



MARION INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND CITY OF MARION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PROPERTY REDEVELOPMENT
EMERSON ELEMENTARY, 1400 10th AVENUE

DATE: November 2, 2016

Request for Proposals

Marion Independent School District (“school”) owns a site at 1400 10th Avenue in Marion that is currently in use as an elementary school. The district is constructing a new elementary and anticipates vacating the building at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. The brick structure is approximately 23,000 square feet on two floors, and includes a working elevator. The original school building was constructed in 1891 and on January 16, 1929 the original building burned to the ground. The current building was rebuilt on the original location in 1929. It features a gymnasium that is approximately 60’ by 40’, 3 administrative offices, and 12 classrooms, and a library area.

The school and City of Marion are partnering to facilitate the redevelopment of the property by a developer, commercial interest, or nonprofit entity (“the Developer”) based on the strength of proposals received, as more fully described below. The selected Developer must demonstrate the technical experience, financial strength, and proven ability to effectively redevelop the property within the parameters established herein. The central point of contact for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process is the Marion Independent Business Manager, John Donner. Based on the relative strength of proposals received, a recommendation will be made to the Marion Independent School Board as the seller of the property. Any award of bid will be contingent on the execution of a development agreement between the Developer and the School laying out the terms of the transaction and redevelopment.

The City of Marion (“city”) is acting in concert with the school to bring about a redevelopment that is consistent with community goals and appropriate adopted development plans and ordinances and is an asset to the surrounding fully developed neighborhood. It is anticipated that the City

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would be called upon to act as a conduit for programs such as state or federal grants, tax credit programs, or other programs where a city government sponsor is needed.

An open house was conducted in the neighborhood to assure an understanding of neighborhood concerns regarding redevelopment of the site. A summary of the comments and submitted concerns is included with this RFP. Firms responding to the RFP should explain how these concerns are being addressed in the redevelopment proposal.

All qualified Developers are invited to submit proposals; however, all Developers are encouraged to arrange a walk-through of the building prior to the deadline for submitting proposals (January 6, 2017). Walk-throughs may be arranged by contacting Ken Cook at the Marion Independent School District at (319)377-0123. Proposals are expected to be initially reviewed by the RFP Committee, and a recommendation made to the School Board within 30 days of the proposal due date.

General Conditions

This RFP does not obligate the School to sell the property. The School reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals submitted. The School will pay no costs associated with the preparation, submission, or presentation of this RFP. All information, documentation, or materials submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the School and may be subject to applicable open records laws. Any addendums to this RFP will be posted on the appropriate pages of the School and City's respective websites at <http://www.marion-isd.org/> and <http://www.cityofmarion.org>, and it is the responsibility of Developers to acknowledge any and all addenda in their proposal.

Project Summary

Marion Independent School District has occupied the site from 1891 to 2017. Building improvement and expansion projects modernized and improved the building; however, by the mid-2010's, it was determined that additional space would be needed and it would be more economical to construct a new elementary school. Following a public campaign, including approval of a bond referendum, the District proceeded with the construction of Longfellow Elementary, which is expected to replace Emerson in fall of 2017. The building is expected to be vacated at the end of the current school year. No sections of the building are in use by other organizations, so no lease issues will exist in the transfer of the property.

The School has had the structure evaluated for asbestos and other environmental issues, and copies of all reports are available upon request. Developers are encouraged to review this carefully and structure their proposals with this information in mind.

The property is not listed as a contributing structure on any local, state, or federally designated historic district. It has never been evaluated for eligibility. This would need to be completed to



potentially make certain rehabilitation activities eligible for state and federal historic tax credits if contemplated as part of the redevelopment proposal.

The intent of this Request for Proposals is to identify the Developer with a desire to invest in Marion, and to return the building and/or site to an application that would represent the highest and best use of a site near the revitalizing and growing uptown core of Marion.

The following are several key considerations for firms to consider as you prepare the

RFP:

- The building is approximately 23,000 square feet and is located on a 72,900 SF lot along 10th Avenue and is 4 blocks from Marion's uptown core. The school also owns an additional lot across the street to the south that is used as supplemental parking that is approximately 60 feet wide and 175 feet long.
- The property is currently zoned R-3 Two-family Residential, which is appropriate for uses which may be found at <http://cityofmarion.org/home/showdocument?id=666> . It is immediately adjacent to other parcels zoned R-2 Medium Density Single Family Residential.
- There are no known environmental issues.
- The entire property has been exempt from property taxation per Iowa Code. The Developer's estimate of both the assessed and taxable value of the property at build out should be included in your proposal (if applicable).
- Please discuss how your proposal has been influenced by information you have regarding the concerns of neighbors, concerns of business and industry, input from realtors, input from builders, information from prospective buyers, knowledge of infrastructure in the area, and how your proposal fits within the Marion community.
- The project is not currently located in an Urban Renewal Area; however, it is close to one. If needed, the district boundaries would need to be amended to include the property and the redevelopment of the property would need to be added specifically to the Urban Renewal Plan.
- Please discuss how you might utilize local businesses in the redevelopment of the property and construction of buildings.

Project Parameters

In an attempt to guide Developers in the creation of their proposal and develop a project that is beneficial to the community while taking into account the interests of the many stakeholders, we offer the following parameters to guide this redevelopment and all of these should be addressed in proposals. It should be noted that the Marion Independent School Board reserves the right to adjust these parameters at their discretion if it is determined to be in the best interest of the School and/or City of Marion or if warranted by market conditions both during this RFP process, during the due diligence phase, and after the property is sold. Also, once a Developer is selected the School and/or City reserves the right to negotiate with the Developer and make adjustments as determined to be in the best interest of the community, this project and/or our redevelopment partners.

- If a use is contemplated that would require a rezoning for a more intensive use, a public input process will be required. Currently only uses permitted with the R-3 Residential zoning district are allowed.
- All proposals should include a plan to have the entire project proposed completed within two years or no later than January 1, 2020.
- Developers must demonstrate their experience and capacity to take on the project, and to make the necessary improvements to renew the property's status as an important contributor to Marion's vitality.
- Energy conservation and other sustainability provisions are encouraged.
- The City of Marion will consider offering development incentives such as tax increment financing for taxable projects. Any such incentives will only be offered in the scope of a comprehensive development agreement.
- All Developers are invited to arrange a site visit and building tour, which may be coordinated through Ken Cook, Head of Maintenance for Marion Independent School District.

Proposal Requirements

As indicated, Developer qualifications to implement a project of this scope and design will be determined by a comparative evaluation of the 'Selection Criteria' detailed later in this RFP as Attachment A. All additional related information pertaining to the Developer's qualifications will be evaluated and may affect the Developer's score.

The following is the information to be included:

Developer name, address and brief history.

1. Services to be provided by your firm.
2. Services to be provided by outside consultants.
3. Past projects of relevant nature or scope.
4. Qualifications/resumes of key personnel likely to be assigned to this project. Firms are encouraged to have the primary staff person to be assigned to this project present at the presentation.
5. A copy of the firm's most recent financial statement.
6. An explanation of how the proposed project would meet community needs and serve as a "highest and best use" of the property.
7. Purchase price offered.

All questions and contacts regarding this RFP shall be directed to:

John Donner
Business Manager, Marion Independent School District
777 South 15th Street
Marion, Iowa 52302
319-377-4691
jdonner@marion-isd.org



SELECTION PROCESS

A committee established by the school and city will review proposals and may interview Developers if deemed necessary. The committee will use the attached evaluation criteria to rank Developers and make a recommendation to the Marion Independent School Board and Marion City Council.

PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS, DEADLINES, AND FORMAT

The deadline for submission of proposals shall be January 6, 2017 in the office of the School Superintendent. Presentations to the School Board and City Council will be conducted upon request of either board.

The School requests that firm's submit ten (10) copies of their proposal. Please provide one electronic copy of your proposal via email to the School Superintendent and City Manager. There must be at least one letter on official letterhead signed by a principal empowered to contractually obligate the submitting firm accompanying the proposals.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

No person or firm will be excluded from participation in this project on the grounds of any legally protected status.



**MARION INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND CITY OF MARION
1400 10th AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS
ATTACHMENT A
EVALUATION FORM**

Name of Firm: _____

1. Firm's experience, expertise, and qualifications. Your firm's experience with similar projects and the qualifications of key personnel assigned to this project. Experience redeveloping similar properties.

Maximum 20 points = _____

2. Firm's capacity and resources. Evidence of your firm's ability to complete projects of this scope and design in a timely manner successfully.

Maximum 15 points = _____

3. Project overview/fulfillment of community needs. Explain your understanding of the Community's objectives for this project. Please describe your understanding of the community's needs, the unique aspects of redeveloping this property, and the approach your company will take to design a project to the objectives.

Maximum 30 points = _____

4. References. Please provide five letters of recommendation from persons or firms for which you have performed development work. City staff will conduct additional reference checks also. At least one reference from a local government official preferred. In the case of a nonprofit entity submitting a proposal, a resolution of support from the governing body may substitute for submittal of references.

Maximum 15 points = _____

5. Purchase price offered.

Maximum 20 points = _____



6. Bonus Points. Bonus points may be awarded for projects that meet the desires of the Emerson neighborhood for the use of the site. These have been gathered through public input meeting(s) at the school and responses solicited via the City of Marion website, as well as direct contact to elected and appointed officials.

Maximum 20 Bonus points

_____ Providing/Upgrading Community Playground Space (4 points maximum)

_____ Providing Community Garden Space (4 points maximum)

_____ Preserving an Educational Component On-Site (4 points maximum)

_____ Maintaining Historic Elements of Current Structure(s) (4 points maximum)

_____ Establishing a Community Center Use or Component (4 points maximum)

TOTAL POINTS: _____

NOTES: _____

**MARION INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND CITY OF MARION
1400 10th AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS
ATTACHMENT B
PHOTOS OF BUILDING**





MARION INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND CITY OF MARION

1400 10th AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

ATTACHMENT C

SUMMARY OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

I am currently the President of the Save Cedar Rapids Historic Heritage Association, I would like focus to be to keep the historic structure of the building. Turning the building into a community center with a focus on the arts would be preferable. Engage in ceramics and painting.

When XXXX moved to Marion there was a handful of elementary buildings in the area, when his son started school the district was reduced down to 2 elementary buildings. He is disappointed that the district in the past has sold old buildings. XXXX would like the building to stay for public use.

Emerson School has been a wonderful neighbor to XXXX. Is the building heat and air systems good to keep up? XXXX wonders if building could be turned into a senior center.

Loving having Emerson in the neighborhood. XXXX loves hearing the kids during the school year and watching the kids who play on the playground in the summer. She misses the Cedar Rapids Science Center, she would like to see Marion getting a Science Center.

XXXX would love the building to become a senior center or a daycare facility. She is a nutritionist and would love a community garden. Marion would benefit from teaching our children how to garden.

XXXX's daughter learned to ride her bike on the playground. There is not another playground in the area unless you would like to travel blocks away. He would like the area to stay a kid friendly area. A place that would draw young families to the area to buy an older home and fix it up. Rejuvenate the area.

XXXX has lived across the street from Emerson for 26 years. She loves to hear the sound of the children. She has concerns about the young adults who use the playground when school is not in session. She would like to see that kind of activity moved off the grounds. XXXX would like the building to be a friendly place. She is inspired by the blue zone movement and would like the district to promote new families to the area. She would also like to point out the dynamics of the building and the way that the bricks on the building carry sound. She can sit on her front porch and hear a conversation happening on the playground. Bushes added to the area would help reduce the sound.

XXXX is a new resident to Marion. He would like to see more green space in the area. He likes the idea of community gardens, would like to blend that with a senior area. Work with the uptown area to keep a vibrant play area.

XXXX would like the building to remain named Emerson or Emerson Park. She would like a green area with a garden and a senior center. She also has concerns with the negative night time activity that happens occasionally.

XXXX has seen thousands of school districts across the state reduce down to hundreds. She is assisting Cedar Rapids with affordable housing and single family homes working to build core housing back. She would like to



make sure the towns stay strong. She would like to show what she is currently doing with Monroe Elementary in Cedar Rapids. She can assist in finding grants to repurpose the buildings to benefit the communities.

XXXX works in Marion and drives by Emerson everyday on his way to the YMCA. He and a friend did some brainstorming for ideas that they thought would be good to repurpose the Emerson building. They discussed a need for parks and recreation. He grew up in Minnesota where they devote area for ice hockey. He is an activity he enjoyed in his hometown and would love to have that here. The rink could have ice hockey in the winter and basketball in the summer. Good way to bring the community out in the winter.

Would like to keep the area a teaching facility. XXXX liked the idea of having gardens in the area, a farmer's market. Education setting with science as a focus. Teach the children how to grow food. Great opportunity to keep it a teaching facility. XXXX feels like there is open homes all over the city and would not like to see affordable housing in this location.

You do not want to put anything of value outside your home with the theft in the area. She has a concern for security in the area.

As a professional historian as well as a Marion resident, I am very interested in the future of the Emerson school. It should go without saying that whatever proposal is pursued, it should recognize the importance of the school as a historic structure and protect it. Why? Because our shared heritage helps define our community identity. With that goal in mind, I propose the much of the building's integrity be maintained, and that it be repurposed as a senior center with an intergenerational aspect.

I've spoken with dozens of older residents in Marion and Cedar Rapids, and their primary complaint about the area is the lack of a central location for services, programs, and activities. They feel no one in Linn County sees them as important, let alone a priority in community planning. The City of Marion could spearhead a plan to resolve that situation by converting the school into a multi-use facility geared primarily toward meeting the needs of our older residents while also welcoming younger ones. Space within the building could be reconfigured to include flexible office space where area agencies who work with seniors (e.g. Council on Aging, County, Health, Social Services, etc) could maintain a presence, even one afternoon a week, or on a rotating basis, to facilitate access to their services. Other areas could be maintained as classroom space for art or music classes, educational programs, and meeting space – this space might even be used for afterschool programs where interested older residents could help students with reading and homework – while maintaining the gym would facilitate senior exercise programs and upgrading the cafeteria would make possible senior and community meals.

Our goal would be to make all of these programs and activities available to seniors first, and then open them to community. Doing so, especially offering afterschool homework assistance, would foster an intergenerational aspect to the facility that would allow the building to be a vibrant part of not only the neighborhood, but also the community and surrounding area. This is an important aspect of the project especially as the City is looking for ways to encourage people to become more involved in the community – the building's proximity to uptown not only means easy access for most users, but also can encourage them to take advantage of businesses and services offered by local merchants.

We believe that an intergenerational senior center would be a great asset to our community, providing just one more example of why we believe Marion is a great place to live, no matter one's age. What better way to show our "elder statesmen and women" how much they are valued than by providing them with resources and opportunities housed in a historic structure?



Marion is a growing community with several new condominium developments which tend to attract persons 55 and older. I believe the community would benefit from a senior center with an adult day care. This could operate Monday through Friday, or to fit the needs of the community. Evenings and weekends the gym could be available to rent for various community activities, such as craft shows, youth sports, holiday events, family gatherings etc. I would love to be involved in developing such a facility. I am the rehab director in a long term care facility, there is a great need for this type of service in every community.

The building could be used as a community centers with recreation and programs for the children and families in the area.

It would be a great place for a Boys and Girls Club.