

## **REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: Martinsburg Market House Redevelopment & Reuse Partnership**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

The City of Martinsburg (“City”) seeks proposals from parties interested in partnering on the redevelopment and reuse of the City’s historic Market House building. The historic structure requires significant renovation to meet current codes for building systems and accessibility. The City seeks a partner to renovate and bring productive use to the property, and welcomes proposals in which payback for all or part of upfront construction costs would be paid back over time through the partner’s use, activation, or lease of the property at a reduced or nominal rate.

The City will consider proposals from any entity capable of lawfully partnering in the furtherance of these goals. Proposals should be written in plain language and explain the proponent’s intended approach, describe the resulting improvements to the Market House facility, detail any costs or cooperation required of the City, and address all other items as described in Part E.

The City strongly prefers to retain ownership or reversionary interest in the historic property, but will consider alternatives expressed by respondents. Ultimately, the Martinsburg City Council seeks to select a single respondent for exclusive negotiations for public-private partnership.

### **B. MARTINSBURG MARKET HOUSE PROPERTY**

The Martinsburg Market House is located at the corner of North Queen and West Burke Streets in the downtown development district, and is zoned accordingly. Originally constructed in 1847, the building originally included a city-operated public market on the ground floor. The second floor included spaces to serve the needs of the Society of Free Masons and the Odd Fellows, paid for at each’s expense. Each floor is approximately 4600 ft<sup>2</sup>. Through the years, ownership and usage have varied and included office space for the Chamber of Commerce, Berkeley County Development Authority, etc.

Today, the majority of the ground floor space is leased to private tenants. The portion fronting Queen Street is leased on month-to-month terms by local fast-casual restaurant Habanero’s. A portion of the building fronting W. Burke Street is leased on month-to-month terms by The Design Center. Unleased portions of the ground floor are used for staging and storage of decorative materials (e.g. downtown Christmas lights, community banners, market tables, etc.) by Main Street Martinsburg under informal agreement or remain vacant.

The second floor of the structure is not currently used except for occasional storage. The current configuration of the second floor is as an office suite suitable for a small business or agency plus two large, open-format meeting rooms/ballrooms that originally served the private “Societies” (Free Masons and Odd Fellows) that participated in the original development of the building. Small kitchen and bathroom areas exist upstairs, but are not currently usable.

Unleased portions of the building have not been improved to keep pace with building codes or accessibility requirements, and occasional leaks in the roof have damaged upper floors before being patched.

The Market House is zoned within the Downtown district, which generally allows mixed-use development as appropriate for the city’s densest corridor, as detailed in the City’s zoning ordinance.

The property is itself historic and sits within a historic district. For additional detail on the building, please see the “Market House Building Evaluation” Prepared by Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.; Omni Associates—Architects, Inc.; and Alleghany Design Services. This document provides the most updated technical evaluation of the Market House building and was procured by the City to support redevelopment planning for the building.

#### C. CITY CONTEXT

Martinsburg is the main city and “downtown” of West Virginia’s fast-growing Eastern Panhandle. An incorporated city of approximately 18,000 residents and the county seat of Berkeley County, the City is approximately 70 miles from Washington, DC and connected to the nation’s capital by commuter, passenger, and freight rail service. It is also served by three exits of Interstate 81.

Martinsburg is experiencing a resurgence in population due to both intrinsic growth in the Eastern Panhandle and migration from nearby metropolitan areas. Economic growth is driven by the City’s affordable proximity to major metropolitan areas, and corporate investments by entities such as Proctor & Gamble, Quad Graphics, Clorox, and other major manufacturing, service, and distribution-based employers.

Continued revitalization of the City’s historic, downtown core is a key component of the City’s economic and community development plan. Revitalization efforts are underway in downtown Martinsburg, with city-led and private sector efforts to support the attraction and retention of businesses and live-work opportunities in downtown buildings; return historic industrial and brownfield sites to productive use; support improvements to city housing and building stock; and revitalize key civic structure and public spaces.

Improving and reactivating the Market House is an important part of this broader strategy to revitalize and reinvigorate downtown Martinsburg as the Eastern Panhandle’s preferred location in which to live, work, dine, shop, and invest.

#### D. FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES CONTEXT

The Market House is a historic structure located within an area targeted for multiple geographically-based incentive programs. Respondents may consider and propose the use of all available tax credits and incentives, including state and federal historic tax credits, New Market tax credits, state and federal opportunity zone treatment, local downtown business and new business credits, and other relevant financial incentives. The City will consider partnership arrangements with the respondent as necessary to meet eligibility requirements for municipally-focused opportunities.

The City of Martinsburg will consider any form of usage agreement, lease, or public-private partnership that allows allow the respondent to make the best use of the property and pursue financing to support the property’s redevelopment and use.

#### E. PROPOSAL STRUCTURE & CONTENT

The City’s selection of a partner (if any) shall be based on the City’s evaluation of the respondent team’s qualifications and experience, quality and sustainability of the proposed project, quality and comprehensiveness of the financial plan, the extent of the benefit to the Martinsburg community and/or the City, and the level of support requested of the City.

Proposals should be no longer than 10 pages (excluding financials and appendices) and should include the following:

**Project Concept**

Briefly articulate your project’s concept. What will the Martinsburg Market House become? In what timeframe? If you propose to sublease the property, are tenants identified or speculative? Please be as clear as possible to allow the City to understand the proposed future use of the Market House.

**Operations Plan**

Please describe your plan to assess, redevelop, and reactivate the Martinsburg Market House as a structure that meets or exceeds all relevant codes and requirements for safe and lawful operation, and results in a viable end use that contributes to the downtown Martinsburg economy and/or community.

Please detail the steps you plan to take; the additional partners, stakeholders, or entities that will be needed to complete this plan; and the methods you will undertake to fully realize your vision for the Market House.

If you propose to support existing tenant relocation in any fashion, please detail this support in this section. The City values its existing small businesses and welcomes any efforts to mitigate displacement of tenant business or disruption of downtown business activity.

Use this section to explain **how** your firm plans to use its skills, expertise, and partnerships to reliably and efficiently deliver your Project Concept if selected to partner on the Martinsburg Market House Redevelopment & Reuse.

**Financial Plan**

Please use this section to explain how your firm plans to fund the proposed project and how operating costs and revenues will be managed to ensure the long-term viability of the Market House as a contributing part of Martinsburg’s downtown economy.

Please include a preliminary budget and/or pro forma. You may include a basic cashflow analysis including: (a) capital expenses associated with the project; (b) operational expenses associated with the project; (c) proposed revenue/funding resources, including the respondent’s investment, other funds committed or raised, grants or incentives relied upon, and any in-kind or other contributions.

**Project Timeline**

Please provide an estimated timeline for the project, including all major phases of work, including estimated timing for Use & Occupancy of the Martinsburg Market House and your proposed operation/reuse period.

**City Contribution**

Please detail the amount(s) and type(s) of support you seek from the City, if any, and how it would benefit your project. The City will consider all lawful and appropriate requests, including the right to use, change, and profit from the Market House facility over time.

Please ensure that any anticipated City Contribution is included within the Financial Plan, as well as detailed here.

**Community Benefit**

Please explain how your proposal would benefit the City of Martinsburg and its residents. Benefits may include such items as: increased in local tax revenue; new employment; enhanced community engagement; activation of downtown corridor; revitalization or repurposing of underutilized real estate; or other benefits not listed here.

**Company & Team Experience**

Please provide a description of the partner entity’s experience in redevelopment, reuse, construction, and operation of historic buildings. Please highlight any experience locally, regionally, or in the State of West Virginia.

Please provide a description of key team members and their experience relevant to executing the proposal. Include all parties responsible for key roles in the assessment, financing, planning, historic preservation, redevelopment, and reuse of the Martinsburg Market House.

F. TIMETABLE

EVENT	DATE
RFEI Issuance Date	February 14, 2022
Pre-Proposal Meeting & Site Tour	February 24, 2022
Deadline for Questions/Requests for Clarification	March 14, 2022
Last Day to Issue Addenda before Submission Deadline	March 18, 2022
Submission Deadline	March 25, 2022
Council Review and Selection of Preferred Partner	Spring 2022

G. QUESTIONS & ADDENDA, RESPONSE & SELECTION PROCESS

Respondents may submit requests for clarification by email to the RFEI Contact listed below via electronic mail. Requests for clarification should include the respondent’s name, address, telephone number, and email address. Where a question relates to a specific portion of the RFEI, reference should be made to the appropriate page number and section. Requests for clarification may be submitted until 5pm on March 14, 2022. Responses shall be provided as Addenda by 5pm March 18 via <https://www.cityofmartinsburg.org/business/bid-opportunities/market-house-rfei>.

An optional pre-proposal meeting and brief walkthrough of the unleased portions of the property will be held at 10am on February 24, 2022. The meeting location is the Council Chamber of Martinsburg City Hall at 232 N. Queen Street in Martinsburg. Note that at the time of this writing, masks are required for entry to the building. For those unable to attend, a full engineering and architectural assessment of the Market House property is also provided.

Proposals shall be received by 5pm on March 25, 2022 in the format described in Section H.

All received proposals will be summarized by City staff. Each received proposal and summary sheet shall be shared with Mayor and Council for review and discussion during Executive Session. Respondents

whose proposals are selected for further consideration, if any, shall be scheduled to present their proposals at a Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for this purpose. Selection of a respondent as Preferred Partner, if any, for exclusive negotiations with the City shall be made at a subsequent Council Meeting following the Committee of the Whole presentation.

#### H. SUBMISSION

Proposals must be submitted either via electronic mail to the email address below, or in paper form with ten (10) copies delivered to the physical address below. Electronic submissions should be in Word or PDF format. Physical copies should be delivered in a sealed envelope with the respondent's name and address clearly marked on the outside and labelled "Martinsburg Market House RFEI." All proposals must be received by 5pm March 25, 2022.

Physical Mail Contact: City of Martinsburg  
Attn: Shane Farthing  
232 North Queen Street  
P.O. Box 828  
Martinsburg, WV 25402

Electronic Contact: [sfarthing@cityofmartinsburg.org](mailto:sfarthing@cityofmartinsburg.org)

#### I. TERMS & LIMITATIONS

1. The City and its officers, agents, and employees make no representation or warranty and assume no responsibility for the accuracy of the information set forth in this RFEI. All information contained in this RFEI is for the sole purpose of indicating the general scope of the opportunity.
2. A respondent submitting a proposal may be rejected if the respondent or a respondent-affiliated business entity is determined, in the City's sole discretion, to be within a category of persons or entities with whom/which the City will not generally do business due to financial misconduct or violation; default or breach of any agreement or obligation with the City—including default on any payment or taxes. Respondents and all officers and principals thereof may be required to complete a background questionnaire and be subject to investigation on these matters by the City.
3. The City shall not be obligated to pay any costs to assist the respondent or the project at any time unless expressly agreed in writing.
4. The City shall be the sole judge of each response's conformance with the requirements of this RFEI and of the merits of the individual qualifications and proposals. The City reserves the right to waive any conditions or modify any provision. This Request is not intended as a formal offer.
5. Although discussions may be conducted with respondents submitting acceptable Proposals to this RFEI, the City reserves the right to select a Preferred Partner to

proceed to an Agreement on the basis of initial Proposals received pursuant to this RFEI. Therefore, each respondent's initial Proposal should contain its best terms.

6. Subject to all applicable laws, respondents and their representatives and agents shall treat their proposals and all information supplied to the City in connection with this RFEI as confidential, and shall not discuss, publish, divulge, disclose, or allow to be disclosed to any other respondent, person, firm, or entity.