around our sustainability initiatives focused on Earth Day, the anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, etc. We look for press coverage for milestones in developing/unveiling new projects, including new murals or other art projects, a few times a year. We also highlight new retailers and trends in local businesses (above floor and storefront). We look for thought leadership coverage around policies that impact our district, such as congestion pricing, sustainability, urban forestry, and public space.
Are there public spaces where activations are allowed or restricted as part of a campaign? If so, can you list them	We manage several public spaces and can activate these within certain limitations based on our licenses to operate them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Street Park – Parks department • Freeman Plaza East + West – Port Authority of NY & NJ

**TOPIC: ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY VIA
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, ETC**

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Answer</u>
Can you provide more insights into the demographics and target audiences?	Not at this time. Please review our press coverage and social media presence to inform who you think our audience is. If a firm is chosen for an interview, we will discuss this more at that time.
How do you currently engage with your diverse stakeholders, and what challenges have you encountered in reaching them?	Please refer to our challenges as a district
Possible to share any notable new businesses/commercial openings expected in the next 12 months that could serve as potential news hooks?	We ask that you research this and advise us if this will be an area of focus in your proposal. There is no huge opening to share that is not already public.
Historically, how much has the BID relied on individual business participation for campaigns? Should we focus on ideas that require minimal lift from businesses?	Our campaigns tend to be focused on policies and capital projects. We work with our retailers to get coverage for them and thus highlight the unique character of our neighborhood and its strengths.
Are there plans to physically brand the neighborhood and mark its boundaries to build more awareness for the BID?	Yes, we are actively implementing and exploring opportunities with our branding agency.
How do you collaborate with tech companies and retail partners? Do you partner with them for events or programming in the neighborhood?	We highlight new retailers and trends in local businesses (above floor and storefront) and partner with local businesses for seasonal promotions mainly on Social Media.
Do you have partnerships with the Hudson River Park Trust or other major organizations?	Yes, we have relationships with neighboring and “adjacent” organizations with shared interests and/or boundaries. With HRPT in particular, there is currently a NYS study on 9A that will require coordination between the BID and HRPT on any pedestrian improvements.

TOPIC: SPOKESPEOPLE, THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP, STRATEGY

Questions	Answer
<p>For preferred spokespeople, does the HSBID like to focus on individual subject matter experts for issues related to open space and urban planning, mobility, pedestrian safety, art and culture, etc? Or do these sorts of opportunities typically go to Samara Karasyk as President and CEO?</p>	<p>We always consider how to put forth the BID in the best light. While Samara is highly experienced and adept at speaking on a wide range of topics, our team is well-equipped to handle press opportunities that align with their area of expertise. Additionally, we are open to collaborating with experts when it helps to highlight an HSBID program or initiative effectively.</p>
<p>Have you identified spokespeople or thought leaders within HSBID for media engagements, or would you like our assistance in developing them?</p>	
<p>Who are the available HSBID voices for media and thought leadership opportunities?</p>	
<p>Who are your most important and effective spokespeople?</p>	
<p>As part of your robust thought leadership strategy, is there interest in pursuing policy-oriented media opportunities? Does HSBID plan to be more vocal when it comes to local and national civic issues?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Are there citywide laws or regulations anticipated in the next 12 months that might impact Hudson Square?</p>	<p>There are always new local laws and policies that impact BIDs. Congestion pricing is a great example of a “news hook” for our neighborhood because congestion is a major challenge here. DSNY Containerization is another example</p>
<p>Would selected agency have access to any historical data or insights related to the BID’s evolution, particularly retail, hospitality, and real estate trends?</p>	<p>Most of this is publicly available information; we will share whatever materials we have that support the PR strategy as long as they are in line with our goals.</p>
<p>How do you envision differentiating Hudson Square from surrounding neighborhoods like SoHo, Tribeca, and the West Village in media narratives?</p>	<p>Please review our current and past strategy as well as the RFP.</p>
<p>Are there particular awards, panels, conferences, events, or recognitions that align with your mission and accomplishments?</p>	<p>We are seeking a firm that can help us find these opportunities beyond what we are already involved in.</p>
<p>Does HSBID have existing relationships with influencers and neighborhood champions who would be available for media activities?</p>	<p>Our campaigns tend to be focused on policies and capital projects. We work with our retailers to get coverage for them and thus highlight the unique character of our neighborhood and its strengths.</p>

TOPIC: SPOKESPEOPLE, THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP, STRATEGY (CON'T)

Questions	Answer
Does HSBID leadership have policy asks of the City Council and/or the Mayor’s Office to improve the neighborhood on issues like congestion pricing, bike lanes, walkability and open streets, outdoor dining, housing density and FAR caps, zoning changes, etc.?	We are big proponents of congestion pricing for our neighborhood and that has been a priority for us in terms of press. We are always interested in being thought leaders around bike lanes, walkability, open streets, and urban forestry. We currently work with a government affairs consultant on policy issues and capital funding. Our major capital improvements are typically funded with 50% public money and 50% BID private contributions. We engage our government affairs consultant on capital funding strategies and asks each fiscal year.
In HSBID’s view, how is Hudson Square perceived by New Yorkers? What are the current reputational challenges, particularly as it relates to other neighborhoods?	We have unique advantages as a commercial district in the CBD that is full of creative companies. Our challenge is that many New Yorkers do not know where Hudson Square is.
Does HSBID have any upcoming milestones such as new initiatives, partnerships, report releases, etc. that should be considered as we develop our proposal?	We produce quarterly mobility reports and biannual workforce surveys. As the New Jersey bound Holland Tunnel entrance is located in the heart of the BID, we are strong proponents of congestion pricing, and are closely monitoring the impacts and potential benefits for our community.
Does HSBID have an existing testimonial database including stories from local businesses (both above-ground tenants in larger commercial spaces and ground-floor retail)?	We don’t have a database; so far we have never had an issue getting testimonials when we need them.
Is HSBID interested in any additional services beyond those requested in the RFP, including creative or digital amplification?	We would like our PR firm to advise us on our social media strategy to complement our PR strategy. Please note, we produce our own content
Are you interested in building on any thought leadership messaging platform related to streetscape improvements or pedestrian safety?	Yes

TOPIC: GOALS, PROJECTS, COMPARISONS, MEASURE SUCCESS

Questions

Answer

<p>What are HSBID’s top goals for 2025? What are the key BID milestones for 2025-2026?</p>	<p>Please refer to the RFP for our goals. Our campaigns tend to be focused on policies and capital projects. In regards to events, at a minimum, we have our Annual Meeting, an evening event, and an opening party when the season starts for Freeman Plaza East + West . A few times a year, we have press initiatives around our sustainability initiatives focused on Earth Day, the anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, etc. We look for press coverage for milestones in developing/unveiling new projects, including new murals or other art projects, a few times a year. We also highlight new retailers and trends in local businesses (above floor and storefront). We look for thought leadership coverage around policies that impact our district, such as congestion pricing, sustainability, urban forestry, and public space.</p>
<p>Are there any major marketing initiatives planned, such as programming, events, or legislation?</p>	
<p>How many signature initiatives/events do you typically hold per year that would require PR support?</p>	<p>It varies. At a minimum, we have our Annual Meeting, an evening event, and an opening party when the season starts for Freeman Plaza East and West. A few times a year we have press initiatives around our sustainability initiatives focused on Earth Day, the anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, etc.. We look for press coverage for milestones in developing/unveiling new projects, including new murals or other art projects, a few times a year. We also highlight new retailers and trends in local businesses (above floor and storefront). We look for thought leadership coverage around policies that impact our district, such as congestion pricing, sustainability, urban forestry, and public space.</p>
<p>Where would HSBID like to be in a year from now? What does success look like?</p>	<p>Success is building upon our current strategy – increasing awareness of Hudson Square as a neighborhood including what makes us unique, having more thought leadership opportunities, and overall increasing our press coverage.</p>
<p>What does a successful PR team engagement look like?</p>	
<p>How do you currently measure success for your PR initiatives?</p>	<p>We measure them based on how much coverage we get for the projects and initiatives that are our priorities, including awareness of Hudson Square as a neighborhood.</p>

TOPIC: GOALS, PROJECTS, COMPARISONS, MEASURE SUCCESS (CON'T)

Questions	Answer
In what areas would you like to see some improvements in any future PR program? Are there any pain points that the new agency can address?	We would like to receive more coverage for our thought leadership and participate more often on panels around the issues that impact our district and our work
What challenges has the BID faced in crafting its messaging and narrative?	We would like to hear what you think its biggest challenge is with our messaging and narrative. If a firm is chosen for an interview, we will discuss this more then.
Are there 2-3 other BIDs, either in NYC or other cities, whose media presence and coverage you admire and would like to emulate? What specific aspects of their media profile stand out to you?	We are a mostly commercial district and our BID is unique in that our first priority has always been capital improvements in the public realm - building and maintaining them. We are not a heavy “retail district” in the traditional sense. We are looking for responding agencies to tell us how we can get more coverage for this work and as thought leaders in this space. We would appreciate you telling us who you think stands out as an organization getting good coverage in these areas and why.
Is there a neighborhood or region that they think is doing an exemplary job with communications?	
What are some of the main challenges the BID has faced with PR and media exposure?	
Regarding the October New York Times profile, did you consider this a key win for the BID? What role did your PR team play in securing and shaping the piece?	The BID considers press coverage of our streetscape and open space development to be a win, and we were thrilled to have the neighborhood covered by the NY Times.
Is HSBID planning any new studies/reports looking at the state of retail in the neighborhood, especially as it pertains to ground-floor retail?	We produce quarterly mobility reports and biannual workforce surveys. As the New Jersey bound Holland Tunnel entrance is located in the heart of the BID, we are strong proponents of congestion pricing, and are closely monitoring the impacts and potential benefits for our community.
What unique neighborhood attributes can the public access?	We are a mostly commercial district and our BID is unique in that our first priority has always been capital improvements in the public realm - building and maintaining them. Please refer to our website and public improvements page to see the amenities we have created for the neighborhood.
Have certain types of initiatives or storylines worked well with the media in the past? If so, what made them successful?	the completion of capital projects usually presents a strong opportunity for media engagement, especially when these events involve elected officials and high-level policymakers.
Can you share insights about your PR process - what aspects have worked well, and what areas need enhancement?	We want to hear from all responding agencies about what they think has worked well with our PR strategy in the past and where it could be enhanced.