

**REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST FOR DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF THE MANHATTAN PRODUCE EXCHANGE BUILDING PROPERTY LOCATED AT 301 E. VENICE AVE IN VENICE, FLORIDA**

Notice is hereby given that Sarasota County is seeking Letters of Interest from qualified entities and individuals interested in the development and operation of the County-owned building ("Property") located at 301 E. Venice, Ave, Venice, FL 34285. All materials requested herein must be received by Sarasota County Property Management no later than the deadline stated below.

Only complete responses will be considered. Copies of the Request for Letters of Interest ("RLI") may be obtained from Sarasota County's Lease web page at <https://www.scgov.net/government/planning-and-development-services/property-management>. Sarasota County reserves the right to cancel this RLI and to accept or reject, in whole or in part, any and all responses for any reason, to reopen this RLI for subsequent phases or to redevelop the project by other means at Sarasota County's sole discretion.

**SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

One (1) hard copy or emailed response must be submitted by the due date and time stated below. Responses must be emailed to [dbeehler@scgov.net](mailto:dbeehler@scgov.net) or delivered to:

Sarasota County Government  
Property Management  
Attn. Donise Beehler  
1660 Ringling Blvd., Suite 240  
Sarasota, FL 34236

**NOTE: The Suite number #240 must be shown on all mailings for proper delivery.**

**DUE DATE AND TIME: June 28, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.**

**SITE VISITS:**  Mandatory  Non-Mandatory  N/A

The interior of the building is available to view by appointment only. Please contact Rebekka Cline at 941-861-5496 to schedule an appointment.

**REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

Requests for information concerning this must be submitted via email to [dbeehler@scgov.net](mailto:dbeehler@scgov.net). No questions will be answered verbally. The electronic responses posted on the Sarasota County Property Management webpage are the only official methods whereby interpretation, clarification or additional information will be provided. Potential respondents should check the webpage periodically to determine if questions and responses have been posted, as no notifications will be provided.

## 1. OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Property Information

Sarasota County is located on the Gulf of Mexico south of Tampa Bay. The Manhattan Produce Exchange Building (Property) is located in the City of Venice which has around 21,000 full time residents and sees a substantial population increase during the winter season. Venice is noted for its large seasonal population and in 2015 was voted as a top 10 Happiest Seaside Town by Coastal Living.

The Property is located on Parcel ID #0408020024 which was acquired by Sarasota County from CSX Transportation in 1999. This parcel is also home to the Venice Train Depot and a non-operational railroad caboose. The caboose and portions of the Venice Train Depot are leased as office and public exhibit space for the Venice Area Historical Society. The Venice Train Depot offers public restrooms, as well as indoor space available for meeting or event use by permit and reservation only. The parcel is further used as a transportation hub for Sarasota County Area Transit with bus service of approximately 70 buses daily. The parcel neighbors Venice's Marina Park and Boat Ramp and also serves as a trailhead to the very popular Legacy Trail and Venetian Waterway Park. As a result, significant bicycle and pedestrian traffic travels past the Property daily. In addition, the City of Venice-owned Legacy Park is an adjoining parcel on the east side of the Property.

The Manhattan Produce Exchange Building was constructed in the 1930's to store locally grown produce prior to its shipment north by rail. The building is a contributing structure within the John Nolen Plan of Venice, Florida historic district, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. The building is not currently designated as a historic building; however, it did play an important part in the agricultural history of the City of Venice and continued the tradition of vegetable and citrus shipments with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. The Manhattan Produce Exchange Building is a post and beam framed rectangular warehouse structure which is approximately 5,900 square feet in size, with extended braced overhangs along both sides to cover open loading docks. It is constructed of wood frame on concrete pier foundations. The original horizontal novelty siding has been covered by contemporary vinyl siding and a portion of the building interior has been partially finished with drywall panel walls.

A structural evaluation was conducted in 2015 and will be made available upon request.

### 1.2 Structural Renovations

The Property has been unoccupied for an extended period. It will require substantial renovations including, but not limited to, repair and/or renovation of the interior systems and features including flooring, walls, restrooms, electrical, HVAC, etc.

The County recognizes the historical significance of the Property and is seeking the participation of a developer willing to invest in the building in exchange for a potential long term use agreement. It has been suggested that the renovation of the building could be in the range of several hundred thousand dollars, depending on its targeted end use. It is the responsibility of the Respondent(s) to conduct their own investigations and perform their due diligence in order to determine the potential cost for the Respondent's targeted use. Also, it is the Respondent's responsibility to research all applicable City, County, State and Federal codes, ordinances and/or laws to determine the permissibility of proposed operations.

- a. The renovations must conform to the historic nature of the Property and may not be completed in such a manner that would prevent possible future historic designation. County shall approve any renovations, prior to commencement.
- b. Respondent is solely responsible for the costs and management of all renovations to the Property. County is currently unable to commit any funding to the project but reserves the right to provide funding if funds should become available.
- c. All costs associated with the renovation will be the responsibility of the selected Respondent.

### 1.3 Proposed Operations

- a. The County reserves the right to prohibit certain activities at the renovated building, including but not limited to, those that promote smoking, illegal drug use, display or distribution of adult content materials.

- b. The parking lot on the parcel will be available for non-exclusive use to the selected Respondent. It is the Respondent's responsibility to research parking requirements set forth by the City of Venice, and/or other governing bodies, based upon the proposed operation. Parking at this location is limited.
- c. All costs associated with the proposed operation will be the responsibility of a selected Respondent.

## **2. CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The structure and terms of an agreement have not yet been determined and will be subject to approval of both the Board of County Commissioners and selected Respondent. Sarasota County is seeking Respondents who have the financial and organizational capacity to successfully implement the proposed development in a timely manner, who can demonstrate the positive economic impact on the community and who provide a favorable revitalization vision for the property. The County may consider any criteria in making its selection.

All Respondents should satisfy themselves with the condition of the Property prior to submitting a response. Sarasota County makes no representation or warranty of the Property or its condition. The selected Respondent agrees to accept the Property "as is" with any easements, restrictions and any and all right-of-way requirements.

No member of the public shall be arbitrarily prohibited from reasonable use and access to the Building and no person shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, handicap, age or sex in any activity. Renovations shall consider applicable laws and best practices related to access to the Property for Americans with disabilities.

The Property is currently zoned Governmental Use District.

## **3. RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS**

- 3.1. Respondents should submit a Letter of Interest ("LOI") identifying the Manhattan Produce Exchange Building and describing the proposed end use. The LOI should also include an overview of the Respondent's concept for development and long-term use of the Manhattan Produce Exchange Building, and Respondent's experience relating to the proposed operation. The Respondent should indicate the zoning required for the proposed development and operation and highlight any other zoning considerations.
- 3.2. Responses should include a description of the respondent's structure, corporate status and years established. In addition, responses should include a high-level overview of the proposed funding mechanisms for the renovations and anticipated desired agreement term.
- 3.3. Respondents should describe any specific experiences, qualifications or resources, and provide any other information which may assist the County in reviewing the LOI.

## **4. REVIEW OF RESPONSES**

The County will review all LOIs received and may reach out to some or all Respondents in the event more information is needed.

## **5. COST FOR PREPARATION OF RESPONSE**

Sarasota County shall not be liable for any cost incurred by the Respondent for preparing and submitting any response to this Request, attending any oral interview, or for any other activities or occurrences related in any way to this Request.

## **6. SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS**

County reserves the right to consider any response to this Request regardless of content, and to consider proposals received outside of this Request. Upon selection, any agreement which results shall be subject to negotiation and may or may not include all the terms of this Request or of Respondent's proposal. County may enter into an agreement with the Respondent who, in the County's sole and absolute opinion, most closely meets the needs of the County.

**END OF INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENT**