

DRAFT**Request for Expressions of Interest****Tompkins County Old Library Property****Introduction**

Tompkins County is requesting expressions of interest for the purchase or lease, and redevelopment of, county-owned property which is the site of the Old Library building. The County intends to vacate the building during the first quarter of 2015 and aims to have a redevelopment plan in place at that time. The Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) is the first step of a process for choosing a developer 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 early 2015.

Property Description and Zoning

The Old Library is a 38,630 square foot, two and a half story building sitting on a .88 acre parcel located at 310-14 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 surrounding land uses include the Lifelong Senior Center, the First Presbyterian Church 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.

In 2013 Tompkins County commissioned a professional appraisal of the property that concluded that the fair market value is ____.

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. Synergies and/or collaboration with adjacent land uses such as Lifelong would be seen as positive. In accordance with the County Comprehensive Plan and City of Ithaca planning objectives, proposals for mixed use projects will be welcomed as will proposals that help fill gaps in the County's housing needs including housing that specifically serves the aging population. Green building proposals that use highly energy efficient

building methods and renewable energy will be favored. Creative or innovative project concepts are encouraged. The County does not have a preference between renovation of the current building or the demolition of the current building and development of a new structure on the site.

In determining which proposals to consider further in the process outlined below the following criteria, in no particular order of relative importance, will be key considerations:

- energy efficiency and carbon footprint of the project
- quality of the overall project concept and design
- responsiveness to community needs
- positive economic/tax base impact
- capability of the development team
- financial feasibility.

Process

The proposals received will undergo preliminary review by the County Planning Advisory Board. The Board will recommend top projects to the County Legislature for consideration and the Legislature will make the final determination of projects to go to the next stage in the review process. Any selected respondent(s) will be invited to submit final proposals in response to a formal Request for Proposals that will entail more detail about the project including a clear financing plan. The County reserves the right to limit the RFP to submissions from selected RFEI respondents, reject all submissions from respondents to the RFEI, or open the formal Request for Proposals to additional submissions.

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

- December 2013 - RFEI released
- April 2014 – Responses to RFEI due
- June 2014 – County review of responses complete
- July 2014 - County releases RFP
- September 2014 - Responses to RFP due
- November 2014 - County review of responses and selection of developer
- January 2015 – terms of agreement for sale or lease agreed upon
- February 2015 – County Legislature adopts resolution authorizing sale or lease
- March 2015 – Close on property sale or lease

Site Visits and Inspections

A guided site visit with County staff will be held on _____. Special arrangements may also be made for site visits at other times but no site visits will be allowed later than two weeks prior to the submission deadline.

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 you believe should be protected from public disclosure. Tompkins County will maintain confidentiality of material as allowed by law but, at a minimum, the narrative descriptions of the project concepts and sponsors of the proposals will become public information.

Form of the Response

All responses must include the following information:

- 1) A detailed narrative description of the proposal addressing all of the selection criteria outlined above and including a description of how the project is intended to be financed.
- 2) A timeline for development beginning in the second quarter of 2015.
- 3) Indication whether the proposal is for purchase or lease of the property and whether the alternative would also be considered. In the case of a lease, lease terms should be proposed that reflect the fair market value.
- 4) A preliminary sketch plan and conceptual elevation drawings or photo-representations of the intended project.
- 5) The principal parties that are proposing the project and any intended partners, along with statements of qualifications for each.
- 6) Any contingencies that could affect project readiness as of April 1, 2015.

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

Submission Deadline

All responses are due within 120 days of the release of the RFEI. Submissions in the manner prescribed above must be received in the County Planning Department office at 121 E. Court Street no later than 4:00 p.m. on _____.

Brokerage

The County will not pay a brokerage fee on this property.

Limitations

The issuance of this RFEI 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.