



# **REQUEST FOR INTEREST**

**FOR THE REVITALIZATION AND REUSE OF ROOSEVELT SCHOOL**

**• GARY, IN**

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2020**

**GARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION**

## INTRODUCTION

The Gary Community School Corporation (GCSC) is seeking information from experienced developers, architects, community stakeholders, and interested parties to assume responsibility for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the historic Roosevelt High School. The bell rang for the last time at Roosevelt in February 2019, leaving the Gary landmark without a future owner or use. GCSC hopes to identify potential new uses and sustainable ownership to transform the historic school into an asset for the surrounding neighborhood, city, and region.



Roosevelt's soaring Colonial Revival façade was completed in two phases (1929-1930 & 1946) and serves as the face to over 700,000 SQ FT (including 1968-71 additions) that once served as a public school in Indiana's Steel City. Roosevelt is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural and historical significance, most notably as a cornerstone of the African American community in Gary during the era of forced segregation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



## OBJECTIVES OF THE RFI

To guide the rehabilitation process, the Gary Community School Corporation and its partners will use this RFI to identify inventive concepts and land use opportunities that are grounded in market-driven data and community input. GCSC and its partners are inviting respondents to submit concepts that bring the property into productive use in ways that preserve the historic building; serve the immediate neighborhood and broader Gary community; support economic activity in the region; and create a compelling asset with the potential to remain appealing and sustainable well into the future.

The following principles should be clearly identified and addressed in all proposed concepts and opportunities. If your entity is not experienced in one or more of these areas, your response should describe the potential partners or resources you would explore to strengthen your team and/or your concept.

**Save** – Commitment to preserving the historic fabric and celebrating the legacy of Roosevelt High School

**Sustain** – Demonstrate the organizational and financial capacity to undertake a project of this scale and complexity and sustain operations over the long term.

**Support** – Consider the needs and desires of the surrounding neighborhood and how the use(s) of the property would foster a relationship of mutual benefit.



## POTENTIAL RESPONDENTS TO THE RFI

The Gary Community School Corporation and its partners encourage responses from a wide variety of organizations and firms, including joint ventures. Those who might want to utilize only a part of the property are welcome to respond, with the understanding that they may be advised to partner with other respondents to create a stronger and more fiscally sustainable concept.



Potential respondents can include, but are not limited to:

- Foundations and related philanthropic organizations
- Museum, arts, and cultural organizations
- Universities
- Institutions
- Developers
- Brokers
- Designers/architects
- Consultants
- Potential tenants
- Community stakeholders

## LOCATION/SETTING

The Roosevelt High School campus is in the Midtown neighborhood of Gary, Indiana, approximately 30 miles southeast of Downtown Chicago. Prominently positioned along 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Roosevelt is five blocks west from Broadway, Gary's main north/south thoroughfare. Broadway is serviced by a public rapid bus service and connects less than a mile south with Interstate 80/94 (Borman Expressway) and 2.5 miles north with the South Shore Line commuter rail to Chicago/South Bend and Greyhound bus terminal located at the Adam Benjamin Jr. Metro Center.



## SITE AND FACILITIES DESCRIPTION

The Roosevelt High School campus is located on a relatively flat parcel of land bounded by 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the South, Harrison Street to West, Roosevelt Park to the North, and Jackson Street to the East.

Vehicle access occurs on the west, south, and east sides of the campus, which includes several large, asphalt parking lots to the rear and front (east) of the building.

City sewer and water infrastructure is in place to serve the building. Regional gas, electric, and telecommunication utilities are readily accessible for service.

**Roosevelt High School Campus**

Street Address	730 W 25 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
Assessor Parcel #	45-08-16-251-002.000-004; 45-08-16-251-001.000-004
Area	18.20 acres
Zoning	R2 Residential (Rezoning will be required)
Council District	5 <sup>th</sup> District – Linda Barnes Caldwell
Census Tract #	0119.00

**Buildings:**

1930/1946 – Original construction and First additions

1968-71 – Later additions

Due to a long period of deferred maintenance, the building does need significant rehabilitation and the mechanical systems are well past useful service life. Additionally, environmental mitigation is required throughout the building.

In January 2019, during an arctic vortex, pipes carrying water froze and burst in several locations inside the building. The damage from this event to the pipes, univents, walls and ceilings was significant enough to cause students to relocate to another building. The building has been unoccupied since the event in January 2019.

In addition to the damage to sections of the interior and heating system from the event in January 2019, water damage mitigation and environmental mitigation is required. The estimated cost for repairing the building and returning students to classrooms was \$10 million dollars. Due to the age of the building, the maintenance on the building and the cause of the damage in January 2019, insurance covered only a very small fraction of the overall costs of estimated repairs. No additional insurance payment is available.

While the building does require rehabilitation, the overall structure appears to be solid for its age. Many sections of the building, while neglected from maintenance and exposed to environmental issues, are in relatively stable condition.



### Historic Roosevelt High School

Roosevelt was the 20<sup>th</sup> century epicenter of civic pride for the African American community of Gary during the era of forced segregation and Jim Crow laws. Erected purposefully in the late 1920s to educate African American youth after public backlash at attempts for integration at a nearby school, Roosevelt fostered Black excellence in academics and athletics. Generations of Roosevelt alumni continue to make their mark across the country.

Roosevelt is also significant for its role in the development of William A. Wirt's internationally recognized "work-study-play" system of education that revolutionized the modern classroom and its Colonial Revival architecture designed by nationally renowned school architect, William Butts Ittner.



The original Roosevelt school (pictured above) was completed by 1930 with a 1946 addition that balanced the façade with a west wing and new gymnasium to the rear. This three-story, historic core is built on a reinforced concrete foundation and steel superstructure, comprised of red and brown brick with classical flourishes of limestone. Echoing the collegial aesthetics of Gary's other public schools, Roosevelt was set back from the street and featured a grand front lawn.

As the main school for African American students grades K-12, Roosevelt expanded alongside the city's booming population that included African Americans migrating from the south. A second round of additions were completed behind the original school from 1968 through 1970, which continue the predominate use of brick and limestone. Athletic fields and auxiliary facilities, including the school's football stadium, are situated behind the sprawling school.



## **HISTORIC STATUS**

Theodore Roosevelt High School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures in 2012. The nominations identify the entirety of the Roosevelt High School building as a contributing resource, which encompasses the original 1930 structure, 1946 addition, and additions completed from 1968-1971.

This designation makes Roosevelt and its rehabilitation expenditures eligible for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits that can provide considerable gap financing for capital costs.

The Gary Historic Preservation Commission has voted to pursue designation of Roosevelt as a single-site historic district, pending a formal recommendation to the Gary Common Council.

Because of the current and pending historic designations, redevelopment plans will be reviewed by the Gary Historic Preservation Commission. Proposed rehabilitation work, alterations, or additions must comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Any redevelopment plans will also be subject to applicable City zoning and general plan requirements.



## **POTENTIAL USES**

Proposed reuses should address the core principles (The Three Ss) detailed in the Objectives section. Concepts may incorporate a combination of public, nonprofit, and commercial uses, and respondents are encouraged to seriously explore how multiple compatible uses could be combined.

Potential uses for consideration:

- Gallery, museum, cultural, or exhibition space
- Live/work space for artists
- Café and/or restaurant
- Educational and other public programming
- Performance space (dance, music, film, spoken word, etc.)
- Cultural tourism
- Residential (multi-unit)
- Nonprofit (on-property programming, office space)
- Small-scale retail
- Event, public use, and/or meeting rental
- Adaptive Reuse
- Publicly accessible open/green space
- Urban agriculture

The Gary Community School Corporation reserves the right to consider combining applicants and concepts, and to recommend partnerships where appropriate.

## **POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **New Market Tax Credit Program**

Roosevelt is located in a census tract that makes redevelopment of the property eligible for the U.S. Treasury's New Markets Tax Credit Program, which permits individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial intermediaries called Community Development Entities.

### **Housing Incentives**

Given the successful adaptive reuse of historic school buildings to multi-unit residential properties across the country, the redevelopment of Roosevelt could benefit from the wide variety of federal housing tax and grant incentives like the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and funding through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

## INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN A RESPONSE

Please structure your response in the same order and format as the following questions, which will be used as the basis of our review process. If your response contains confidential or proprietary information that you do not wish to be shared beyond the owner and the reviewers, clearly mark those sections as “confidential.”

Decisions about a future owner or use are not driven by the sale of the building or land. The intent and desire of GCSC is to identify potential new uses and sustainable ownership to transform the historic school into an asset for the surrounding neighborhood, city, and region. While an offer to purchase the building and land from GCSC will be considered, the ability of a respondent to purchase, or the inability to purchase, the building is not a primary factor for determining the best outcome for the Gary community.

### Respondent Information

- In what capacity would you want to participate (e.g. owner/operator, tenant, developer, etc.)?
- Describe your organization or firm with an emphasis on your qualifications to undertake such a venture, including resumes of the leaders/principals who would be involved with this project.
- Please provide three to five references for rehabilitation and/or redevelopment projects of historic properties and or historic schools you have successfully completed.
- Please indicate any legal judgements or settlements in the past ten years.
- Please list the location of offices providing services.
- How many years have you been in business or providing applicable services?
- Please indicate if your firm is a minority-owned business, a small business, and/or a women-owned business.
- Please address the applicable questions below in your response. If you are a...
  - **Developer** – describe your experience with the rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of similar historic properties. Do you have experience partnering with nonprofits or other community-focused organizations? How many rehabilitation and/or redevelopment projects have you successfully completed?
  - **Broker** – describe what type of tenant(s) you envision for the property and your experience with similar projects. How many rehabilitation and/or redevelopment projects have you successfully completed?
  - **Consultant** – describe your experience with other projects of this type and complexity, and what role you or your firm played. How many rehabilitation and/or redevelopment projects have you successfully completed?

- **Architect or Designer** – describe your experience with the reactivation and/or rehabilitation of similar historic structures. How many rehabilitation and/or redevelopment projects have you successfully completed?

For any of the above roles, please also describe:

- Your experience with rehabilitation of complex historic structures
  - Your management and financial capacity to successfully pursue a financially sustainable project, including experiences that demonstrate this capability
  - Your Potential Use Concept (outlined below)
- **Potential Tenant** – describe whether your concept or programming would occupy all or a portion of the property; if there are other organizations or entities you would seek to bring in as partners or fellow tenants; potential funding sources that would sustain rent and ongoing operational costs; and relevant details from the Potential Use Concept section.
  - **Community Stakeholder** – please describe owners, operators, or partners that would be necessary to realize your concept; potential sustainable funding sources that would support your proposed use(s); and relevant details from the Potential Use Concept section.

### **Potential Use Concept**

- Describe your scenario(s) for potential rehabilitation and reuse of Roosevelt High School. Your responses may address only part of the property or may combine full use of the facility by one or more entities. If your concept uses less than the full property, describe which portions of the building your concept would occupy. Please be specific and include examples or images of similar concepts.
- Describe how your concept
  - Addresses the core principles outlined in the Three Ss
  - Is appropriate in the context of the Midtown neighborhood and the wider demographics, trends, and needs of the City of Gary
- Given the major investment needed,
  - How will the physical rehabilitation, maintenance, and ongoing operation of the property be financed and sustained over time?
  - What do you see as the most pressing challenges, and how do you anticipate these, and other potential challenges might be mitigated? Provide references and examples of similar successful projects, where available.
  - How will you measure your project's success?



- Describe the type of community and public outreach you would pursue for your project concept.

### **Community Engagement**

Respondents should plan to present their proposal at one or more public forums upon the request of the Gary Community School Corporation.

### **SITE TOURS**

Roosevelt High School will be made available during tours of the property and grounds followed by discussion with representatives from the Gary Community School Corporation and its partners.

FIRST TOUR DATE OPTION – one day between October 5-9, 2020

SECOND TOUR DATE OPTION – one day between October 12-16, 2020

Applicant attendance at tours is strongly encouraged but is not required.

### **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

**Submit one (1) electronic copy in a single PDF file (20 MB max.) to**

**[RFIresponse@garycsc.k12.in.us](mailto:RFIresponse@garycsc.k12.in.us)**

**OR**

**Seven (7) printed copies to the address listed below by 3:00pm CT on November 2, 2020**

Dr. Paige McNulty  
Manager  
Gary Community School Corporation  
900 E Gerry Street  
Gary IN 46406  
219-881-5401  
[pmcnulty@garycsc.k12.in.us](mailto:pmcnulty@garycsc.k12.in.us)

Proposals must include the following:

- A cover page that includes the following information
  - Name(s) and mailing address
  - Current legal status: corporation, partnership, sole proprietor, etc.
  - Contact person's name, title, phone number, and email address

- Response to the above prompts and questions

Incomplete submission may be rejected at the sole discretion of the Gary Community School Corporation and its partners.

### **Review Process**

In consultation with the Indiana Distressed Unit Appeals Board, Gary Community School Corporation stakeholders, staff of MGT Consulting and Indiana Landmarks will review and evaluate all submissions. The most promising submissions will be identified based on applicants' experience with rehabilitation of historic properties or similarly complex projects; financial capacity; management capacity and history of sustained operations; community benefits of proposed project concept; long-term viability and sustainability of proposed project concept; and commitment to public outreach and communications. These are articulated in the RFI sections above.

During the review process, we may contact respondents with questions and clarifications, to request one-on-one meetings, or to explore the potential for collaboration between two or more respondents. Respondents should plan to present their proposal at one or more public forums upon the request of the Gary Community School Corporation.

At the end of the RFI process, Gary Community School Corporation will determine the appropriate next steps. The Gary Community School Corporation and its partners reserve the right, at their discretion, to determine those steps, which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Entering into a Development or Exclusive Negotiation Agreement with specific respondents(s)
- Drawing on the RFI responses to develop and circulate a Request for Proposal
- Issuing a new RFI with project modifications based on information learned from the initial round or other changing circumstances.

**Please note that responses to the RFI will not be considered confidential or proprietary unless the respondent has clearly marked the response, or portions of their response, accordingly.**

Gary Community School Corporation will share a summary of the responses after completion of the RFI review. This summary will include the total number of responses and an overview of the type of entities that submitted responses. Names of specific applicants may be included as examples in the summary unless confidentiality is specifically requested in the response.

The summary will be posted to the Gary Community School Corporation website at [www.garycsc.k12.in.us](http://www.garycsc.k12.in.us).

**Schedule (All times in Central Time)**

RFI Distribution	September 21, 2020
First Optional Site Visit	One day between October 5-9, 2020
Second Optional Site Visit	One day between October 12-16, 2020
Submittal Deadline	November 2, 2020
Evaluation of Submittals	November 3 – 13, 2020
Question Period	November 16 – December 4, 2020
Announcement of Next Steps	December 14, 2020

**Contact Information for Questions**

Gary Community School Corporation  
Eric Parish  
[eparish@garycsc.k12.in.us](mailto:eparish@garycsc.k12.in.us)

Indiana Landmarks  
Brad Miller  
[bmiller@indianalandmarks.org](mailto:bmiller@indianalandmarks.org)

City of Gary Community Investment  
Eric Reeves  
[ereaves@gary.gov](mailto:ereaves@gary.gov)