

# **REQUEST FOR** **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF  
THE FORMER PRINCETON NURSERIES  
WAREHOUSE BUILDINGS  
AT  
THE MAPLETON PRESERVE  
SOUTH BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**Issued by:**

**Mapleton Preserve Commission  
on behalf of  
Township of South Brunswick  
State of New Jersey**

**ISSUE DATE: April 20, 2017**

**DUE DATE: July 20, 2017**

# **REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER PRINCETON NURSERIES WAREHOUSE BUILDINGS**

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND INTENT**

The Mapleton Preserve Commission ("Commission") is seeking ideas, concepts and information regarding the redevelopment of the former Princeton Nurseries ("Nurseries") Warehouse Buildings ("Warehouses") at the Mapleton Preserve ("Preserve"), located in South Brunswick Township ("Township"), Middlesex County, New Jersey ("NJ"). This Request for Expression of Interest ("RFEI") is to solicit recommendations for the economically self-sustaining redevelopment of the Warehouses into usable structures, while continuing to maintain their historic significance and the cultural landscape, of which they are major contributing elements. Respondents are invited to submit a response that describes their vision of the proposed use or uses of the Warehouses and how the envisioned uses will relate to the Preserve in conjunction with the surrounding neighborhood. The information and recommendations obtained from responses to this RFEI may result in the development and issuance of a Request for Proposals ("RFP") for the Warehouses, at the sole discretion of the Commission. However, there is no assurance or certainty that the Commission shall issue an RFP for the redevelopment of the Warehouses.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The former Nurseries began in 1913 with the purchase by the Flemer family of four farms along Mapleton Road, within the Village of Kingston, NJ. As the family acquired additional land in subsequent years, it became one of the largest commercial nurseries in the world. The Nurseries were well known and held a nationally significant place in the history of commercial horticulture as one of the most innovative nurseries that created many notable cultivars. In the 1960s the Nurseries expanded with a second site near Allentown, NJ; by 1995 the Kingston Site ceased to operate. In 2005 the historical heart of the Nurseries land was preserved in an agreement by the State of NJ Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP"), the Township, Princeton University and William Flemer's Sons. Subsequently, in 2008, the Preserve and portions of the adjacent properties were designated as the "Princeton Nurseries Historic District" on the NJ Register of Historic Places.

Oversight of the Preserve is provided by the Mapleton Preserve Commission. The Commission consists of three representatives from the DEP (one each from the Park Service, the Green Acres Program and the Historic Preservation Office) and three members appointed by the Township of South Brunswick. The Commission is dedicated to the preservation, restoration, development and maintenance of the historic, cultural, natural and scenic resources of the former Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site and their interpretation for the education and enjoyment of the public.

## **3.0 SETTING AND SITE**

The Preserve is located in South Brunswick Township, on the outer edges of the Village of Kingston, approximately a half mile from the shops of the historic Village's main street.

Considered within the greater Princeton market (downtown Princeton is approximately 3 miles away), the area is characterized as a healthy business environment that offers an appealing work environment and desirable quality of life. Although proximate to the Princeton Forrestal development and the Route One corridor, the subject property is surrounded by preserved open spaces, residential and historic places with numerous connecting multi-use paths, which are shared by runners, walkers and bicyclists. The paths also offer opportunities for hiking and birding, as well as access to some of the region's most ecologically sensitive and culturally rich resources, including the Delaware & Raritan ("D&R") Canal State Park, the Kingston Greenbelt and Lake Carnegie.

The Preserve consists of 53-acres which include fields, paved areas (former truck and rail loading areas) and the former nursery operations area that contains the two (2) subject Warehouse complexes (former bare-root storage buildings), the former Propagation House (including eight (8) attached greenhouses) and the former shipping office. The Preserve abuts the former Nurseries administration/education building which has been renovated and now serves as the headquarters of the D&R Canal State Park. Utilities including water, gas, electric, sewer and telecom are accessible from Mapleton Road. Access to the subject site is from Mapleton Road.

This unique Preserve, the core of a historically significant cultural landscape, provides extraordinary opportunities for horticultural and natural resource conservation, education, interpretation, and passive recreation for the benefit of all.

#### **4.0 REDEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

There have been many suggestions regarding the future use of the Warehouses such as storage, vertical farming, restaurant, museum, education, recreation, wedding/event venue, performing arts center, studio/gallery space, etc. The objective of this RFEI is to assess if there are viable options for the adaptive reuse/restoration of the Warehouses in a manner that is economically self-sustaining and also sympathetic to the retention of the historical elements of the Preserve's buildings and the cultural landscape. The current Goals and Objectives for redevelopment of the site are set forth in the Mapleton Preserve Management Plan, Cultural Landscape Report and Management Agreement, all of which are available for review upon request.

Respondents should provide financial models and strategies that demonstrate the ability to reach the redevelopment goals and objectives, including the identification of potential funding gaps (if any) that may occur with the redevelopment. Envisioned uses may incorporate the two (2) Warehouse complexes, a single Warehouse complex or a section(s) of a Warehouse complex. There are five (5) sections in the larger Warehouse complex and two (2) sections in the smaller Warehouse complex. The Commission is willing to consider offers that include re-use of other areas within the Preserve including the other structures, the paved areas and the fields.

#### **5.0 REDEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

The following factors will be considered in the review of any submission for the redevelopment of the Nurseries:

- Compatibility with park use and preserving the peace and serenity of the Mapleton Preserve.
- Minimizing impact to the Princeton Nurseries Historic District.
- Adaptive reuse and restoration/rehabilitation (in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards).
- Restoration of the existing buildings.
- Avoidance of new building construction with the exception of agricultural structures (such as hoop houses) in field areas which may be acceptable.
- Compatibility of proposal with the cultural landscape of the former Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site.
- How the structures will contribute to a historic district.
- Environmental impact.
- Financial benefits.
- Compatibility of the proposed uses with the historic qualities of the building(s).
- Parking and traffic flow.

It should be noted that the Preserve is located on lands jointly owned by the State of New Jersey and South Brunswick Township. Therefore, the traditional municipal land use planning and approval requirements do not apply. The Preserve is governed by the State Government’s approval process for proposed land uses and development. In addition, ADA or other applicable code compliance having an impact on any one historic building, must be uniformly applied to all buildings. Further, as the Preserve is part of a NJ Register of Historic Places listed Historic District, any proposed alternative use requires conformance with provisions of the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act, the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, found at: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>. Rehabilitation work completed as per the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation may be eligible for 20% Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit if the historic district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places is anticipated, and is expected to occur in or about September of 2017.

## **6.0 REQUIRED INFORMATION**

All responses received, and any information contained therein, are subject to disclosure in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Records Act (“OPRA”). A respondent may designate specific information as not subject to disclosure pursuant to the exceptions to OPRA found at N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1 or the common law Right to Know, when the respondent has a good faith legal and/or factual basis for such assertion. In the event of any challenge to the responder’s assertions of confidentiality with which the Commission does not concur, the responder shall be notified and shall be solely responsible for defending its designation. All proposals shall become the property of the Commission once submitted.

In accordance with the provisions of this RFEI, you are requested to provide a project description and narrative that includes four elements:

1. Compelling vision of your concept;

2. Building use proposal for each Warehouse or section of a Warehouse in which you are interested;
3. Supporting Financial, Business and Management Concepts including financial information on the organization and the proposed project; a description of the estimated capital investment needed to meet code and redevelopment guidelines as well as the proposed usage; and the identification of potential funding gaps (if any) that may occur with the redevelopment; and
4. Other factors not accounted for in the RFEI that support the respondent's submission.

## **7.0 SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL**

All respondents are required to limit their proposals to twenty (20) pages or less at no smaller than 12 point type. Excess pages and extraneous materials or appendices will detract from the overall quality of the response.

Respondents must submit by the submission deadline four (4) original paper copies and one (1) electronic copy of proposals to:

Mapleton Preserve Commission  
c/o Township of South Brunswick  
Attn.: Law Department  
540 Ridge Road  
P.O. Box 190  
Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852  
email: lward@sbtj.net

If you have questions or require clarification on any aspect of this RFEI, please forward the request(s) via email to Mapleton Preserve Commission. There is no deadline for submitting questions. However, responses to questions could require up to five (5) business days. A concerted effort will be made to answer all questions in a timely manner, but the issuance of answers prior to the deadline for submission of responses to this RFEI cannot be guaranteed.

The Commission will not be responsible for any expenses in the preparation and/or presentation of the proposals and oral interviews, if any, or for other disclosure of any information or material received in connection with the solicitation, regardless of circumstances. The Commission reserves the right to request additional information or clarification, if necessary. This RFEI is not intended to result in the selection of any respondent's proposal. For-profit organizations, individuals, governmental agencies, not-for-profit and educational institutions are welcome to submit proposals.

Upon submission of a response to this RFEI, the Respondent acknowledges and consents to the following conditions relative to the submission, review and consideration of its proposal:

- All costs incurred by the Respondent in connection with responding to this RFEI shall be borne solely by the Respondent.

- The Commission reserves the right (in its sole judgment) to reject any Respondent that submits incomplete responses to this RFEI, or a response that is not responsive to the requirements of this RFEI.
- The Commission reserves the right, without prior notice, to supplement, amend, or otherwise modify this RFEI, or otherwise request additional information.
- No Proposals or Responses shall be returned.
- The Commission may request Respondents to send representatives at a date and time mutually convenient to the parties for interviews.
- Any and all Proposals and Responses not received by the Commission by 4:00 p.m. Prevailing Time on the date due may be rejected.
- Neither the Commission, the Township or the State, nor their respective staff, consultants, volunteers or advisors, shall be liable for any claims or damages resulting from the solicitation, preparation or submissions of the Proposal and Response.
- The Commission may waive any technical non-conformance with the terms of this RFEI.
- The Commission may suspend or terminate the process described in this RFEI at any time (in its sole discretion.) If terminated, the Commission may determine to commence a new process or exercise any other rights provided under applicable law without any obligation to the Respondents.

## **8.0 OPTIONAL SITE VISIT**

Interested parties are invited to attend a site visit on **May 10, 2017**. The site visit will begin at 10:00 AM at the D&R Canal Park Headquarters, 145 Mapleton Road, Princeton, NJ 08540. The visit will include a tour of the site and interior inspection of all the buildings located within the Preserve. Please RSVP at [lward@sbtnj.net](mailto:lward@sbtnj.net).

## **9.0 SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

All responses to this RFEI are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on **July 20, 2017**.

## **10.0 EVALUATION OF SUBMISSIONS**

After expiration of the response period, all responses to this RFEI shall be reviewed by the Commission, with technical assistance from:

- a. NJ DEP Green Acres;
- b. NJ Historic Preservation Office;
- c. NJ Office of Leases and Concessions;
- d. The Township; and
- e. The State Park Service.

At the conclusion of the review of all responses to this RFEI, the Commission shall make a written recommendation to the Township and the DEP on how to proceed in order to preserve, restore and make use of the buildings/structures/facilities and/or fields, either by:

- a. Working directly with one or more interested non-profit organizations and/or governmental entities; and/or
- b. Issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for development.

The DEP and the Township must both agree with either the recommendation of the Commission, or otherwise agree on a plan to allow reuse of all or any portion of the buildings/structures/facilities and/or fields.

### **11.0 POST-EVALUATION PROCESS**

If the Commission recommends working directly with one or more non-profit organizations and/or governmental entities, and said recommendation is approved by both the Township and the DEP, a lease, license, or other contract will be developed to govern the implementation of the recommended proposal.

- a. If the proposal is to be implemented under a lease, the lease must be executed with at least one such organization/entity within three (3) months of approval by the State House Commission.
- b. If the proposal is to be implemented through a license or other contract, the license or other contract must be executed with at least one such organization/entity within three (3) months of approval of the recommendation by the Township and the DEP.

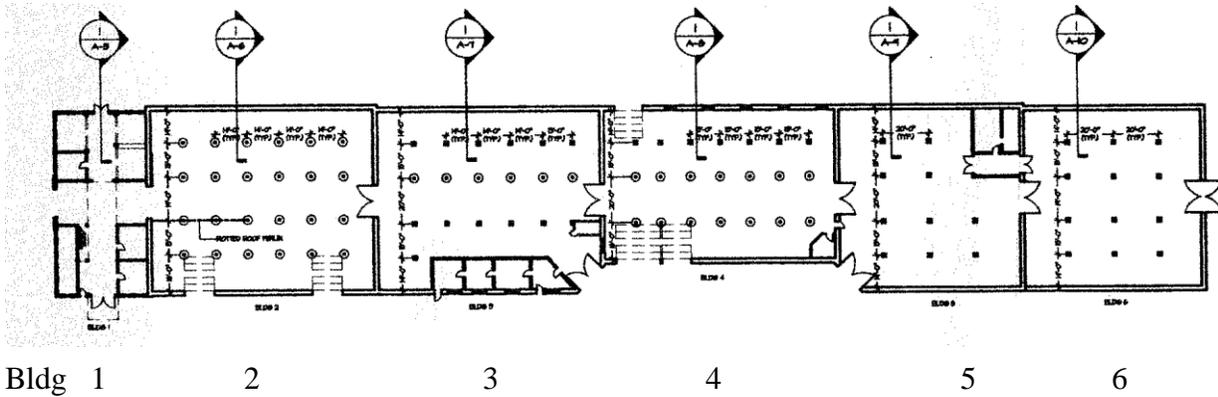
If the Commission recommends issuing one or more RFPs for development, one or more RFPs must be issued for use of any or all of the building(s)/structure(s)/facilities and/or fields as recommended by the Commission. The RFP process will include issuance of the RFP, at least a sixty (60) day response time and subsequent evaluation similar to the process described above for evaluation of responses to this RFEI.

# MAPLETON PRESERVE

## Summary of Warehouse Areas and Dimensions

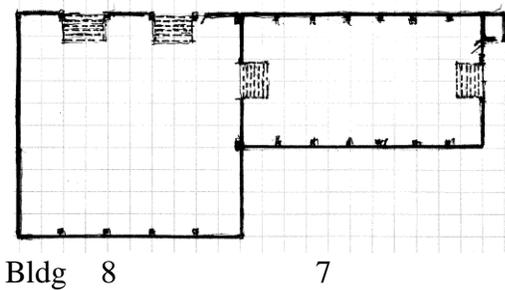
### LARGE WAREHOUSE COMPLEX:

	W x L	Interior sf	Height
Building 1	40' x 82'	3,120 sf	11'-11"
Building 2	82' x 98'	7,760 sf	15'-0" to 20'-0"
Building 3	82' x 98'	7,760 sf	15'-0" to 20'-0"
Building 4	68' x 102'	6,565 sf	13'-0" to 20'-0"
Building 5	80' x 80'	6,120 sf	13'-0" to 20'-0"
Building 6	80' x 82'	6,006 sf	13'-0" to 21'-0"



### SMALL WAREHOUSE COMPLEX:

	W x L	Interior sf	Height
Building 7	60' x 110'	6,600 sf	18' clear
Building 8	100' x 100'	10,000 sf	18' clear



## Photographs



LARGE WAREHOUSE COMPLEX from east



LARGE WAREHOUSE COMPLEX from west



SMALL WAREHOUSE COMPLEX (East end) Bldg 7



SMALL WAREHOUSE COMPLEX (middle) Bldgs 7 + 8



SMALL WAREHOUSE COMPLEX (west end) Bldgs 7 + 8