

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

**Development of 500, 600 & 700 East Washington Street,
Norristown, PA**



Issued By: **The County of Montgomery and The County of Montgomery
Redevelopment Authority**

Issue Date: **June 17, 2021**

Response Date: **September 17, 2021**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Montgomery County (the “County”) and the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority (the “Authority”) are seeking qualified applicants to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP) and Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the acquisition and development of three parcels owned by the Authority located at 500, 600, & 700 East Washington Street in Norristown, PA (the “Site”) (being County Tax Parcel Nos. 13-00-37992-002, 13-00-37996-00-7, and 13-00-38000-00-3).

The County and the Authority seek a qualified developer, or team of developers, to acquire, design, finance, construct, and manage the 14.5 acre Site, which is an integral part of Norristown’s riverfront revitalization. The Site is located in Norristown’s Gateway Redevelopment Overlay District, which encourages pedestrian-oriented uses and urban design that is compatible with Norristown’s historic character and economic development goals. The County and the Authority seek a development that benefits the community, provides public access to the waterfront, and is in keeping with the County’s comprehensive redevelopment vision set forth by the Montgomery County Planning Commission in the County’s comprehensive plan, *MONTCO 2040*.

The timeline for this RFQ/RFP is summarized below. Additional details regarding the development opportunity and the RFQ/RFP process follow.

Release RFP	June 17, 2021
Site Visits (voluntary)	Week of July 12 th , 2021
Questions Due	July 23, 2021
Answers Posted by RDA/County	August 6, 2021
Submissions Due	September 17, 2021

OPPORTUNITY

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Authority owns three former industrial properties located at 500, 600 and 700 East Washington Street, Norristown PA (collectively the “Site”), along the Schuylkill River (see **Attachment A**). The three parcels comprise approximately 14.5 acres total. The Site is at the gateway to Norristown’s riverfront district, and has been zoned for residential, office, commercial, and mixed-use development (see **Attachment B**).

LOCATION

The Site is situated on Washington Avenue at the intersection of Lafayette Street and Ford Street, and is safely and conveniently accessed on foot, via public transportation, and by car. Recent improvements to Lafayette Street, including the installation of a new traffic signal and an upgraded railroad crossing at Ford Street, significantly enhanced pedestrian access to the Site from downtown Norristown and the adjacent Schuylkill River Trail. The Site is approximately one-half mile from the Norristown Transportation Center, which connects Norristown to the rest of the region through eight bus lines, the Norristown High-Speed Line, and a Regional Rail train. The Site is also easily accessed by car from the region’s interstates; it is located approximately two miles from Interstate 476 and within 1,000 feet of a new Pennsylvania Turnpike interchange slated for construction by PennDOT in 2023 (targeted completion 2025).

PROPERTY DISCLOSURE

The former industrial buildings on the Site have been demolished. Act 2 environmental remediation based on a non-residential use scenario was completed at the Site under the oversight of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The Site is located within the 100-year floodplain. Refer to **Attachment C** for the full property disclosure.

In addition to the disclosure included as Attachment C, developers are advised that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (the “Commonwealth”) awarded a H2O PA Grant in the amount of \$3,758,851.00 in 2010 to be used for the construction of a wastewater treatment plant on the Site. The Commonwealth has previously stated that should the Site be utilized for anything other than a H2O PA eligible water supply, sanitary sewer, or storm water project, the Grant shall be repaid to the Commonwealth upon the sale of the Property. There is an additional PENNVEST Loan in the current amount of \$835,998.00 on the property. The potential repayment of the Grant and/or Loan may affect the purchase price that will be accepted by the County/Authority.

MUNICIPAL ZONING

The legislative intent of the Municipality of Norristown's Gateway Redevelopment Overlay District, where the Washington Property is located, is provided below. The Norristown Zoning Regulations for the Gateway Redevelopment Overlay District are attached hereto as **Attachment B**.

§ 320-191 Legislative intent. The purpose of the Gateway Redevelopment Overlay District is to encourage and permit uses that are compatible and complementary with the historic character of the community and its downtown, to assist in its revitalization, and which are in accordance with the goals and objectives of the redevelopment plan, the Norristown economic redevelopment strategy and other applicable policies. Pedestrian-oriented uses and an urban character of design are permitted and encouraged, while automobile-related uses and design qualities that promote a suburban mall or strip commercial appearance are restricted. Also, uses that traditionally accompany and strengthen the commercial core are permitted, such as office, cultural, residential, educational, entertainment, recreational and related uses. Parking lots shall be separated and buffered from streets and sidewalks by low-lying walls and decorative fences, while new construction should utilize traditional building materials and accepted principles of urban design. Furthermore, all new construction shall preserve the existing streetscape by requiring that all new buildings be built at or close to the edge of the public sidewalk. It is also the intention of this district to provide year-round opportunities for outdoor recreation within for occupants, residents and the general public, to the riverfront as a public amenity both visually and physically, and to facilitate circulation for pedestrians to and throughout the district and along the riverfront.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

These requirements are designed to establish a developer's overall capacity to complete the project and to meet the requirements and obligations associated with the Site. The developer must provide information that clearly demonstrates that the development team has the experience to design, secure governmental approvals for, build, market, and operate the proposed development. The developer must also provide a development plan that achieves the highest and best use of the site, in keeping with both the municipal Gateway Redevelopment Overlay District and the County's *MONTCO 2040* plan. Responses will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Cover Letter and Executive Summary**
 - Cover letter from the lead contact for the developer and a brief summary of the developer's proposal.
 - The cover letter should state that the proposal is valid for 120 days.

- **Project Scope and Concept**
 - Narrative description of proposed buildings and improvements. Include size and type of building(s), proposed use(s), building materials, design elements, and amenities, as well as a general description of planned building massing, heights, and open spaces.
 - If the project includes residential development, indicate the total number of units, size of units, and anticipated sales price and/or lease rates.
 - If the project includes commercial development, indicate the total number of tenanted spaces, size of each space, anticipated lease rates, anticipated type of tenant, and anticipated number of jobs created.
 - Supplement the narrative by providing illustrations such as aerial photos, maps, site plans, massing plans, elevations, line drawings, and renderings that clearly explain the location, appearance, and scale of all proposed development, including any open space.
 - Identify any and all community benefits of the Site, including but not limited to any public waterfront access.

- **Developer Information**
 - *Composition, Structure, and Roles*
 - Description of the developer and ownership entity (i.e. partnership, sole owner, corporation, limited-liability corporation, joint venture, etc.). Include an organizational chart.

- Contemplated development team structure, including design and other professionals, including identification of certified minority, women, and disabled-owned businesses that will be part of the development team and their proposed roles.
 - Key individuals and their associated firms responsible for major functions to be performed relative to designing, building, managing, and operating the development.
 - *Experience*
 - Past projects of a similar nature to that proposed in this RFP/RFQ on which the development team worked, and the official role of team members on those projects. Include references (name, company, title, telephone number, and email address) for each past project.
 - Description of the developer's commitment to and demonstration of environmental leadership through sustainability and environmentally conscious design.
- **Financial Qualifications**
 - Most recent consolidated financial statements of the lead developer (balance sheet profit/loss statement, cash flow statement, etc.), including all contingent liabilities.
 - Description of any individual or entity that will guarantee the promised performance of the developer.
 - List of investors in the participating entities.
- **Acquisition and Development Budget**
 - Estimated total acquisition and development cost.
 - Preliminary budget and information about how developer would finance project.
- **Development Schedule**
 - Provide a proposed project completion schedule identifying major milestones, including closing date, zoning and land development approvals, construction phasing, marketing, and occupancy.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Authority and County may, if they so choose, narrow down the list of proposals to a short list based on evaluation of responses. Each of the developers on any short list, if any, may be interviewed by the Authority and County and in such case will be expected to make a presentation during such interview. Following the completion of any interviews and presentations, the Authority and County may choose a development team(s) with which to enter into negotiations for the sale and development of the Site. The Authority and County's decision of whether and to what

entity to enter into a redevelopment contract shall be final. The Authority and County reserve and hold at their discretion the following additional rights and options:

- Not to select a candidate from those submitting a response; and
- To not negotiate or enter into a contract with any developer; and
- To issue or not re-issue subsequent RFPs and/or RFQs.

Pennsylvania's Urban Redevelopment Law requires that any redevelopment contract within a redevelopment area be approved by the applicable governing body prior to execution by the Authority and performance thereunder, which contract must be in substantial conformity with any area redevelopment plan and executed by Authority, Municipality of Norristown, County, and developer. The Municipality, Authority, and County will not enter into a contract unless it is in substantial conformity with the foregoing and the terms included in **Attachment D** attached hereto.

NEGOTIATIONS

The County and/or Authority may enter into a contract on the basis of initial proposals received. The County and Authority reserve the right to enter contract negotiations with the selected respondent. If the County, Authority, and the respondent do not agree to terms of a contract, the County and/or Authority may elect to terminate negotiations and begin negotiating with the second-best ranked respondent and so forth. This process will continue until a contract has been executed or all proposals have been rejected. No proposer shall have any claims and/or rights against the County and/or Authority arising from such negotiation and/or the proposal process and respondent shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the County and Authority from and against any and all disputes arising out of or relating to submission of a proposal to this RFP. By virtue of submitting a proposal, respondent agrees to the terms and conditions herein.

REDEVELOPMENT CONTRACT

The following terms will be negotiated as part of the redevelopment contract:

1. Proposed acquisition price and value of the proposed development project;
2. Development plan that achieves the highest and best use of the property in keeping with the intent of the Gateway Redevelopment Area Overlay Zoning District;
3. Project elements that benefit the community and provide public access to the waterfront;
4. The use of environmentally conscious design and sustainable elements; and
5. Any other terms as requested by the Authority.

Additional provisions required by the Urban Redevelopment Law are outlined in **Attachment D**.

RFP/RFQ POSTPONMENT/CANCELATION

The Authority and County may, at their sole and absolute discretion, reject any and all, or parts of any or all, responses; re-advertise this RFP/RFQ; postpone or cancel, at any time, this RFP/RFQ process; or waive any irregularities in this RFP/RFQ or in the responses.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Respondents acknowledge by submitting this information and responses that the Authority and County do not undertake any obligations and shall have no liability with respect to any matters related to any submission by a respondent.
- The Authority and County reserve the right to negotiate with, any, all, or none of the respondents and to recommend another respondent in the event that the originally selected respondent defaults or fails to execute a contract that meets the requirements provided herein.
- The Authority and County shall determine which, if any, proposals and respondents best meet the selection criteria. Notwithstanding anything in this RFP/RFQ to the contrary, the Authority and County reserve the right to reject any or all responses received, to waive any submission requirements contained within this RFP/RFQ, and to waive any irregularities in any submitted proposal.
- The Authority and County cannot guarantee the confidentiality of responses.

SCHEDULE AND PROCESS

This RFQ/RFP is being distributed widely to local and regional developers. Rebecca Swanson, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority (rswanson@montcopa.org), is the lead contact for the County/Authority.

REGISTRATION

- Interested parties should register via email to rswanson@montcopa.org in order to receive updates, responses to questions, and additional information.

OPTIONAL SITE VISIT

- The RDA will host interested parties for voluntary visit(s) to the Site during **the week of July 12th, 2021**. Parties will be able to walk the Site and pose questions to the RDA representatives leading the visit(s). All current COVID-19 protocols will be adhered to.
- To request a site visit, submit a request via email to rswanson@montcopa.org by **Friday, July 9, 2021 at 4:00 PM EST**.

QUESTIONS FROM POTENTIAL RESPONDENTS

- Questions from respondents regarding this RFQ/RFP must be submitted in writing via email to rswanson@montcopa.org by **Friday, July 23, 2021 at 4:00 PM EST**.
- Answers to all submitted questions will be distributed to all interested parties that registered via email to rswanson@montcopa.org. Answers will be sent no later than **Friday, August 6, 2021**.

SUBMISSIONS DUE

- **All responses are to be submitted by Friday, September 17, 2021 at 12:00 PM EST.**
 - An electronic copy is to be submitted via email to rswanson@montcopa.org.
 - Three (3) hard copies are to be submitted by certified mail or hand delivery to:
Rebecca Swanson
Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority
104 M. Main Street, Suite 2
Norristown, PA 19401
- No responses will be accepted after the time and date specified above, subject to any proposal receipt deadlines extended at the discretion of the Authority/County.

ATTACHMENTS

The Attachments to this RFQ/RFP are listed below and incorporated herein.

Attachment A: Location Map

Attachment B: Zoning for Norristown Gateway Redevelopment Overlay District

Attachment C: Property Disclosure (March 2019)

Attachment D: Terms of Redevelopment Contract