

Development Opportunity - Request for Letters of Interest- Southside Senior Center

September 3, 2019



Former Fire Station #5 and Southside Senior Center Site
Tax Parcel #17-30046-10
1220/1222 Denton St, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

8,800 square feet building with a 124 year history

First deadline for Letters of Interest (LOI) is December 3, 2019. If no acceptable offers are received as of that date, the City of La Crosse will continue to accept proposals and review them until a proposal has been approved.

1.1 Summary

The City of La Crosse (City) is soliciting Letters of Interest (LOI) for the purchase and re-development of an 8,800 square foot building that was built to be a fire station and was most recently the Southside Senior Center. The redevelopment may be for commercial, residential or a mixed-use project, but must be taxable and be consistent with the City's adopted Comprehensive Master Plan.

The City is selling the building for \$300.00, with the contingency that the purchaser agrees to significantly restore and renovate the building. The purchaser must agree to make significant repairs and improvements on the exterior, estimated to cost \$60,000-\$150,000. The property may be eligible for State and Federal Historic Tax Credits. To obtain State and Federal Historic Tax Credits, this may require restoring the north façade to its original condition, which may include adding a bell tower ([see original drawings](#)), and preserving historically significant exterior and interior architectural features. LOIs contingent on receiving historic tax credits are acceptable.

1.2 Deadline

The first deadline to submit a LOI is **December 3rd, 2019**. All offers received as of that date will be considered. If no acceptable proposals are received, LOIs will be accepted on an ongoing basis (deadline is the first Tuesday of every month for consideration by the Community Development Committee) until an acceptable proposal is received.

1.3 Site Background

This property was built by the City of La Crosse in 1895 to serve the city fire department as the Eighth Ward Engine House, renamed Fire Station #5, and served in that capacity until 1967. This property is also one of the only two historic fire station buildings from the 19th century still standing in the city and it is the last of the city's fire stations equipped with solely horse drawn fire engines. The former fire station was converted to use as a Senior Center in 1967 and served that purpose until 2019. There were up to four horses stabled inside on the ground floor, along with two fire wagons with hoses and ladders.

1.4 Site

The building sits one lot to the east of the intersection of West Avenue and Denton Street in south La Crosse. The parcel is approximately 6,098 square feet. The building is approximately 8,800 square feet. It is bordered by residences with the exception of a funeral home across the alley to the west. The parcel is currently undergoing a process to be zoned Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) to allow for multi-unit residential or mixed-use development. The building is not setback from the sidewalk on the north and is separated from the alley to the west by an approximately 3 foot sidewalk on the property. A paved parking area fills the section of the property from the building to the alley to the south. The building has a working elevator. There is a full basement. Full details on the building and history are available in the [Architectural and Engineering Analysis](#).

1.5 Past Work on the Building

2008- Renovation of the main floor kitchen included a new dishwasher, counter, and plumbing improvements

2009- Backflow preventers installed

2010- Multiple projects including a new roof on northeast elevator and storage addition; new boiler; replacement of 7 stone sills on the lower west and south windows, power-washing, tuck pointing and sealing the exterior brick walls to approximately 6-7 feet above grade

More detailed information on the past work on the building is available in the [Architectural and Engineering Analysis](#).

1.6 Site Development Goals

Redevelopment of this property shall accomplish the following City goals, as authorized in [Resolution 19-0834](#).

- A. Restore, rehabilitate and maintain the historic character of the building in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation. The City is in the process of submitting a National Register of Historic Places Questionnaire to determine if the building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and eligible for State and Federal Tax Credits.
- B. Repair and significantly improve the exterior façade.
- C. Create new taxable investment in the city.
- D. Create new residential, commercial, office or mixed-use space.
- E. Renovate building to be certified to meet energy efficiency standards, such as Green Built, LEED or Focus on Energy.

1.7 Mandatory Repairs

All proposals must include the following mandatory repairs:

- A. Original building exterior façade repair work including limestone sills and brick tuckpointing
- B. Remove all paint from exterior to expose brick and repair brick
- C. Original building stair (central) restoration and renovation
- D. Second floor window repair and restoration
- E. Depending on proposed use, repairs to meet Municipal Code Requirements

1.8 Additional Information

The purchaser will sign a Development Agreement ([sample agreement available on the website](#)) with the City of La Crosse. The purchaser will be required to pay a \$20,000 performance deposit as security for fulfilling the obligations proposed in the Development Agreement. The deposit will be returned in full if all requirements are met. Additionally, the purchaser will agree to give

back the property to the City and pay additional fines if the scope of work is not completed or not completed according to the specified timelines.

2.1 Submission Requirements

The City seeks a highly qualified business, individual, or purchaser to realize a vision for this site. The respondent shall be capable of site preparation, financing and project management.

The City is requesting a letter of interest with the following details:

1. Brief qualification statement highlighting the respondent's experience with projects of similar size and complexity.
2. Restoration plan for the building, including a narrative of what areas/details/features that will be addressed immediately and why. Also include proposed procedures and practices for restoration and rehabilitation. *It is highly recommended that interested parties address the minimum work that needs to be completed in order to occupy the building.*
3. Floor plan detailing the proposed changes and repairs.
4. Proposed budget for rehabilitation/restoration, including cost estimates from contractors (HVAC, Plumbing, Electrical, etc.). *The building will be made available by appointment to allow contractors and prospective buyers in for evaluation and assessment.*
5. Proposed use for the building and description of how this will enhance the neighborhood.
6. Expected sources of financing and estimated total cost, including an estimate of private equity in the project.
7. Schedule of major milestones and estimated project completion date.
8. Contact information for key staff, description of their role in this project and qualifications necessary to fulfill this role.
9. Any other significant factors, including any energy efficient standards that will be met, contingencies, or preferences regarding the respondent's ability to complete the project that may be relevant.

2.2 Anticipated Timeline

The first deadline to submit a LOI is **December 3rd, 2019**. If no acceptable proposals are received as of that date, letters will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the Community Development Committee (CDC) approves a proposal. Only completed letters including all 9 components listed in Section 2.1 will be considered. Only completed letters which meet stated goals in Section 1.6 will be considered. If no viable proposals have been received by June 2020, this request will be re-evaluated by the CDC.

2.3 Evaluation Process

Staff and the CDC will evaluate the proposal based on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications and experience (5 points)
 2. Articulation of project vision and its benefits for the city of La Crosse (5 points)
 3. Demonstration of project financial feasibility and team's capacity to develop a project of this scope. (5 points)
 4. Timeline and ability to execute vision and strategy in a timely manner (5 points)
 5. Energy efficiency standards met (3 points)
- Total possible: 23 points

3.1 Reservation of Rights

The City reserves the right to:

- Cancel or withdraw the Request for LOIs.
- Modify or issue clarifications.
- Reject any submissions for any reason.
- Consider a submission that is in non-compliance with the submission requirements.
- Reject all submissions that are submitted under the Request for LOIs.
- Modify the deadline for submissions or other actions.
- Reissue the Request for LOIs, modify the Request for LOIs, or issue a new Request for LOIs, whether or not any submissions have been received in response to the initial issuance.
- All LOIs become property of the City of La Crosse and will be made available to the public.

3.2 Notice of Modification

The City will post at this website: <http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/news/?FeedID=1066> information regarding cancellations, withdrawals, modifications to deadlines, and other modifications to this request. Respondents shall have the obligation to check the website for any such notices and information, and the City shall have no duty or obligation to provide direct notices to respondents.

3.3 Ownership and Use of Submissions

All submissions shall be the property of the City and the City may use any and all ideas in any submission, whether the submission is selected or rejected.

3.4 Further Efforts

The City may request that respondents clarify their submissions and/or submit additional information pertaining to their submissions. The City may request best and final submissions from any purchaser and/or request an oral presentation from any developer.

3.5 Non-Binding

The selection by the City of a respondent indicates only intent by the City to continue with the selection process and/or negotiate and the selection does not constitute a commitment by the City to execute a final agreement or contract.

3.6 Project Points of Contact

For questions related to this project, please contact:

General Questions

Dawn Reinhart
Neighborhood Housing Development Associate
City of La Crosse
(608) 789-7360
reinhartda@cityoflacrosse.org

Historic Tax Credits

Tim Acklin
Senior Planner
City of La Crosse
(608) 789-7391
acklint@cityoflacrosse.org