

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Commercial Development on City-Owned Acreage in the Central Business
District

(Stage One of Two-Stage RFQ/RFP Qualifications-Based Competitive Process)

Avondale Estates Georgia

Submit your Qualifications to:

City of Avondale Estates and
Avondale Estates Downtown
Development Authority

21 North Avondale Plaza
Avondale Estates, Georgia 30002

February 22, 2019

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The City of Avondale Estates is actively pursuing the redevelopment of an approximately four-acre City-owned site on North Avondale Road (Exhibit A). The intent of this project is to activate an underutilized portion of the City’s downtown and to provide a positive economic impact for the surrounding area through the creation of a large public green space along with the construction of a unique and transformative private development.

The City initiated a six-month public process to create a development plan that includes both public and private uses. The result of that process is the attached conceptual site plan (Exhibit B). It includes a large public park on the northern portion of the site utilizing approximately 2.1 acres. The City of Avondale Estates plans to construct this park in a phased approach over the next two years. For the remainder of the property, the City is seeking a development partner to construct a mixed-use project adjacent to North Avondale Road.

The objective of this RFQ process is to determine the level of interest and number of qualified developers for the area identified above. Responses to this RFQ should provide general ideas and strategies for the redevelopment of the site including resumes and qualifications for the development team(s). The City and DDA will review qualification packages to select experienced developers to advance to the next step, which will be a Request for Proposal (RFP), leading toward the selection of “preferred developers” and the eventual disposition of the development site under mutually beneficial financial terms.

Depending upon the number and quality of responses, the City and DDA reserve the right to request additional information from some or all respondents, or to issue additional requests to advance the review process. This RFQ does not obligate the DDA or the City of Avondale Estates to select or negotiate with any development team(s) or to accept offers which the City or DDA determines, in their judgment, are not in the best interest of the Authority or the City.

It is acceptable for two or more development firms to propose a joint venture for this development opportunity. In such case, both developers should provide all information requested in this RFQ along with a clear indication of the project lead and designated responsibilities.

SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Description

The property available for development (Exhibit C) is bound by North Avondale Road to the south, Lake Street to the east, Oak Street to the west, and the future town green/public park to the north. The land available for development totals roughly 1.5 acres and currently includes a vacant former bank building (approximately 7,000 square feet). As indicated above, the City is seeking a qualified developer/development team to repurpose and develop this area as a mixed-use development with destination restaurant, retail, and service tenants on the first floor along with office, residential,

commercial, and/or retail uses on the upper floors. Potential developers are encouraged to consider opportunities to incorporate adjacent parcels into the overall development in future phases.

The real estate market in Avondale Estates is strong, and within the area surrounding this site there are several large, privately-led developments that are either planned or underway. The goal of this project is not to simply add another development to the area. This project should result in a mixed-used development that will be integrated with the existing Tudor Village and the new roughly two-acre park to create a “place” that is unique in metro Atlanta. Development plans should build on the extensive placemaking efforts and outcomes included in the Avondale Estates Downtown Master Plan and feature exceptional architectural design and materials. Further, the project should set a pattern for walkable development at a human scale with a focus on the public realm and gathering spaces. Accordingly, we have developed the following Statement of Intent to provide interested development partners with guidelines for how we would like to see the property redeveloped.

1. Zoning & Development Standards

The subject property is zoned Central Business District (CBD) Area 1. The intent of this district is to promote the development of downtown Avondale Estates in a manner that is consistent with the Downtown Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan focusing on the creation of a pedestrian oriented destination in downtown Avondale Estates. Further, the City of Avondale Estates approved a Master Plan for Downtown Development in 2014. The overall goals include:

- Emerge as a regional destination.
- Facilitate key development and redevelopment opportunities.
- Build employment options.
- Attract neighborhood retail.
- Design a complete network.
- Plan for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Capture additional pass through traffic.
- Remember parking.
- Provide spaces to gather.
- Improve study area aesthetics.
- Promote green development.

Here is a link to the Downtown Master Plan:

<https://www.avondaleestates.org/DocumentCenter/View/159/March-2014-Downtown-Master-Plan-Update-PDF>.

Projects in the CBD zoning district require review and approval by the Architectural Review Board (ARB). Here is a link to the ARB Guidelines:

<https://www.avondaleestates.org/DocumentCenter/View/36/Architectural-Review-Board-Design-Guidelines-PDF>.

The City may have flexibility regarding strict adherence to Zoning Ordinance regulations if the project meets the intent of the CBD, the Downtown Master Plan and achieves the fine-grained architecture, design and sense of place the City is striving to implement.

2. Redevelopment Objectives

Desired Development Characteristics

The site plan for new development should be similar to the “Concept 9” site plan (Exhibit B) that was chosen by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners with a break in the building mid-block and activated first floor facades on all four sides of the buildings. Desirable design elements include but are not limited to a terrace facing the proposed park, roof top uses and permeability on the ground floor.

Along North Avondale Road, the scale of development should roughly match the scale of the historic Tudor Village with buildings that are no more than three stories in height. While there are plans in place for larger apartment blocks in the surrounding downtown area, the BOMC expressed a desire that private development on the City-owned property be of a lower scale, especially along North Avondale Road.

The architectural design for the development should be respectful and compatible with the City’s historic character, scale and materials, but it is not necessary or desirable that the project mimic the architecture of the surrounding area. The City has an active Historic Preservation Commission and Architectural Review Board which will review the proposed site plan and elevations. The Design Guidelines can be found here: <http://avondalestates.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/36>.

Development should ideally have a “fine-grained” appearance with a variety of building heights and architectural design across the block. (The word 'granular' is used to describe something that is made up of smaller elements, and 'granularity' is how small or large those elements are. If the elements are small, we call it 'fine-grained', and if the elements are large, we call it 'coarse-grained'. In development, coarse-grained development refers to blocks dominated by larger structures with relatively little variation in scale and architecture. Fine-grained development refers to blocks that are (or appear to be) divided into smaller units for the development of individual buildings with variation in materials, architectural details, floor heights, and building heights.) Individual storefronts within the larger buildings should feature a variety of different materials and architectural designs.

The development should create an intimate, pedestrian scale along the North Avondale Road frontage and include a robust pedestrian oriented streetscape, including, but not limited to, seating, bike accommodation and active storefronts with no blank walls. The development should also address and activate the adjacent proposed park to the north. Services (trash, electrical service, etc.) should be screened from view. The north and south facades of the building (s) should be activated and accessible promoting a truly integrated plan as shown in Exhibit B.

Desired Uses

First Floor. The majority of first floor space should be dedicated to commercial tenants including a significant amount of retail and restaurant use. Office uses are also acceptable as first floor tenants. The retail tenant mix should focus on a curated group of destination retailers and restaurants that will draw customers from outside of the community and take advantage of the public park as an amenity. This should ideally include retailers with unique goods and services offered in an environment that creates an experience for the customer.

Upper Floors. Office, residential, commercial, and/or retail uses are acceptable for upper floors. While the residential uses may be either rental or owner-occupied condominiums, condominiums are the preferred use in order to broaden the current residential offerings in the downtown area.

Alternative Designs

The City and the DDA are willing to review alternative designs if they meet the overall placemaking intent of Concept 9 and the Downtown Master Plan.

SECTION III: DESIRED DEVELOPER QUALIFICATIONS

The City and the DDA are seeking responses from qualified Developers who are interested in undertaking the development opportunities described in this RFQ. In this context, the terms “Developer” and “Developer Qualifications” apply to the development entity itself and the proposer’s professional team assembled to execute the project.

Developer Qualifications

It is the City’s expectation that Parcel A will be repurposed and developed as a destination restaurant and retail district with a significant office or residential component. The City is seeking a developer and supporting professional team that possess the strongest combination of the following qualifications and experience.

- Experience developing open-air village-scale retail/restaurant districts in new or historic downtown districts with an emphasis on placemaking.
- Experience developing and/or redeveloping, retail, restaurant, for-rent office or office condominium.

SECTION IV: SUBMISSION FORMAT AND CONTENTS

Submittals must include one (1) original of the response, two (2) unbound hard copies and one (1) electronic copy (PDF) of the response. Every effort should be made to make proposals as concise as possible. Submissions must address the following sections in order to be considered complete and ensure consideration.

I – Qualifications and Experience - Cover Letter

RFQ responses should include a cover letter introducing the company and resumes of the respondent’s professional team and the firm’s areas of expertise. The letter should clearly show how the development team meets the minimum qualifications as outlined in SECTION III of the RFQ.

II – Proposed Development Vision and Program

Responses should describe the overall vision and a recommended development program to include, retail, high-end residential, restaurant, taverns, or office. Include information on company’s operational philosophy regarding typical length of time projects are held after completion.

III – Conceptual Financial Structure/ Financial Stability

Provide a conceptual financial structure, including sources of funding and a structure for providing compensation for the City owned real estate (e.g., land purchase, ground lease).

Provide evidence of your firm(s) financial capability to undertake the Project. Evidence should cover the last five years. If your proposal is being submitted by a syndicate of two or more entities, provide evidence for each firm that would be a part to the Project. Suitable documentation includes audited or reviewed financial statements, partnership or corporation tax returns, bank or financial institution commitments, or other verifiable information demonstrating financial stability necessary to support a project of this size. Submission of this RFQ provides consent to the City or its assigns to confirm the information provided in response to this question.

All firms will be required to allow the City to inspect and examine their company operating information and financial statements during the RFP's process. Each firm shall submit its legal firm name or names, headquarters address, local office addresses, state of incorporation, and key firm contact names.

SECTION V: EVALUATION CRITERIA

The City of Avondale Estates and the DDA support the creation of a vibrant urban neighborhood and retail/restaurant district to complement current and future downtown business enterprises. Accordingly, the City of Avondale Estates DDA along with City of Avondale Estates staff will evaluate responses based on the criteria stated within this document. Given the uniqueness of the anticipated development, developer qualifications and experience will be assigned the greatest value including but not limited to the following;

- Developer qualifications and experience-20pts.
- Uniqueness in proposed development vision and program-30pts.
- Conceptual financial structure-25pts.
- Financial history/stability-25pts.

SECTION VI: RESPONSE DEADLINE

Responses to this Request for Proposal (“RFQ”) must be submitted in hard copy (one original, three copies and one electronic copy) by no later than 4:00 p.m. April 1, 2019. Responses received after this time and date will not be considered. Please address responses to:

City of Avondale Estates - Downtown Development Authority
Attention: Gina Hill, City Clerk
21 North Avondale Plaza
Avondale Estates, Georgia 30002

SECTION VII: INQUIRIES

There will be a mandatory pre-submittal conference on March 12, 2019 at 10:00 am EST at the City of Avondale Estates City Hall. A question and answer time will follow the pre-submittal conference. All such written inquiries must be delivered by 5:00 PM EST on March 11, 2019, after this date, no further written questions will be accepted. Requests for information and questions should be submitted in writing, no later than March 11, 2019:

Keri Stevens
Assistant City Manager

21 North Avondale Plaza
Avondale Estates, GA 30002
kstevens@avondaleestates.org

All respondents will be provided access to or a copy of all received written inquiries and the City of Avondale Estates written responses to those inquiries along with all verbal responses to questions at the pre-submittal conference in the form of an addendum by 4:00 PM EST on March 18, 2019. Informal verbal communications by any person other than the meeting organizer, shall be considered unofficial and the City shall have no responsibility to verify any information that is not contained in this RFQ or future addenda.

SECTION VIII: SELECTION PROCEDURE/TIMELINE

The selection will be a two-step process. There will be a pre-submittal conference on March 12, 2019, to answer any questions. Responses to this RFQ will be reviewed and those shortlisted will be invited to participate in a more detailed RFP process to be determined upon review of the responses to this RFQ. In step two, the RFP process, developers will respond to an outline of more specific transaction terms and developer obligations. Final selection will be determined by evaluation of offers which are determined by the RFP Team which includes the City Manager, Assistant City Manager and the Executive Director of the DDA to be in its best interests. The City, DDA and the selected developer will enter into an Exclusive Development Agreement (EDA).

The Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC), the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and the City of Avondale Estates staff will review responses in accordance with the evaluation criteria outlined in Section V above. Depending upon the number and quality of responses, the BOMC or DDA may request additional information or schedule presentations from some or all respondents. Next steps will be determined by the BOMC and the DDA at the appropriate time.

The following is a preliminary schedule for general timeframes only and subject to change depending on proposals received and final transaction structure selected.

RFQ Process

RFQ issued	February 22, 2019
Pre-submittal conference	March 12, 2019
RFQ submittals due	April 1, 2019
Decision on Preferred Direction/Short List	April 30, 2019

SECTION IX: TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All responses and supporting materials as well as correspondence relating to this RFQ become property of the City and DDA when received. Any proprietary information contained in the response should be so indicated. However, a general indication that the entire contents, or a major portion, of the proposal is proprietary will not be honored. The following terms and conditions shall also apply:

All applicable Federal and State of Georgia laws, City of Avondale Estates and DeKalb County ordinances, licenses and regulations of all agencies having jurisdiction shall apply to the respondents throughout and incorporated herein.

Professionals requiring special licenses must be licensed in the State of Georgia and shall be responsible for those portions of the work as may be required by law.

No Response shall be accepted from, and no contract will be awarded to, any person, firm, or corporation that (i) is in arrears to the DDA or the City with respect to any debt, (ii) is in default with respect to any obligation to the DDA or the City, or (iii) is deemed irresponsible or unreliable by the Downtown Development Authority.

The Downtown Development Authority shall be able to request of the respondents' satisfactory evidence that they have the necessary financial resources to accomplish the developments as contemplated in the RFQ.