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Redevelopment RFP issued for Colt Building, adjacent properties

A Request for Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of the Colt Building, 1121-1123 Lake St., and other adjacent Village-owned properties in the heart of downtown Oak Park, including on Westgate Street, was issued today. RFP responses are due by 5 p.m., Thurs., Feb. 15, at Village Hall, 123 Madison St.

In a change from past practices, notification of the RFP was distributed to known interested parties rather than physical copies. Developers are being asked to request an electronic copy of the RFP by e-mail and directed to the Village website www.oak-park.us to download all of the appendices and related documents. A request for a copy of the RFP also can be made through the website.

"Issuing an RFP of this size in the traditional way is a labor-intensive job," said Bob Clements, the Village's chief economic development official. "The sheer volume of relevant background materials would require us print and assemble a huge package and then send it to a list of developers who may or may not be seriously interested in responding.

"In addition to saving paper and postage, this distribution approach also will allow us to better track the level of serious interest in the project. We will know exactly who has a copy of the RFP."

Clements said the RFP is intentionally broad, allowing developers to propose any concept for the property, including restoration or adaptive re-use of existing buildings, demolition with the existing historic facades reattached to a new building or demolition with replacement by a structure using all new materials. However, proposals that reflect the community's pride in its architectural heritage through building finishes, design, massing and other site planning elements are encouraged, he said.

The Village is not requiring developers to match or copy any building or existing style in the downtown area, but the RFP does stipulate that design elements of the exterior finish should not appear to be a copy or variation on a similar building under construction in Oak Park or other communities. Respondents with new construction proposals are required to have facade treatments on Westgate that are complementary to the architectural style of the other nearby buildings.

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Sustainable building practices are also is addressed in the RFP, which states that “proposals incorporating sustainable design and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System elements will be looked upon more favorably than those that do not.”

All responses will be evaluated using specific criteria outlined in the RFP, including site and community fit; experience and financial wherewithal of the proposer; cost to the Village; and identification of specific retail tenants that would complement the existing mix of area shops.

Developers whose proposals are deemed to best meet the needs of the Village will be required to make public presentations, probably in early March, with a final selection by the Village Board possible within 60 days following the presentations.

For more information on the RFP or the process, call 708.358.5644 or e-mail devsvcs@oak-park.us.

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