



Request for Expressions of Interest (“RFEI”) Fleisher Art Memorial Parking Lot Joint Venture

Executive Summary

The Fleisher Art Memorial is seeking a partner to co-develop a half-acre parking lot it owns in the Bella Vista neighborhood. The intent of the development is to generate income for Fleisher, provide additional space for Fleisher’s use, and enable a developer to make economically productive use of all land not utilized by Fleisher. This RFEI is designed to provide Fleisher’s board and staff with insight on the universe of potential development partners with interest in the space as the first step in the process of selecting a partner. While understanding potential partners’ basic concepts for the space is a component of this initial phase of selection, finding the partner who is the “right fit” – in particular a partner who understands and values Fleisher’s mission and culture – is the main objective, rather than selecting a specific building plan or settling on the economics of a transaction.

Fleisher Background

Our Mission, Vision, and Values

Fleisher’s mission is to make art accessible to everyone, regardless of economic means, background, or artistic experience. Every year, more than 17,000 people of all ages experience the transformative power of art by participating in our classes, workshops, exhibitions, and community-based programs.

Founded in 1898, we are one of the country’s oldest nonprofit community art schools and are committed to advancing the vision of our founder, Samuel S. Fleisher, who believed that art is one of society’s greatest assets and equalizers, and from the doorway of his Graphic Sketch Club, “invited the world to come and learn art.”

Fleisher’s core values are rooted in the ideals of Samuel Fleisher:

The Artist in Us All — Within every individual are the ingredients for original artistic expression.

Art is a Pathway to Fulfillment — An individual’s ability to use art is a vital means for emotional and intellectual exploration and growth.

Art Enriches the Community — By nurturing each individual’s creative potential, we aim to provide social, cultural, and economic benefits to the community as a whole.

Goals for the Joint Venture

Fleisher's objectives in pursuing the development of its parking lot are as follows:

- Generate maximum revenue to support Fleisher's mission. This may come in the form of up-front payment, recurring lease or performance payments, or some combination of the two. There is not necessarily a preference among these options.
- Provide usable space for Fleisher's core activities. While exact square footage and build-out requirements have not yet been determined, it is possible that Fleisher would seek to preserve at least a small portion of the footprint of the parking lot for its own usage. Fleisher will also require use of at least some parking capacity either on site or nearby, particular during the highest volume hours for the organization, which currently are evenings Monday-Thursday and Saturdays during the day.
- Maintain ownership of the land. As an institution with a long history and a long view toward the future, it is critical that Fleisher maintain ultimate ownership of the parking lot parcel. However, Fleisher would entertain long (99yr) ground lease proposals to allow a joint venture partner to capture economic value.
- Link development to Fleisher's mission. While it is understood that the highest and best use of the parking lot site may not be for art making or educational uses directly, it would be a positive if a proposed development utilized linkage to Fleisher as an integral part of its identity and value proposition. For example, if rental housing is proposed, the ideal proposal would include opportunities for residents to utilize Fleisher as among the core amenities of the development. If a school is proposed, bringing Fleisher into the curriculum to provide art education and exposure would be a positive. Etc.
- Be a good neighbor. Fleisher is highly conscious of its role as a member of the Bella Vista community and strives to ensure that any development has positive effects for the neighborhood. Among other things, this means that the development must be conscious of parking requirements. It is important to note that Fleisher has already undertaken a number of forums to discuss possible development options with community stakeholders, and the results of those forums are reflected in many of the objectives stated here. In particular, the community focused on opportunities to make Fleisher a more obvious and welcome physical presence in the neighborhood – even a gathering place for community activity.
- Create a more apparent “campus” feel on Catharine St. Fleisher owns a number of buildings along Catharine Street, including a former church and several adjoining rowhomes. The cumulative effect of these properties does not convey a clear sense to passers-by that they are moving through a community art institution that is open to them to learn and enjoy art. Ideally the new development would help tie the existing spaces together and project a more coherent and open Fleisher campus.

- Create a connection to Christian Street. Currently the bulk of Fleisher's campus is situated on Catharine Street. There is minimal physical presence on Christian Street, the neighborhood's main thoroughfare. An approach that better identified Fleisher on Christian Street and drew traffic to Fleisher would be desirable.

Partnership Expectations

Fleisher's ideal partner would be one that sees this project as more than a pure development opportunity but also as an opportunity to create a strategic partnership with Fleisher that can serve as the basis for a longer lasting relationship and as a mean to enhance the brand of each business. To accomplish this end, Fleisher is looking for a partner that shares an appreciation of its mission, core values and operational goals and would be willing to work with Fleisher to create a greater mutual impact on the community and our businesses than that which could be accomplished alone. Fleisher welcomes creative ways in which the two organizations can work together to support one another and also serve the social need and the needs and desires of our surrounding community. Given that community input played such an important role in the goals and expectations set out in this Request for Expressions of Interest, our ideal partner have experience with positive community engagement and interested in pursuing such an approach with our stakeholders, including Fleisher's artists and neighbors.

Site Conditions

The subject of this RFEI is the redevelopment of a parking lot site across from the Fleisher's buildings on the 700 block of Catharine Street. The site's legal address is 706-724 Catharine Street. The parking lot is approximately .42 acres (18,500 sf) and connects Catharine Street to Christian Street immediately to the south. The site is 'mid-block' and is flanked on the east and west by typical Philadelphia row houses with residents and businesses. At the southern end of the site, another parking lot is immediately west of the Fleisher site and is owned and operated by the City of Philadelphia.

In addition to the parking lot, Fleisher also owns the adjoining building on Christian St (705-707) which has a land area of 2,272 square feet. There is currently a two story structure on the site that could either be incorporated into a redevelopment or demolished to make way for development.

Given the Fleisher site's somewhat awkward configuration (see Apple or Google maps), conversations have been initiated with Councilman Squilla's office as to whether some portion of the City lot can be included in the project, either by utilizing portions of the City lot to give the site a more regular configuration or by some overbuild of the City lot. Those conversations are in their initial phases. No commitments have been made, nor is it certain that such an accommodation is necessary. However, it is clear – and important to Fleisher as a

member of the Bella Vista community – that such an accommodation would only be possible if 100% of currently available public parking capacity is maintained. Put another way, any development plan, in addition to providing parking spaces required for Fleisher’s use and the use of tenants of the new development, must be net-neutral in terms of publicly available parking in the community.

The site and the adjoining properties along Christian Street are zoned CMX2 which allow mixed residential, commercial, educational and artist/artisanal uses, all within certain design controls. While it is preferable for the site to be developed within the limitations of CMX2 zoning, the unique circumstances of the site and of Fleisher might necessarily lead to discussions about variations from the prescribed zoning. Fleisher is open to such discussions but does not presume at this time to be in support of or in opposition to variations from CMX2 zoning.

The site is proximate to the 9th Street Italian Market. A Business Improvement District has been proposed – but not approved – for the neighborhood and would include the site.

Requirements for Submission

This RFEI is a preliminary round in the selection of a development partner for Fleisher. Specific development proposals are neither requested nor expected at this time. The Fleisher board expects to shortlist a limited number of firms who express interest in the project through this submission, and to ask them to submit further, more detailed information in a second round of requests. For this submission, please provide the following:

- 1) Identification of your firm and its primary business address and contact information
- 2) Identification of the principal of the firm who will be responsible for the project and for all high-level discussions with Fleisher
- 3) A list of all development projects in the Philadelphia region within the past 10 years.
- 4) A list of select development projects outside of the Philadelphia region, within the past 10 years that are relevant to this project
- 5) A portfolio of select projects from the above lists that demonstrate familiarity with the general conditions of this site (e.g., urban neighborhoods, mixed-use projects, scale, urban context, familiarity with art/educational partners). Provide descriptions, including images, of the select projects shown and identify any development partners outside of your firm.
- 6) A short narrative on the firm's experience with non-profit development partners and identification and contact information for those development partners. Include a description of benefits to the non-profit development partner as a result of the development (e.g., financial, improvements to existing facilities, new space).

- 7) Describe any unique issues you have encountered working with non-profit partnerships and how you managed them (e.g., timeliness of decision-making, community input, size of working group).
- 8) A short narrative on any impressions of the site, neighborhood or development trends that you consider relevant at this time to Fleisher or to general issues of development in this area.

Submission Schedule

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Request for Expression Release Date	November 10, 2016
Walking Tour of Fleisher and Q&A Session	December 1, 2016 (10:00 EST)
Submission Deadline	January 16, 2017 (5:00 EST)
Short List Announced	Q2 2017

Following the submission process, responses to this Request for Expressions of Interest will be evaluated based upon the information provided. Fleisher reserves the right to request additional information and/or conduct interviews with those development teams that it determines are the best candidates for the project. Respondents are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing and submitting responses, and for any meetings, negotiations or discussions with Fleisher or its representatives and consultants relating to or arising from this Request for Expressions of Interest.

Submissions should be emailed to executive director Elizabeth Grimaldi at egrimaldi@fleisher.org

Please RSVP for the December 1 walking tour at egrimaldi@fleisher.org by November 28th. The tour will begin at 10 a.m. in Fleisher’s Sanctuary, enter through 719 Catharine Street.