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Cleveland Business

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Cleveland Heights considers major development project

By **Jay Miller**

Cleveland Heights is looking for help developing a prime piece of real estate that has sat dormant for decades.

The eastern suburb has released what's called a **request for qualifications and preliminary development proposals** for the "Top of the Hill," a four-acre site at the top of Cedar Hill at the corner of Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, one-and-a-half miles from University Circle. It is at the west end of the Cedar-Fairmount retail district, which includes a Dave's Supermarket, Nighthtown restaurant and Zoss the Swiss Baker.

City manager Tanisha Briley told *Crain's* the city is looking for a partner to develop the site in collaboration with the city government and its residents, who have in the past been active and even obstructionist when their opinions have not been taken into account.

"We're not looking for pretty pictures of what they may build," Briley said. "Instead, we want a team that can work with. Cleveland Heights is a very engaged community."

Cleveland Heights residents in 2010 and 2011 actively opposed some of the plans discussed for the redevelopment of the Oakwood Country Club, which straddles Cleveland Heights and South Euclid. The South Euclid portion has been redeveloped with a shopping center anchored by a Walmart store. A school is planned for the Cleveland Heights portion.

"We understand that Cleveland Heights is a civically engaged community, so we're looking for a partner who isn't shy about that so we can come up with something together," Briley said. "It's not far-fetched to say we're interested in mixed use, something that matches the character of the neighborhood, the authenticity and urban fabric of the already pedestrian-friendly, bike-friendly, transit-friendly community that already exists here. It's one of the original walkable neighborhoods."

The site was home to the 1913 Edgehill Apartments, an eight-story residential building that was converted to a hospital in 1946. It was the home of Doctors Hospital until the late-1960s, when the doctors who operated the hospital built Hillcrest Hospital in Mayfield Heights.

The city will be asking developers for something that provides a visual and symbolic entrance to the city, will help catalyze additional development and improves parking and traffic conditions in the area.

The west end of Cleveland Heights is the oldest part of the suburb. The nearby residential Ambler Heights

Historic District was developed in the first decade of the 20th century.

The city's proposal says the core of the site is zoned for mixed use, but Briley said the city expects to create a planned development overlay district, which would allow development that includes one or more uses not otherwise permitted by existing zoning. Briley said the city anticipates the project would include some residential units.

"The city is really trying to keep an open mind about the site and not place any limitations on people who might respond," said Dennis McAndrew, a principal in Silverlode Consulting, a Cleveland economic development consultancy.

The deadline for proposals is Monday, May 23. Briley said the city expects to bring a partner to city council by the end of July, after public hearings.

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