



**Request for Expressions of Interest (“RFEI”)
for
A Destination Anchor at Poplar Point
Washington, DC**

Issued on: August 22, 2024

RFEI responses due: September 30, 2024

Issued by:

**Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
Government of the District of Columbia**

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Request For Expressions of Interest (“RFEI”) Destination Anchor for Poplar Point

I. RFEI Purpose

The Government of the District of Columbia (“the District”), through the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (“DMPED”), is seeking information to determine interest and identify and partner with an owner and operator of a destination anchor (“Destination Anchor”) to be developed at Poplar Point, a 110-acre waterfront property on the Anacostia River in Washington, DC.

Poplar Point is one of two remaining large-sized waterfront properties in Washington, DC. The successes of The Wharf, The Yards (anchored by Nationals Ballpark), and Buzzard Point (anchored by Audi Field), have transformed the Anacostia Waterfront in Southwest and Southeast DC to now be among the most dynamic neighborhoods and entertainment districts in Washington, DC. With the completion of the iconic Frederick Douglass Bridge (to the south) and the construction of the 11th Street Bridge Park (to the north), Poplar Point is now poised to be the next major new neighborhood development to activate the Anacostia Waterfront, and the District seeks a unique destination for this location.

The primary economic development goals for Poplar Point include creating a new mixed-income waterfront neighborhood, attracting high growth industries, and increasing recurring domestic and international visitation.

II. Poplar Point

Poplar Point is located in Ward 8 and is bound by the 11th Street Bridges to the north, the Anacostia Freeway (Interstate 295) and Suitland Parkway to the south, and the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge and Anacostia River to the west. *Figure 1: Poplar Point* below provides the specific location of the site.

Poplar Point is an approximately 110-acre site that currently consists of 60 acres are comprised of managed meadows, wetlands, and natural areas, the National Park Service (“NPS”) National Capital Parks–East Headquarters, and U.S. Park Police (“USPP”) facilities (together, the “NPS Facilities” or “Facilities”). The property is currently owned by the U.S. Government but is subject to the *Federal and District of Columbia Real Property Act of 2006* (the “Act”), whereby the site will be transferred to the District of Columbia once the District satisfies the requirements of the Act.

The total amount of land subject to this RFEI should be no more than 15 acres, which specific location and boundaries will be agreed to by the District and the Destination Anchor. The District expects to issue a separate Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to solicit a developer or developers for the remainder of the site, but respondents to this RFEI may provide information about complimentary uses to the Destination Anchor to be developed on the remainder of the site and are not precluded from responding to the RFP, when/if issued.

Figure 1: Poplar Point



Respondents are notified that before Poplar Point can be transferred, the District must satisfy requirements detailed in the Act, which include:

- Certification by the Secretary of the Interior of a land-use plan for Poplar Point. The land-use plan shall be consistent to the greatest extent practicable with the 2003 Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan (“AWFP”) referred to in section 103 of the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation Act of 2004 (D.C. Official Code §2-1223.03). The land use plan shall reflect:
 - Delineation of not fewer than 70-acres (including wetlands) for a public park;
 - At least two sites within the area designated for park purposes shall be set aside for federal memorial sites to be conveyed back to the NPS;
 - Existing NPS Facilities and location of new relocated Facilities;
- Relocation of existing NPS Facilities and related properties;
- Completion of an Environmental Assessment (“EA”) or Environmental Impact Study (“EIS”) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended 42 U.S.C. §4321 et seq (“NEPA”).

The District is working on satisfying the requirements to obtain the certification from the Secretary of the Interior. DMPED has recently made significant progress toward acquiring land

for the relocation of existing NPS Facilities and related properties and has contracted with an owner's representative ("Consultant") to provide real estate advisory services and construction and development management services to support the redevelopment of Poplar Point, including facilitating the transfer and completion of a joint EA or EIS/Planning Process.

A. Site History and Current Uses

Prior to 1882, the area that became known as Poplar Point consisted of tidal marshes associated with the Anacostia River. Between 1882 and 1927, sediment dredged from the Anacostia River was placed into these tidal marshes to create developable land. From the mid-1920s until 1993 the western portion of the approximately 96-acre Poplar Point Site was divided into two parcels, both of which were used for plant nurseries and greenhouses. One of those parcels was used by the District of Columbia's Lanham Tree Nursery, and the other by the Architect of the Capitol. From the 1940s through the 1960s, the Naval Receiving Station ("NRS") occupied the central and eastern portions of Poplar Point. Currently, NACE headquarters, the USPP Anacostia Operations Facility, and the USPP Aviation Unit facilities occupy the portion of the Poplar Point property formerly occupied by the NRS. The Metro Green Line runs underground through the western end of the former NRS parcel. The former greenhouse and nursery areas are unused and have been revegetated.

In 2008, Poplar Point went through a competitive RFP process where a developer was selected. Due to financial pressures, the project did not move forward but the plan generated provided insight into the potential of the site. A Draft EIS ("DEIS") was completed in 2010, but a final EIS was never issued.

In 2008, NPS and the District entered into a Settlement Agreement under which a Remedial Investigation ("RI") and Feasibility Study in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act ("CERCLA") commenced at Poplar Point. The RI field activities commenced in 2018. A Phase II RI commenced in 2022. The anticipated conclusion of the Phase II RI is Fall 2024.

In 2023, the District initiated a Neighborhood Needs Assessment and Market Study and studied alternative development scenarios to be further analyzed during a joint EA or EIS and Planning Process expected to conclude in FY24.

B. Development Constraints

Although not inclusive of all constraints, respondents are made aware that, to complete Federal transfer of Poplar Point, the District must (i) meet the requirements of the Act and (ii) complete an EA or EIS, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq). This is anticipated to take 18 to 24 months.

Poplar Point is currently undeveloped and will require that a road network, utilities, and other infrastructure will need to be built either concurrently with or prior to vertical development.

Other constraints include: topography, environmental challenges, floodplain areas, delineated wetlands, future park areas, existing and future infrastructure.

The District has commenced a pre-planning process with the completion of a neighborhood needs assessment, market study, boundary survey, and a study of development alternatives. Commencement of the joint EA and Planning Process involves detailed planning efforts that engage community stakeholders to discuss land use, infrastructure needs, and overall vision for the area.

Other critical constraints include: 1) the parkland requirement that 70 acres of the 110-acre site must remain designated as parkland; 2) a requirement to designate two sites within Poplar Point as memorials; 3) remediation of contaminants before any construction may begin; and 4) that the existing infrastructure surrounding Poplar Point present both opportunities and challenges for development.

III. Destination Anchor Requirements

The District is actively seeking a Destination Anchor that has the potential to draw in over 1 million national and international visitors annually to the Poplar Point area. This initiative aims to enhance the local economy, promote tourism, and create a vibrant community space that can serve as a focal point for both residents and visitors alike.

Successful respondents to this Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI), must demonstrate several key capabilities that demonstrate proven expertise, innovative concepts, financial acumen, community involvement, and sustainable practices.

The Destination Anchor should meet the needs of and be complementary to the surrounding communities while also attracting national and international visitors, thereby generating significant economic activity. The proposed development plans must emphasize the value of inclusion and accessibility, and respond to the local community by incorporating specific characteristics, particularly uses that are:

- Compatible with a world-class public waterfront park, providing meaningful access to open space and honoring the ecosystem inclusive of preserved wetlands and shoreline, and capitalizing on the site's spectacular viewsheds of the Historic Anacostia neighborhood, the Anacostia River, the greater District of Columbia including The Yards and Capitol Hill, as well as Northern Virginia;
- Sources of significant job creation and new small business opportunities, increasing new sources of tax revenue;
- Able to bolster the tourism and entertainment sectors of the DC economy by attracting local, District, regional and tourist customers;
- Responsive to community aspirations for experiences that reflect the local culture, local community, and economic opportunity;
- Enhances the emerging Arts and Culture District in Historic Anacostia;

- Of high-quality architectural, landscape, and urban design with a commitment to resilient, energy efficient buildings, and walkable streetscapes; and,
- Financially and economically-viability.

In its RFEI response, the respondent must detail a robust community engagement plan, as partnering with the adjacent community is imperative. A detailed engagement plan should be comprehensive and focus on equitable inclusion across race, gender, and socioeconomics.

IV. RFEI Schedule

The anticipated timeline for this RFEI is set forth below. Any changes to this RFEI will be subject to the issuance of an Amendment, which Amendment will be posted on DMPED’s website.

Milestone	Estimated Date
Release of Request for Expressions of Interest	August 22, 2024
Expressions of Interest Questions Deadline	September 5, 2024
Submission of Expressions of Interest Deadline	September 30, 2024
Commence negotiations with the selected respondent or issue a request for proposals	As soon as November 15, 2024

V. Submission

Respondent must submit the required attachments via email to whit.smith@dc.gov with the subject line: "Proposal in Response to RFEI – Poplar Point Destination Anchor” no later than **5:00 PM local time, Monday, September 30, 2024**. Paper, telephonic, telegraphic, and facsimile proposals may not be accepted.

All attachments shall be submitted as a .pdf file. The District will not be responsible for corruption of any file submitted. If the submitted file cannot be viewed and printed as submitted, it will not be considered.

All questions should be directed to whit.smith@dc.gov no later than 5:00 PM local time, Thursday September 5, 2024.

VI. Selection Process

The RFEI is intended to give interested Destination Anchor firms the opportunity to demonstrate their interest in this location and ability to achieve the District’s desired goals. Respondent submissions will be evaluated by a Selection Recommendation Panel consisting of three to five (3-5) members. Each Selection Panel member will first independently evaluate and rate all

aspects of the submissions. Then, after preparing their individual ratings, the Selection Panel members will meet and formulate a recommendation on each submission and determine to: (a) proceed with one firm with which to negotiate an agreement; (b) issue an RFP; or (c) terminate this process for a Destination Anchor.

VII. Reservation of Rights

DMPED reserves the right, in its sole discretion to: (1) cancel, withdraw, or modify the RFEI at any time prior to the deadline for submissions of expressions of interest, (2) modify or issue clarifications to the RFEI at any time prior to the deadline for submissions of expressions of interest, (3) request submission of additional information from one, some, or all respondents, (4) request modifications to expressions of interest, (5) enter into negotiations with one or more respondents based on submissions of expressions of interest, (6) cease negotiations with a selected respondent, (7) begin negotiations with a different respondent, (7) reject any or all expressions of interest, (8) issue a request for proposals for some or all respondents to this RFEI or the public, or (9) take any other action with respect to Poplar Point.

VIII. Submission Requirements

The submission shall be organized in the following sections and contain the information detailed below. There will be a page count limit of 20-pages excluding attachments as described below.

SECTION 1: Firm Description

(2-page count limit, excluding attachments)

- 1) The Respondent shall identify and describe the qualifications of key personnel, team members, and subcontractors who will be involved with this project, including project assignments and the extent of the participation of each. The Respondent shall provide an organization chart and describe key personnel of project team, including subcontractors, demonstrating their capability and experience. The Respondent should include resumes of all assigned personnel as attachments to the proposal and identify a main point of contact (“POC”) with contact information.
- 2) The Respondent shall describe its organization’s experience with designing, developing, and operating a Destination Anchor. Respondent shall demonstrate a commitment to racial equity, large scale planning efforts, and community engagement; and demonstrate its experience with the engagement of government agencies and community stakeholders including residents, businesses, property owners, civic organizations, advocacy groups, and elected officials.
- 3) If the Respondent is a corporation or partnership, a copy of its license, registration, and certification to transact business in the District of Columbia. If this is not included, respondent shall certify its intent to obtain the necessary license, registration, or certification prior to executing an agreement with the District.

SECTION 2: Qualifications and Experience
(3-page count limit, excluding attachments)

Respondent shall identify three (3) anchor destination projects generally comparable to Respondent's proposed project that have attracted over 1 million visitors a year across a broad range of users and with which Respondent or their key personnel have had primary involvement. For each relevant project, Respondent shall identify the following:

- 1) Project name or title
- 2) Location or address of project
- 3) Description of project and operating program, including project features and use(s), total number of estimated yearly visitors, square footage of various project components
- 4) Period of performance and evidence of operational performance and metrics to evaluate the financial success of the facility as a sustainable, viable operating entity
- 5) Estimated total development costs, if project is not yet complete, OR actual total development costs, if project is complete
- 6) Projected groundbreaking and completion date, if project is not yet complete, OR actual groundbreaking and completion date if project is complete
- 7) Proposed OR actual financing structure of the project and sources of capital
- 8) Illustrative materials that will help DMPED evaluate the caliber, innovation and relevant experience of Respondent's development team
- 9) References (at least one per project), including names, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, and a letter authorizing each reference to respond to inquiries regarding the design, financing, development, disposition, or management of prior projects
- 10) Number of jobs created by type during construction and operation
- 11) Demonstrated community benefits of each project and the Destination Anchor's relationship to the local community in furthering community goals

SECTION 3: Design Vision
(3-page count limit, excluding attachments)

DMPED seeks a place-based urban design strategy centered around creative, thoughtful, and high-quality building massing and design, pedestrian-focused streetscape design, and resilient landscape architecture that complements and frames views towards the adjacent waterfront and world-class 70-acre park. Respondents shall include a narrative (no more than 2 pages), which describes the rationale for the various architectural features proposed including:

- 1) Site planning.
- 2) Building placement, configuration, and massing.
- 3) Building facade, including active street frontages, building projections and embellishments, and play in texture and materials.
- 4) Street network in relation to pedestrian comfort and visual/physical connectivity, multimodal transportation infrastructure, and viewsheds to the water, open spaces, key existing corridors, landmarks and monuments.

- 5) Opportunities to incorporate health and wellness elements such as playable art for all ages and open spaces to linger, exercise, and recreate.
- 6) Elevations highlighting the pedestrian experience as they travel, shop, and play in public space. Elevations should highlight proposed materials used in open spaces and their building edges.
- 7) Resilient building, streetscape, and open space design that is responsive to the environmental challenges facing Polar Point.
- 8) Appropriate complementary uses for adjacent parcels.

Respondents shall also include renderings that illustrate the design vision and project features.

SECTION 4: Project Concept
(3-page count limit, excluding attachments)

Respondents shall submit only one project concept and vision. Respondents shall describe, in detail:

- 1) How the proposed anchor destination will attract a minimum of 1,000,000 visitations per year across a broad range and diversity of local, regional and global users.
- 2) The overall concept and vision for Poplar Point; and how the vision integrates with and enhances the surrounding community and a 70-acre park.
- 3) Development plans for no more than 15 acres.
- 4) Evidence of market demand for Respondent's proposed uses.
- 5) Projections from a qualified third party of the anticipated tax revenues and bonding capacity.
- 6) If applicable, detailed phasing plan that describes Respondent's strategy and timing for delivering various components of the project.
- 7) Zoning strategies for the project, including a detailed explanation and justification for any proposed zoning variance or PUD. If applicable, Respondents should provide a schedule that fully describes each step in the approval process necessary for entitlements assumed in the Submission.
- 8) A multimodal transportation and parking strategy, taking into account the Development Parcels' location close to Metro and multiple bus stops, and a major transportation corridor.
- 9) Anticipated job creation.
- 10) Stated willingness to enter into a Community Benefits Agreement and proposal for the types of community benefits the project will provide.
- 11) Provide proposed community engagement strategy.

SECTION 5: Development Program
(3-page count limit, excluding attachments)

Respondents shall identify and describe in detail the elements of their proposed development. Respondents must submit at least one development program along with the construction schedule and the primary Sources and Uses Statement. This development scenario (or an alternate

scenario if provided) will serve as the basis for evaluation. Respondents are encouraged to describe in detail how they believe the development program meets or exceeds the District's and the RFEI's goals and objectives. Respondents should note that the District seeks self-sustaining business models as the District does not intend to provide either ongoing operating support or a capital subsidy for the construction of the proposed facility.

Respondents should include the following:

- 1) A project narrative indicating the scope of work, scale and character of the project.
- 2) The estimated achievable gross floor area below and above grade (on-site FAR).
- 3) A visual representation of the proposed development and schematic plans that include basement plan, ground floor plan, typical floor plan and roof plan, and elevations of front, side and rear views. Such visual representation need not be elaborate or costly but should offer DMPED a clear picture of the proposed end result. If possible, provide color renderings or three-dimensional graphics for a better understanding of the project.
- 4) Rent/sales projections for each type of program use.
- 5) Gross square footage for all different types of program uses including all above and below-grade parking spaces. For retail space, the total gross square footage, the number of bays and the intended type of retail tenant must be specified.
- 6) Landscape plan showing the typical landscape materials planned to be used on the property and in the public realm, including street furnishings, lighting, landscape and streetscape elements.
- 7) A proposed project timeline for the design, construction and operation periods.
- 8) A proposed development schedule and related contingencies, if any, given DMPED's stated desire to deliver a quality project within the shortest amount of time.
- 9) A description of any proposed additional project or neighborhood-related amenities.

SECTION 6: Project Implementation

(1-page count limit, excluding attachments)

Respondents shall identify and describe the following:

- 1) The amount of sponsor equity immediately available to be committed to predevelopment activities upon selection. Respondents are hereby put on notice that all pre-development expenses and costs are at the sole risk of the Respondents and under no circumstances shall the District be responsible to reimburse the same.
- 2) The design and construction timetable and milestones through project completion. Respondents are required to complete and submit with the Response the "Schedule of Performance" [attached in Appendix B]. The Schedule of Performance should list each step in the redevelopment process through project completion and operation.

SECTION 7: Economic, Market, and Public Benefits Analysis

(1-page count limit, excluding attachments)

Respondents must provide a detailed, but concise, overall description as to how their response will benefit the residents, surrounding community, and economy of the District of Columbia. Respondents should provide the estimated number of new construction and permanent jobs to be created for District residents, all new tax revenue to be generated on an annual basis upon stabilization (e.g. construction period taxes, property taxes, sales taxes, etc.), the projected number of users/visitations the anchor will attract and contracting opportunities for CBE businesses, as well as any additional community benefits that the response offers. Respondents should list the number of full-time jobs and full-time equivalent jobs by type and provide details on any job training programs that may be offered for the benefit of local residents.

SECTION 8: Financial Capacity and Capability

(1-page count limit, excluding attachments)

DMPED seeks to evaluate each Respondent's ability and willingness to invest sponsor equity and self-fund project predevelopment costs. Therefore, regardless of the status of such Respondent's organization (whether a corporation, a non-profit or charitable institution, a partnership, a limited liability corporation, a business association, joint venture, faith-based or other), they should include a narrative or tabular statement identifying the Respondent's members, team, shareholders, or partners ability and commitment to invest equity capital into the proposed project. Additionally, the Respondent shall show how financial capabilities are distributed among key participating entities.

SECTION 9: Explanation of Proposed Financing Strategy

(1-page count limit, excluding attachments)

The District seeks either cash proceeds or in-kind consideration from the ground lease or disposition of the subject parcel. In determining economic feasibility, Respondents may consider all available non-District sources of financing or other private or federal assistance that may benefit the project.

SECTION 10: Response Summary for Distribution to the Community

(2-page count limit, excluding attachments)

Respondents shall provide a summary of their Response that may be shared with the local community and stakeholders. The summary should not exceed two (2) 8.5x11 pages and should include at a minimum, but not limited to, the following: Development team members introduction, Project description; comparable facilities currently open and operating, anticipated tax revenue and jobs created, projected community benefits, anticipated attendance, contribution to community development and District-wide economic benefit.

NOTE: Proprietary information, if any, should be minimized and **MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED**. Please be advised that all submissions become District Government property and will not be returned.

IX. Conflicts of Interest

By responding to this RFEI, each respondent is representing and warranting to the District that (1) no current or former employee has participated in the preparation of an expression of interest or as a member of respondent's team in conflict with the District's ethics manual, (2) respondent has not offered to give, or given, to any District officer or employee any gratuity or anything of value intended to obtain favorable treatment under this RFEI, and respondent has not taken any action to induce any District officer or employee to violate the rules of ethics governing the District and its employees, and (3) respondent has not and shall not offer, give, or agree to give anything of value either to the District or any of its employees, agents, consultants, managers, or other person or firm representing the District, or to the member of the immediate family of any of the foregoing.