

**Request for Qualifications (RFQ):**

Redevelopment of the former Mount. Auburn  
Cable House

**Any Requests for Information (RFI)  
regarding this RFP must be submitted  
in writing by email to:**

Brian Ogawa  
[bogawa@cincinnatiport.org](mailto:bogawa@cincinnatiport.org)

**Proposal Issue Date:**  
June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

**Final Proposal Due Date:**  
August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021



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**Section 1 – Introduction and Overview**

The Hamilton County Land Reutilization Corporation (Landbank) is seeking developers of multi-family, mixed-use, and commercial projects to provide proposals for the redevelopment of 2001 Highland Avenue in Cincinnati’s Mt. Auburn neighborhood. Although the Landbank’s preference is to solicit proposals to increase the affordable housing density in the neighborhood, all project types are welcome. The property is located at the highly visible corner for Highland Avenue and Dorchester Avenue.

The Mt. Auburn neighborhood is located just north of Over-the-Rhine and South of the Uptown neighborhoods of CUF, Clifton Heights, and Corryville.

<b>Property Address</b>	<b>Parcel</b>	<b>Existing Land Use</b>	<b>Parcel Width</b>	<b>Parcel Depth</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
<b>2001 Highland Avenue</b>	087-0005-0137-00	Vacant Lot			0.303

Full property details can be found in *Section 2, Site Information*.

Successful bidders should be able to commence work by the fall of 2022 and complete their proposed project no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. However, these timelines are negotiable. Specifications, budget, and timeline for design, construction, and lease-up are due to the Landbank no later than **August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021**.

**Section 2 – Site Information**

Over the past decade, the neighborhoods surrounding Mt. Auburn have seen exponential growth. Private investment has been directed into the redevelopment of the Over-the-Rhine and Walnut Hills neighborhoods, the expansion of several local hospitals, the redevelopment of Martin Luther King Jr. Interchange, and the growth of the University of Cincinnati. Mt. Auburn is beginning to experience a growing interest in single-family home development due to the investments into Cincinnati’s downtown and uptown neighborhoods. However, there is still a lack of commercial and multi-family development in the area.

The property was once home to the historic Mt. Auburn Cable House. Built in 1884 the Cable House shuttled Cincinnatians wishing to bypass the steep incline traveling between Downtown and Uptown. The Landbank acquired the property in June of 2020, in hopes of stabilizing and saving the historic property. However, the property required emergency demolition after the roof unexpectedly collapsed in March of 2021.

**2001 Highland** is currently a 0.303-acre vacant lot. The property is currently zoned Planned Development-42. The zoning outlines a project construction 18 condominium units with on-site parking. The Landbank acknowledges the difficulties conforming to a restrictive zoning designation and is not requiring offerors to submit projects that comply with the current zoning. However, offerors should be prepared to take on all zone change/variance processes associated with the project.

Please note: Site is offered “as-is”. The HCLRC make no representations or warranties as to any soil or environmental conditions.

**Site Advantages:** 2001 Highland is located approximately one mile north of the revitalized Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, one mile south of the University of Cincinnati and two blocks from Christ Hospital. The commercial development in Over-the-Rhine and on the University of Cincinnati’s campus provides this site with copious retail,

entertainment, dining, and other amenities, including the newly constructed Cincinnati Ballet.

The area has also benefited from increased investment into the residential real estate market. Private developers have added to a diverse housing stock by both created luxury housing and renovated historic structures. The area has also seen investment in larger multi-family projects. Both the Baldwin Apartment complex and One41 Wellington dramatically increased the housing density in the area. The property is located near Inwood Park, which has seen major improvements including a new gazebo, repaved walking paths, and new 9,500 playground. However, the Landbank believes that there is still a demand to increase the residential inventory of the neighborhood through a dense redevelopment of 2001 Highland Ave.

### **Section 3 – Proposal Requirements**

The Offeror is invited to submit Proposals and concept plans for one or more of the subject properties. A detailed list of the requirements for submission and evaluation criteria is identified below. To achieve a uniform review process and a fair degree of comparability, the proposal should be organized in the following order and contain all of the following information:

#### **1. Contact Information**

Name, address, phone number, and email of the individual or firm. If a firm, the name and title of the individual authorized to negotiate contract terms and make binding commitments shall be included and identified.

#### **2. Capacity & Experience**

Provide a concise narrative describing the Offeror’s background, history, and construction experience, including comparable projects successfully completed by the Offeror. Provide the names and titles of key members of the development team, including as applicable: general contractor, design team, investors, and other team members or subcontractors required for the completion of the project.

It is acceptable for two or more firms to propose a joint venture for this development opportunity. In such case, both developers should provide all information requested in this RFP along with clear indication of the multiple firms participating in the venture, designated roles and responsibilities, and the primary project lead or point of contact.

#### **3. Project Description and Concept**

- **Overall Project Narrative:** Provide a concise narrative describing the proposed development and end product, including as applicable:
  - i. Conceptual Site Plan
  - ii. Renderings, floor plans, or preliminary building elevations useful in demonstrating your development concept.
  - iii. Density (unit count and/or commercial square footage)
  - iv. Any additional site specifications or site features
- **Timeline:** Provide a projected schedule for completion with key milestones identified, including but not limited to pre-construction work and meetings related to final design and plans, City approval processes, submission for permit, site preparation, construction, final inspections, receipt of Certificate of Occupancy, and lease-up.

4. **Community Vision** Offerors should attempt to align their proposals with the objectives of the 2017 Auburn Avenue Corridor Plan ([https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/sites/planning/assets/File/FINAL\\_Auburn-Ave-Plan\\_170207.pdf](https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/sites/planning/assets/File/FINAL_Auburn-Ave-Plan_170207.pdf)) if/when feasible. Although the intersection at Highland and Dorchester is not the specific focus of the study, many of the themes hold true throughout the neighborhood.

Specifically, the Plan recommends the following objectives for the Mt. Auburn corridor.

- Identify opportunities for businesses to support a neighborhood business district concept.
- Access to a variety of housing options with an emphasis on affordable units (page 22 of Auburn Ave. Plan)

#### **5. Budget and Financing Plan**

- **Offer Price:** Offeror’s asking price for the acquisition of the subject property. Note that to date, approximately \$400,000 has been invested acquisition and demolition of the property, which should

be considered in asking price. The purchase price will not be the primary consideration in the selection process. However, applicants' financials should be able to justify the asking price.

- Preliminary Sources and Uses: Statement showing Total Project Cost and all sources of capital and expected uses in the proposed development project.
- Pro Forma: Provide a 10-year post-development cash flow statement
- Proof of Funds: This can be demonstrated through a statement of Offeror's financial ability and resources at the Offeror's disposal and/or a Soft Financial Commitment Letter.
- Subsidy: Expected sources of public subsidy, grants, or other contingent sources required for the project, including Historic Tax Credits, New Markets Tax Credits, or Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, if applicable.

#### **6. Economic Inclusion Plan**

The Port is committed to empowering MBEs, WBEs, and SBEs; and to that end the Port will be vigilant in monitoring encouraging and facilitating the satisfaction of its goals in relation to the participation by MBEs, WBEs, and SBEs in all Port-related work, including for suppliers, providers, developers, investors, or other members of a proposed development team. The goals of the Port are described in *Appendix D – Economic Inclusion Policy*. Offerors should be prepared to comply with the Port's Economic Inclusion Policy and maximum extent practicable for SBEs, WBEs, and/or MBEs in alignment with the Port's economic inclusion policy. Offerors are encouraged to indicate any past successes in achieving economic inclusion goals. Offerors whose firms are certified through the Office of Economic Inclusion in the MBE, WBE or SBE Programs should submit proof of certification.

After written proposals have been reviewed, discussions with prospective firms may or may not be required to clarify any portions of the proposal.

#### **Section 4 - Scoring Criteria**

The Selection Committee will review and evaluate RFPs that are complete and received on or before the deadline. The Selection Committee will consist of leadership representing the Landbank, City of Cincinnati, Mt. Auburn Community Development Corporation.

Each submission will be evaluated against the Proposal Requirements outlined in Section 3.

**Section 5 – Submission Requirements, Timeline, and Disclaimer**

Any Requests for Information (RFI) regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing by email to Brian Ogawa at bogawa@CincinnatiPort.org. All potential offerors should submit an intent to apply letter no later than June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The letter will represent your interest and you shall continue to receive information regarding the site. Final Proposals shall be accepted no later than August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Each bidder should contact Brian Ogawa at [Bogawa@CincinnatiPort.org](mailto:Bogawa@CincinnatiPort.org) to arrange access to the site to fully acquaint themselves with the existing conditions and the neighborhood.**

**The RFP will be governed by the following schedule:**

Proposals Due:	August 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
Notification of Award:	September 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2021 (anticipated)

**All proposals must be received by August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 by 4:00 pm at the address shown below. Proposals must be submitted digitally in a singular document titled, “ ‘OfferorName’/2001Highland Redevelopment Proposal.” The proposal must be signed by a person who has the legal authority to contractually bind the Offeror. Unsigned proposals will be deemed non-responsive and will not be reviewed by Port staff.**

The Port  
Attn: Brian Ogawa  
[bogawa@cincinnatiport.org](mailto:bogawa@cincinnatiport.org)  
3 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 300  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Nothing in this RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of the Landbank or any respondents. The Landbank reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue the RFP in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall the Landbank be liable to respondents for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process, including but not limited to, any and all costs, expenses, or fees related to this RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to this RFP will become the sole property of the Landbank. Respondents may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any point in time as more information becomes known.

This RFP is being emailed to prospective bidders, will be posted on both The Port’s and Landbanks website ([www.CincinnatiPort.org](http://www.CincinnatiPort.org) and [www.HamiltonCountyLandbank.org](http://www.HamiltonCountyLandbank.org)). The Landbank encourages all qualified firms to apply.

**Section 6 – Attachments (For Informational Use Only)**

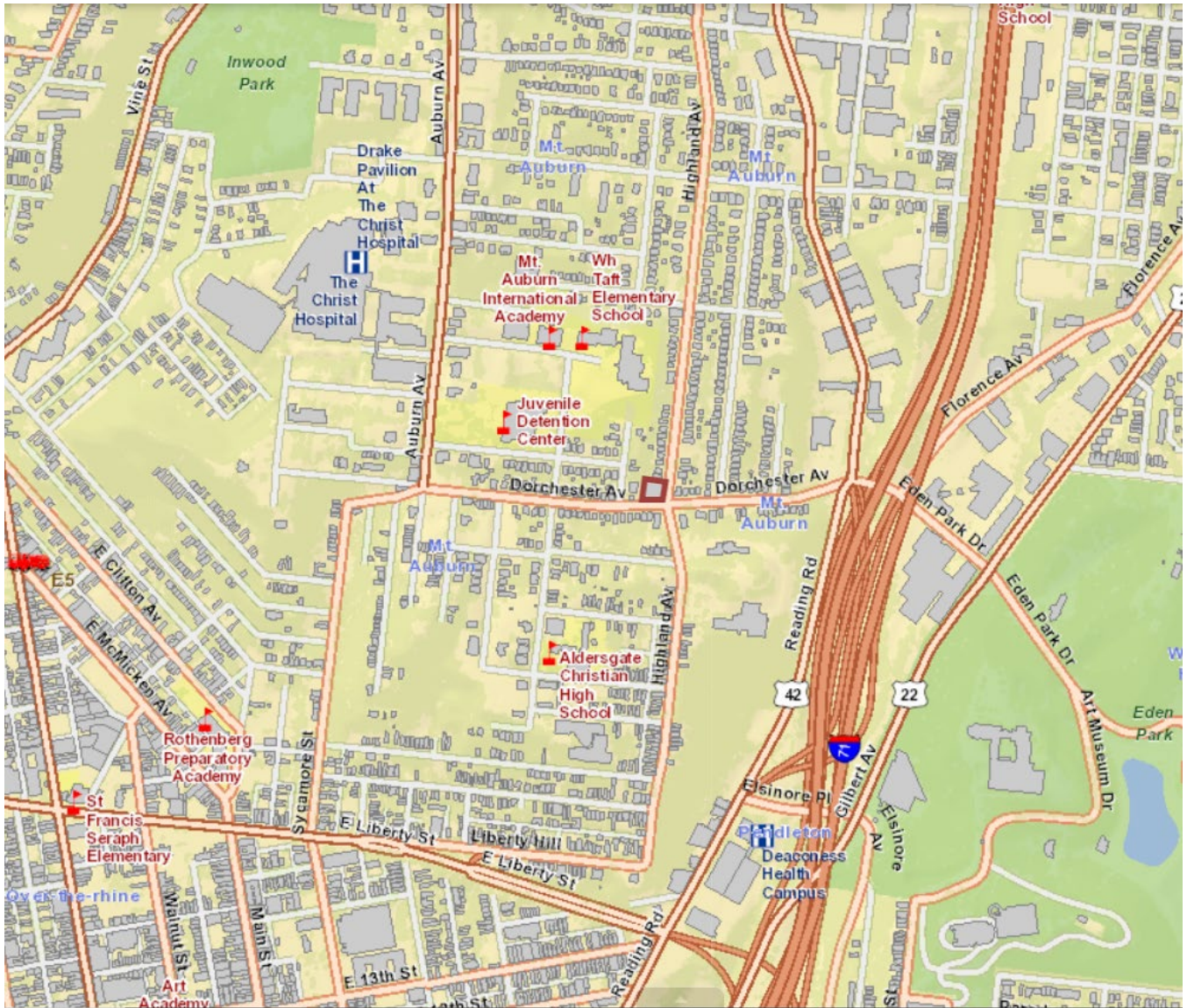
- Exhibit A: Site Map*
- Exhibit B: Context Map*
- Exhibit C: Port Economic Inclusion Policy*

***Exhibit A: Site Map***





**Exhibit B: Context Map**



## **Exhibit C: Port Economic Inclusion Policy**

*The Port strives to continually have meaningful and substantial levels of participation by Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), and Small Business Enterprises (SBEs) in the services for which it contracts, and in its various contracts for development projects. Further, the Port strives to increase the equity participation and/or ownership by MBEs and WBEs within those development projects.*

*The Port is committed to helping build and sustain strong MBEs, WBEs, and SBEs within the Greater Cincinnati community. The Port is further committed to empowering entrepreneurs, generating jobs, building tax base, and providing opportunities for wealth creation in every segment of society.*

*All contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and service providers should have an equal opportunity to compete on contracts for services issued by the Port regardless of race, color, sex or national origin. It is also the aspiration that a fair share of contracts be awarded to small, minority, and women business enterprises. This will be promoted through the provision of educational opportunities, training, and a good faith effort by all involved to promote inclusion through locating and engaging qualified MBEs, WBEs, and SBEs. It is the Port's expectation that this aspiration can be achieved.*

While there are no set-asides or preferences for suppliers, providers or developers, the Port is committed to empowering MBEs, WBEs, and SBEs; and to that end the Port will be vigilant in monitoring encouraging, and facilitating the satisfaction of its goals in relation to the participation by MBEs, WBEs, and SBEs in all Port-related work. The goals of the Port in this regard are:

1. To aspire to achieve a total target goal of 25% Minority Business Enterprise (MBEs), 7% Women Business Enterprise (WBEs), and 30% Small Business Enterprise (SBEs) for:
  - Construction
  - Supplies
  - Services
  - Professional Services
2. To require that all respondents to RFPs, RFQs, and other such solicitations for proposals, qualifications, or services commit and demonstrate, in writing, what best efforts they will make in order to meet these goals.
3. To work with the majority/prime contractors to track and support the sub-contractors they use on Port-related projects. The anticipated outcome is that they establish and maintain an Economic Inclusion Program for themselves, and for their future projects. The Port will assist them in finding sub-contractors to support Port-related project needs.
4. To use the criteria for certification in identifying minority and women owned businesses as defined by the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).
5. To accept certifications from the NMSDC, or the local affiliate council; the WBENC; the Small Business Administration (SBA); and local, state, and federal certifying organizations.
6. To encourage partnering relationships between majority owned firms and small, women-owned and minority-owned firms among professional service providers to the Port. The Port also encourages, where economically feasible, establishment of joint ventures and contracting partnerships by businesses of different race ownership, different gender ownership, or both, in all phases of contracting (to include, but not limited to, developer agreements, architectural and engineering design services, construction, retail-hospitality-entertainment tenant/ownership, supplies, and professional services) as a means to achieve greater levels of prime contracting opportunities for all businesses.
7. To require that all proposers or bidders submit an economic inclusion subcontractor utilization plan with their proposals, qualifications or bids. Failure to submit an economic inclusion subcontractor utilization plan with the proposals, qualifications or bids and other documentation that may be requested may deem the proposals, qualifications or bids as non-responsive and may result in rejection of the proposals, qualifications or bids.