



Solicitation Information
October 2, 2018

RFI 7597556

TITLE: "Request for Information (RFI) and Expressions of Interest for Development of the Cranston Street Armory.

Submission Deadline: Thursday November 16,2018 at 11:00 am (Eastern Time)

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at thomas.bovis@purchasing.ri.gov no later than 10/24/2018 at 4 PM Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word attachment*. Please reference the RFI# on all correspondence. Questions received, if any with responses, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

SURETY REQUIRED: No

BOND REQUIRED: No

Buyer: Thomas Bovis

Applicants must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

Note to Applicants:

Offers received without the entire completed RIVIP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the State of Rhode Island, is soliciting expressions of interest from qualified firms interested in partnering with the State to develop and operate the facility. This Request for Information and the State's General Conditions of Purchase may be obtained at the Rhode Island Division of Purchases' home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov

This is a Request for Information (RFI), not an Invitation to Bid. See Exhibit D – *Definitions, Acronyms and Qualifications*. Submittals will be evaluated based on the relative merits of the response and qualifications; there will be no public opening and reading of responses received by the Division of Purchases pursuant to this Request, other than to name submitting Respondents. Responses to this RFI are deemed public upon the award of a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP).

This solicitation will occur in two phases:

Phase 1: Through the RFI phase, the State will solicit helpful information and gauge interest from potential vendors.

Phase 2: Firms selected from the submitted RFI will be invited to respond to an RFP for the development and operation of the Cranston Street Armory.

This RFI is targeted to organizations that desire to use a significant amount of space within the Armory and take significant responsibility for management of the building and partnerships. Smaller organizations that would like to utilize a portion of the building, but do not want responsibility for management of the building and partnerships, should express their interest using the form available at www.cranstonstreetarmory.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1 - Introduction

- A. Project Overview
- B. Building Background/Description and Uses
- C. The Cranston Street Armory Neighborhood Demographics

Section 2 – Site Overview

Section 3 – Submission - Structure for Review & Consideration

Section 4 – Structure of the Partnership and Ongoing Operations

Section 5 – Development Incentives

Section 6 – Submission Review and Evaluation Criteria

Section 7 – Schedule

Section 8 – Response Submission

- A. Instruction and Notifications to Respondents
- B. Questions
- C. Response Contents
- D. Disclosure of Response Contents
- E. Terms and Conditions

Exhibits:

- **Exhibit A** – Cranston Street Armory Reuse Study Interim Report
 - **Exhibit B** – Facility Condition Assessment
 - **Exhibit C** – Definitions, Acronyms & Qualifications
 - **Exhibit E** - Cranston Street Armory Floor Plan and Square Footage Breakout
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SECTION 1 – Introduction

A. Project Vision and Approach

The State of Rhode Island desires to redevelop a unique piece of property on the West End of the City of Providence. The Cranston Street Armory, also known as the Providence Armory, is a 190,000-square-foot historic facility that once housed the State’s Militia.

During the last twenty years, the facility has been subject to limited use and primarily serves as a place for storage. The State is interested in redeveloping this building to enhance the city’s landscape and bring further economic and social value to the local and regional community.

The State envisions this facility as an economic and community development opportunity. It is also possible for the Amory to be developed as a multipurpose facility that combines educational, cultural and/or business uses. While the State would like to retain ownership, the State is open to discussions of a Public-Private Partnership (P3) to finance this project.

B. Building Background/Description and Uses

The Cranston Street Armory (Providence Armory) was designed by William R. Walker & Sons in 1907 for the Rhode Island National Guard in a style that is reminiscent of medieval castles. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Cranston Street Armory is the largest of Rhode Island’s historic armories. It is a monumental masonry building of granite, specialty yellow brick and terra cotta, and is crowned with numerous turrets and copper crenellated parapets.

Central to the Armory is a 40,000 square foot Drill Hall with a clear-span roof structure that slopes up to a maximum height of 80 feet. The vast drill hall is flanked by two four-story headhouses with central stairways and towers. The headhouses are nearly identical to one another and are generally symmetrical with respect to the Drill Hall; however, they are set slightly off-center in relationship to the Drill Hall to reflect the angle of Cranston Street. Each headhouse totals approximately 51,890 square feet, including the 155-foot tall tower.

The building’s basement is partially above ground and includes an additional 21,000 square foot clear-span space and a vehicle ramp entrance from Parade Street. The building includes decorative woodwork throughout. See “Attachment D” for more information.

Historically, the Armory has accommodated a wide range of events, including gubernatorial inaugural balls, track meets, car shows, home shows and movie stage sets. The first floor of this magnificent building was most recently home to the State Fire Marshal's office, while the upper floors have remained unoccupied for many years. The building is mostly vacant, although the basement and drill hall are used for storage purposes by multiple State agencies.

The Armory – conveniently accessible from Interstate 95 and R.I. Route 10 – is in the heart of the Broadway-Armory Historic District and abuts a vibrant commercial corridor that has experienced increased investment in recent years. Improvements to the property are subject to approval by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC).

C. Cranston Street Armory Neighborhood Demographics

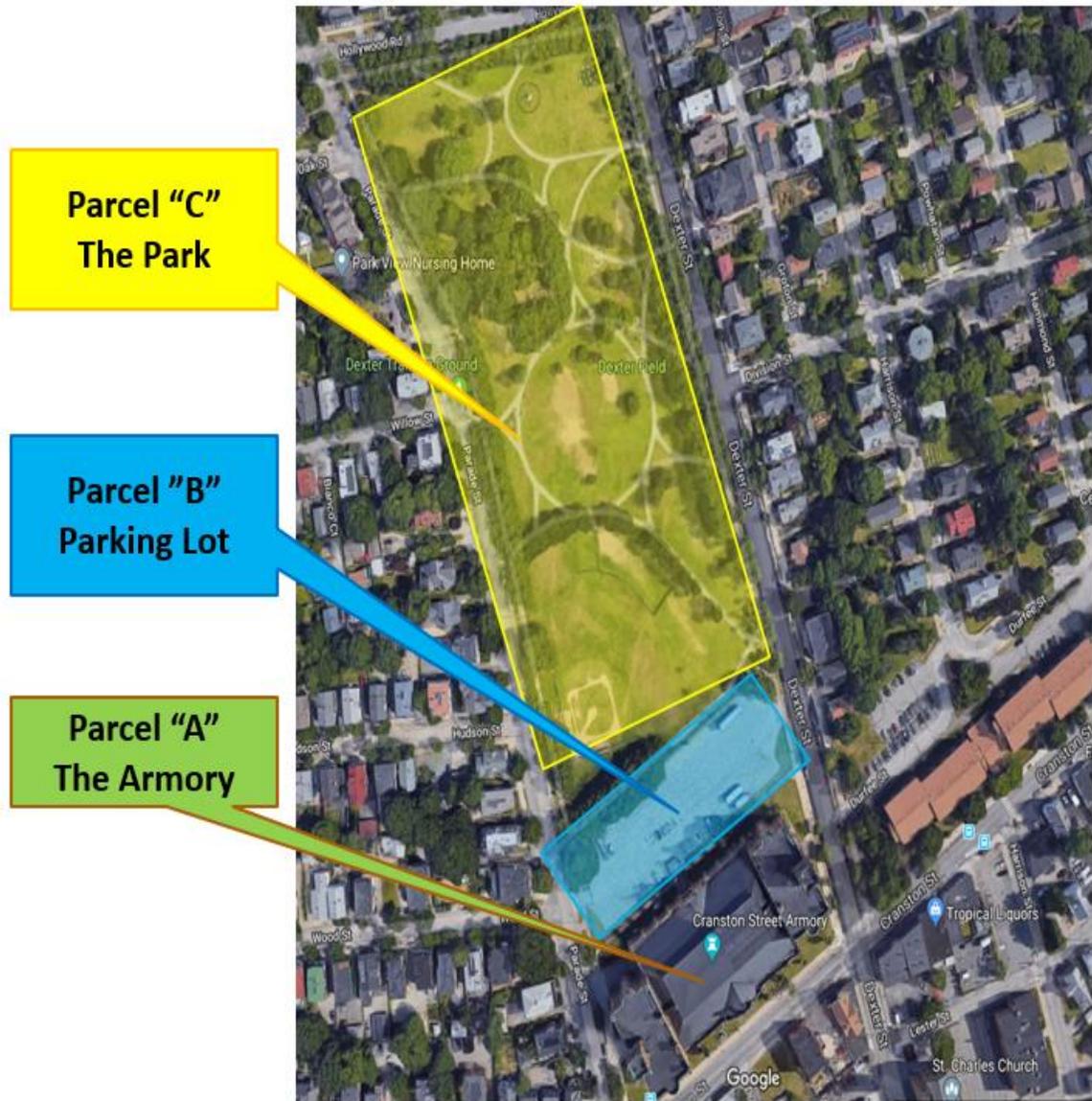
The Armory is adjacent to the Dexter Training Ground, a nine-acre City-owned park. It is one of the most heavily-used parks in Providence. The park includes a playground, bocce court, chess tables, and playing fields.

The neighborhood surrounding the Armory is racially and economically diverse. Almost half of its residents identify as Hispanic and almost 20 percent are Asian. The remaining 30 percent identify as White, Black and other races. The median income in the West End, \$33,878, is below the Providence average of \$40,335 (U.S. Census 2010-16). The median age for the neighborhood (32 years) is slightly older than the rest of the City (29.9 years).

Almost one-third of the population lives below the poverty line, while the city-wide rate is 25 percent (U.S. Census, 2016). About 47 percent of residents over age 25 have not attained a high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-16).

The West End is served by several commercial corridors. Cranston Street has many small, ethnically diverse stores and restaurants, many of which are owned by immigrants. The Neighborhood is characterized by a high level of activism and a strong investment in ensuring quality of life. Over the last twenty-five years, significant investments have been made in the West End's housing stock, attracting many new residents.

SECTION 2 – Site Overview



Site Overview

Parcel A: The building (owned by the State)

Parcel B: The adjacent parking lot (owned by the City)

Parcel C: The park (owned by the City)

SECTION 3 – Submission: Structure for Review & Consideration

A. Submission Requirements for prospective Master Lease Holders

- Resumes and firm descriptions for members of the Development Team
- Examples of relevant prior or ongoing projects
- Proposed programming, including indicating which spaces (if any) within the Armory would be available to sub-lease to additional partners
- High-level conceptual design sketches or programmatic diagrams
- Indication of ability to finance capital upgrades necessary for occupancy
- Financial Qualifications and Resources available for this project
- Pro forma, including capital and operating costs, operating revenues, and financing mechanisms
- Proposed ground rent and major ground lease terms, including preferred duration

B. Topics to prepare for oral presentation:

- What is your vision for the Facility?
- What is your vision for the Partnership?
- How will you include/work with the community that is surrounding the facility?
- Please provide some background and examples of work your firm has performed involving the restoration of historic space(s). If you cannot provide examples, what would be your approach in gaining the expertise needed to redevelop this space?
- Please provide examples of successful work your firm has conducted on economic development projects similar in size and scope.

A. Evaluation of Submissions

Submissions shall be evaluated by the point system associated with the technical provisions and Statement of Qualifications (“SOQ”) requested in this RFI. Following the evaluation process, the top-evaluated qualified Respondents will be invited to make oral presentations to clarify any potential questions of the Review Committee.

Each of these Respondent teams will be contacted by the R.I. State Procurement Officer in advance to schedule a date and time for an oral presentation. Written materials and other visual aids supporting the oral presentations may be used, provided that any such materials or visual aids shall be retained by the State following the presentation. The Respondent shall make its best efforts to have the firm’s Key Personnel attend.

SECTION 4 – Structure of the Partnership and Ongoing Operations

This purpose of this RFI process is to develop and review all options for reuse of this facility. The State expects to further define the structure of the partnership, including expectations for capital upgrades and ongoing operations, in the Request for Proposals phase.

Respondents are welcome to detail their preferred structure for lease/ownership, capital costs, management, and operations in their submissions. A Respondent's preferred structure may or may not align with the structure that the State will outline in the Request for Proposals phase, but these preferences will be taken into consideration as the partnership structure is developed.

SECTION 5 – Development Incentives

Discretionary tax credits and funds offered by the State of Rhode Island may be leveraged to provide additional financial support for the redevelopment of the Cranston Street Armory:

- a) **Qualified Jobs Incentive Tax Credit: Up to \$7,500 per job per year in annual and redeemable tax credits, depending on the wage level and other criteria.**
- b) **Rebuild Rhode Island Tax Credit: Redeemable tax credits that cover up to 30% of project costs if a real estate project cannot raise sufficient funding or is at risk of locating in another state.**
- c) **Tax Increment Financing: Provides capital to eligible projects by rebating new State tax revenue generated, not to exceed 30% of total project costs or 75% of incremental revenue generated.**
- d) **First Wave Closing Fund: Provides lynchpin financing unavailable from other sources to close transactions of a critical or catalytic nature.**

More detailed information on these economic development incentives is available on the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation's website: CommerceRI.com.

SECTION 6 – Submission Review and Evaluation Criteria

Responses will be reviewed by a Technical Review Committee comprised of staff from state agencies and the City of Providence. The Technical Review Committee may select Respondents to participate in on-site interviews to clarify the required technical provisions.

SECTION 7 - Schedule (To be provided by Division of Purchases)

Responses Due: 8 weeks after RFI issuance date

Technical Committee Evaluation: 4 weeks after RFI issuance date

Oral Presentations: 4 weeks after RFI issuance date

Anticipated RFP Issuance: 8 weeks after RFI issuance date

SECTION 8 – Response Submission

A. Instructions and Notifications to Respondents:

1. Potential Respondents are advised to review all sections of this RFI carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the response.
2. Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, responses that depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this RFI will be rejected as being non-responsive.
3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a response to this RFI, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the vendor. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.
4. All responses should include the Respondent's FEIN or Social Security number as evidenced by a W-9, downloadable from the Division's website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
5. Respondents are advised that all materials submitted to the State for consideration in response to this RFI will be Public Records as defined in Title 38, Chapter 2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request once an award has been made in a subsequent RFP. Some information submitted by RFI respondents may be considered proprietary or involve confidential business/financial information. It is the intention of the State of Rhode Island that information and materials submitted under this RFI shall be considered confidential/privileged commercial and financial information in accordance with the provisions of the Rhode Island "Access to Public Records Act," R.I. Gen. Laws § 38-2-2 (4)(B). That said, final determination of what material is or is not confidential and therefore not subject to public inspection will be made by the Rhode Island State Attorney General or a judge of the Superior Court should the release of such information be challenged by others.
6. Interested parties are instructed to contact Thomas Bovis at thomas.bovis@doa.ri.gov or 401-574-8119 so that they can be notified in a timely manner of any additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFI. Any addenda will also be posted publicly on www.cranstonstreetarmory.org and the Division of Purchases website.
7. Equal Employment Opportunity (G.L. 1956 § 28-5.1-1, et seq.) – § 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies to all areas where State dollars spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and are in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Opportunity Office at (401) 222-3090.

In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation or corporation without a Rhode Island business address – shall have the right to transact business in the State until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). This is a requirement only of the successful vendor(s).

A. Questions

Offerors are encouraged to submit written questions to the Division of Purchases. No other contact with State parties will be permitted. Interested Respondents may submit responses covered by this Request on or before the date and time listed on the cover page of this solicitation. Responses received after this date and time, as registered by the official time clock in the reception area of the Division of Purchases will not be considered. Responses (an original, plus seven copies) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked "RFI 757*" to:

RI Department of Administration, Division of Purchases 2nd floor,
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5855

NOTE: Responses received after the above-referenced due date and time will not be considered. Responses misdirected to other State locations or those not presented to the Division of Purchases by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Responses faxed, or emailed, to the Division of Purchases will not be considered. The official time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.

B. Response Contents

Responses shall include the following:

- A completed and signed R.I.V.I.P generated bidder certification cover sheet downloaded from the R.I. Division of Purchases site at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
- A completed and signed W-9 downloaded from the R.I. Division of Purchases site at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
- A separate Technical Response as described in Section 8 above.

Eight (8) bound hard copies of responses are required. Respondents are further requested to provide their response in electronic format (CD-ROM, disc, or flash drive). Microsoft Word/Excel or PDF format is preferable. Two electronic copies are requested; one for the State and one for the State of Rhode Island, which shall be placed in the response marked "original."

All costs associated with developing or submitting a response to this RFI, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the vendor. The State assumes no responsibility for costs.

C. Disclosure of Response Contents

Cost and price information provided in responses will be held in confidence and will not be revealed or discussed with competitors, except to the extent required by law. All other material submitted becomes the property of the State of Rhode Island and may be returned only at the State of Rhode Island's option. Responses submitted to the State of Rhode Island may be reviewed and evaluated by any person other than competing bidders at the discretion of the State of Rhode Island. The State of Rhode Island has the right to use any or all ideas presented in any response to the RFI. Selection or rejection of the response does not affect this right. Where confidential or proprietary information is required, or should the Respondent deem it necessary to submit such matter, mark each page/section in large bold type (PROPRIETARY INFORMATION) and submit in a separate, sealed envelope.

D. Term & Conditions

The State of Rhode Island reserves the exclusive right to select the individual(s) or firm (vendor) that it deems to be in its best interest to accomplish the Project Approach as specified herein; and conversely, reserves the right not to select any response(s).

Applicants may be required to submit additional written information or be asked to make an oral presentation before the technical review committee to clarify statements made in their response. Notwithstanding the above, the State reserves the right not to award this contract or to award based on cost alone, to accept or reject any or all responses, and to award in its best interest.

Responses found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and will not receive further consideration.

The State's General Conditions of Purchase contain the specific contract terms, stipulations and affirmations to be utilized for the contract awarded to the RFI. The State's General Conditions of Purchases/General Terms and Conditions can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.purchasing.ri.gov/RIVIP/publicdocuments/ATTA.pdf>

End RFI