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Proposals to be Sought for Developing South Boulevard, Harlem Avenue Properties

Developers may soon be asked to present ideas for how best to use the nearly 50,000 square feet of publicly owned property that fronts on Harlem Avenue and South Boulevard directly across from the multimodal mass transit station.

A Request for Proposals (RFP), expected to be issued in early fall, will seek concepts for the two parcels, both of which are now surface parking lots. The RFP also will likely allow respondents to include the portion of Maple Avenue that runs between the two parcels, a step that could add another 7,500 square feet to any project by consolidating the properties into one site.

The Village Board directed staff to prepare an RFP. Development Services Director Michael Chen, whose department manages the Village's economic development efforts, said the RFP will give respondents wide latitude in use and design, but will encourage commercial uses such as retail on the first floor of any multi-level development. Replacing the existing 145 parking spaces, as well as adding new parking, also will be required.

"These particular parcels are zoned for business use, but do not specifically require retail," Chen said. "Developers should identify the site's convenience to the mass transit station and other nearby businesses, and are sure to see a wide range of possibilities. Potential developers will need to temper their proposals, including design and architecture, in recognition of the site's proximity to residential properties and the Ridgeland Historic District."

Chen said the RFP also will encourage developers to consider uses that augment, not duplicate, existing neighborhood business activities.

The Village is aware of several developers who want to receive this RFP. Public notice of the RFP also will be published and any interested party wishing a copy of the RFP can contact the Development Services Department at 708.358.5640.

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