

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

For

NORTH AVE GATEWAY REDEVELOPMENT AREA

IN THE

TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD, UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

ISSUED BY: TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD, UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

**8 SPRINGFIELD AVENUE
CRANFORD, NEW JERSEY**

Issue Date: February 19, 2021

Submission Due Date: April 6, 2021



1. Seeking Expressions of Interest for Redevelopment Opportunity:

The Township of Cranford, Union County, New Jersey (the "Township") is requesting that qualified developers or development teams ("Respondents") respond to this Request for Expression of Interest ("RFEI") for the redevelopment of the North Ave Gateway redevelopment area. The proposed redevelopment area has been designated, by the Township Committee ("Township Committee") of the Township, as a Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment pursuant to the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. (the "Redevelopment Law").

By Resolution No. 2020-298, adopted on September 8, 2020, the Township Committee designated the area in the Township consisting of Block 193, Lots 6.01, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14 (collectively, the "Redevelopment Area"), as a Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment.

The Township is seeking expressions of interest for the redevelopment of the Redevelopment Area consistent with the Township's objectives in the Township Master Plan, Downtown Vision Plan, and Affordable Housing commitments of the Township.

The Redevelopment Area consists of six (6) properties with an approximate total of 85,959 square feet, situated on a prominent corner in downtown Cranford with frontage along North Union Avenue, Springfield Avenue and North Avenue.

Respondents should demonstrate a broad background of real estate, development and financing experience, including successful past experience with private/public development ventures along commercial corridors and inclusionary affordable housing.

The Township reserves the right, if it is deemed to be in the public interest, to enter directly into negotiations with one or more Respondents in order to advance the redevelopment process through the adoption of a redevelopment plan.

2. Redevelopment Area:

A. Township of Cranford

The Redevelopment Area is located in the Township of Cranford, Union County, New Jersey. Cranford is home to approximately 24,000 residents who enjoy its many parks, recreational facilities, shopping areas and outstanding schools. Strategically located in the heart of Union County, the Township is served by the NJ Transit bus and Raritan Valley train line making it desirable for outbound and inbound commuters.

Established in 1871, Cranford is 4.8 square miles of wonderful neighborhoods and historic homes along the Rahway River, some dating back to the late 1800s. Township residents and visitors, young and old, can enjoy the many programs offered at the Community Center, Public Library, parks, tennis courts, indoor and outdoor pools or canoeing on the river. These are just some of the reasons Cranford is routinely rated in the Top 50 Best Places to Live in NJ and to raise a family.

Cranford Public Schools, a K-12 program, offer innovative programs and consistently receive high rankings both nationally and at the State. The town is also home to Union County College main campus.

The Township also has a strong commercial base. Downtown Cranford is well known for its many restaurants, unique specialty shops and has seen tremendous investment and growth in recent years with several Transit-Oriented Development projects. Smaller neighborhood shopping areas, like Centennial Village, are also revitalized with new restaurants and businesses. The Cranford Business Park, with easy access to the Garden State Parkway, major roads and Newark Airport, is home to several well-known national corporations.

However, Cranford's best asset is its residents who take great pride in the town's history and exemplify volunteerism and community spirit in the many civic organizations, clubs and committees.

B. Downtown Cranford

For the past two years, Cranford's central business district has been voted the Best Downtown in New Jersey by the readers of NJ.com/NJ Advance Media. The Redevelopment Area, centrally located within Downtown Cranford, is within Cranford's designated Special

- Lot 10 fronts on Springfield Avenue and contains a one-way driveway and accompanying parking lot, held in common ownership with Lot 13.
- Lot 11 is the site of the Cranford Animal Hospital fronting on Springfield Avenue.
- Lot 12 contains a Delta Gas Station at the corner of Springfield Avenue and North Avenue East.
- Lot 13, which fronts on North Avenue East, contains a two-story building that contains four retail businesses on the ground floor—Cranford Hair Care, Island Tans, Ramen, and Hunan Wok. Upstairs contains at least one residential apartment unit.
- Lot 14 contains a one-story vacant structure.



Lot	Area	Address	Owner	Land Value	Improvement Value
6.01	1.38 acres	7 Springfield Ave.	Township of Cranford	\$552,000	\$485,000
10	3,082 sq. ft.	Springfield Ave.	Tuck Sing Continental Inc	\$43,700	\$2,300
11	1,143 sq. ft.	1 Springfield Ave.	Cranford Pet Vet LLC	\$34,700	\$76,200
12	7,482 sq. ft.	45 North Ave. E	Springfield Avenue Bp LLC	\$219,100	\$53,000
13	6,607 sq. ft.	39-43 North Ave. E	Tuck Sing Continental Inc	\$175,800	\$218,400
14	7,532 sq. ft.	27 North Ave E	Township of Cranford	\$110,000	\$216,100
Total	85,958.80 sq. ft.			\$1,135,300	\$1,051,000

3. Redevelopment Vision and Considerations

A successful concept plan for redevelopment will integrate the redevelopment vision of the Township. The award-winning downtown continues to thrive as new development embraces the visions of the Township and the planning goals created with the input of the residents, businesses, property owners and stakeholders. The Township embraces Smart Growth principles throughout all planning documents.

A. Transit Village – Transit Oriented Development

The Township has also been designated as a Transit Village by the New Jersey Department of Transportation since 2003. To date, only 33 Transit Villages have been designated statewide.

To achieve this designation, a community must meet certain eligibility criteria, demonstrating a willingness to grow in the area located within a half mile of the transit station by adopting development regulations that promote Transit Oriented Development (“TOD”), identifying bicycle and pedestrian improvements to help support transit, and identifying placemaking efforts near the station (i.e. community events) that are designed to further draw people to the area.

These include, but are not limited to, (building) design, and parking guidelines: providing transportation infrastructure that safely and conveniently accommodates bicycles and pedestrians, limits driveway curb cuts on primary pedestrian routes through the creation of shared alleyways on side streets, buildings located and designed in direct relationship to the street and pedestrian realm in order to maintain a continuous building street wall and safe and pleasant pedestrian experience, avoiding drive-through establishments, providing open space that is easily accessible, obscuring the visibility of parking structures abutting streets and walkways through the provision of ground floor retail/office uses and other design treatments, discouraging off-street parking areas located in front of a building and along pedestrian routes, utilizing measures that minimize the need for excess off-street parking (i.e. shared parking, and reducing in parking requirements within walking distance of transit, convenient access to bike parking).

B. Special Improvement District

Redevelopment in the Township SID will require compliance with the requirements of the Downtown Management Corporation. Construction of new structures or alteration of existing structures in the SID is subject to special design requirements (Chapter 355) related to buildings, signage, and awnings.

Economic and non-residential goals of the DMC include:

1. Conserve and promote the economic vitality of the Downtown so that the core of Cranford remains healthy.
2. Provide a parking strategy to accommodate all of the Downtown’s constituents: commuters, office workers, shoppers and Downtown residents. Require adequate parking as a prerequisite to new development.
3. Recognize the economic value of multi-story buildings within the Downtown. Encourage the fullest use of existing upper floors and the creation of additional upper-story floor space.

4. Promote the Township's accessibility to transportation facilities such as the Garden State Parkway and New Jersey Transit rail and bus lines as attractive to both Township businesses and residents.
5. Continue to develop commercial and business (i) in the Downtown, (ii) on the North, South and Centennial Avenues, and (iii) in existing centers of commerce.
6. Continue to evaluate development opportunities that utilize Cranford's rail and bus lines in order to encourage an increase in mass transit usage.
7. Encourage the development of a diversified economic base that generates employment growth, increases property values, and promotes the improvement of underutilized properties.
8. Capitalize on Cranford's competitive advantages for economic development, including its designation as a regional work center, metropolitan location, extensive transportation and utility infrastructure, a stable and highly skilled labor force and an excellent quality of life.
9. Create attractive gateways at the principal entrances to the Township through upgraded land uses, streetscape improvements and signage.
10. Require all in-fill development to be done in a manner that is consistent and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and environment.
11. Ensure that public and quasi-public land use remains compatible with the needs and character of adjacent neighborhoods.
12. Limit developments that would generate a high volume of vehicle traffic on local and collector streets.

C. Affordable Housing Development

The Study Area was identified in the Township's 2019 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan ("HEFSP") as part of a "Proposed North Avenue Redevelopment Area." The housing area would provide for a mixed-use inclusionary project of at most 40 residential units, twenty-percent (20%) of which are to be designated and deed-restricted affordable housing units. The area would also include a municipal parking component, address downtown flooding concerns, and is designed at a scale and density that is consistent with Cranford's continued efforts to revitalize its downtown.

D. Redevelopment Plan

The Township's intent is to create a Redevelopment Plan pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 to establish particular land use and building controls, serving as the zoning for the Redevelopment Area. A redevelopment plan, which may supersede the zoning of an area or serve as an overlay thereto, specifies the following:

- Relationship of the project area to local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population, improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements.
- Proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area.
- Adequate provision for the temporary and permanent relocation, as necessary, of residents in the project area, including an estimate of the extent to which decent, safe and sanitary dwelling units affordable to displaced residents will be available to them in the existing local housing market.
- An identification of any property within the redevelopment area, which is proposed to be acquired in accordance with the redevelopment plan. (Note: not every property in a redevelopment area must be acquired and, in fact, none may be acquired; the redevelopment plan can specify buildings or uses to remain in the redevelopment area and to be incorporated into the future design and development of the area.)

4. Redevelopment Goals

The Township intends to designate a private developer, who will redevelop the site in accordance with an adopted North Ave Gateway Redevelopment Plan. The North Ave Gateway Redevelopment Plan will be consistent with smart growth principles of the downtown and transit-oriented development. The site is to be a gateway to the downtown Cranford, redeveloped in a way that reinforces the planning goals of the Township with mixed-use development at a density and height consistent with downtown development trends and the 2019 HEFSP.

Key elements of the North Ave Gateway Redevelopment Plan also include the following elements:

- The vacant building on Lot 14 is to be removed;
- the firehouse situated on Lot 6.01 should remain, however, certain features (gas filling equipment) may be relocated;

- public parking should be preserved but may be shared (public parking is currently provided on Lot 6.01); and
- a public space for community events (a function occasionally served by the municipal parking lot on Lot 6.01) should be preserved and enhanced with new amenities.

All Respondents are encouraged to consider the development of the Redevelopment Area as a “blank slate” and provide creative and innovative designs and concepts for the area. The cohesion and vision of a submission will guide the Township's review of that submission and guide the criteria and requirements of the North Ave Gateway Redevelopment Plan.

5. RFEI Submission Requirements

A. General Submission Requirements

- Respondents should submit 3 hard copies and an electronic copy, either on a USB drive or CD of their submission.
- Submissions should be submitted on 8.5 x 11 sized paper and should not exceed 50 pages (excluding appendices). Planning diagrams and concepts may be submitted on 11 x 17 sized sheets.
- Submissions should be submitted in a sealed envelope which bears the name of the Respondent and clearly marked “North Ave Gateway Request for Expression of Interest”.
- A check in the amount of \$500.00 made out to Township of Cranford for the non-refundable submission fee.
- Submissions should be sent to:

Township of Cranford
Attn: Jamie Cryan, Township Administrator
8 Springfield Avenue
Cranford, NJ 07016
- All questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail to: administration@cranfordnj.org
- Submissions must be received by: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 10:30 am.

The Township seeks responses to this RFEI from only those development firms who have the knowledge, proven experience and capacity to redevelop the Project.

At the conclusion of the RFEI reviews, the Review team will select 2-3 developer finalists and ask them to provide a more detailed development proposal to the review team. Interviews will be scheduled with the finalists to review and discuss their updated proposals and at the conclusion of this process, **either** (a) a finalist(s) will be selected **or**, (b) the finalist(s) will be asked to respond to any follow-up question(s) after which a finalist will be selected. The finalist(s) will be deemed qualified to submit a response to a Request for Proposals upon the Township’s adoption of a Redevelopment Plan for the redevelopment of the Redevelopment Area.

To assist interested parties in preparing a response to this RFEI, the Township will convene an information session on Friday, March 5, 2021 at 10:30 AM at 27 North Avenue East, Cranford, NJ, which will include a walk of the site and a post-tour Q&A session with representatives from the Township. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this information session will be conducted entirely outdoors, with a rain date of Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 10:30 am.

Issuance of RFEI	Friday, February 19, 2021
RFEI Bid Conference	Friday, March 5, 2021 at 10:30 am
RFEI Due Date	Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 10:30 am
Notification of Non-Responsive Submissions	Monday, April 9, 2021

Documents relevant to the Study Area and Township will be available for review by Respondents and hosted on the Township website, here <https://www.cranfordnj.org/home/bids/rfei-north-ave-redevelopment-area>

B. Submission Requirements

1. Development Team

Respondents should identify their development team (the “Development Team”) and identify the following individuals:

- Development Teams should provide an overview of each key team member, describing general experience with details on years of operation, number of projects, range of urban architectural project sizes and budgets, experience with

development of inclusionary affordable housing projects, experience with mixed-use transit-oriented development.

- Name, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of each principal, and such team member's resume, including the roles or titles within the Development Team.
- Name, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of the Development Team Members authorized to act on behalf of the Respondent.

2. *Qualifications and Experience*

Respondents must clearly demonstrate qualifications in completing the type of development contemplated in the Respondents' Submission and prior experience and success with such projects. Respondents' should present a minimum of three and up to five relevant projects for each team member that exemplifies the Respondent's accomplishments. Local and/or regional experience should also be highlighted, particularly where local and New Jersey-based partners have been included. Response should include the following for each project identified:

- Project summary, including project name, address, size, total development cost, project team members (including project principals) and date of completion.
- Brief physical description (may include photograph, site plan, or rendering in Appendices).
- A municipal reference per project, including name, address, telephone number and e-mail addresses for municipal individuals directly involved with projects presented in the qualifications section.

3. *Development Approach*

Respondents are required to submit the following:

- Concept Plan: Respondents must provide a concept plan, diagram and narrative that describes the Respondent's overall vision for the site.
- Project Development Approach: Respondents must provide a development plan that identifies, among other things, the target market for the development components

- Project Phasing Plan: Respondents must outline their implementation strategy, including a description plan of the phasing plan for the overall project.
- Property Acquisition Plan: Respondents must identify the properties or portions of properties required for the development of the overall project.
- Developer Assumptions/Exceptions: Respondents may identify any ways for the Township to improve or enhance the Redevelopment Area to allow the Township to best achieve the stated redevelopment objectives.

4. *Financial Feasibility*

Respondents should provide a preliminary project financial framework plan for the redevelopment project. The financial framework should consist of order-of-magnitude projections and a description of sources and uses, a hard and soft cost budget and an operating pro forma through project stabilization for each project component (retail, residential, office, parking, etc). Sufficient preliminary information should be provided for the Township to determine the proposed project’s financial underpinnings and ability to be self-sustaining.

C. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

A review team will be assembled to review submissions. All submissions will be evaluated through consideration of several evaluation factors. The respondent’s submission will be evaluated and scored on a one-hundred point scale according to the following criteria and weighting:

EVALUATION CRITERIA – RFEI	MAXIMUM POINTS
Conceptual Design – Respondents will present a concept for development evaluated on the basis of innovation, suitability for the project, consistency with the stakeholders vision for the Township.	35
Project Feasibility – Respondents will submit a <i>pro forma</i> to develop the project, identify requirements and assumptions in the development concept and <i>pro forma</i> , and identify participation from the Respondent's proposed project team.	30
Team Experience – Respondents will provide evidence of development team experience, financial capacity, prior history of providing community benefits, and detailed information of recent developments completed by	25

the Respondent and particularly, those projects completed in conjunction with the proposed project team.	
Affordable Housing – respondent will develop the residential component of the project with inclusionary affordable housing units	10
TOTAL AVAILABLE POINTS	100

D. Conditions Applicable to RFEI

Upon submission in response to this RFEI, the Respondent acknowledges and consents to the following conditions relative to the submission and review and consideration of its submission by the Township:

- This document is a Request for Expression of Interest and does not constitute a Request For Proposals.
- This RFEI does not commit the Township to issue a Request For Proposals.
- All costs incurred by the Respondent in connection with responding to this RFEI shall be borne solely by the Respondent.
- The Submission Fee shall be paid at the time of submission and will be non-refundable.
- The Township reserves the right (in their sole judgment) to reject for any reason any and all responses and components thereof and to eliminate any and all Respondents responding to this RFEI from further consideration for this project.
- The Township reserves the right (in their sole judgment) to reject any Respondent that submits incomplete responses to this RFEI, or a submission that is not responsive to the requirements of this RFEI.
- The Township reserves the right, without prior notice, to supplement, amend, or otherwise modify this RFEI, or otherwise request additional information.
- All submissions shall become the property of the Township and will not be returned.
- All submissions will be made available to the public at the appropriate time, as determined by the Township (in the exercise of its sole discretion) in accordance with law.
- The Township may request Respondents to make representatives available for interviews.

- Neither the Township, nor their respective staffs, consultants or advisors (including but not limited to the Review Team) shall be liable for any claims or damages resulting from the solicitation or preparation of the submissions, nor will there be any reimbursement to Respondents for the cost of preparing and submitting a submission or for participating in this procurement process.
- The Township reserves, holds and may exercise, at their sole discretion, the following rights and options with regard to this RFEI and the procurement process in accordance with the provisions of applicable law:
 - To determine that any submission received complies or fails to comply with the terms of this RFEI.
 - To supplement, amend or otherwise modify the RFEI through issuance of addenda to all prospective Respondents who have received a copy of this RFEI.
 - To waive any technical non-conformance with the terms of this RFEI.
 - To change or alter the schedule for any events called for in this RFEI upon the issuance of notice to all prospective Respondents who have received a copy of this RFEI.
 - To conduct investigations of any or all of the Respondents, as the Township deems necessary or convenient, to clarify the information provided as part of the submission and to request additional information to support the information included in any submission.
 - To suspend or terminate the procurement process described in this RFEI at any time (in its sole discretion.) If terminated, the Township may determine to commence a new submission process or exercise any other rights provided under applicable law without any obligation to the Respondents.
 - To submit all notices, addenda, schedule revisions or other project updates to Respondents via email and/or other methods at the sole discretion of the Township.

EXHIBIT A

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST CHECKLIST

THIS CHECKLIST MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR SUBMISSION.

Please initial below, indicating that your submission includes the itemized documents.

A SUBMISSION WITHOUT THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS IS CAUSE FOR REFUSAL

INITIAL

An original and 2 signed hard copies of the complete submission and USB or CD	
Authorized Signatures on All Forms	
Non-Collusion Affidavit	
Stockholder Disclosure Certification, if applicable	
Partnership Disclosure Statement, if applicable	
Business Registration Certificate	
Check for \$500 made payable to "Township of Cranford"	

Note: N.J.S.A. 52:32-44 provides that the Township shall not enter into a contract for goods or services unless the other party to the contract provides a copy of its business registration certificate and the business registration certificate of any subcontractors at the time that it submits its proposal. The contracting party must also collect the state use tax where applicable.

THE UNDERSIGNED ACKNOWLEDGES THE ABOVE LISTED REQUIREMENTS

Name of Submission:

Person, Firm or Corporation

BY: _____
(NAME)

(TITLE)

EXHIBIT B

LETTER OF INTENT

[TO BE TYPED ON RESPONDENT'S LETTERHEAD]

TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD

ATTN:

Dear Review Committee:

The undersigned, as Respondent, has (have) submitted the attached Response to the Request for Expression of Interest ("RFEI"), issued by the Township, in connection with the redevelopment of the Project Site identified in the RFEI.

[NAME OF RESPONDENT] HEREBY STATES:

1. The Response contains accurate, factual, and complete information.
2. [NAME OF RESPONDENT] is interested in being invited to respond to the Township's RFEI. It is the intent of [NAME OF RESPONDENT], if selected, to complete and submit a Proposal for redevelopment of the Project Site as generally described in the RFEI.
3. [NAME OF RESPONDENT] agrees to participate in good faith in the procurement process as described in the RFEI and to adhere to the Township's evaluation schedule.
4. [NAME OF RESPONDENT] acknowledges that all costs incurred by it in connection with the preparation and submission of the Response and any Submission prepared and submitted in response to the RFEI, or any negotiations which result therefrom shall be borne exclusively by the Respondent.
5. [NAME OF RESPONDENT] hereby declares that the only persons participating in this Response as Principals are named herein and no person other than those herein mentioned has any participation in this Response. Additional persons may subsequently be included as participating Principals, but only if acceptable to the Township. [NAME OF RESPONDENT] declares that this Response is made without connection with any other person, firm or parties who have submitted a Response, except as expressly set forth below and that it has been prepared and has been submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud.
6. [NAME OF RESPONDENT] acknowledges and agrees that the Township may modify, amend, suspend and/or terminate the procurement process (in its sole

judgment) and that, notwithstanding efforts of the Township and Respondent, the Township may decide not to proceed with implementation of the Project described in the RFEI. In either case, the Township nor any of their officers, employees, servants, consultants, agents or representatives shall have any liability to the Respondent for any costs incurred by the Respondent with respect to the submission and evaluation activities described in this RFEI.

[SIGNATURE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER]

[Typed Name and Title]

[Typed Name of Firm]

Dated: _____

EXHIBIT C

NON-COLLUSION AFFIDAVIT

State of New Jersey
County of _____

I Am: (Name) _____

Position _____

Of: (Company) _____

Upon My Oath, I Depose and Say:

1. THAT I EXECUTED THE SAID PROPOSAL WITH FULL AUTHORITY SO TO DO;
2. THAT THIS PROPOSER HAS NOT, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY ENTERED INTO ANY AGREEMENT, PARTICIPATED IN ANY COLLUSION, OR OTHERWISE TAKEN ANY ACTION IN RESTRAINT OF FAIR AND OPEN COMPETITION IN CONNECTION WITH THIS ENGAGEMENT;
3. THAT ALL STATEMENTS CONTAINED IN SAID PROPOSAL AND IN THIS AFFIDAVIT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, AND MADE WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE THAT THE TOWNSHIP RELIES UPON THE TRUTH OF THE STATEMENTS CONTAINED IN SAID PROPOSAL AND IN THE STATEMENTS CONTAINED IN THIS AFFIDAVIT IN EVALUATING THE RESPONSE TO THE RFEI; AND
4. THAT NO PERSON OR SELLING AGENCY HAS BEEN EMPLOYED TO SOLICIT OR SECURE THIS ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT OR UNDERSTANDING FOR A COMMISSION, PERCENTAGE, BROKERAGE OR CONTINGENT FEE, EXCEPT BONA FIDE EMPLOYEES OR BONA FIDE ESTABLISHED COMMERCIAL SELLING AGENCIES OF THE PROPOSER.
(N.J.S.A.52:34-25)

Subscribed and Sworn to:

Before Me this _____ **Day**

Of _____ **2021.**

(Type or Print Name Affiant under Signature)

Notary Public

My Commission Expires: _____, **20** _____