



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
FOR
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

3700 BOWDENS FERRY ROAD, NORFOLK
FORMER MADISON SCHOOL SITE

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

RFI ISSUE DATE: 01/31/2025
RESPONSE DUE DATE: 02/28/2025

A. Introduction

1. Purpose of this Request for Information (RFI)

The City of Norfolk, through this Request for Information, invites professional real estate development firms (“Respondents”) to provide insights on potential developments at a city owned site (the “**Subject Site**” – **3700 Bowdens Ferry Road, Norfolk, VA 23508 (former Madison School site)**) located in the Lamberts Point Neighborhood on the Hampton Boulevard Corridor.

Specifically, the City of Norfolk is actively exploring opportunities for a development partnership at the Subject Site with the aim to unlock the value and development potential of the strategic parcel located in the Hampton Boulevard Corridor, in western Norfolk. The City of Norfolk will consider a partnership to develop the Subject Site that benefits both parties financially, as well as aligns with City of Norfolk objectives:

1. **Highest and Best Use:** Develop city owned real estate to achieve the highest and best use, maximizing legal, financial, and physical potential while aligning with surrounding areas to identify the property’s greatest value and deliver the highest return on investment.
2. **Strengthening Neighborhoods:** Leverage city-owned real estate development to support the growth of the adjacent residential and commercial areas, while adding value to the community by enhancing its social, economic, and cultural fabric.
3. **Economic Inclusion.** Support diverse participation in the real estate market to drive equitable economic growth and empower local communities by ensuring minority-owned, women-owned, and small businesses get access to development opportunities.

This RFI process is designed to collect information and gauge the interest and aspirations of the local and broader development communities. The insights gathered will inform the City of Norfolk’s strategies for partnership and development of this strategic site. It is important to note that this RFI is not a "competitive solicitation". Responses to this RFI will be evaluated solely for informational purposes and will not lead to the awarding of any contract. However, the information obtained may inform the creation of a future competitive solicitation.

2. Background of the City of Norfolk

Norfolk, a vibrant and dynamic city with a population of 246,000, is at the heart of the Hampton Roads metropolitan area in southeast Virginia. Situated along the Elizabeth River and nestled on the southern side of Hampton Roads, Norfolk spans about 66 square miles. This strategic location positions the city as a central hub for finance, business, healthcare, culture, education, and entertainment in the region. Norfolk is the kind of city that strikes a perfect balance between urban sophistication and the welcoming atmosphere of a mid-size city, offering its residents both modern amenities and a relaxed way of life.

One of the key arteries of Norfolk is Hampton Boulevard, which runs north to south and serves as the main thoroughfare, connecting the midtown tunnel to the Naval Station Norfolk. This vital corridor cuts through the western part of the city, bringing together several distinctive neighborhoods. One such neighborhood is Lamberts Point, a historically diverse area of Norfolk. The Lamberts Point community is a blend of single-family homes, retail spaces, and the Lambert’s Point coal-exporting

facility. Recently, the area has seen a resurgence of development, with a focus on revitalizing retail spaces as part of the “Railyard District” and the “Railroad District” projects. The district is breathing new life into the old industrial area, previously home to Norfolk Southern’s tracks, by transforming it into a vibrant, mixed-use space that includes residential, retail, and light industrial developments.

Nearby, Old Dominion University (ODU) stands as a proud cornerstone of the community. This public research university enrolls around 23,000 students and is recognized for its excellence in multiple fields. ODU is particularly renowned as the top-rated university for veterans in Virginia, and its R1 research designation from the Carnegie Foundation underscores its high level of research activity. Additionally, Old Dominion is the fifth-largest employer in Norfolk, contributing significantly to the city's economy and culture.

In all, Norfolk is a city with a rich mix of history, innovation, and community development, making it a central force in the Hampton Roads region. Whether it’s the thriving local neighborhoods, the growth of educational and business institutions, or its strategic position along the water, Norfolk is a place where urban life and coastal charm come together seamlessly.

3. Subject Site (Development Site) Characteristics

The Subject Site, located at **3700 Bowdens Ferry Road** in Norfolk, Virginia (GPIN 1428565829), is the **former Madison School**. This **2.8379-acre** property is home to a **14,069 square-foot facility**, originally built in 1962. It is currently owned by the City of Norfolk and was recently (10/10/24) **appraised at \$4,330,000.00**. <https://air.norfolk.gov/#/property/78915010>

At present, the property is designated for commercial use under the zoning classifications of **C-C (Community Commercial)** and **IN (Institutional)**. The C-C zoning is designed to accommodate community-serving commercial developments, particularly along well-traveled arterial roads. It allows for a mix of community-focused commercial, retail, and office spaces at a moderate scale, aligning with the district's character. The IN zoning is intended for institutional uses, encouraging a variety of related land uses, often in a campus-style setting. The standards for this zoning ensure compatibility with neighboring properties and minimize any potential negative impacts from development.

Additionally, the property benefits from several incentives that may be of interest to future developers or investors. It is located within the [Virginia Enterprise Zone](#), the [Norfolk Innovation Corridor](#) (a designated Technology Zone), an [Opportunity Zone](#), and a [Tourism Zone](#), all of which offer various financial and developmental advantages.

As a previously developed site, public utilities are available from adjacent public rights of way, making it a prime location for the redevelopment of new uses.

4. Subject Site Development Objectives

The City of Norfolk has an overarching goal for the redevelopment of the former Madison School site. The aim is to transform the property into a tax-producing asset that meets the needs of the community, while aligning with the vision set forth in [PlaNorfolk 2030](#). The proposed redevelopment should maximize the site's potential, considering fiscal impacts for the city, creating positive outcomes for local residents, and complementing existing development projects. Additionally, any new development should serve as a transition between the residential areas surrounding the site and the possible multifamily, mixed-use, or commercial elements on the site.

The city remains open to a wide range of residential and commercial uses for the property, with the goal of ensuring that the project enhances the local community and contributes to the area's growth. In particular, the redevelopment should contribute to the vibrancy of the urban space by providing active, engaging uses that animate the public realm. The city envisions a development that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion, with mixed-income residential spaces and opportunities for small businesses to grow and thrive. Furthermore, public art should be incorporated, helping to foster a sense of community and enrich the lives of residents.

The City of Norfolk also places a strong emphasis on promoting opportunities for local and small, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses (SWaM). As part of the redevelopment process, submissions should demonstrate how they align with the city's initiatives to support equal opportunity business development. The city encourages partnerships, joint ventures, and subcontracting opportunities that allow these businesses to participate in the project.

Additionally, the city is committed to supporting Norfolk-based businesses and workforce development. Developers are encouraged to highlight any connections to Norfolk businesses or their employment of local residents in their proposals.

Ultimately, the City of Norfolk seeks distinctive, high-quality projects that incorporate exceptional architectural design, character, and materials. The goal is to create a development that attracts tenants, contributes to the business vibrancy of the area, and supports the long-term growth of the environment. The city will be most interested in inspiring submissions that offer the most meaningful value, aligned with the development objectives, and demonstrate a clear understanding of all development costs, considering current market conditions.

B. Information Requested

The City of Norfolk is seeking information from real estate developers having experience in urban development and redevelopment projects.

Respondents should clearly explain how they plan to develop the Subject Site in their response. Responses must address all the elements required from the RFI and any amendments that may follow. Respondents are encouraged to be concise, respond directly to the RFI requirements (information requested), and address the objectives of the RFI process.

Submissions are to be prepared at the sole cost and expense of the Respondents, with the express understanding that there may be no claims whatsoever for the reimbursement of any costs, damages, or expenses related to this RFI from the City or their officers, employees, advisors, or representatives, or any other party for any reason.

Specifically, the city is seeking the below information. Please provide the information requested and respond to each question in the order provided, addressing how your current or proposed qualifications align with the items listed below:

1. Introduction Letter of Interest (LOI)

- 1.1 Introduce your firm and give a brief overview of your expertise, relevant experience, and include any diverse components of your development team. If applicable, identify your Norfolk location and/or detail your employment of Norfolk residents.
- 1.2 Clearly indicate your interest in the development of the Subject Site.

- 1.3 Provide the Respondent's name/firm, contact person for the submission (with name, address, telephone number, and email address), a designation of the responsible legal entity, and signature of the authorized representative.
- 1.4 Confirm that the development firm/group is a legal entity and is registered to do business in the Commonwealth of Virginia with the State Corporation Commission (the "SCC") and that the contact person is authorized to communicate on the Respondent's behalf.

2. Market Outlook

- 2.1 Describe your firms outlook for the Lamberts Point Neighborhood and the Hampton Boulevard Corridor of Norfolk, in both economic and real estate trends perspective.

3. Project Information

- 3.1 Provide your thoughts on the Subject Site (i.e. market condition, demand and supply, opportunities and challenges, development obstacles, etc.).
- 3.2 Describe potential real estate development options/uses you would consider and a brief explanation why.
- 3.3 Describe a preliminary plan or concept of the development plan, including project use/type, potential plan to repurpose existing facility (if applicable), number of units (if residential is included), etc. Include a brief explanation of how the proposed plan will meet the objectives in Section 4.
- 3.4 Describe how you would support and involve SWaM businesses in your development plan.

4. Project Funding

- 4.1 How would your development group plan to structure and fund this project?
- 4.2 Identify the number of funding sources, if known, and describe any known restrictions on the proposed funding.
- 4.3 Indicate if the proposed plan can be accomplished without supplemental funding from the city. If necessary, indicate the projected funding amount.

5. Development Plan and Timeline

- 5.1 Considering your described development plan, provide a proposed timeline for development.
- 5.2 Based on your experience, what challenges would be anticipated in the development process, financing or proposed partnership structure? What strategies could the City of Norfolk consider to address these challenges?
- 5.3 What is your investment horizon? Would you plan to stay invested in the project in the long term or plan to sell it once it reaches stabilization?

6. Respondent Experience and Additional Information

- 6.1 Provide inspiration examples (preferably pictures or graphics) of what you proposed to be developed.
- 6.2 Examples of prior projects you have developed successfully that evidence your experience of similar projects to what is proposed.
- 6.3 Is there any additional information from you/firm that was not incorporated into the above responses that is relevant to the Subject Site and/or the City of Norfolk? If applicable, provide this information.
- 6.4 If applicable, please provide massing diagrams or a conceptual land use plan that supports your proposed development plan.

C. Response Instructions

Respondents are required to submit a formal **Letter of Information (LOI)** and to provide comprehensive answers to the questions above.

1. The City of Norfolk must receive all responses to this RFI no later than **4:00 p.m. EST on 02/28/25**. Any submittal received after the slated time and date shall not be considered and will be deemed non-responsive. **It shall be the sole responsibility of the Respondent to have its intended response to the City of Norfolk via electronic submittal. The electronic submission must be in the PDF format.**
2. One (1) signed electronic copy of the submittal must be sent to the **City of Norfolk – Department of Economic Development and Department of Housing and Community Development, clearly marked, “Request for Information – Former Madison School”, sent to both:**

Paul Bayer, Business Development Manager
City of Norfolk – Department of Economic Development
Paul.Bayer@Norfolk.gov

Ian Brown, Bureau Manager
City of Norfolk – Department of Housing and Community Development
Ian.Brown@Norfolk.gov

3. Submissions must be in an 8 ½” x 11” electronic format with standard text no smaller than 11 point. The margins on each page should not be less than 1 inch and the line spacing should not be less than 1.1”, excluding charts and graphics (if applicable). Submissions should be organized and outlined in the format described above.
4. All request for clarification or additional information should be made in writing by 02/07/25 by 12:00 p.m. via email to: Paul.Bayer@Norfolk.gov and Ian.Brown@Norfolk.gov. **Subject line should indicate Madison School RFI.** All responses will be posted on the sites indicated below.

D. Calendar of Events

Listed below are the important action and dates/times by which the actions must be taken or completed. All listed times are EST in Norfolk, Virginia. The following key dates/times are subject to change at the sole discretion of the City of Norfolk.

Event	Location	Date/Time
Release of Request for Information (RFI)	City of Norfolk – Development Showcase webpage and New Journal and Guide advertisement	01/31/25 by 5:00 PM
Deadline for Questions/ Request for Clarification	Email to Ian.Brown@Norfolk.gov and Paul.Bayer@Norfolk.gov	02/07/25 by 12:00 PM

Deadline for Answers to Questions/ Request for Clarification	City of Norfolk – Development Showcase webpage	02/14/25 by 12:00 PM
Response Deadline	Email to Paul.Bayer@Norfolk.gov and Ian.Brown@Norfolk.gov	02/28/25 by 12:00 PM

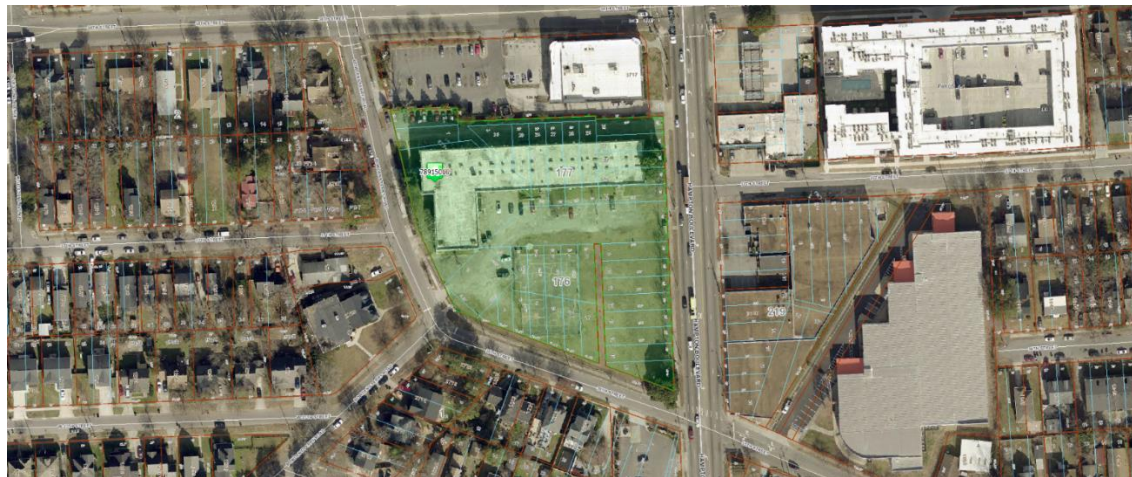
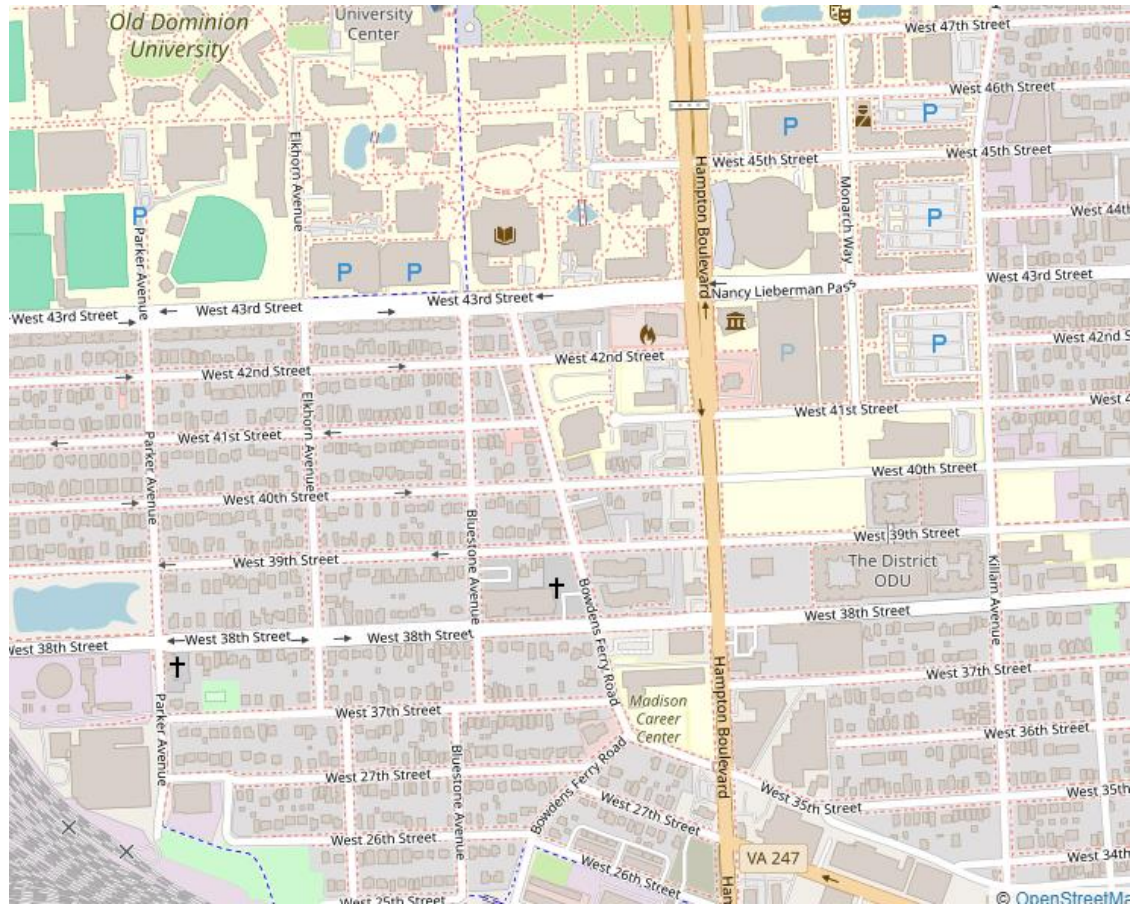
E. Review of Submissions

The City of Norfolk, at its discretion, may establish a review committee to assess the submissions. Based on the evaluation, the city will determine the appropriate next steps, which could include issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP), Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or continue to make the property available for unsolicited proposals.

F. Public Record and Disclosure Considerations

By submitting a response, Respondents acknowledge that all materials provided will become the property of the City of Norfolk and will not be returned. The city may retain or dispose of these materials according to the Virginia Public Records Act. Respondents should be aware that all submissions are subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, meaning that, except where required by law, they will not be made public until the city decides whether to enter into a contract. If a Respondent believes any information is exempt from mandatory disclosure, they must clearly mark it as such and specify the applicable Virginia Code section. The city will make the final determination on whether any information is exempt from disclosure, and exempt information may still be released at the city's discretion unless prohibited by law. The city will not assume liability for any loss or damage resulting from the disclosure or use of proprietary information.

EXHIBIT A - Parcel Maps



Site Street View

<https://assets.spatiallest.com/clients/va/norfolk/allimagery/streetview.html?x=-76.30336682285693&y=36.87897951878877>