

Request for Proposals

Tompkins County Old Library Property

Introduction

Tompkins County is requesting proposals for the purchase or lease, and redevelopment of county-owned property that is the site of the Old Library building. The County intends to vacate the building during the fourth quarter of 2015 and aims to have a redevelopment plan in place at that time. Proposals are being solicited from a subset of the respondents to the prior Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI), dated December 2013, soliciting potential developers for the property.

The site was acquired by Tompkins County in 1965 from the I.O.O.F. Ithaca Lodge and Ithaca College, and the Tompkins County Public Library was constructed on the site. In 2000 the Public Library was moved to its current location on Green Street and since that time the County has used the Old Library building primarily for records storage and for the Community Justice Center. As a result of a comprehensive review of County facility needs and efficiencies it has been determined that the building is no longer needed for those purposes. The last remaining use, the Community Justice Center, is slated to be moved to space at the County Human Services Building in late 2015.

Property Description and Zoning

The Old Library is a 38,630 square foot, two and a half story building sitting on a 0.88-acre parcel located at 310-314 N. Cayuga Street (the SW corner of Cayuga and Court Streets) in the City of Ithaca. The property is currently assessed at \$1.5 million based on prior zoning. It was recently re-zoned CBD-50 which allows mixed-use buildings up to four stories and 50 feet in height. It is located in the Dewitt Historic District and any development will require a certificate of appropriateness from the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission. Surrounding land uses include the Lifelong Senior Center, the First Presbyterian Church, the Dewitt Park Inn and Dewitt Park. The site is on the edge of the vibrant Ithaca Downtown Business District to the south and the popular urban neighborhood of Fall Creek to the north, and is walkable to employment, entertainment, shopping, schools, and many services.

Selection Criteria

Tompkins County is interested in selling or leasing the property at fair market value for redevelopment that will make a positive contribution to the community and that is not only compatible with, but also will strengthen and enhance the quality of the surrounding neighborhoods. The County is requesting that all proposals include mixed uses, i.e., at least one other use, such as commercial, public purpose or not for profit, in addition to residential. Housing should be designed to serve a diverse population and provide ownership opportunities if possible. Green building proposals that use highly energy efficient building methods and renewable energy will be favored. All project proponents are required to attend a special meeting of the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commissioner tentatively scheduled for a date in January 2015 to discuss what will be required for the project to obtain a certificate of appropriateness.

In determining which proposal to select the following criteria, in no particular order of relative importance, will be key considerations:

- A. energy efficiency and carbon footprint, including impacts of proposed demolition/deconstruction and/or remediation, of the project including any attempt to meet Architecture 2030 standards
- B. quality of the overall program and conceptual design, including its compatibility with the surrounding historic neighborhood and how it addresses traffic, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and parking
- C. responsiveness to community needs including housing and other uses, such as a community organization
- D. positive economic/tax base impact
- E. capability of the developer or development team to undertake, finance, and manage the project
- F. demonstrated market feasibility of the proposed program
- G. price/lease payments offered for the property
- H. plan for managing neighborhood impacts including noise and air quality during demolition/deconstruction/remediation and construction.

Process

The proposals received will be reviewed by the Old Library Committee of the Legislature which may solicit assistance from County staff or advisory boards. A recommendation will be made to the full legislature to designate a preferred developer. That developer will then be asked to undertake a coordinated SEQR review of their project with the County and City of Ithaca. Upon completion of the SEQR process the legislature will consider a resolution to authorize an agreement for sale of the property to the preferred developer.

The intended schedule for a sale or lease of the property is as follows:

- November 2014 – draft RFP released for 10-day comment by invited respondents
- December 2014 – final RFP released
- January 2015 – presentation to and feedback from the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission
- March 2015 – Responses to RFP due
- July 2015 – County review of responses complete and resolution authorizing designation of preferred developer for SEQR process approved by Legislature
- July – October 2015 – coordinated SEQR review with City of Ithaca along with parallel certificate of appropriateness process before Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission
- November 2015 – negotiate terms of agreement for lease or sale
- December 2015 – County Legislature adopts resolution authorizing sale or lease
- January 2016 – Close on property sale or lease

Submission Requirements

All responses to the RFP must be provided in both hard copy (7 copies) and electronic pdf format. All information that is confidential shall be provided in a separate document. The responses should be as specific as possible and must include:

- A project narrative addressing all of the criteria outlined above in the order presented and any other factors deemed relevant by the respondent.
- A scaled sketch plan including details regarding parking, sidewalks and landscaping.
- Building design including conceptual-level floor plans and elevations for all sides of the building.
- Strategies that will be employed to manage parking demand and traffic impacts both during and after construction, including consideration of pedestrian networks, TCAT service and Car Share resources in the area.
- Specific, detailed explanation and quantification of measures to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, including, if applicable, how the project will meet the Architecture 2030 standard. Meeting the 2030 standard or any other specific green building standard is not a requirement, but measures that will be incorporated in the project should be specified and be sufficient to support any standard the project seeks to achieve. Building energy modeling is not required. Projects will be evaluated on both the level of energy efficiency the project is committed to achieving and the specificity of the measures identified to achieve that standard.
- A plan for how utilities will be provided to the site including consultation with NYSEG and the City of Ithaca about availability and location of access to required utilities.
- How the project has incorporated into the design feedback received from the City of Ithaca Landmark Preservation Commission with an explanation of any modifications to the design that have been made to respond to its input.
- Evidence of meeting with City staff to assure that the project will meet City zoning and code requirements, identification of any variances that would be required, and indication of whether City staff feels those variances are likely to be granted.
- A signed agreement or memorandum of understanding with Lifelong, if it is to be a part of the project, outlining the terms and conditions of that partnership. *This document should be part of the confidential submission.*
- Signed agreements or MOU's with any other parties that are committing to lease/own non-residential space in the building. *These should also be part of the confidential submission.*
- An income and expense pro forma that outlines in detail the cost of building the project, debt service, and projected revenues including projected rents or sales prices by unit and by square foot. If housing units are to be made affordable to low or moderate income households (80% of median income or below) how long those units will be maintained as affordable and the mechanism to assure continued affordability.
- Any anticipated request for tax abatements or tax credits.
- The price offered for purchase of the property and/or stream of ground lease payments proposed.
- Demonstration that the responder can obtain the financing to implement its proposal, including payment of fair market value for the property. This should include financial statements and evidence of any commitments from financial institutions or other sources.
- Certification of ability to close on the property acquisition or lease by no later than January 31, 2016.
- Project schedule including major milestones from date of selection to occupancy, including coordinated SEQR review.

- Any contingencies that could affect project readiness to proceed to project development as of January 1, 2016.
- Answers to the following questions:
 - Do you plan to use local contractors?
 - Does your organization have a diversity and inclusion plan?

The County expects to sell or lease the property for fair market value. An appraisal of the property is attached as an addendum to this RFP.

The County has conducted an assessment of asbestos, lead and PCB abatement requirements and that is also attached as an addendum to the RFP.

Living Wage

The County's 2003 Livable Wage Policy requires the County to "consider the wage levels and benefits, particularly health care, provided by contractors when awarding bids or negotiating contracts, and to encourage the payment of livable wages whenever practical and reasonable." While paying the living wage to employees is not mandatory, the attainment of a broadly-applied living wage is a County goal and is therefore an important consideration applied by the County when reviewing proposals.

The current living wage level standard in Tompkins County is \$12.62/hour when health benefits are provided, and \$13.94/hour when they are not.

Questions and Answers

Specific questions in writing from potential respondents will be entertained until three weeks prior to the submission deadline. Answers to all questions will be posted publicly at least two weeks prior to the deadline.

Confidentiality and Ownership of Proposals

All proposals will become the property of Tompkins County. Respondents should indicate and label as "confidential and proprietary information" any material that it believes should be protected from public disclosure. Tompkins County will maintain confidentiality of material as allowed by law but, at a minimum, the information provided in the non-confidential document will become public information.

Form of the Response

All responses must be presented in the following format:

- 1) A document containing:
 - a. A one-page executive summary of the proposal;
 - b. All of the non-confidential submission requirements outlined above in the order listed in this RFP;
 - c. The principal parties that are proposing the project and any intended partners, along with statements of qualifications and three references for each.

- 2) A document containing all of the confidential information requested in the order listed in the RFP.

All responses must include seven hard copies and a CD including all project files in pdf format.

Submission Deadline

All responses are due in the County Purchasing office at 125 E. Court Street no later than 4:00 p.m. on March 20, 2015.

Limitations

The issuance of this RFP and the submission of a response by any person or firm or the acceptance of such response by Tompkins County do not obligate Tompkins County in any manner whatsoever. Legal obligations will only arise upon execution of a formal contract by Tompkins County and the person or firm selected by Tompkins County.

For further information contact:

Ed Marx, Commissioner of Planning
121 E. Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850
(607) 274-5560
emarx@tompkins-co.org