

Brooklyn Village & Walton Plaza Master Developer Solicitation

Mecklenburg County

Request for Proposals Q&A

January 20, 2016

Based on questions asked during individual mid-course discussions between respondents and the solicitation team, and those submitted online, Mecklenburg County and HR&A Advisors have prepared the below answers to assist respondents in their completion of responses to the Request For Proposals. Please note that questions may be paraphrased or condensed to retain the spirit of questions asked and provide the most robust possible answers.

Brooklyn Village/Walton Plaza Priorities

What is the County's top priority with regard to this process and property?

The project objectives set forth in the RFQ are listed in order of priority. The County intentionally prioritized creation of a vibrant, mixed-use program on these sites, with an emphasis for uses to create a stream of steady economic returns to the local economy (through provision of jobs, sales activity, and returning the parcels to local tax rolls).

The second project objective conveys the County's attention to the quality of development (design and execution) and program (mix and density of uses) to be realized on the site. Responsible redevelopment of these sites will catalyze activity and growth in the Second Ward and across this corner of Uptown Charlotte.

The County is also seeking to maximize financial returns, within the context of these other priorities and the fact that these sites may be developed over an extended period, perhaps requiring a phased approach. The County is open to various strategies of receiving payment for the sites, within reason, and looks forward to your creative proposals.

Does the County have a preference for certain uses to come online first?

Beyond market-supportable uses and the County's goal for these sites to provide a vibrant mix of uses and generate long-term economic value to the community, there are not any specific uses that the County prefers be brought online first.

What is the County's desire and ability to be a "partner" in this development? Are there specific financing programs the County would or would not consider?

The County is open to different partnership and deal structures, including a phased project, but does not wish to retain an ownership stake in the sites. The County is also open to participating as a financial partner in the creation of public benefits on the site, but does not anticipate any partnership in vertical development on the sites. As a partner in financing site development, the County may consider PILOT, TIF, and other structures, as long as requests for this type of support are indexed appropriately to the type, timing, and density of development planned for these sites.

While the County is open to phased development of the sites and creative economic structures such that some returns are realized as the project is developed and responds to the market, it remains critical that the County realize some near-term financial return.

Will the eventual master developer be required to complete the full project if it is multi-phase, or would the County entertain options to opt out?

This solicitation process was designed to procure a master developer for development of both the Walton Plaza and Brooklyn Village sites. The County will not entertain proposals for only portions of one or both sites. Respondents are encouraged to put together development teams who can sustain a long-term commitment to the site.

A future purchase and sale agreement between the County and master developer will set any further requirements around timing for delivery of vertical development.

Are there similar developments, in Charlotte or other locations that the County would suggest developers look to as examples for the type of development the County wishes to see here?

The solicitation team recommends looking to regional and national precedents for examples of successful mixed-use development. Developments that successfully combine a mix of uses, programs for mixed-income populations, and varied architectural and design elements are representative of the program that the County hopes to see here.

Brooklyn Village/Walton Plaza Current Uses & Disposition

What is the structure of the agreement between Mecklenburg County and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education with regard to the County's authority to bind the Walton Plaza property?

The County has the ability to bind both parcels offered in this solicitation.

The Walton Plaza site was purchased jointly by Mecklenburg County and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (CMBE). Part of the property's title remains with CMBE, though the County retains a two-thirds stake in ownership, equivalent to funds committed for the site's purchase. CMBE is fully aware of the County's plans for the site and of this solicitation process. They are in the midst of relocating their offices in anticipation of the sale and redevelopment of Walton Plaza.

Could public sector office users currently in the Walton Plaza office building be relocated into office space on the Brooklyn Village or Walton Plaza sites?

Office tenants on Walton Plaza will be relocated to other sites throughout the Charlotte area. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' employees will locate to a new administrative office complex while County employees will be relocated to the Valerie C. Woodward Center, Community Resource Centers, or elsewhere in the Government District as deemed appropriate for their job function. These users will vacate the building along with the future master developer's development phasing, and should not be viewed as candidates for future uses on these sites.

Old Metro School Site & Aquatic Center Redevelopment

Has there been any further development regarding potential to incorporate the old Metro School site into the Brooklyn Village/Walton Plaza development plans?

As noted during the RFQ, the old Metro School site, which sits between the Brooklyn Village and Walton Plaza sites and adjacent to the Aquatic Center, is not directly part of this offering. The County understands, however, that it may be an attractive and valuable addition to respondents' proposed master plans. There have not been additional developments related to joining this parcel to the offerings since the RFQ stage. Please find responses on this topic during the RFQ stage [here](#).

Should the future master developer want to pursue development of the old Metro School site, the County would support discussions with CMBE around procurement of this site.

What are the current plans for redevelopment and future use of the gymnasium on the old Metro School site? How does this affect potential future development on that site by a separate developer?

In considering the old Metro School site, respondents should note that the former Second Ward High School gymnasium is undergoing a planning and redevelopment process separate from the rest of the site.

Redevelopment of the gymnasium is currently being explored as part of the Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center renovation by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. Park and Recreation is coordinating with CMBE to incorporate additional program and support space for the Aquatic Center into the gym, potentially including warmup/cool down space, classes, and small events. A Second Ward Alumni Association history museum would also be part of the program for the gymnasium. Park and Recreation intends to begin a renovation of the existing gymnasium facility, including upgrades to the HVAC system and a connection between the gymnasium and the Aquatic Center via breezeway. At this time, this plan is fully capitalized and not in a procurement stage (for partners or designers). LS3P has been engaged as the architect of record and Balfour Beatty is acting as construction manager. Therefore, the gymnasium will not directly be a part of future development as part of the master developer's work on the site.

Should respondents consider potential expansion of the Aquatic Center as part of site development?

The development of a second bowl as part of the Aquatic Center's expansion has been considered, but is not currently a County or Park and Recreation priority, and its forward movement would require additional support. Any expansion of the Aquatic Center can be accommodated on its current site. Recreational facilities such as this are a welcome use on the larger site, but not a requirement, and should not be introduced to the detriment of site value or program.

Parking

Please clarify the County's intent with regard to providing parking for public agencies within the site plan.

The County is not obligated to provide parking for employees near their places of employment, and there are currently City, County, and State employees who do not have dedicated, permanent parking. While the County is open to proposals that include some public parking or parking for public sector employees within the master developer's site plan, it is not a requirement for future development on the sites.

For additional information on the County's stance on parking, please see the response to this topic of questions in the Q&A document released during the RFQ stage [here](#).

What is the anticipated demand for public parking needs (related to the Aquatic Center or other public entity parking)?

As noted above, the future master developer is not required to provide parking for County or City offices or specifically for events at the Aquatic Center. However, public employee demand in the area is approximately 200 to 400 spaces on a daily basis, during usual working hours (8am to 5pm), with additional use from visitors to the Government Center.

Open Space

Does the County have any unique objectives with regard to the open space requirement that would affect site organization or surrounding uses?

No. The open space requirement on the Brooklyn Village site is part of an objective to create an anchor park in each of the city's four wards, and development of open space should not be constrained to Marshall Park, but there are no specific requirements about how the site is organized around this open space.

Can bodies of water be counted as part of the 1.5 acres of open space required as part of the overall site plan?

The intent of the RFP requirement around open space is to solicit proposals including active, creative open space that relates to the development on each of its edges, to the greatest extent possible. The County would consider water features within open space, or innovative incorporation of storm water capture or drainage methods as a part of recreational space, to be aligned with this vision. The mere preservation of passive or underutilized bodies of water as a mechanism for meeting the open space requirement will not be evaluated favorably.

Area Development and Public Realm Improvements

Please provide live links to the Second Ward Master Plan, as those currently on the County website no longer lead to the full final plan.

Please find a direct link to the Second Ward Master Plan final plan [here](#).

How are the City and County coordinating capital improvements and timing of development at sites including Hal Marshall, the Observer block, CHA Strawn site, and others?

At this time, the County does not anticipate that these sites will have any effect on the redevelopment of the Brooklyn Village and Walton Plaza sites with regard to available capital or financing, as they are either inactive (in the case of Hal Marshall, which is not yet under any solicitation or disposition process), or are not part of a County process.

Does the County have traffic or mass transit studies for these sites and the surrounding areas that could be made available for reference?

The County does not have traffic or mass transit studies that would be of use in this area on record.

Has the City of Charlotte commissioned any plans for streetscape or street network improvements in the area that would dovetail with the future master developer's plans?

No. There have been preliminary conversations around connectivity across I-277, road diets, and pedestrian improvements, but there is not a formal plan.

Is there a City or County plan for development from Brevard to McDowell that would impact the edge along 3rd Street, moving toward development rather than open space?

No, there is not active development of a plan for this area now. Respondents should look to the Second Ward Master Plan and the Center City Vision 2020 Plan for guidance around the County and City's objectives for future development in that area.

Are there any current plans for connections between the Brooklyn Village site and the Government Center?

There are no current plans for these connections, nor are improvements between the sites and Government Center required by the County. The County will see any pedestrian improvements as a plus, but off-site improvements are not required by this process.

With regard to the right of way at Davidson, Stonewall, and I-277, will the County see a future sale as part of the Mandatory Referral process?

The County does not intend to assemble additional properties or areas of land adjacent to the parcels currently offered in this RFP.

What is the status of the Alexander Street extension and creation of a future flyover at I-277?

The City is interested in both of these improvements, but does not currently have funding allocated to these plans.

Must the Mayor's Trees along 3rd Street be preserved?

These trees do not necessarily need to be preserved on-site, though the County would want to understand any need to remove them and potential to relocate.

What is the status of any public storm sewer work at Marshall Park?

The County is not planning storm sewer work at Marshall Park, and this type of horizontal improvement should be included and specifically detailed in responses.

Other Questions

How will the evaluation committee and process be structured?

County staff, representing various departments within the County, representation from the Board of County Commissioners, and the HR&A consultant team, will all participate in the evaluation process. A subset of this group will oversee evaluation of RFP responses, while an expanded team will participate in Respondent interviews. Recommendations of this committee will be subject to approval by the County Manager.

Responses will be evaluated based on the criteria described and process described on pages 9 and 10 of the RFP document.