COLUMBUS ROAD DEVELOPMENT SITE

Greater Cleveland
Regional Transit Authority

Request for Qualifications

1.36-acre site between Abbey Road and West 25th Street



Project Partners:

CUYAHOGA TOD · We're Growing Places

CUYAHOGA · COUNTY · PLANNING · COMMISSION

COUNTY OF CUYAHOGA · OHIO

CITY OF CLEVELAND OHIO

PORT CLEVELAND

Letter from GCRTA and Partners

Dear Project Teams,

This Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") presents an opportunity to improve access to public transportation for Cleveland residents while supporting additional density within a historic neighborhood. Guided by transit-oriented development principles, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority ("GCRTA") in partnership with the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission ("County Planning"), and the Port of Cleveland, seeks to build on the neighborhood's vibrancy and connectivity while ensuring convenient access to housing, transit, employment opportunities, and community amenities.

Collectively, GCRTA, the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, County Planning and the Port of Cleveland (the "GCRTA Partners") are collaborating to advance the successful redevelopment of the Columbus Road Development Site. Through this partnership, the GCRTA Partners seek innovative responses that create long-lasting community assets, strengthen neighborhood connectivity, and support equitable economic growth while reflecting the site's historic character and strategic location.

The Columbus Road Development Site represents one of the most significant transit-oriented development ("TOD") opportunities in Cleveland. Located between Ohio City, Tremont, Downtown Cleveland, the West Side Market District, and Irishtown Bend, the site occupies a strategic position at the convergence of high-frequency transit, regional trail infrastructure, and hundreds of millions of dollars of recent and planned public and private investment. In 2025 alone, $324 million was invested in transit-oriented development projects in the surrounding Cleveland area. The GCRTA Partners invite Project Teams that have a track record of success, experience working in public-private partnerships, being responsive to community needs, and working within the confines of federal transit requirements to respond to the Columbus Road RFQ.

Sincerely,



India Birdsong Terry
General Manager & CEO,
GCRTA



Justin M. Bibb
Mayor,
City of Cleveland



Chris Ronayne
Executive,
Cuyahoga County



Mary Cierebiej
Executive Director,
County Planning



Jeff Epstein
President & CEO,
Port of Cleveland

Cuyahoga TOD

Cuyahoga TOD is a collaborative effort empowering people, communities, and partners to grow vibrant, transit-friendly neighborhoods along Cuyahoga County's key corridors.

Five public agencies meet on a quarterly basis to share updates and ensure strategic alignment. Each agency is well-versed in aspects of transit, planning, and development; this combined expertise helps to meaningfully advance TOD.

Developers are encouraged to use the following local tools and resources when considering a transit-oriented development project:

- TOD Navigator Tool
- TOD Development Trends Report
- TOD Financing Sources
- TOD Resources List

CUYAHOGA TOD

We're Growing Places

www.CuyahogaTOD.org

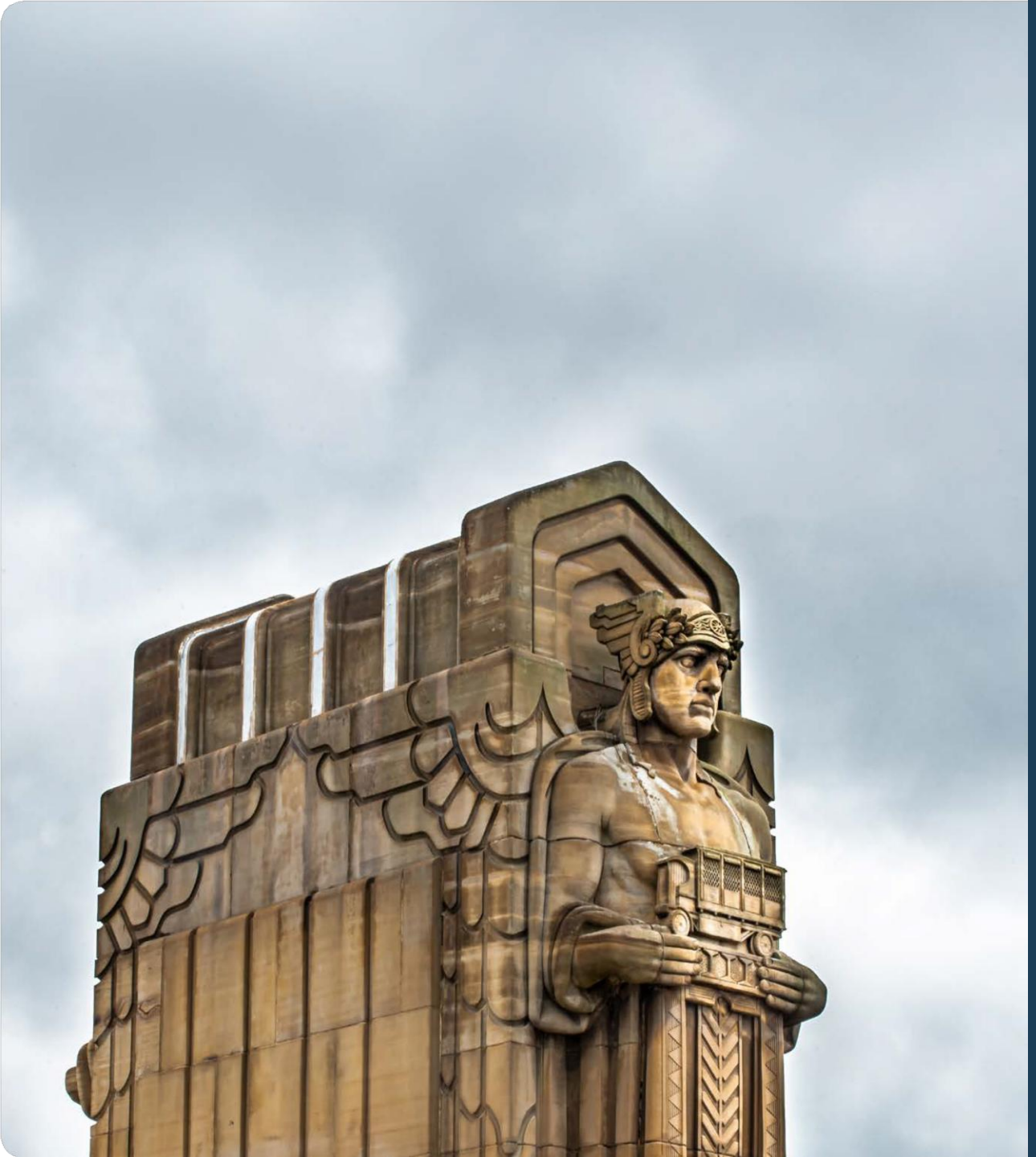


Table of Contents

01 Introduction

02 Neighborhood Context

03 Development Guidelines + Principles

04 Financial Incentives

05 RFQ Instructions for Interested Parties

01

Introduction



Development Opportunity

The GCRTA Partners are seeking an experienced development team to transform a 1.36-acre site into a dense, mixed-use, transit-oriented destination. The Columbus Road Development Site ("Site") is located along the GCRTA Red Line Transit Line adjacent to the West 25th Street Station with frontage on Columbus Road between Abbey Avenue and West 25th Street.

The opportunity is to create a project that:

- Serves as a gateway between Ohio City and Downtown Cleveland
- Integrates directly with current rapid transit and future Bus Rapid Transit ("BRT") investments
- Increases transit ridership and strengthens multimodal connectivity
- Expands housing opportunities and economic activity



02

Neighborhood Context



Photo Source: Cuyahoga County

Neighborhood Demographics

Ohio City is one of the fastest-growing neighborhoods in Cleveland. Between 2010 and 2020 the population grew 9.7% to total population of 9,219. The neighborhood currently has an estimated population of 10,018.

Among Ohio City residents, 11.9% do not own a vehicle, and 40.7% rely on public transportation, walking, or biking as their primary means of transportation.

Ohio City has a median household income of $68,191, compared with the City of Cleveland's median household income of $43,383. Additionally, the neighborhood's median rent is $1,066, compared with the city's median of $797.

For more information regarding the Ohio City neighborhood, please visit: Center for Community Solutions - Ohio City Fact Sheet.

OHIO CITY NEIGHBORHOOD INFO

56.1% of residents identify as White. 5.0% are under 5 years of age, 9.0% are age 5-17, **74.8% are age 18-64**, and 11.3% are age 65 and older.

About **8 in 10 (76.4%)** working age residents (16-64) have **worked at all in the last 12 months** compared to 70.1% in Cleveland.

About **3 in 10** houses are **owned**, and **7 in 10** houses are rented. About 66.8% of homeowners live in housing that is affordable to them compared to 59.8% of renters.

47.1% of residents have a **bachelor's degree** or more, compared to 20.3% in Cleveland.



Photo Source: Ohio City Incorporated

Development Site Information

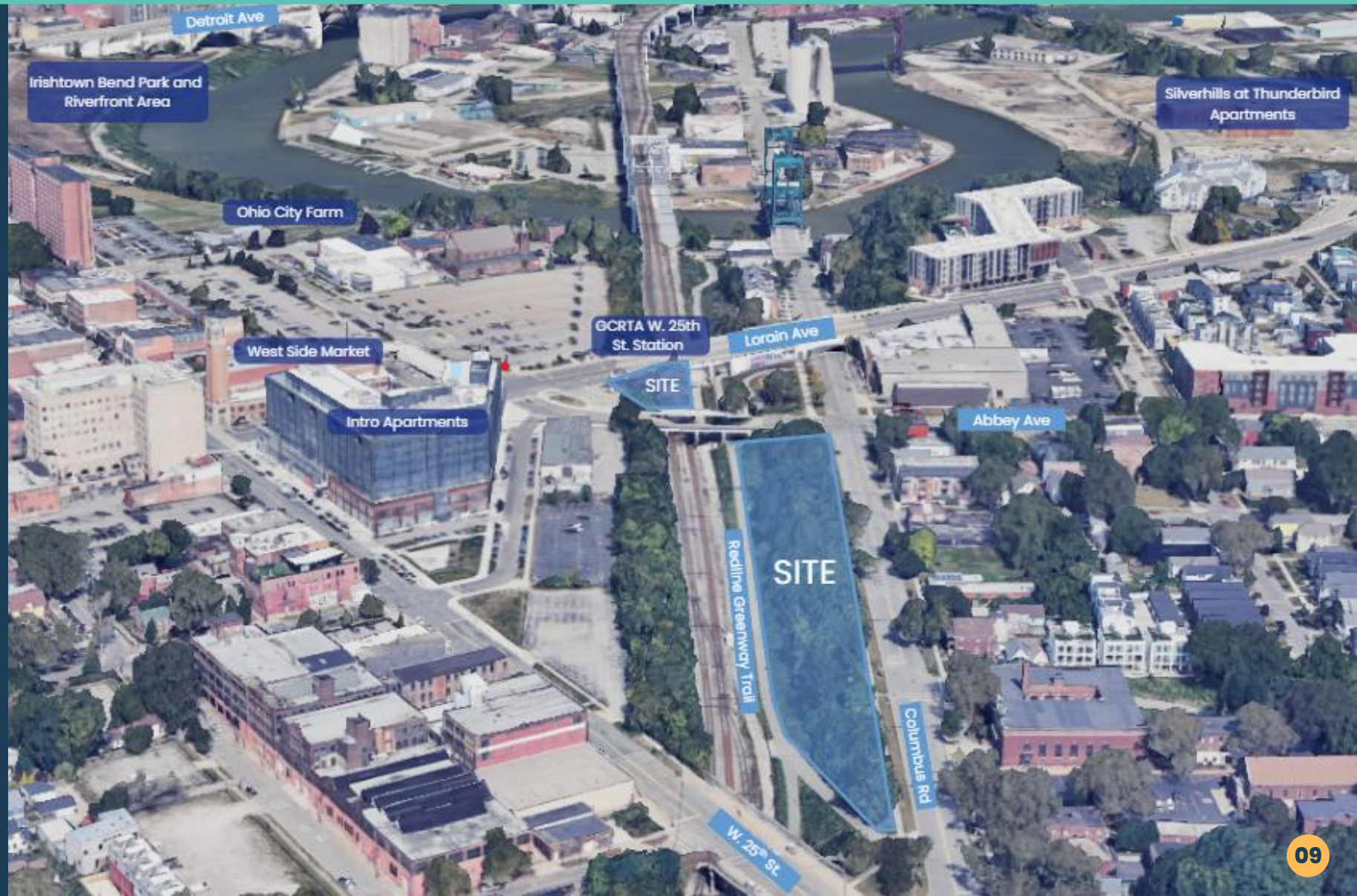
The Columbus Road Development Site includes the following relevant information:

Site Size

- Total Site Acres: 1.36

Zoning

- Zoned: Limited Retail Business
- Max Height: 115’
- Urban Form Overlay
- Pedestrian Retail Overlay
- Transit Oriented Development Zone
- Market Square Local Landmark District



Recent Investments

For more information on the surrounding neighborhood and recent investments, please visit:
Columbus Road Development Site Asset Map

Nearby neighborhood investments:

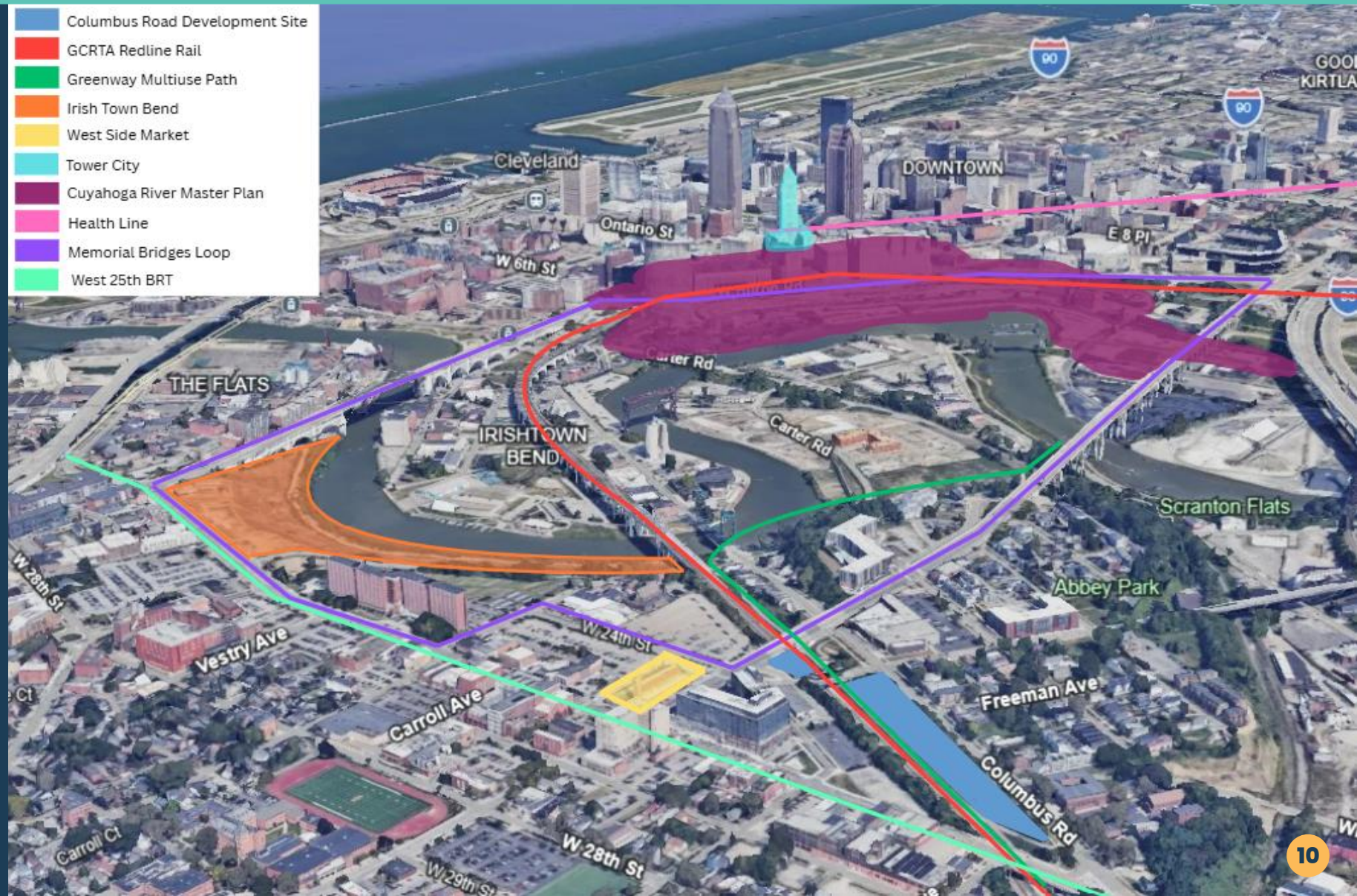
West Side Market Renovations: Currently undergoing a $68 million renovation, the market attracts more than one million visitors annually.

Cuyahoga River Masterplan: A comprehensive, multi-year plan for 35 acres along the riverfront, including a Master Development Agreement between Bedrock and the City of Cleveland for a $3.5 billion riverfront development project.

Irishtown Bend Project: A $100 million project that includes $65 million for hillside stabilization and aims to transform the site into a 23-acre public park and community amenity.

Memorial Bridges Loop: Creation of a separated path along Huron Road and Ontario Avenue for people walking, running, and biking.

West 25th BRT: An initiative to strengthen connections between public transit, surrounding development, and community needs by promoting transit-oriented development along West 25th Street.



Existing Transit

The site connects directly to:

- Red Line Rapid Transit
- Red Line Greenway
- West 25th BRT MetroHealth Line
- Connecting Bus Routes

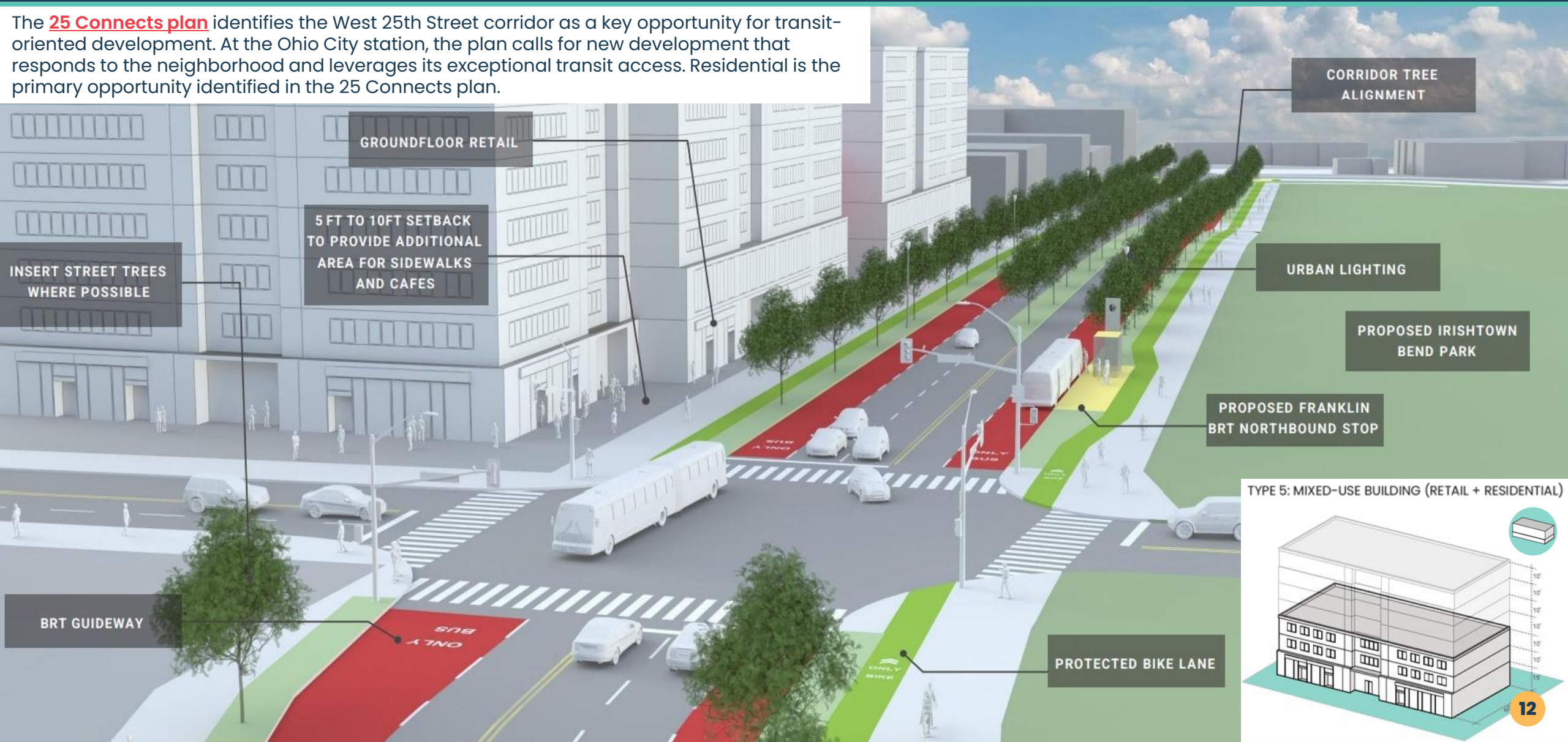
Transit times from the site to key destinations are as follows:

- Downtown Cleveland – 5 mins
- Hopkins Airport – 25 mins
- University Circle – 30 mins
- MetroHealth Hospital – 15 mins



25 Connects BRT Plan

The [25 Connects plan] identifies the West 25th Street corridor as a key opportunity for transit-oriented development. At the Ohio City station, the plan calls for new development that responds to the neighborhood and leverages its exceptional transit access. Residential is the primary opportunity identified in the 25 Connects plan.



03

Development Guidelines + Principles



Photo Source: Cuyahoga County

Guiding Principles

The GCRTA Partners expect successful responses to include the following information in their vision for the Site:

- Residential Units
- Live/Work Units
- Office Space
- Retail Space
- Public Spaces/Pocket Parks
- Improved Pedestrian Access to W. 25th St.

Respondents should incorporate the following guiding principles into their submission:

- **Increase Transit Ridership:** Responses should demonstrate how the Project will increase ridership and improve connectivity to the West 25th Street Station.
- **Enable Transportation Accessibility:** Explore how the Project can improve access to the full range of transportation options near the Site.
- **Enhance the Public Realm:** Explore opportunities to enhance the public realm and strengthen connections between the Project and nearby public realm assets, including trails, parks, and amenities.
- **Neighborhood Asset Building:** Describe how the proposed concept will complement the existing neighborhood with the opportunity to offer the marketplace a product that is unique.
- **Connectivity to the Outdoor Environment:** Explore opportunities to strengthen connections between the Project and nearby transit, auto, pedestrian and bicycle assets.
- **Mixed Use:** Identify opportunities for the Project to incorporate a mix of multiple product types that support long-term economic and community vitality.



Photo Source: Cuyahoga County

Aspirational Examples

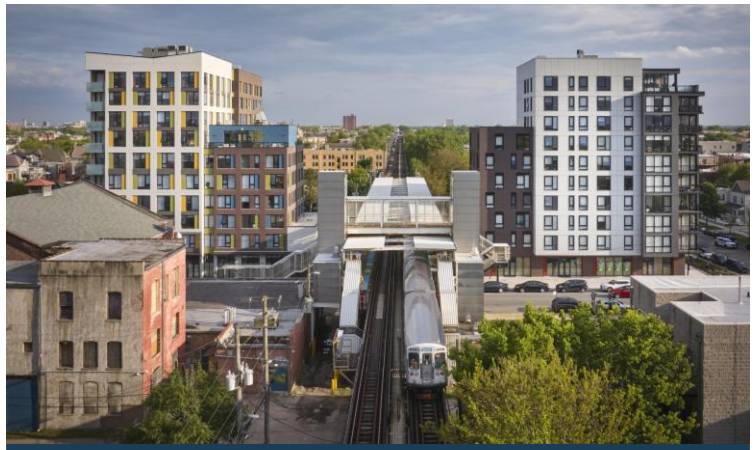
The following developments in other markets are representative of the guiding design principles of the project.



Orenco Station – Hillsboro, Oregon



Paseo Verde – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



43 Green – Chicago, Illinois



SMU/Mockingbird Station – Dallas, Texas



Cedar Crossing – Seattle, Washington



J Malden Center – Malden, Massachusetts

Transit-Oriented Development Requirements

GCRTA TOD Requirements

TOD Criteria
Please refer to GCRTA's Rapid Station TOD Criteria for additional requirements related to Proximity, Access, Parking, Affordable Housing, Green Building, and Community Outreach. Proposals should meet or exceed all requirements outlined in the "Core TOD" Station Typology as defined by the guidelines.

For more information, please visit: GCRTA TOD Guidelines.

City of Cleveland TOD Requirements

Reduced Parking Ratio (Below 1:1)
The Site is located within City's TOD Zone and any submission should be at a below 1:1 parking space per unit.

Transportation Demand Management Plan
Subsidy for GCRTA passes must be provided in a Transportation Demand Management Plan submitted to city at time of permit application.

GCRTA Partners TOD Requirements

West 25th Street Station Integration
Work with GCRTA on development integration into a new West 25th Street Station.

Mixed-Income Units
Project teams that demonstrate commitment to providing a percentage of affordable units in development will be preferred.

Retail Space
At the corner of Columbus and Abbey Avenue, inclusion of neighborhood retail in cohesion with OCI Retail Plan as required by the Site's zoning.



Photo Source: Cuyahoga County

04

Financial Incentives



Photo Source: Ohio City Incorporated

Incentive Opportunities

The GCRTA Partners are committed to creating a financeable, achievable development opportunity and are open to creative approaches that help unlock the site's potential.

GCRTA Incentives

Flexible Ground Lease Terms
GCRTA is willing to negotiate ground lease terms which both provide market-facing financial compensation to GCRTA for its land and also provide flexibility on payment timing to facilitate a successful development.

Additional site control options may be considered to facilitate project financing and development.

City of Cleveland Incentives

Residential Tax Abatement
The City of Cleveland offers tax abatement to qualified projects as an incentive to help encourage and spur investment across all its neighborhoods. For more information, visit the **City of Cleveland Residential Tax Abatement webpage.**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be utilized on large scale real estate development and renovation projects that create and retain jobs and housing units in the City of Cleveland. Terms up to 30 years, 100% of the increase in non-school real property taxes. Program typically used for mixed use, office, and industrial projects with total project costs greater than $5,000,000. For more information, visit the **City of Cleveland's TIF Strategy webpage.**

Port of Cleveland Incentives

Port of Cleveland Capital Lease Program
The Port of Cleveland can enter into a capital lease which grants a sales tax exemption on construction materials for eligible projects. Cuyahoga County sales tax is currently 8%. For more information, visit the **Port's capital lease webpage.**

Port of Cleveland Bond and Loan Financing
The Port of Cleveland can provide bond financing to monetize TIF or PACE-backed improvements through it's A- credit rated Bond Fund. The Port can also provide below market loans with flexible terms to catalytic projects through its new Economic Growth Fund. For more information, visit the **Port's development finance webpage.**

Cuyahoga County Incentives

TOD Loan Program
The TOD Loan Program is designed to catalyze development projects that are located near high-frequency public transit. It offers subordinated long-term, fixed-rate gap financing at below-market rates to developers and businesses that may struggle to secure all necessary capital for urban redevelopment projects. To learn more, visit **Cuyahoga County's TOD webpage.**

Additional Funding Organizations

- Cleveland Development Advisors
- Cleveland Housing Investment Fund

05

RFQ Instructions for Interested Parties



Submission Schedule

Submission Process

- GCRTA and Partners will conduct the developer selection process, and GCRTA will be the final decision-maker regarding any selection. The GCRTA reserves the right to reject any or all responses or to terminate the development negotiations at any time.
- It is the responsibility solely of the respondent to see that its qualifications are received by the date and time stated in this RFQ. No oral submittals will be considered.
- Electronic submissions in PDF format are preferred. Zip files cannot be submitted. Responses may be sent by mail or hand delivered; however, if sent by mail, the responsibility of their timely delivery is wholly upon the respondent. Late responses will not be accepted.

Qualifications must be submitted by 5:00 PM on December 14, 2026.

Selection Schedule/Key Dates

The selection process as part of this RFQ includes the following steps and schedule:

RFQ Process	Anticipated Timeline
RFQ Release Date	October 16, 2026
Question Submission Period	November 16-November 20, 2026
Pre-Submission Meeting	November 18, 2026
Response Deadline	December 14, 2026 (5:00 PM EST)
Submission Review Period	December 15-January 11, 2026
Interview Period	January 18-January 29, 2026
Notification to highest ranked teams	February 2027
GCRTA and Developer Negotiations	February-April 2027
Board of Trustees action on development	April 20, 2027

GCRTA reserves the right to revise this RFQ and the RFQ evaluation process. Such revisions will be announced to all RFQ respondents depending upon the timing of the change.

Submittal Requirements

Each development team responding to this RFQ is required to provide a Statement of Qualifications as described in this section. In order to facilitate review and evaluation by the Selection Committee, all respondents are requested to structure their responses in conformance with the outline presented below. All responses will become the property of the GCRTA and will not be returned. Information of a confidential nature must be noted in the response and will be kept confidential during and after the selection process as permitted by law when respondents properly identify such information.

The information below constitutes the entirety of the Statement of Qualifications. If Score Values marked "Credit/No Credit" are not included or any of the additional sections are not included, that submission may not be scored. **Each project team's submission should be prepared in the following order:**

Score Value	Category	Content
Credit or No Credit	Table of Contents	
Credit or No Credit	Cover Letter	A letter of introduction and interest signed by the principal(s) of respondent firm(s).
10 points	Statement of Understanding	Discuss the significance of the Site and its relationship to the community and surrounding neighborhoods; describe the key opportunities and constraints as you see them from a market and planning perspective; discuss the team's willingness to negotiate a private-public partnership with GCRTA or suggest an alternate structure; the respondent's view of the roles and responsibilities of the partners; and, an understanding of the transformative impact this effort could have in the area.
20 points	Project Concept	The respondent shall provide a written statement of the project concept(s). This section should be used to explain how the Project will advance the principles and requirements outlined in the earlier sections of the Columbus Road RFQ. Submissions should include 2-3 completed projects that demonstrate relevant experience with a similar land area, project scale, scope, and complexity to the Columbus Road Development Site. For each project, respondents should briefly describe the project, its scope and size, the respondent's role, conceptual development and operating proformas and how the project experience is relevant to the proposed project.

10 points	Team Overview	The Team Overview should identify and provide a general description of the firms of the team. Please clearly state the name, address, email and phone number of principal offices of the developer and each member firm of the team; description or form of organization (corporation, partnership, LLC, etc.); statement of years the firm has been in business under current name and a list of the other names under which the firm has operated. Resumes of all key project team members to be involved in the Project are required and should include headshots and outlined responsibilities related to the Project and **must not exceed one page in length**.

30 points	Completed Project Examples	Provide descriptions of 2–3 completed projects from the most recent ten-year period that demonstrate relevant experience with TOD projects, integration into existing community fabric, public-private partnerships, and mixed-use developments similar in nature to the Site.
		• For the completed projects, provide the following information for each project:
		  • Project Team's role
		  • Project summary
		  • Project Images
		  • Innovative Practices (Construction, sustainability, social impact, financing, public health, etc.)
		  • Capital Stack (including sources and uses with source names, award amounts, and dates)
		  • Development timing/phasing/date opened (original schedule/final schedule)
		  • Master planning elements and investment in public amenities
		  • Project and property management
		  • Public/private partnerships
		  • Sustainable and TOD development principles and practices

10 points	Completed Project References	References should be from public agencies, private companies, major tenants or individuals whom the respondent has had relevant experience collaborating with. For the above listed Completed Project Examples provide three (3) references, including their name and contact information.
20 points	Financial Information and Capacity	Provide supporting documentation that the development entity has the financial capacity to implement the development project. The GCRTA Partners recognize the sensitive nature of the financial information requested in this RFQ. Requested financial information includes: • Financial Narrative: outline the approach to project funding including construction loans, senior lenders, tax credits (Historic and/or Low Income) and tax abatement. • Letters from the developers' lenders, equity sources and other financial partners attesting to the developer's financial capacity to undertake this Project. • Information describing whether the development entity or any named individual in the proposed Project is involved in any litigation or other disputes that could result in a financial settlement having a materially adverse effect on the ability to execute this Project, and if so, describing the nature of those disputes • Information describing whether the development entity or any named individual in the project has ever filed for bankruptcy or had projects that have been foreclosed, and if so, describing the dates and circumstances.

Submission Process

All responses will become the property of the GCRTA and will not be returned. Qualifications shall be submitted electronically in a searchable .pdf format and should be emailed to AssetRedevelopment@clevelandohio.gov no later than **5:00 PM on December 14, 2026**. Respondents are solely responsible for ensuring that their qualifications are received by the date and time specified in this RFQ. No oral submissions or ZIP files will be accepted. Late responses will not be accepted.

Evaluation Process

The RFQ invites qualified real estate development teams to submit responses describing in detail their technical, management, and financial qualifications to design, finance, permit, construct, and close out the future project. An Evaluation Team comprised of representatives from GCRTA, the City of Cleveland, County Planning, and the Port of Cleveland will review and rank all responses based on the Submittal Requirements described above. The Evaluation Team will make recommendations to GCRTA and the GCRTA Board of Trustees, which will make the final selection.

Development Agreement

Negotiations with the developer and GCRTA will begin immediately after their selection. The Development Agreement will establish timeframes, responsibilities, critical path items and the process for decision making. If selected as the finalist, GCRTA may require a security deposit from the developer. The deposit will be refundable upon compliance with milestones agreed to in the Development Agreement. Failure to reach an agreed upon Development Agreement or failure to provide a security deposit will result in the GCRTA rejecting and terminating the developer's proposal and selection. Execution of a Development Agreement requires the approval of the GCRTA Board of Trustees. Approval of the Development Agreement by the GCRTA Board of Trustees does not exempt the developer from meeting all requirements of the City of Cleveland and other requirements.

Developers are cautioned not to undertake any activities or actions to promote or advertise their submittal, other than with GCRTA staff as described in this RFQ. After the release of this RFQ, developers and their representatives are not permitted to make any direct or indirect contact with employees of the GCRTA Partners or the media on the subject of this RFQ except in the course of GCRTA sponsored presentations. Violation of these rules is grounds for disqualification of the development proposal and team.

Inclusion on the GCRTA and City of Cleveland's Qualified Developer List

Through GCRTA and the City of Cleveland ("City"), responding Project Teams may be selected to be on the Qualified List as a Qualified Developer eligible to commence negotiations on other City or GCRTA owned sites. Inclusion of a Qualified Developer on the Qualified List will mean only that the GCRTA and the City may commence negotiations with that Qualified Developer regarding a site. GCRTA or the City will send a written notification to commence negotiations if a Qualified Developer is matched to a site.

Inclusion of Qualified Developers on the Qualified List does not guarantee that any Qualified Developer will be selected to develop a site or sites. Inclusion of Qualified Developers on the Qualified List will not create any rights on the Qualified Developer's part. GCRTA and the City will publish the Qualified List on its website.

All determinations in connection with this RFQ (including, but not limited to, any determinations regarding the experience, capability, capacity, financial resources of any Applicant or regarding the addition of Qualified Developers to the Qualified List or removal of Qualified Developers from the Qualified List) shall be at the sole discretion of GCRTA and the City.

GCRTA and the City reserve the right to discontinue the Qualified List at any time. Inclusion of a Qualified Developer on the Qualified List does not necessarily relieve such Qualified Developer from any City required reviews if such Qualified Developer is ultimately selected to receive a site or sites. Each Applicant has a continuing obligation, prior to and after placement on the Qualified List, to update the GCRTA and the City regarding any material changes to information that such Applicant has provided within 30 days of any such material changes, including, but not limited to material changes to information regarding investigations, subpoenas, and changes of Principal(s). Failure of any Applicant to update GCRTA and the City on such material changes may result in the Applicant's disqualification from consideration for inclusion on the Qualified List or, if the Applicant is already on the Qualified List, the removal of the Applicant from the Qualified List. GCRTA and the City reserves the right to utilize the Qualified List for purposes each deems fit.

GCRTA Discretion and Authority (Terms and Conditions)

1. GCRTA reserves the right to reject any and all RFQ respondents at any time, to waive minor irregularities, and to terminate any negotiations implied in this RFQ or initiated subsequent to it.
2. GCRTA reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted, and to request additional information from any respondent.
3. GCRTA reserves the right to revise this RFQ and the RFQ evaluation process. Note: Such revisions will be announced to all RFQ respondents depending upon the timing of the change.
4. GCRTA reserves the right to award any contract to the next most qualified respondent, if the successful respondent does not execute within a specified deadline a Development Agreement contract after selection of a preferred developer.
5. GCRTA will determine from the information submitted in the responses, the most qualified developer or development team to meet the stated duties as evaluated under the criteria set forth herein.
6. The issuance of the RFQ and the receipt and evaluation of submissions do not obligate the GCRTA to select a developer and/or enter into an agreement.
7. Any submission does not constitute business terms under any eventual agreement.
8. GCRTA will not pay any costs incurred in responding to this RFQ.
9. GCRTA may cancel this process without liability at any time prior to the execution of any agreement.
10. GCRTA has the ability to award a contract to multiple developers, depending on the developer's area of expertise or specialization.
11. Any contract entered into between GCRTA and a developer or development team is subject to final approval and concurrence by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Board of Trustees of the GCRTA.
12. All information (Non-financial) submitted during the RFQ process will remain confidential until a Development Agreement with the successful proposer is approved by the GCRTA Board of Trustees. Financial information will remain confidential in accordance with State of Ohio law.

Questions and Contact Information

Questions regarding this RFQ process must be directed in email to the contact below. The GCRTA Partners will respond to all questions in an RFQ Addendum(s). The deadline for submitting questions to GCRTA shall be **November 20, 2026**. Questions and inquiries regarding all aspects of this RFQ should be directed to:

Asset Redevelopment Team
Department of Development, City of Cleveland
601 Lakeside Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
Phone: (216) 664-7326
Email: AssetRedevelopment@clevelandohio.gov

Do not make inquiries or send questions to any other individual except the team listed above.