

Revitalizing Historic Fort Wayne



Request for Information



**General Services
Department**

**Release date: February 10, 2020
Walkthrough/tour: February 24, 2020, 10:00 a.m.
Question Deadline: February 28, 2020, 1:00 p.m.
Submission Deadline: March 10, 2020, 1:00 p.m.**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Detroit General Services Department is seeking partner entities to help revitalize and activate Historic Fort Wayne through the rehabilitation and adaptive use of numerous vacant buildings located on the 78-acre riverfront park property. This Request for Information seeks responses from public or private entities with the capacity to rehabilitate and occupy or operate one or more presently vacant buildings at Historic Fort Wayne with uses compatible and appropriate in a historic park setting. This RFI is being issued as one component in a broader revitalization strategy for Historic Fort Wayne, building off of many years of significant community engagement including the State of Michigan’s 2015 Vision for the Future of Historic Fort Wayne.

A former riverfront military facility now owned by the City of Detroit, Historic Fort Wayne contains about 40 major structures including an 1842 star fort, a prehistoric Native American burial mound, and numerous vacant buildings that formerly served residential, office, and storage functions. Located at 6325 West Jefferson Avenue, Historic Fort Wayne sits in the city’s Delray neighborhood in what will soon be a prominent, high-visibility location, adjacent to the future site of the Gordie Howe International Bridge entrance plaza.

The objectives of this RFI are:

- Identify and initiate dialogue with interested public or private partner entities—including nonprofit or for-profit organizations, governmental or quasi-governmental agencies, educational institutions, and individuals—with an interest and the capacity to undertake a feasible and sustainable reuse for buildings at Historic Fort Wayne.
- Provide an opportunity for evaluation and vetting of the types of uses that may or may not be appropriate and compatible in a historic park setting.

- Allow prospective partners or developers to identify questions, obstacles, challenges, or other key issues that the City of Detroit must resolve in order to facilitate revitalization of the site's historic assets.

Ideal responses will indicate an interest in:

- Financing and undertaking the historically appropriate rehabilitation of a selected building or buildings (see <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/historic-fort-wayne/historic-fort-wayne-request-information>: **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**).
- Drawing increased visitation, as well as public awareness and appreciation, to Historic Fort Wayne, a dynamic and evolving Detroit gateway destination.
- Enhancing the visitor experience at Historic Fort Wayne and encouraging continued public access and enjoyment of the site by City of Detroit residents and visitors.
- Achieving financial stability by generating revenue or other resources needed to maintain subject the subject building (or buildings) and grounds.

The City of Detroit welcomes inquiries regarding reuse of any individual vacant building (described in more detail in **Section III: Property Description**, below), a group of buildings, or a comprehensive plan for the entire site. This Request For Information (RFI) is for information only and may be the first of a two phase process. Should the City decide to proceed with a proposal based upon the responses to this RFI, it would be through the issuance of a formal Request for Qualifications (RFQ). However, no proposal submitted as part of this RFI will be binding in any way.

Responses to this RFI are expected to inform the City of Detroit's efforts to facilitate new partnerships, recreational and historical programming, and adaptive uses at Historic Fort Wayne.

Historic Fort Wayne Statement of Purpose

Historic Fort Wayne will improve the equity of recreational and cultural opportunities for residents of Southwest Detroit and the region while exemplifying stewardship of the site's outstanding historic, cultural, and natural resources for the benefit of future generations.

II. AREA OVERVIEW

Historic Fort Wayne is situated upon a riverfront location along West Jefferson Avenue in a mixed industrial and residential area in the city's Delray neighborhood.

Proximity to the Gordie Howe International Bridge

The area surrounding Historic Fort Wayne promises to be dramatically altered by the construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge, a development which will provide both

challenges and opportunities regarding access to Historic Fort Wayne. The Detroit-Windsor trade corridor is presently the busiest crossing between the two nations; the new bridge will connect Detroit and Windsor by directly linking I-75 with Highway 401 in the Canadian province of Ontario.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge is projected to carry an estimated traffic of 12,800 passenger cars and 13,500 commercial vehicles on a typical weekday.¹ Local motor vehicle access to and from the Gordie Howe International Bridge will be on Campbell Street, approximately one quarter-mile from Historic Fort Wayne; pedestrian and bicycle access will be on Jefferson Avenue, immediately across from the entrance to Historic Fort Wayne.

Construction began in late 2018, with completion expected in 2024 (for more information, see the project website at www.gordiehoweinternationalbridge.com).

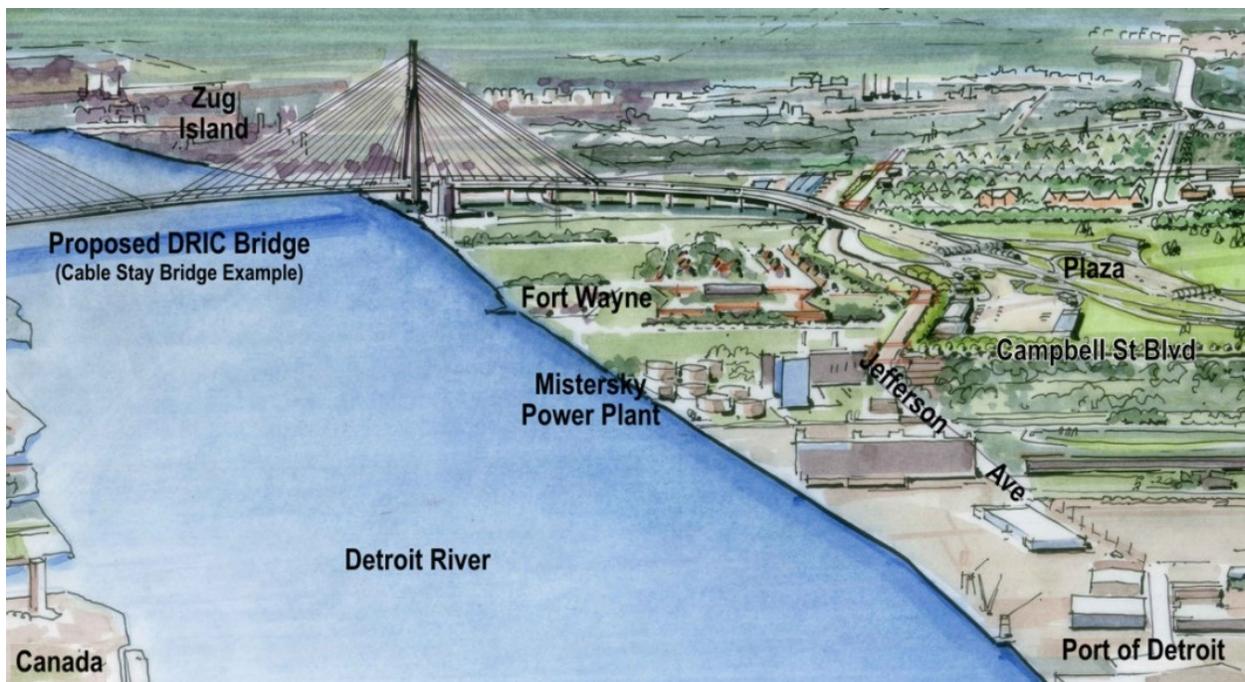


Fig. 1: Conception of completed Gordie Howe International Bridge. Image: Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority

Delray Neighborhood

Historic Fort Wayne is a landmark of the city’s Delray neighborhood, also in a state of transition due to the construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge. The City of Detroit is presently in the midst of a comprehensive planning effort, the Delray Comprehensive Neighborhood Framework and Economic Development Plan, the goal of which is to create in the Delray neighborhood “a highly industrialized distribution and logistics hub for the Great Lakes region, while maintaining the existing residential housing stock, improving the quality of life for local residents, and expanding opportunities for nearby employment.” For a timeline and more

¹ http://www.partnershipborderstudy.com/reports_us.asp.

information on the Delray plan, please see <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/planning-and-development-department/central-design-region/delray>.



Fig. 2: Location of Historic Fort Wayne (green boundary) within Delray study area (black boundary). Image: City of Detroit Planning and Development Department.

Adjacent Land Uses

Immediate neighbors to Historic Fort Wayne, in addition to the forthcoming Gordie Howe International Bridge crossing and plaza, also provide opportunities. The Delray Park Detroit River Fishing Access Site, bordering Historic Fort Wayne to the southwest (the two sites are presently separated by a fence), is owned by DTE Energy and operated under an agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The Fishing Access Site offers a boat launch and fishing area; possible integration of this amenity with Historic Fort Wayne would generate additional traffic and recreational opportunity. The United States Army Corps of Engineers Detroit District office and boat yard sits along the riverfront to the east and is accessed by easement through Historic Fort Wayne. To the northeast, privately owned expanses of open land (the Detroit Bulk Storage facility on the site of the former Revere Copper and Brass plant) offer potential opportunity for further ancillary development in support of uses at Historic Fort Wayne.

III. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The City of Detroit acquired Historic Fort Wayne in three phases in 1949, 1971, and 1976,

through two public benefit conveyance programs for surplus federal property administered by the National Park Service. Historic Fort Wayne was operated for a time as the Fort Wayne Military Museum and is now managed by the City of Detroit General Services Department, Parks and Recreation Division. A former United States military reservation, Historic Fort Wayne comprises a rich and historically significant built environment. The site features, in addition to its namesake masonry star fort (the only such structure remaining in the Midwest), almost 40 historic structures of varying scales, time periods, and condition, as well as open spaces including a quarter-mile of riverfront access and a historic “parade ground” area now used as athletic fields. A Native American burial mound, dating from around 750–1150, is part of the property and is fenced off from public access.

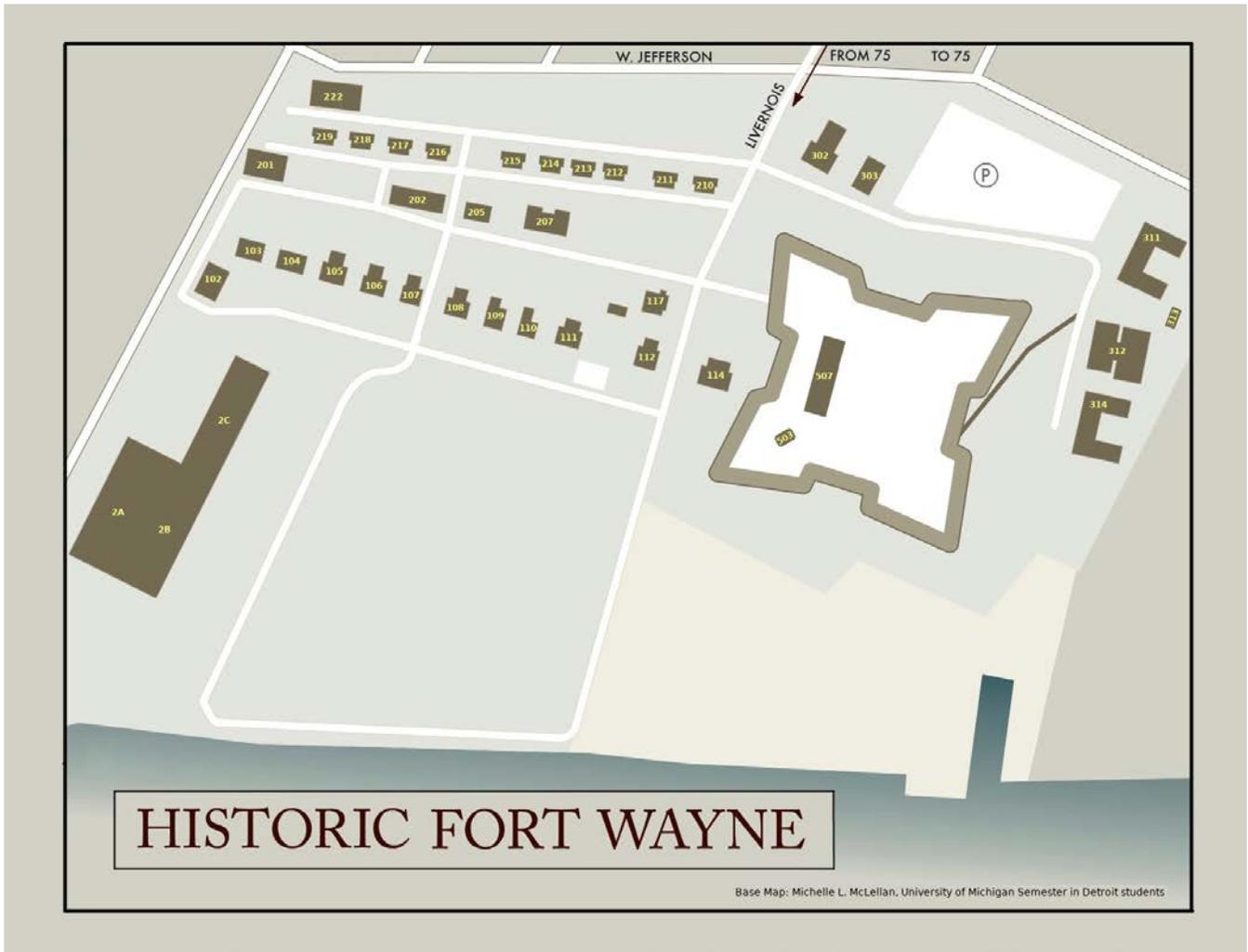


Fig. 3: Property map with building numbers in yellow. Image: University of Michigan, City of Detroit General Services Department.

Buildings

Structures contemplated by this RFI range in size from the two-story, formerly residential, duplexes known as Officers Row and NCO (Noncommissioned Officers) Row, along with smaller utility and storage buildings and a historic theater, to larger barracks buildings and the former Post Headquarters.

Vacant buildings range in condition from “good” to “threatened,” according to conditions assessments made by Hamilton Anderson and HR&A Advisors in 2015. This range reflects an associated level of effort of necessary rehabilitation; all buildings will require a substantial level of investment (open spaces including the historic parade ground are maintained in good condition and will be the subject of further investment by the City of Detroit, continuing the function of Historic Fort Wayne as open recreational space).

A profile of each building, including interior and exterior photos and site plans (where available), a conditions assessment prepared by SmithGroup in 2003, as well as rough cost estimates for rehabilitation, are included on the project website at www.detroitmi.gov/historicfortwayne/RFI.

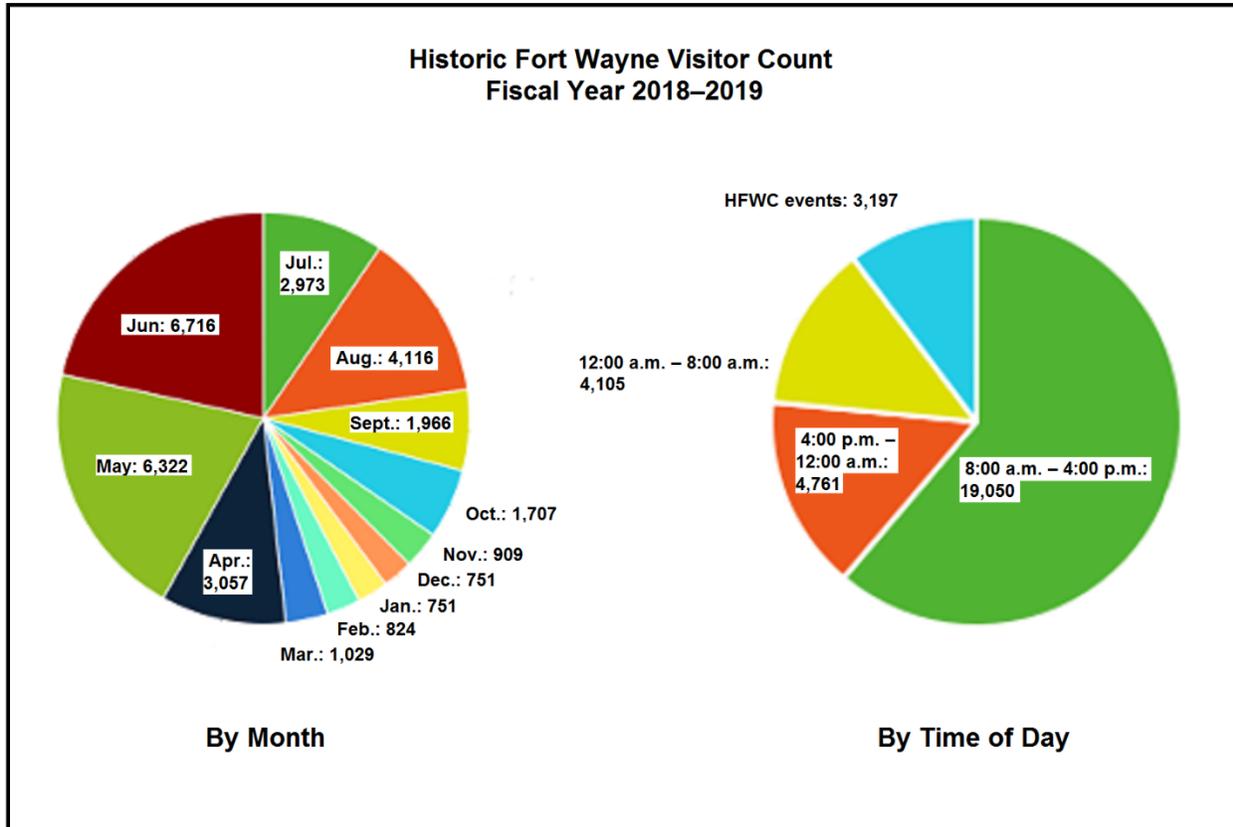
Please note that although a majority of buildings on the site are vacant, a smaller number remain in active use by the city’s Parks and Recreation Division or are subject to ongoing license agreements with existing third party partners including the Detroit Historical Society and the Historic Fort Wayne Coalition. The General Services Department does not intend to discontinue uses that already exist on the Historic Fort Wayne property. Proposals for any occupied building may only be considered as part of a comprehensive plan for a larger group of buildings or for the entirety of Historic Fort Wayne. Such a proposal is strongly encouraged to include a strategy for accommodating the continuation of any existing uses (see the project website for more information on occupied buildings and uses).

Public Access and Visitation

By the end of 2020, the General Services Department intends to increase the Historic Fort Wayne hours of operation to facilitate regular public visitation as a city park.

At present, access to the site by the public is restricted to organized events (weekend tours, historical events, organized sports, weddings, meetings, etc.) and monitored by 24-hour security, for safety reasons and to prevent vandalism. As the completion of the Gordie Howe International Bridge elevates Historic Fort Wayne—already a destination in its own right—to serve as a gateway to Detroit and the region, the General Services Department will facilitate greater access to the property, exploring steps to open the site on a regular or daily basis and broaden its appeal to Detroit residents and regional visitors with enhanced opportunities for active and passive recreation and historical interpretation. This may include increased City of Detroit investment at Historic Fort Wayne or partnership with other governmental agencies or private or philanthropic entities.

In the fiscal year 2018-2019, Historic Fort Wayne saw 31,113 visitors.



Parking and Non-motorized Access

Parking needs are served primarily by a 420-space Visitors Parking Lot at the northern end of the site, with another 138 spaces available on-street at convenient locations throughout Historic Fort Wayne. Additional off-street parking spaces are proposed throughout the site in order to serve new uses and programming; however, new parking may be limited by a desire to maintain the historic character of the site as well as to preserve open space (See <https://detroitmi.gov/historicfortwayne> : **Historic Fort Wayne Parking Plan**).

Historic Fort Wayne is presently served by the Detroit Department of Transportation’s Route 30 (Livernois) bus route. Routes will be expanded in the coming years as the completed Gordie Howe International Bridge draws increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the area. Upon completion of the bridge, it is anticipated that up to three routes will terminate in close proximity to the entrance to Historic Fort Wayne.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge will include dedicated pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, allowing non-motorized users to arrive from Canada, with a point of entry along West Jefferson Ave. across from Historic Fort Wayne’s main entrance.

Historic Fort Wayne will also feature a convenient connection to the Joe Louis Greenway, a planned biking and walking trail that will extend from the Detroit Riverfront to Highland Park,

Dearborn, and Hamtramck (for a map and more information, please see <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/general-services-department/joe-louis-greenway>).

IV. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Revitalization efforts at Historic Fort Wayne are grounded in the 2003 *Historic Fort Wayne Master Plan*, a 2015 community visioning workshop sponsored by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and a 2019 community and stakeholder outreach effort conducted by the General Services Department. In general, these planning processes envision Historic Fort Wayne as a multifaceted, multi-use attraction, simultaneously serving as a destination for outdoor recreation—both for neighborhood residents as well as those from elsewhere in Detroit and the surrounding area—and as a historic interpretive site enlivened by educational and operational partnerships with other institutions.

The 2003 plan first introduced the strategy of a public-private partnership, with a governmental entity responsible for programming and operations at the site; ancillary buildings would be leased to compatible public or private (commercial or nonprofit) entities to generate revenue for rehabilitation. Community and stakeholder engagement conducted in 2015 and 2019 identified a general consensus of support for a mix of adaptive uses at Historic Fort Wayne, provided that uses identified will be compatible in a historic park setting and play a supportive role to continued historical and recreational use of the property (See **our website for information** <https://detroitmi.gov/historicfortwayne> **Historic Fort Wayne Master Plan (2003)** and See **our website for 2015 community visioning workshop maps**; information collected during the 2019 outreach opportunities is provided on the main Historic Fort Wayne page.

Historic Preservation Covenant

The General Services Department is working to remove deed restrictions within the year from the Federal Lands to Parks Program and Historic Surplus Property Program; future development will instead be governed by a historic preservation covenant mandating adherence to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Historic preservation will be a guiding principle; however, some degree of alteration (including building additions, partial demolition, interior alterations, landscaping, and lighting) may be appropriate to adapt a building to its proposed new use. Both a draft covenant as well as the Standards are included as an appendix to the RFI as **Appendix E: Draft Historic Preservation Covenant** and **Appendix F: Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation**, respectively.

Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- All properties subject to this RFI are located within the Fort Wayne Historic District, established by City of Detroit Ordinance No. 25-16. All work affecting the exterior appearance of a resource within the district, including work that would not otherwise require a permit such as paint colors and landscaping, must be approved by the City of Detroit Historic District Commission as described in the Michigan Local Historic District Act (PA 169 of 1970) and Chapter 25 of the City Code.

- Historic Fort Wayne is zoned R1: Single-family Residential District. The General Services Department has proposed a rezoning to PD: Planned Development District, which would allow a broad range of business, residential, and some industrial uses, to facilitate the revitalization of Historic Fort Wayne. For this reason, respondents may propose any otherwise legal use of the property, regardless of current zoning classification. We anticipate that the proposed zoning change will be presented to the Detroit City Council for consideration by mid-2020.
- For proposals that include a residential use, at least 20% of the units, whether for rent or for sale, must be affordable to those households earning up to 80% of the area median income (AMI). The unit mix and sizes should be supported by market conditions.

V. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In general, it is envisioned that selected partners will be responsible for a minimum rent based on Fair Market Value as determined by the City of Detroit on a building-by-building basis. It is expected that the Fair Market Value rent will be offset by the level of tenant investment required, which may result in a nominal rental rate. Further, the City of Detroit may consider a discounted rent for partner entities that offer a direct and quantifiable service (such as food and beverage service, a gift shop, recreational equipment rental, etc.) to Historic Fort Wayne visitors, as determined during lease negotiations.

Fort Wayne is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and its buildings may be eligible for the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

Any selected developer will be responsible for all infrastructure costs associated with the project, including but not limited to electrical, gas, street, water, and sewerage. A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment, prepared in 2001, should be considered outdated, but is provided as an appendix to this RFI for baseline purposes. See **our website for information** <https://detroitmi.gov/historicfortwayne>

VI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

Response Format

Written responses should address the items below in a clear and concise fashion using a narrative format. Site plans or other renderings are not required at this time. Submissions must include a complete electronic copy in an 8.5x11 PDF format as an attachment.

- Compelling Narrative of Your Concept
Please identify the building, buildings, or area in which you are interested; discuss your vision for adaptive use and highlight how it conforms to the objectives of this RFI. Describe any building alterations or site improvements that will be required to facilitate your proposed use. If applicable, provide a market overview and market needs assessment.

- Organizational and Financial Capacity
Provide an estimated budget and evidence of financial capacity to successfully complete the project. Describe any capital funds, letters of credit, proposed volunteer labor, in-kind donations, or other sources of support, including any grants or city, state, or federal financial incentives to be sought in conjunction with the project. Identify any anticipated revenue streams. Describe your qualifications and any relevant experience with rehabilitation or adaptive use projects or a similar type and scale, especially those with historical interpretation or outdoor recreation components.

Smaller organizations, including volunteer organizations, are encouraged to respond to this RFI. In some cases, such entities may wish to partner with higher-capacity organizations in order to create a more competitive proposal.

- Value-added Benefits
Please describe any additional forms of value or consideration generated by your proposal, other than financial, and how they are of benefit to the property, the local community, or the City of Detroit. What direct or indirect benefits will you provide that will improve the Historic Fort Wayne experience for City of Detroit residents and visitors? Will your proposed use create synergy with other (existing or proposed) on-site management entities or partners?
- Additional Information
If desired, please identify any additional information you seek, describe any obstacles you see to implementing your proposed use or to a successful revitalization of the property in general, or provide any suggestions regarding technical assistance the City of Detroit could provide to facilitate successful partnerships at Historic Fort Wayne.

Submission of Responses

All responses must be received by 1:00 p.m. on March 10, 2020, via Oracle www.detroitmi.gov/supplier open bids.

Once received, submitted responses may be made publicly available so that they can serve as a shared resource for the City of Detroit and for the benefit of potential respondents.

Questions and Site Visit

Any questions regarding this RFI may be submitted by February 28, 2020, at 1:00 p.m., via Oracle www.detroitmi.gov/supplier

Answers to questions will be posted on the Oracle website.

Entities interested in responding to this RFI may attend a walkthrough to be held at Historic Fort Wayne on February 24, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. This session will provide an opportunity to view the

property and several building interiors. A presentation will be made by City of Detroit staff highlighting the site's planning history and the community vision for the area. Although the site visit is not required, interested parties are strongly encouraged to attend. An RSVP is appreciated but not required; please contact Toni Stewart-Limmitt at limmittl@detroitmi.gov.

VII. REVIEW PROCESS

Submissions will be evaluated by a selection committee consisting of City of Detroit staff. The General Services Department may, at its option, present eligible RFI responses at a public meeting prior to making any selection.

Submissions will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- Compatibility of the proposed use with values of historic preservation, interpretation, and outdoor recreation as expressed in the Historic Fort Wayne Statement of Purpose
- Compatibility of the proposed use with community vision as expressed in 2015 and 2019 stakeholder engagement efforts
- Ability of the proposed use to increase visitation or enhance the visitor experience at Historic Fort Wayne
- Financial and organizational capacity of the responding entity to undertake a historically appropriate rehabilitation of the selected building or buildings
- Ability of the proposed use to attain financial sustainability

VIII. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The City of Detroit reserves the right to reject any and all responses or to engage in further discussion with any or all respondents as it deems is in the best interests of the City.

The City of Detroit reserves and may exercise the right to request one or more of the respondents to provide additional material, clarification, confirmation, or modification of any information in the submission, and can supplement, amend, substitute, cancel, or otherwise modify this Request for Information at any time prior to the selection of one or more developers.

In the event that the process outlined in this document does not result in the execution of a definitive selection, the City of Detroit, at its sole option, may choose to initiate negotiations with any other qualified developer, open the an RFI process, or pursue any other avenues for the property deemed appropriate by the City of Detroit.

The City of Detroit reserves the right, in its sole discretion, without liability, to use any or all of the RFI responses in its planning efforts and to develop and operate the property, in whole or in part, outside of the RFI process. The City reserves the right to retain all the materials and information, and the ideas and suggestions therein, submitted in response to this RFI. All such material, information, ideas, and suggestions will become the property of the City.

The City of Detroit is issuing this RFI solely for information and planning purposes, and this RFI does not constitute a solicitation. A response to this notice is not an offer and cannot be accepted by the City to form a binding contract.

Respondents are hereby notified that the City has not fully investigated the environmental condition of the Historic Fort Wayne site. Various Federal, State, or other City agencies may have information regarding the environmental condition of the site. Each respondent is encouraged to conduct its own due diligence regarding the environmental condition of the site. The City of Detroit makes absolutely no warranty or representation regarding the environmental condition of any of the Historic Fort Wayne site discussed within this RFI.

IX. APPENDICES

A site map and building-by-building profile (photos, description, and conditions assessment, etc.) is available at the project website, <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/historic-fort-wayne/historic-fort-wayne-request-information>.

- Historic Fort Wayne Parking Plan
- Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment
- *Historic Fort Wayne Master Plan* (2003)
- 2015 community visioning workshop maps
- Draft Historic Preservation Covenant
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation