REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
City of Delaware, Ohio
Disposition of City-Owned Properties in the Historic Downtown District



RFQ Issue Date: 9/22/25

Questions Due Date: 10/17/25

Submission Due Date: 11/7/25

Tentative Selection Date: 11/21/25

Tentative RFP Issuance Date: 12/5/25

RFQ Contact:

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I. Introduction/Purpose

The City of Delaware, Ohio ("City") hereby requests Statements of Qualifications ("SOQs") from experienced development teams (each, a "Developer" and collectively, "Developers") with a proven record of delivering high-quality, mixed-use, public-private partnership ("P3") projects in walkable downtown settings. This RFQ is the first step in a multi-stage disposition process for City-owned properties (the "Properties") located in the Historic Downtown District.

Following evaluation of SOQs, the City anticipates transferring the Properties to the Delaware County Community Improvement Corporation ("CIC"), which will issue a Request for Proposals ("RFP") to a short-list of Developers. The final Developer will be selected based on their proposal, capacity, and ability to advance the City's goals of historic preservation, economic vitality, public benefit, and seamless integration with surrounding cultural and educational assets.

Roughly 0.6 acres of City-owned land directly west of Ohio Wesleyan University's (OWU) Ross Art Museum and campus gateway, the site presents a signature "town-gown" development opportunity. The City seeks SOQs from visionary Developers eager to collaborate with OWU and other cultural/historic stakeholders to create a project that: a) Embodies Delaware's heritage; b) Leverages OWU's identity, mission, and talent; and c) Delivers enduring public, cultural, and economic value.

Desired Use Mix: Boutique or conference-oriented hotel (80+ rooms), arts-infused retail/dining, and structured parking. Creative concepts that intertwine campus themes with hospitality and mixed-use components are encouraged.

NOTE: This RFQ does not request purchase offers. Instead, it seeks to pre-qualify capable teams that can deliver financially sound, historically sensitive, community-anchored, and parking-neutral (or parking-positive) development.

II. Project Overview

Disposition Mechanism

The Properties are owned by the City of Delaware and will be deeded to the County CIC for ultimate disposition to the winning Developer after entitlements, development plan, and any negotiated incentives are approved by the City (or other public entities).

The process will comply with all applicable public disposition laws in accordance with ORC, including but not limited to ORC Chapter 1724.

Goals & Objectives

- **Promote Mixed-Use and Commercial Development:** Encouraging projects that incorporate a combination of hospitality, retail/dining, and/or office with structured parking to enhance downtown vibrancy.

- **Historic Preservation & Design Sensitivity:** Ensure designs are harmonious with the architectural character of Delaware's Historic Downtown District, following the City's historic preservation guidelines regarding materials, setbacks, building stepbacks, and building massing.

- **Public Parking Replacement/Enhancement:** Replace and/or increase the existing public parking spaces on-site. Structured parking solutions are strongly encouraged, with potential use of Tax Increment Financing ("TIF"), abatements, and New Community Authorities ("NCAs") for offsetting structured parking costs for desirable development types.

- **Economic Impact:** Maximize the positive economic benefits to the City, other political subdivisions, and the local School District. If Developer is chosen to move to the RFP stage, an economic impact analysis will be required for the proposed development.

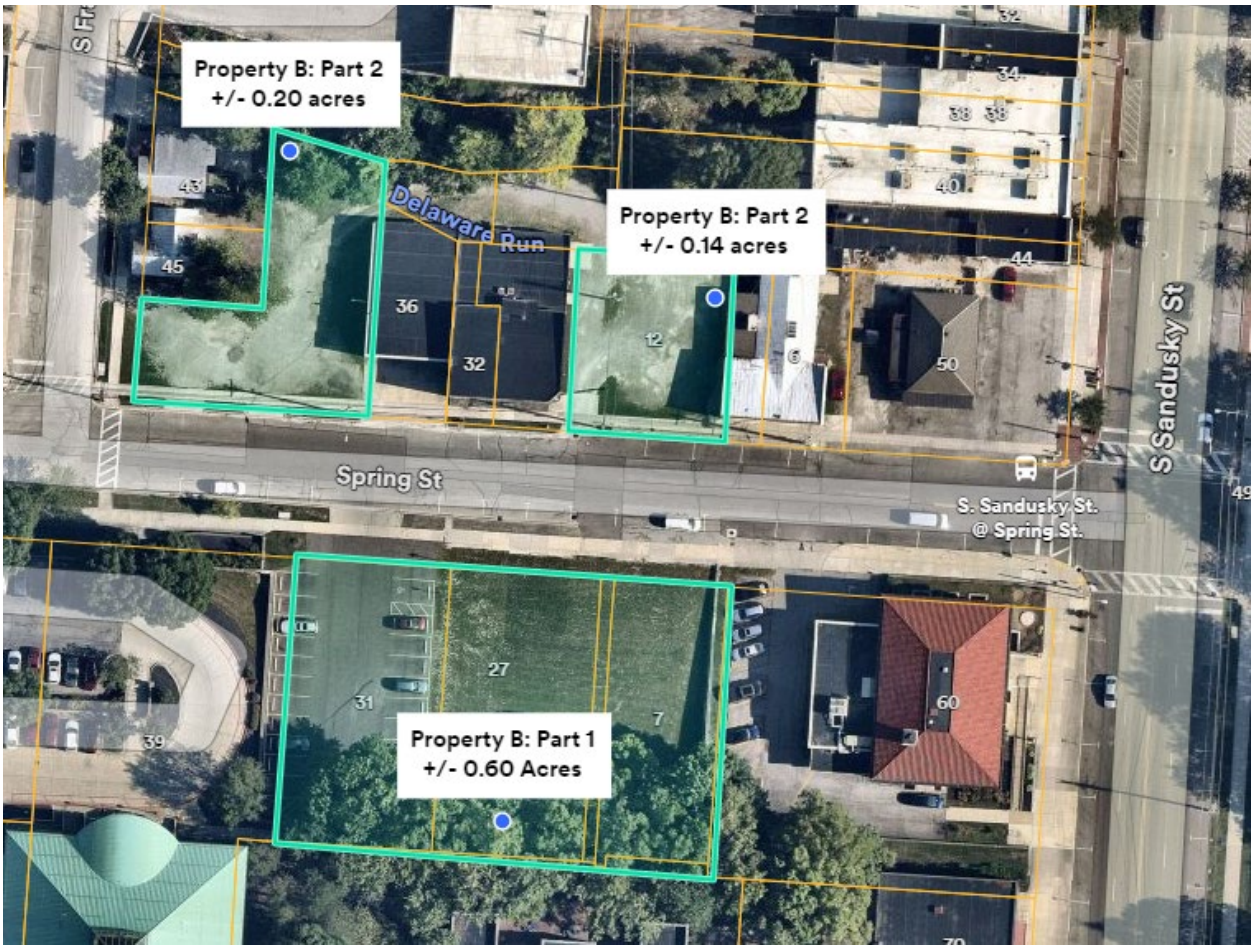
- **Connectivity & Walkability:** Incorporate walkable, urban design with minimal building setbacks from the street right-of-way, providing an engaging pedestrian experience and preserving significant viewsheds of downtown and Ohio Wesleyan.

- **Clear Signals of Partnership**: Proposals should explicitly integrate OWU's cultural and educational assets through branding, public space design, or programming.

- **Academic & Experiential Engagement**: Plans that offer student internships, research collaborations, performances, or consulting projects will score highly.

- **Shared Value Incentive Structures**: Developers are encouraged to propose TIF/abatement/NCA models that fund not just parking and infrastructure but also cultural programming and placemaking.

Project Site: Surface Parking + Adjacent Lots near OWU/Downtown



Property B: Part 1

- **Address:** 27 Spring Street
- **Parcel Numbers:** 51943307001000, 51943307002000, 51943307003000, 51943307004000
- **Approximate Acreage:** ±0.60 acres
- **Existing Use:** City-owned parking lot abutting Ohio Wesleyan University's Ross Art Museum.

Property B: Part 2

- **Parcels:** 51943301021000 and 51943301016000 (Spring Street, no formal address)
- **Existing Use:** Vacant parcels located across the street from Property B Part 1.
- **Development Considerations:**

1) Develop a cohesive site plan incorporating both Part 1 and Part 2 to ensure efficient usage of space, design harmony, and parking solutions.
2) Collaborations or joint ventures with adjacent landowners (e.g., Ohio Wesleyan University) will be viewed favorably.
3) Emphasize structured parking or suitable parking solutions that enhance downtown's walkable character.

IV. Scope of Desired Development

While the final programmatic mix will be determined by the prospective Developer, the City envisions the following potential uses:

1. **Commercial / Retail / Office:** Street-level retail, dining, or office spaces that activate and complement downtown's existing commercial corridor.
2. **Hospitality:** Campus-style hotels that contribute to the vibrancy of the university while increasing foot traffic and supporting downtown businesses.
3. **Structured Parking:** Multi-level parking structures, potentially financed in part through TIF, abatements, NCAs, or other incentive tools, to ensure no loss of public parking capacity.
4. **Urban Amenities & Public Space:** Incorporation of plazas, courtyards, or other design features that enhance the pedestrian experience.

V. Submission Requirements & Qualifications

Developers are asked to submit **qualifications only** at this stage. Submissions must include:

1. **Cover Letter**
    - Introduce the Developer team and provide contact information.
2. **Developer Profile**
    - Legal name and form of Developer entity.
    - Organizational structure and key staff resumes (if available).
    - History and background, including experience with public-private partnerships (P3).

3. **Relevant Project Experience**
    - Description of at least three (3) past successful commercial or mixed-use development projects, preferably involving P3 components.
    - Emphasis on projects with integrated or structured parking solutions.
    - Demonstrated experience in historic downtown or urban infill settings.
4. **Financial Capacity & References**
    - Evidence of financial stability (e.g., bank letter, audited financial statements, or other proof of capacity).
    - Contact information for references, particularly from municipalities or public entities who have partnered with the Developer.
5. **Project Vision / Concept** (Conceptual only; no formal design required)
    - High-level narrative describing how you might approach development, including:
        1. Potential project uses (retail, office, hospitality, etc.).
        2. Approach to parking solutions (structured, shared, public, etc.).
        3. Plans for maintaining or increasing public parking.
        4. Sensitivity to historic context and design guidelines.
        5. Potential partnerships with adjacent owners, Ohio Wesleyan University, or other local stakeholders.
6. **Anticipated Funding / Incentive Utilization**
    - High-level discussion of potential use of TIF, abatements, NCAs, or other incentives.
    - Statement of Developer's willingness to collaborate with the City and CIC on appropriate financing structures for structured parking or other public improvements.

VI. Evaluation Criteria

1. **Relevant Experience (20%)**
    - Proven track record with comparable mixed-use, commercial, or urban infill developments.

- Successful history of P3 project delivery and structured parking solutions.

2. **Financial Capacity (20%)**
    - Demonstrated financial resources and/or access to capital sufficient to undertake a project of this scale.
    - Strong references from lenders or public-sector partners.
3. **Project Vision & Alignment with City Goals (20%)**
    - Responsiveness to the City's objectives of historic preservation, walkability, urban design, and economic vitality.
    - Incorporation of structured parking that maintains or expands the current parking capacity.
4. **Community Partnerships & Anchor-Institution Collaboration (25%)**
    - Engagement Strategy with Ohio Wesleyan and/or other community partners
    - Willingness to engage with the City, Ohio Wesleyan University, and local stakeholders to maximize community value.
5. **Team Qualifications & Collaboration (15%)**
    - Strength of the proposed team, including key personnel and project partners.

VII. Submission Instructions

1. **Submission Deadline**
    - All qualifications must be received by the City of Delaware, Ohio, no later than *[Date/Time]*. Submissions received after this deadline may not be considered.
2. **Submission Format**
    - Electronic submissions (PDF) are encouraged. Please address them to: Nic Langford, Economic Development Director @ nlangford@delawareohio.net
    - If hard copies are submitted, please provide five (5) copies in a sealed envelope, labeled:
      Developer Name: RFQ Response: Historic Downtown Property Disposition
      City of Delaware

Office of Economic Development
18 E William St
Delaware, OH 43015

3. **Questions & Clarifications**
    - All questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing/email to nlangford@delawareohio.net to ensure timely response.

VIII. Anticipated Selection Timeline (Subject to Change)

- **RFQ Release:** *9/22/2025*
- **Deadline for Questions:** *10/17/2025*
- **RFQ Responses Due:** *11/7/2025*
- **City Evaluation & Shortlisting:** *11/21/2025*
- **Proposed Invitation to RFP (by CIC):** *12/5/2025 (tentative)*

The City reserves the right to amend this schedule as needed.

IX. Disclaimer & Reservation of Rights

1. **Non-Binding**
    - This RFQ does not commit the City or the County CIC to enter into any disposition, sale, or development agreement. Costs incurred by Developers in responding to this RFQ or participating in the selection process are the sole responsibility of the Developer.
2. **Public Disposition**
    - The final disposition will proceed through the County CIC, as authorized under Ohio law, including relevant provisions of the ORC and City Charter.
3. **Confidentiality**
    - The City will make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality of proprietary information, subject to Ohio public records laws.
4. **Right to Reject**

- The City reserves the right to reject any or all responses, to waive informalities, and to modify or cancel the RFQ process at its sole discretion.

5. **Subsequent RFP**
    - Following the evaluation of qualifications, selected Developers will be invited to respond to a detailed RFP administered by the CIC. No legal or equitable rights accrue to any Developer unless and until the City, CIC, and other relevant parties execute final agreements.

X. Conclusion

The City of Delaware seeks qualified Developers to transform underutilized public parking areas into catalytic, mixed-use projects that enrich the Historic Downtown District while preserving or expanding public parking. Through this RFQ, the City intends to identify experienced teams capable of collaborating with the City, CIC, local stakeholders, and adjacent property owners (including Ohio Wesleyan University) to deliver highly impactful developments.

We welcome your qualifications and look forward to reviewing your submissions.

Attachments/Appendices

1. Zoning Regulations

    a) Zoning Map: COD Zoning Map

    b) Zoning Code: 638900869022130000

    c) Comprehensive Plan: Comprehensive Plan | Delaware, OH
2. Historic District Design Guidelines: 638908538047270000
3. Parking Inventory Study (Existing Conditions): email nlangford@delawareohio.net for latest version.