University seeking partnerships for College Avenue Campus

BACKGROUND:
The University of Regina released a request for proposals (RFP) on January 12th, 2016, seeking development partners able to support the College Avenue Campus Renewal Project. This project is the University’s number one capital fundraising priority and is aimed at revitalizing the 100-year-old College Avenue Campus (CAC) to enable it to continue as an economic, educational and cultural hub for the city of Regina.

Through this process, the University is looking for resources to help preserve the unique history of CAC, protect its heritage, and enhance the park landscape that surrounds it. The University is also seeking partners committed to advancing the goals of the University’s Wascana Centre partners.

The University’s campus master planning consultations, conducted jointly with Wascana Centre Authority, identified several parcels of land adjacent to existing CAC facilities for potential future development. The RFP released today seeks proposals for development on three of these parcels (map is included as an appendix to the end of this document). The primary criteria for evaluating these proposals will be:

- the demonstrated synergy of the proposal with the educational, cultural and community programming delivered at the University’s downtown campus;
- the commitment to develop in a manner that protects the heritage of CAC and enhances the surrounding park space;
- the level of financial contribution to the CAC Renewal Project; and
- how effectively the proposed project advances the goals of the University and its Wascana Centre Authority partners.

Applications for use will be limited to proposals for functions consistent with the Mission, Mandate and Values of Wascana Centre Authority. All developers will be required to ensure that proposed developments comply with The Wascana Centre Act and show a commitment to conservation and stewardship of the land, as is expected of all partners in Wascana Centre.
Selected proposals will be subject to applicable planning and development approvals and public consultation requirements of Wascana Centre Authority and its partners, including a public forum to obtain input on the proposal prior to awarding the project.

The University is not expecting to develop all three sites at once and is not obligated to accept proposals for any or all of the sites.

A full copy of the RFP is available upon request. Please call Jim Woytuik, Director, Supply Management Services at 306-585-4126 or e-mail jim.woytuik@uregina.ca for a copy.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. **Why is the University putting out this RFP?**
   - The CAC Renewal Project is the University’s number one capital priority.
   - A significant investment is needed to preserve its historic character and enable it to continue as an economic, educational and cultural hub for Regina.
   - The RFP will help us determine whether there are any new partnership opportunities that leverage the land parcels adjacent to existing CAC facilities to help us advance our goal of renewing CAC and enhancing the surrounding park space.

2. **What kind of proposals are being sought in the RFP and where?**
   - Applications for commercial development will be limited to proposals that demonstrate synergies with CAC including office, educational, cultural, or artistic functions. No other commercial activities will be considered.
   - There are three areas adjacent to existing CAC facilities for potential development, as identified through our joint master planning process with WCA (see map in appendix at the end of this document).
   - Proponents will be asked to present financial contributions for a long-term land lease as well as cite synergies and benefits to all partners in Wascana Centre Authority.
   - Any successful proposal(s) will have to go through all necessary WCA and other development approvals and any required public consultations to ensure all partners are confident in the proposed path forward.
   - We intend any proposed development to be a public process. In fact, we see value in being able to promote our CAC redevelopment and CAC’s contributions to creating a more vibrant city and enhancing Wascana Centre.

3. **What is the primary criteria being used by the University in the RFP process?**
   - The primary criteria for evaluating proposals will be:
     - demonstrated synergy of the proposal with the educational, cultural and community programming delivered at the University’s downtown campus;
     - the commitment to develop in a manner that protects the heritage of CAC and enhances the surrounding park space;
the level of financial contribution to the CAC Renewal Project; and
how effectively the proposed project advances the goals of the University and its
Wascana Centre partners.

4. **Does Wascana Centre Authority approve of the direction the University is taking?**

- Yes, they are supportive of the CAC Renewal Project.
- It is critical to remember that nothing has been decided yet and that this process is meant to enable us to consider potential partnerships.
- Selected proposal(s) will have to go through all necessary WCA and other development approvals and any required public consultations to ensure all Wascana Centre partners are confident in the proposed path forward.

5. **What are the benefits for the community if development proceeds?**

- According to data from Regina Regional Opportunities Commission, the CAC Renewal Project itself is estimated to create approximately 200 jobs in Regina during the life of the construction. And this is only for the specific refurbishment of existing facilities and does not include the economic impact of development of other facilities as contemplated in the RFP.
- Most critically, decommissioning CAC would not only risk the loss of a historic site, but also forgo the significant economic, educational and cultural benefits that CAC programming and services provide the citizens of Regina.
- The units that operate out of CAC serve approximately 8,000 learners per year, host dozens of community and cultural events, and directly contribute $18 million GDP annually to the Saskatchewan economy.
- To lose CAC would be a major blow to our University and our community, so we have to explore every option to ensure it survives.
- A strong cultural sector is important to attracting and retaining skilled workers and companies. Strengthening CAC would enhance its significant role as an educator, creator, space provider, and partner in cultural activities.

6. **The word synergy is used a lot. Can you me an example of the kind of synergies you would hope to see?**

- This could be a number of things:
  - Physical integration of the facility with CAC or Darke Hall, helping with cost avoidance on construction or shared utilities such as heating and cooling.
  - Or, physical integration that benefits both developments, like a shared atrium with Darke Hall, or shared entrances and common spaces.
Joint programming could also be a possibility, whether it is a proposal from another educational institution or a business interested in integrating with us on a leadership training facility.

These are just a few examples. We hope the process actually yields other ideas as well, as we are open to anything that helps us renew CAC and enhance Wascana Centre.

7. How could a new development actually enhance Wascana Centre?

- The mandate of Wascana Centre explicitly notes its role in promoting educational, research, cultural and artistic activities.
- CAC Renewal would allow us to expand services in all those areas, rejuvenating CAC’s role as a hub of educational and cultural activity for all citizens of Regina.
- To lose CAC would forgo those significant benefits, forgoing millions annually in economic activity, and result in fewer educational, artistic and cultural activities.
- In addition, part of the development proposals could be addressing demand for public amenities in that area of Wascana Centre.

8. One of the criteria is that bidders include a financial contribution/donation to CAC. Is this normal practice in an RFP?

- The entire motive for this RFP is to find a partner that will help us renew CAC, which requires a significant financial investment.
- Including this as one of the criteria was identified as a fair and transparent way of measuring the level of commitment of the potential partner and gaining valuable resources for the refurbishment of CAC.
- This will be one among several criteria for evaluating the proposals received.

9. Is this a Public-Private-Partnership (i.e. a P3)?

- No, we are using our traditional procurement method.
- The University will still own and operate all of our existing buildings and programs. And we should be able to expand some of these programs with the renewal of CAC.

10. What kind of investment dollars does the CAC require?

- The initial cost estimates of renewing CAC were estimated at between $50 and $60 million.
- We recognize, however, that many years have passed since these initial estimates were done and that inflation will have made these costs somewhat higher.
- Therefore we are in the process of re-calculating the needs of the facilities and the costs of ensuring CAC survives and thrives for future generations.
Regardless of the result of our new cost estimate, the capital costs of replacing the facility are far exceeded by the long term economic, educational, and cultural benefits for our community of enabling our historic downtown campus to continue operations.

Appendix: Map

The University of Regina is seeking to identify parties interested in all or portions of three potential development sites:

- Site A: Proposed site of roughly two acres to the west of Darke Hall
- Site B: Roughly two-acre site to the east of the College Building
- Site C: Roughly two-acre site between Darke Hall and the Conservatory