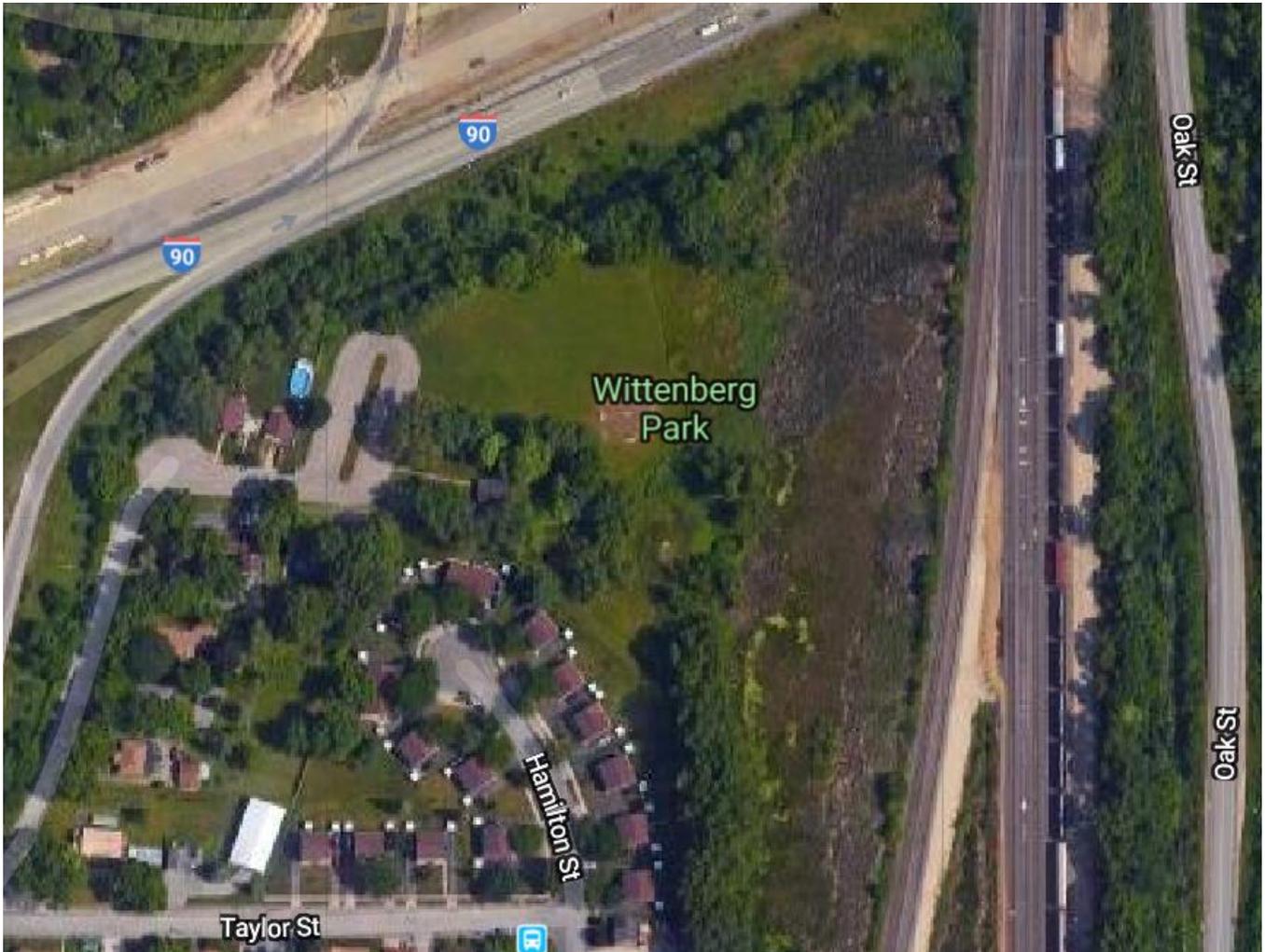


WITTENBERG PARK PARTNERSHIP

Development Opportunity-Letters of Interest

Wittenberg Park, 2940 George Street, is a 9.5 acre traditional neighborhood development opportunity. Approximately 4.25 acres are developable. (Parcels 17-10255-100 and 17-10255-110)



The City of La Crosse is soliciting Requests for Letters of Interest (LOI) from experienced real estate developers for a residential development. The site is located on the far Northside of La Crosse, close to biking and walking trails, Interstate 90, the Interstate Industrial Park and near a key future development corridor in the city (Hwy 53). The City is actively pursuing a public-private partnership, leveraging assets to develop a notable urban development, adding to the desirability of La Crosse's Northside. We look forward to your response.

LOIs are due by 5:00 pm Central Time on April 15, 2019 electronically to the attention of Andrea Schnick at: schnicka@cityoflacrosse.org.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Project Goals	6
Economic Data	7
Submission Requirements	8
Timetable	9
Miscellaneous Provisions	10
Project Point of Contact	11

Executive Summary

The City of La Crosse is looking for letters of interest and qualifications from experienced urban developers willing to purchase a 9 acre site, of which 4.25 acres is developable and not wetlands. The site is composed of approximately 5 acres of wetlands. Assuming a probable development area outside the wetland area, we would anticipate approximately 48,000 cubic yards of fill on 3.5 acres to bring the finished elevation above the flood protection elevation. The City is looking to elevate the far Northside of La Crosse as a preeminent destination for families to live, work, and play. In conjunction with its Hwy 53 Corridor Plan and the future redevelopment planned there, the City hopes that this site's redevelopment will help address the shortage of family housing in La Crosse.

The City has a preference for a mix of residential types (apartments, townhomes, or single family) that are respectful of the nearby wetlands and attractive to a variety of demographics. In addition, the successful developer will agree to set aside and maintain a portion of the development for public access, which might be a walking trail or playground facility. The site has environmental challenges that will need to be addressed, such as wetlands where development cannot occur (the City envisions that this as the site for public access).

Site Background

Located on one of the most northern boundaries of the city of La Crosse and near the I-90 Interchange, to the best of our knowledge this land was originally farmland until it was purchased in a foreclosure by La Crosse Public Housing Authority. The Housing Authority's original intent was to build 75+ units of public housing but due to funding, was only able to build 33 family housing units. The current site is the extra vacant land the Housing Authority did not develop. In 1977, they exchanged this land for city-owned land (Forest Park) to build their sixth high rise building for the elderly closer to downtown. This site has been a park since 1978 but has proven to be underutilized for various reasons. In 2018, the La Crosse Common Council authorized the City Planning Department to undergo a Request for Letters of Interest to have this land developed. The Common Council will then review these proposals to determine if it wants to move forward with the redevelopment.

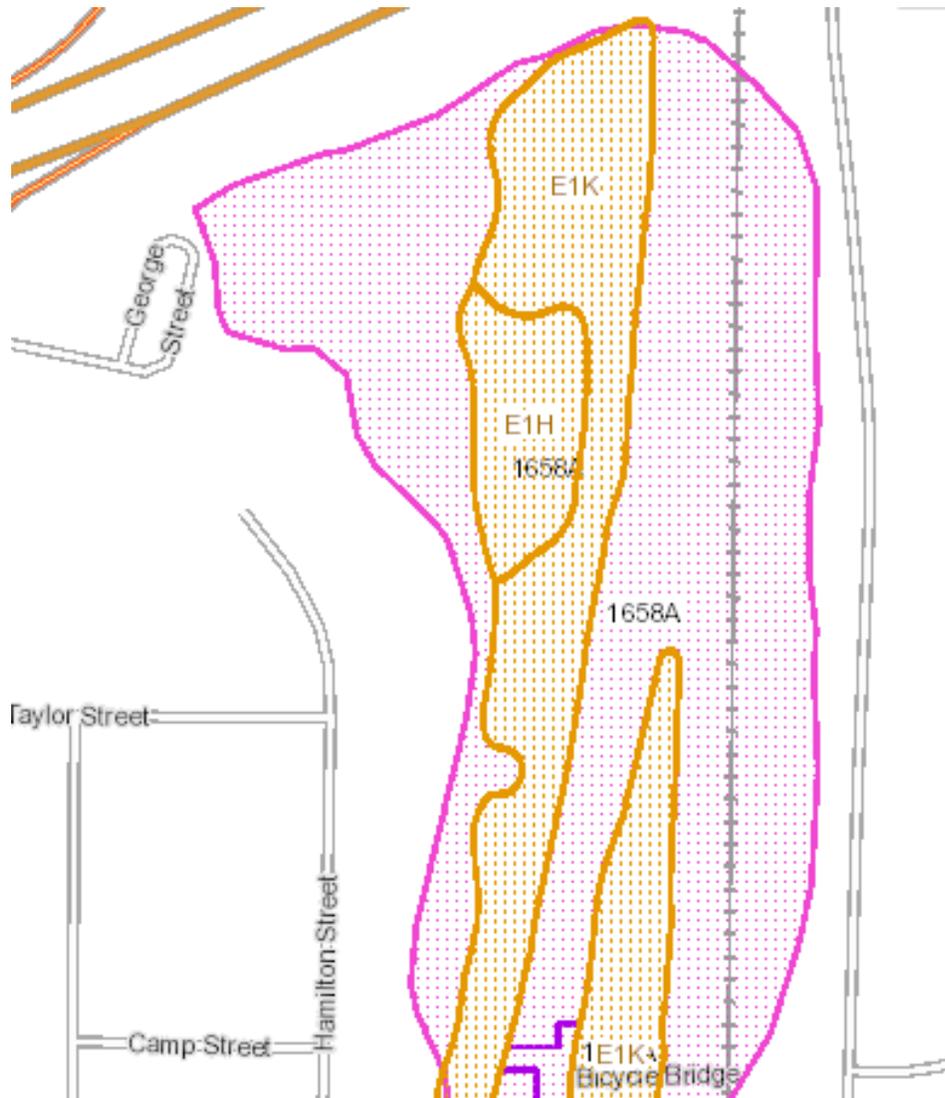
The city of La Crosse draws its identity from a scenic river location and prides itself on neighborhoods with leafy, tree-lined streets forming a compact grid pattern. City living also includes ice fishing in the winter, bald-eagle sightings in the spring, kayaking in the summer, and biking year round. La Crosse has ranked among the nation's "Best Places to Live" (U.S. News), "Best Green City" (Country Home), and "Smartest Places to Live" (Kiplinger's Personal Finance).

There are several large employers within close proximity to the site, with Kwik Trip headquarters being within a mile and many businesses in the Interstate Industrial Park. This creates a demand for workforce housing in this part of the city.

Sites Considerations

- 1. Flood Plain:** It is estimated that fill will be needed to be brought in for development to bring the park to be the same level as the current shelter and nearby Housing Authority homes. In addition, variances and a Letter of Map Revision will be required.

2. **Wetlands:** Wetland delineation by a certified wetland delineator will be necessary. According to the DNR's [Surface Water Data Viewer](#), there are mapped wetlands and wetland indicators in Wittenberg Park. Grading, filling, removing, or disturbing soil in low areas or wetlands is regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, as well as by the city. State regulations typically require avoidance and/or minimization of wetland fill if possible. When reviewing projects for permit approval, the DNR will determine if they comply with the requirements of section 281.36, Wis. Statutes, and NR 299 and NR 103, Wisconsin Administrative Code.



3. **Endangered Species:** Developer should request an Endangered Resources Review from the WI DNR to ensure compliance with Wisconsin's Endangered Species Law (s. 29.604 Wis. Stats.) and the Federal Endangered Species Act (16 USC ss 1531-43).

4. **Soil Conditions:** The City is unaware of subsoil conditions that would significantly increase the cost of development, including but not limited to subsurface foundations or waste material; any type of fill; dumpsites where toxic or hazardous materials or containers for these materials were disposed of in violation of government guidelines or other laws regulating such disposal; high groundwater; adverse soil conditions, such as low load-bearing capacity, earth or soil movement, or excessive rock or rock formations.

5. **Storm Water Impact:** Adding fill on this site could affect storm water for other sites around this area as the entire site is identified as an area for potential wetland. The City will be looking for proposals with a robust stormwater management plan.

6. **Utilities:** There is currently one sanitary main that serves the site.



7. **Noise:** Given its proximity to the highway and railroad, noise mitigation steps may be required for the development. This will be required if the developer anticipates utilizing HUD funds or Tax Credits to help subsidize the project.

8. **Transportation Access:** This site receives a walk score of 20 and its transit score is 22 (minimal transit but it is possible to access site on a bus). There are bus stops on Taylor St, approximately 500 feet away. There are currently no sidewalks on George St.

9. **Assessed Value of Land:** The City Planning Department estimates the value of the land to be \$350,000.

Project Goals

Six key goals have been established for the project:

1. **Broad community support:** The voice of the community as part of the development process is imperative to the project's success.
2. **Economic feasibility:** There will be environmental remediation required for building in the flood plain and close to wetlands. Taxable development must be sufficient to pay for these higher upfront costs and the proposed development must be realistic and marketable to the private sector.
3. **Create quality housing:** The city's needs include quality and diverse housing options.
4. **Maintain some publically accessible green space:** This is important as public space (a park is being given up as part of this project).
5. **Ecological compatibility**
6. **Foster community diversity:** The proposed development should propose a variety of housing options attractive to a diverse group of individuals.
7. **Sustainability, connections and linkages:** This project needs to find the opportunities to push the envelope on environmental design and energy efficiency to weave both the built and natural amenities on this site together.

Economic Data

Residential Market

The projected household growth for the city of La Crosse to 2020 is currently estimated at 2,940 households. Projected household growth for the Greater La Crosse Area is estimated at 4,764 households. Between 2020 and 2030, the city of La Crosse is projected to add another 760 households while the Greater La Crosse Area is projected to increase by 2,335 households.

The median household income in the Northside of La Crosse is \$37,160. Growth has been stagnant or declining on the Northside; not due to the desirability of living in this area but rather due to shrinking household sizes and limited opportunities for new development.

In a listening session with area employers, it was reported that new hires were having difficulty finding quality, market rate rentals in the area. In particular, there was a need for rentals which did not impose income restrictions.

Public Partnership Opportunities

The City hopes that a development-ready site will be sufficient to build a development **with limited public subsidy**. The following are available considerations for the development.

Loans: Depending upon the development, the City may be able to use its CDBG funds to cover some of the costs for environmental issues such as bringing in fill. The City may also be willing to offer the cost of the land as part of the public subsidy, in the form of a deferred, interest-bearing loan.

P-5 Opportunities: Given the visibility and impact of this project, there may be numerous local partners offering assistance in public, private, non-profit, philanthropic and volunteer capacities. The City expects a strong commitment in terms of equity in the project from the developer.

Submission Requirements

The City seeks a highly qualified developer to plan and execute the project. The developer/team shall be capable of site preparation, financing and project management that will be required to support development.

For this LOI, the City is requesting the following from interested developers/teams:

1. Letter of interest, including the following details:
 - A. Brief qualification statement highlighting experience with projects of similar size and complexity
 - B. Key aspects of the project, such as development approach, site design, architecture, building materials
 - C. Estimated proposed unit types and size, number, rents or sale prices
 - D. Expected sources of financing and estimated total cost, including estimated private equity in the project
 - E. Estimated public subsidy (federal, state, local) required for the development and source
2. Contact information for key staff people and proposed role
3. Questions relative to the project parameters
4. Pictures of other projects completed by firm/team in similar size and scope
5. Availability for a briefing and/or presentation

Evaluation Process

The City will develop a short list of development teams from which to solicit proposals based upon the following information ascertained from the LOI submittal:

- **Qualifications and Experience of Developer:** particularly those who demonstrate they are qualified to execute the delivery of a development opportunity.
- **Project Vision and Development Approach:** those who best articulate their vision for the implementation.
- **Project Financial Feasibility and Development Team Capacity:** those who best demonstrate their financial capacity to develop a project of this scope.
- **Reputation:** those who have a track record of successful public/private partnerships built upon trust, integrity and a desire to achieve a project that is a win-win for the developer and the City.

Timetable

March 15, 2019

LOI Release

April 15, 2019

LOI Submission Deadline

May 9, 2019

Update to Common Council for direction forward

If given direction to move forward, the following may occur:

June, 2019

Selection of finalists for full Request for Proposals

July, 2019

Interviews and Selection of a Developer

Spring, 2020

Break Ground on Development

Miscellaneous Provisions

Reservation of Rights

The City of La Crosse reserves the right to:

- Cancel or withdraw the LOI prior to or after the submission deadline
- Modify or issue clarifications to the LOI prior to the submission deadline
- Reject any submission it deems incomplete or unresponsive to the submission requirements
- Consider a submission that is in non-compliance with the submission requirements
- Reject all submissions that are submitted under the LOI
- Modify the deadline for submissions or other actions
- Reissue the LOI, a modified LOI, or a new LOI, RFQ or RFP whether or not any submissions have been received in response to the initial LOI issuance.

Notice of Modification

The City may post planning notices or information regarding cancellations, withdrawals, modifications to deadlines, and other modifications to this LOI on its official website (www.cityoflacrosse.org/planning). Developers 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 developers.

Ownership and Use of Submissions

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

Further Efforts

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

Non-Binding

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

Non-Liability

By participating in the process, the developer agrees to hold the City of La Crosse and its officers, employees, agents, representatives, and consultants harmless from all claims, liabilities, and costs related to all aspects of this solicitation.

Project Point of Contact

For questions related to this project and this LOI, please contact Andrea Schnick.

Andrea Schnick
Economic Development Planner
City of La Crosse
(608) 789-8321
schnicka@cityoflacrosse.org

All questions and answers on the LOI will be posted on our website, www.cityoflacrosse.org/planning under Request for Proposals, Wittenberg Park Letters of Interest.

All LOI submissions must be emailed to Andrea Schnick at schnicka@cityoflacrosse.org by 5:00 pm (Central Time) on April 15, 2019.

Appendix A



January 22, 2019

MVAC SR 2019-04

Andrea Schnick
Economic Development Planner
City of La Crosse
400 La Crosse St.
La Crosse, WI 54601

RE: Archaeological potential of the City of La Crosse Wittenberg Park.

Dear Ms. Schnick,

I am writing to inform you that the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC) has no archaeological concerns pertaining to any future development at Wittenberg Park on the north side of the City of La Crosse. In 1981 James Gallagher of the Center for Research Archaeology, the precursor to the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC), conducted an archaeological survey for the proposed Wittenberg Park development. The survey found the area to be comprised of fill consisting of glass, cinders, and some pieces of asphalt and concrete that was at least six inches and up to 1.5 feet deep overlaying sterile sand (Gallagher 1981). In 2000 MVAC took sixth grade students from Logan Middle School in La Crosse to shovel test a portion of Wittenberg Park. Again no prehistoric artifacts were recovered and the no additional archaeological investigations were recommended within the park (Dowiasch and Boszhardt 2000) The 1960 Soil Survey of La Crosse County was also consulted and the location of the current park was mapped as an area that frequently floods and is poorly drained (Beatty 1960). It is likely that fill was added throughout the location of the park to make it a useable space.

If you have any questions please call or email.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wendy K. Holtz-Leith".

Wendy K. Holtz-Leith
Senior Research Archaeologist
Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
1725 State Street,
La Crosse, WI 54601
608-785-8455
wholtz-leith@uwlax.edu

References Cited:

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1960 Soil Survey of La Crosse County, Wisconsin. United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service.
- Dowiasch, Jean and Robert Boszhardt
2000 Regional Archaeology Program West-Central Wisconsin (Regions 3 and 6) Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center 1999-2000 Annual Report. Reports of Investigations No. 378. Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.
- Gallagher, James P.
1981 An Archaeological Survey of the Proposed Wittenberg Park Development at La Crosse, Wisconsin. Center for Research Archaeology La Crosse, Wisconsin.