



## **Request for Proposals to Purchase and Develop the Elmwood District Redevelopment Project Area**

### **I. Introduction**

The City of Yorktown seeks proposals from qualified developers for the Elmwood District Redevelopment Project Area.

This Request for Proposals contains requirements for the proposal and describes the

- Development opportunity, and
- Developer selection criteria and process.

The city seeks a developer who can create a sustainable, economically vibrant, distinctive district that encourages cross-generational interactions and takes maximum advantage of the surrounding commercial, educational, and cultural resources; and acknowledges the site's prime access to mass transit.

The City of Yorktown's redevelopment plan for the Elmwood District permits:

- New construction of office, retail, residential, and mixed-use buildings;
- Rehabilitation of existing buildings; and
- Provision of new community and recreational facilities.

The primary goals for the area's revitalization are to:

- Create housing that is attainable to a mix of income groups (very low-income, low-income, and moderate income) in addition to market rate housing;
- Create employment opportunities for neighborhood and city residents and increase the number of jobs offering a living wage;
- Attract retail businesses that serve the needs—both products and price points—of neighborhood residents;
- Develop the city's first EcoDistrict by promoting equity, resilience, and climate protection;
- Contribute to the city's plan for decarbonization by investing not only in green buildings, but also in net zero buildings;
- Generate tax revenues for the city;
- Create or preserve public and private amenities that enhance retired/longtime residents' ability to age in place;
- Address existing residents' concerns about gentrification;
- Create public spaces for active and passive recreation;
- Address blight caused by dilapidated buildings and vacant lots; and
- Preserve legally designated historic sites.

#### **Important Thresholds:**

Developer rate of return:

**Minimum 13.5%**

City required return:

**Minimum \$9.5 M** in tax  
revenue over 10 years

Affordable Housing threshold:

**Minimum 10%**

**A NOTE ON BLIGHT:** In real estate and planning, blight refers to deteriorated property that can include abandoned buildings, vacant lots, or a legacy of disinvestment. However, blight also has been used as a coded word to describe people rather than property. In this form, the designation of 'blighted' has been used to justify the destruction of entire communities and displacement of its residents, often marginalized people of color.

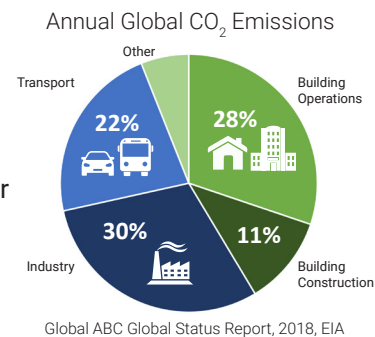
Starting in the 1960s, people who shaped cities referred to this process as urban renewal. It is important that when we discuss blight we are aware of this bias, and we do not perpetuate historic and contemporary misuse of the term.

## Sustainable Development

Yorktown is an older city established before the dominance of the automobile, so many of its neighborhoods, in their prime, were living examples of sustainable development before the term was in common usage. The neighborhoods were compact, walkable, cross-generational communities, providing a range of housing types and price point options, robust neighborhood-serving retail, local employment opportunities, sites for civic and social congregation, and access to public transit infrastructure.

The city asks that proposals meet the following three requirements:

1. **Achieve Green Building Certification.** Buildings generate nearly 40 percent of annual global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, with both building construction and building operations contributing to this impact (see diagram to the right). In accordance with Yorktown's commitment to carbon neutrality, all new and renovated buildings in the city must achieve certification under Yorktown's green building standard. As a result, buildings will use less energy and less water in their operations, use materials efficiently, and generate less waste than conventional buildings.



2. **Include Net Zero Buildings.** Developers will determine what percentage of new and renovated buildings will be net zero energy buildings. This investment will consist of construction of solar panels, or photovoltaic (PV) arrays, on the roofs of all buildings (except the Q-Mart which has a green roof) and parking structures to generate electricity for the district. Any balance of electricity needed to operate the district will be purchased off-site from the Yorktown Wind Turbine Farm. These upfront costs will be paid back over the lifetime of the buildings through operations savings.
3. **Create the city's first EcoDistrict.** An EcoDistrict is a comprehensive framework to guide urban and community development from planning to implementation. It's a powerful way to move projects from vision to reality, and puts equity, resilience, and climate protection at the heart of every decision. Teams will identify key strategies to pursue under all three pillars and demonstrate which metrics help them achieve those objectives.

## Affordable Housing

City policy requires that a minimum of 10 percent of all housing be designated affordable, but developers are invited to exceed that threshold. Developers must consider which mix of income levels they aim to support with their housing supply. In Elmwood, building types dictate what types of affordable housing can be provided.

- **Rehabbed existing buildings: very low-income housing** for families, seniors, and individuals on very fixed incomes.
- **Podium apartments: low-income housing** for families and individuals with jobs that make saving difficult.

- **Townhouses: moderate (workforce) housing** for people who provide services to the community: firefighters, police, teachers.
- **Luxury condos: only market-rate housing.**

The city does not specify which types of affordable housing be included to meet or exceed the 10 percent minimum.

### Job Creation in Elmwood

The city is seeking proposals that will generate employment, enabling neighborhood and city residents to build careers, develop skills, and potentially live near where they work. The city acknowledges that the redevelopment of Elmwood will generate construction jobs that will benefit the city, but responses to this RFP will be evaluated on the creation of potential permanent jobs.

While many of the new residents of Elmwood will keep their existing jobs, the city wants to see new jobs proximate to the new residences in Elmwood. If many of the new jobs can go to existing or new residents of Elmwood, then they are more likely to be able to walk, bike, or take the bus to their place of employment, which can provide considerable financial savings and increase quality of life. New jobs will be generated by all building types and land uses, including open space. The city categorizes new jobs as follows:

Job Category	Description	Examples of Position	Potential Housing Choice (Assumes a one-person household)*
Part-time entry-level	Part-time positions that do not require a degree. Majority of these jobs in Elmwood will pay hourly for flexible work but do not offer benefits.	Cashier, janitorial, mail room, concierge	Apartments in Rehabbed Buildings: Affordable Units (Very Low Income)
Full-time entry-level	Full-time positions that do not require a degree. Majority of these jobs in Elmwood will be salaried with benefits.	Cashier, deli counter/ butcher, stocking, administrative support, research associate	Podium: Affordable Units (Low Income)
Mid-paying	Full-time salaried positions with benefits that require education or experience levels higher than entry-level.	Store manager, office manager,, nurse, police officer, teacher	Townhouses: Affordable Units (Moderate Income) and some market-rate units
High-paying	Full-time salaried positions with benefits, often supervisory or executive, that require education or experience levels higher than mid-paying.	Store general manager, lawyer, department head, executive director of nonprofit	Market-rate housing in Podiums and Townhouses and Luxury Condos

\* Note: most households have more than one person. For example, a four-person household might include two parents - one with a high-paying job and one with a mid-paying job and a teenager with a part-time entry-level job.

## II. The Development Opportunity

The City, community, and selected respondent have an opportunity to create a development that is truly of benefit to the people of Elmwood. Pertinent information to inform the RFP respondents is listed below.

### A. Location

The redevelopment site is within the Elmwood District, to the northwest of downtown Yorktown.

### B. The Elmwood District and Surrounding Area

- The Elmwood District redevelopment site is an approximately 5.5-block area (11.75 acres) within a 15-minute walk to downtown Yorktown.
- The site is bordered immediately on the north by residential neighborhoods. Two- and three-story multifamily dwellings were converted into moderately priced condos and rental units.

- One block farther north, above Oak Street, is a well-established, single-family residential area of more than 800 residences. Residents include retirees on fixed incomes who have lived in the neighborhood for decades, many Yorktown University faculty families, and upper-middle-income couples and families who recently moved into the neighborhood to take advantage of the value-priced single-family housing stock.
- Grace Memorial Church, with its entrance on Oak Street, provides a transition from both residential neighborhoods to the site.
- Five blocks to the northeast are Yorktown's newly renovated and high-performing public schools: an elementary school and a high school.
- To the west and immediately adjacent to the site is low-priced multifamily rental housing in three- and four-story apartment buildings.
- Yorktown University is five blocks to the west of the site, on the other side of the highway, offering Elmwood District residents and workers many cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities, including museums and theaters.
- The site is bordered on the south by York Street. Across York Street are three- and four-story partially occupied office buildings with limited ground-floor retail uses, including a medical supply store, check-cashing service, donut shop, and locally owned motorcycle supply store.
- To the east of the site, at the intersection of Cherry Street and 11th Avenue, is a newly rehabilitated 70,000-square-foot, three-story YMCA with extensive sports and fitness facilities and programs for adults and children.
- Farther south on 11th Avenue and York Street is a new five-story City Employment Development Services office where city residents can apply for unemployment benefits and seek job counseling.

### **C. Getting to Elmwood by Automobile and Mass Transit**

- The Elmwood District is centrally located and readily accessible by many modes of transportation. Convenient public transportation is available, including YART—the area's rail and subway transit system—and numerous bus lines on York Street. Bike lanes on York connect downtown to the Yorktown University neighborhood.
- The Elmwood District borders on York Street, a primary east–west thoroughfare connecting downtown to Yorktown University. Traffic counts on York Street are 10 times greater than those on Elm, Cherry, and Oak streets.
- Ninth Avenue bisects the site and is the primary north–south thoroughfare, with traffic counts four times those of 8th and 10th avenues. Before the Elmwood District's decline, 9th Avenue was served by a streetcar, but it is now served by a city bus route.
- Access to the highway is three blocks west of the site. The highway connects Elmwood to western sections of the city and the suburbs.

### **D. What Zoning Uses Will the City Permit in the Elmwood District?**

The redevelopment area is zoned for office, retail, and residential uses, which can be mixed within a block or programmed as mixed-use in new or rehabbed buildings.

### **E. The Elmwood District Today**

In the mid-1990s, a building boom hit downtown Yorktown, attracting residents and businesses. The city has continued to grow at a brisk pace. Home prices and rents are rising throughout the city, and local leaders are eyeing Elmwood's vacant properties as a solution to their housing problem.

Currently, Elmwood has a variety of multifamily housing options, with rents lower than average for the city, but housing prices are rising in the neighborhood. The rising prices have pushed housing from low-income prices to mid-market or market rate.

The once-vibrant core is lacking in key amenities. There is no grocery store and very little retail in a walkable area, and many remaining businesses are in disrepair.

Today, the 5.5-block redevelopment site for the Elmwood District consists of four remaining buildings in various states of disrepair, owned by the City of Yorktown:

- The York Dry Goods Building is a vacant department store. Designed by a famous architect, it is historically significant and thus cannot be demolished.
- The former Phoenix Hotel is currently functioning as a homeless shelter and operated by the Grace Memorial Church.
- The two Victorian Row buildings do not meet current fire or building codes. Twelve artists have low-rent leases with the city to rent studio space in the buildings, but the leases are due to expire soon.
- The Franklin Preparatory Academy foundation site, adjacent to Grace Memorial Church, has served for several years as a makeshift skate park.

#### F. City Funding Available for the Project

The city will invest funds to meet the economic and social objectives of this RFP. Funds will be approved based on the public benefit achieved. The developer must demonstrate to the City Council that such benefits exist and are compatible with the entire proposal. The city will only be offering a subsidy toward construction costs at this time. The city is unable to subsidize any other community facilities. Any additional proposed uses requiring subsidies will be 100 percent the responsibility of the developer.

The city exempts the developer from paying property taxes on the affordable units and contributes a subsidy toward operating costs for open space and community facilities.

The City of Yorktown expects to recover all investments in the project plus an additional \$9.5 million through increased property and sales tax revenues within 10 years.

Use	City Subsidy towards Construction Costs
Affordable Housing	15%
Public Open Space: Parks & Plazas / Sports Courts / Skate Park	50%
<b>Community Facilities / Community Benefit: Developer Subsidizes 85% of Construction Costs</b>	<b>City Pays 15% of Construction Costs</b>
- Branch Library (7,500 SF)	15%
- Community Art Space (2,500 SF) Providing classes and public studio space for painting, sculpting, and potting for residents and Elmwood workers	15%
- Community Meeting Space with Resilience Hub (7,000 SF) May be used for civic meetings or rented by Elmwood residents for private functions	15%
- Daycare Center (3,500 SF)	15%
- Drug Treatment Center (1,500 SF)	15%
- Police Substation (1,500 SF)	15%
- Senior Center (6,000 SF)	15%
- Teen Center (5,000 SF)	15%
- Yorktown Bike Share Office (5,500 SF)	15%
- Public Health Clinic (4,500 SF)	15%
- Small Business Incubator (4,000 SF)	15%

#### G. Price of Land to the Developer

The city acquired the land in the Elmwood District over a period of years at a total cost of \$25 million, which is above the market value. The city will offer the land at a reduced price of \$20 million to a developer who will develop the site in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives stated in the RFP. The city views this as an additional subsidy towards the project similar to the subsidies noted above.

## H. Market Analysis: What Land Uses Does Market Demand Support?

The city commissioned a complete market analysis to determine viable uses for the site. The analysis concluded that demand exists for residential, office, and retail space within the Elmwood District redevelopment area.

All projections are based on current population data and forecasts for the overall economy over the next three years. *Unexpected events could occur. Changing economic conditions could affect the market demand for real estate products and price points in the Elmwood District.*

### 1. Residential

A surge of residential growth has occurred within the city limits of Yorktown, consisting of young professionals seeking proximity to downtown employment and empty nesters who enjoy Yorktown's cultural and civic activities. The expansion of Yorktown University's graduate programs has created new demand for housing for faculty and graduate students, particularly those with young families.

The market analysis revealed that demand exists for rental apartments, for-sale townhouses, and luxury condos to house the area's diverse population.

The demand for affordable units is essentially unlimited. In addition to low- and very-income households, the city is concerned that public service workers and others making moderate incomes are not priced out of the market.

#### Annual Demand Forecast

Use	Number of Units per Year for Next Three Years
Market-Rate Units	
- Luxury Condos	35
- Market-Rate Podium Apartments	100
- Market-Rate Townhouses	24
Subsidized / Non-Market-Rate Units	
- Affordable Podium Apartments	Unlimited
- Affordable Townhouses	Unlimited

### 2. Office

Vacancy rates are very low in downtown Yorktown, so many companies are looking for office space that is nearby. The Elmwood District will be attractive to office users who are looking for transit access, proximity to the highway, and adjacency to talent from the university. Yorktown is also home to many nonprofit organizations that might be attracted by lower office rents in Elmwood, particularly in rehabbed office space or in low-rise office buildings.

#### Annual Demand Forecast

Use	Number of Square Feet per Year for Next Three Years
Low-Rise Office	80,000
Mid-Rise Office	70,000

### 3. Retail

Elmwood, similar to many underserved neighborhoods, lacks basic retail services. Many retailers have long since closed. Most national chain merchants have concentrated their new stores in outlying suburban locations. Residents of Elmwood currently must walk 45 minutes or travel by bus for 40 minutes in order to reach the closest grocery store and shopping center. This particularly impacts lower-income households, senior citizens, or students that do not have a car.



The market study revealed opportunities for three types of retail: neighborhood retail; a supermarket with a pharmacy; and a discount department store.

#### **a. Neighborhood Retail**

Neighborhood retail consists of small shops that serve households within the immediate neighborhood, generally those living within one mile. These shops often include retail that serves residents and workers and their everyday needs, such as coffee shops, dry cleaners, hair salons, etc., but can also include specialty shops such as a butcher shop or bookstore.

The area can support one fine-dining, full-service restaurant in the next three years if new office space and new market-rate residential are built.

The demographics will not support large national retailers such as Old Navy or Macy's. The city is looking to attract locally owned businesses to the district.

#### **Neighborhood Retail Annual Demand Forecast:**

22,000 square feet per year for the next three years

#### **b. Supermarket**

Demand exists for a supermarket in the market area. A new supermarket needs approximately 25,000 households within three miles of Elmwood, new residential development in the site, and convenient access for shoppers. The use cannot be supported by Elmwood residents alone. The city has been in talks with a local company looking to open a second location that focuses on purchasing produce from local farmers.

#### **c. Discount Department Store**

The market study also determined that demand exists for a discount "big-box" department store within the market area. Currently, such stores, including Target and Walmart, are located in the suburbs. Q-Mart, a global discount chain, is interested in a 80,000-square-foot store in Elmwood. The retailer has found that a market area of 100,000 households within 12 miles can support one of its stores.

There is not demand, currently, for both a supermarket and a discount department store.

### **I. Developer's Responsibility for Site Improvements**

The developer is solely responsible for construction of all improvements on the site, including underground utilities, street lighting, curbs, street trees, bioswales, and sidewalks.

### **J. Environmental Analysis: Toxic and Hazardous Materials**

Studies have revealed asbestos in Victorian Row. The developer must pay abatement costs for this brownfield site in compliance with all relevant federal, state, and local laws and ordinances. These costs are incurred only if Victorian Row is rehabbed.

### **K. Neighborhood Issues and Outreach**

The city and its successful developer partners have worked closely with neighborhood residents in all neighborhood development projects to ensure opportunities for input and to create neighborhood support. Prospective developers are strongly encouraged to study the input from neighborhood organizations and neighboring property owners/occupants in preparation for a response to the RFP. The successful developer will clearly articulate the benefits its proposal provides to the neighborhood residents as well as to the entire city.

The City Council has provided letters from various neighborhood groups and institutions. A successful developer candidate will assist the City Council in determining each group's standing in the neighborhood and if the group's positions are aligned with city and resident goals and objectives.

### **L. Homeless Shelter**

Development teams have three options when it comes to how to address the existing homeless shelter, which is in substandard condition:

1. Keep in the Phoenix Hotel, which requires renovating the building.

2. Build a new homeless shelter on the site.
3. Not include the shelter on the site, which requires paying a \$1 million fee to the city's Homeless Shelter Relocation Fund to offset the cost of purchasing land and building a new shelter elsewhere in Yorktown.

#### **M. Land Use and Urban Design Standards**

All proposals must meet the requirements of the redevelopment plan and shall reflect the development and urban design standards of the City of Yorktown.

### **III. Developer Selection Criteria and Process**

The development team must make an oral presentation and provide a coherent vision, site plan, and proposal packet with supplemental materials at an upcoming City Council hearing. We expect all submitting teams to demonstrate how their proposals meet the city financial and non-financial goals for the Elmwood District.

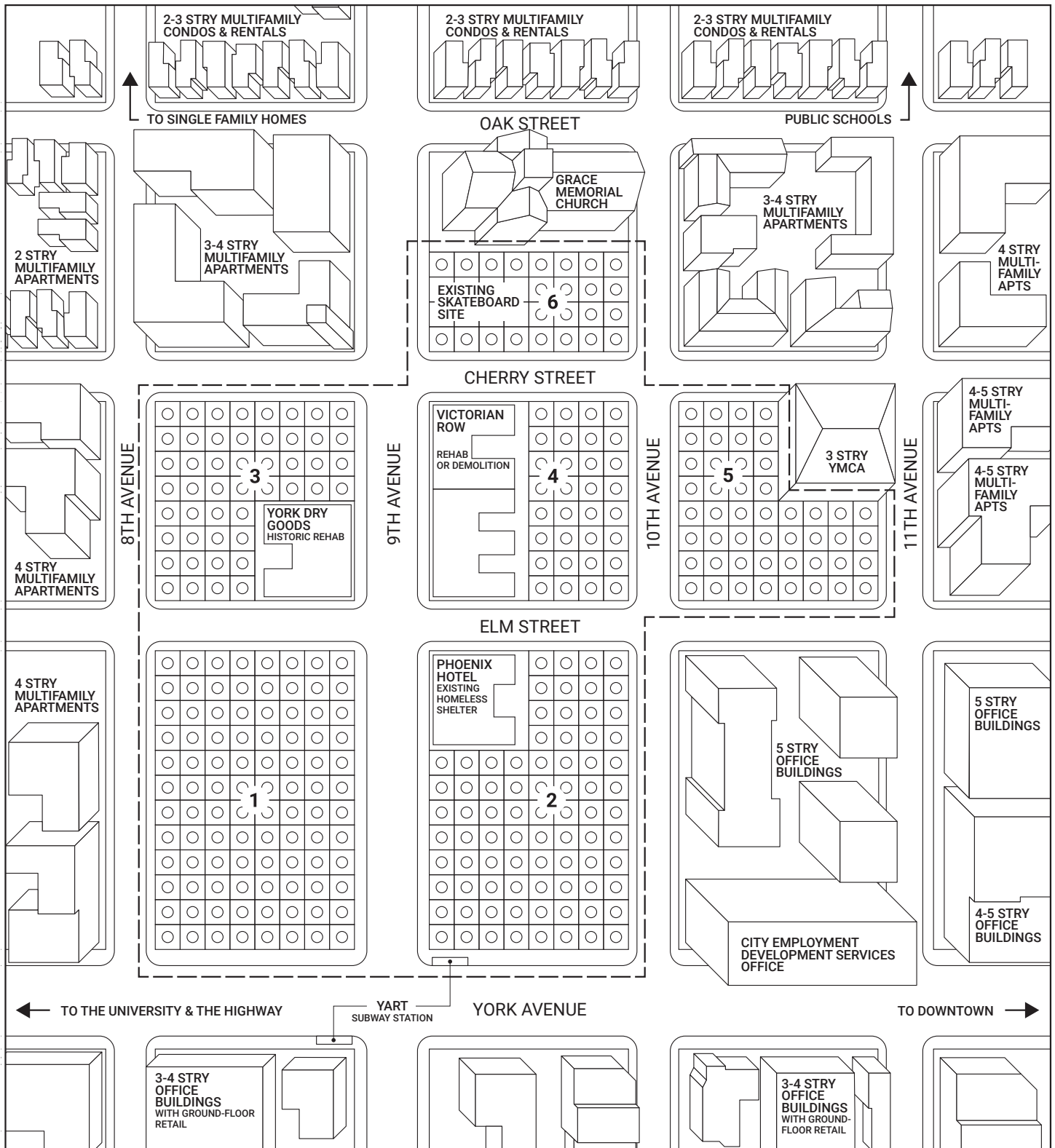
Each development firm will have 5 to 7 minutes for the presentation and 5 to 7 minutes for questions from Council. (The exact timing allowed will be confirmed.)

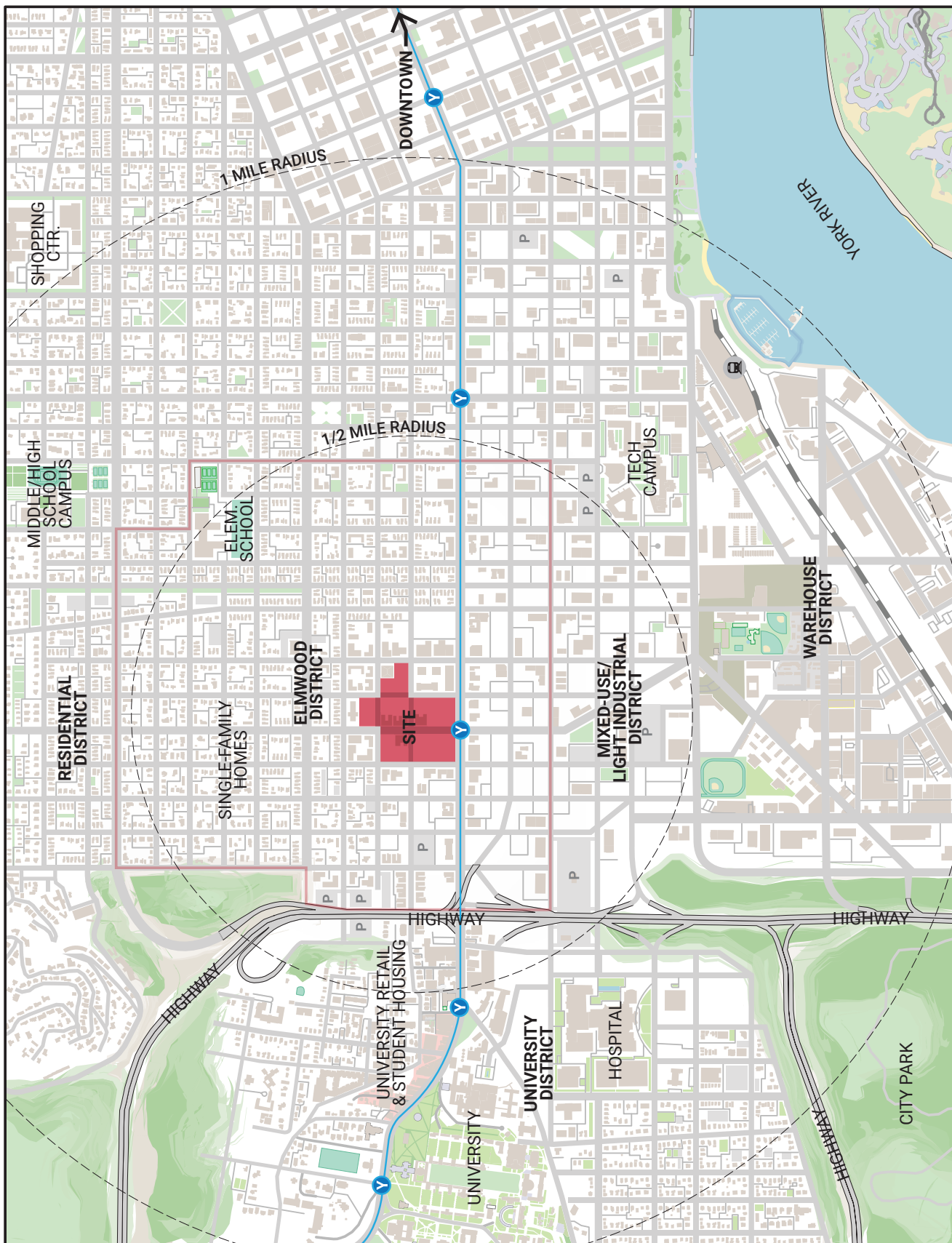
#### **Proposals and Submission Deadline**

The winning proposal will accomplish the greatest number of the RFP goals while demonstrating to the City Council that the proposal is viable: grounded in market demand and able to attract the capital required to build the project.

- Proposals must be for the entire site. Each existing building that is identified must be either rehabilitated or demolished, and land uses must be specified for each vacant lot.
- This RFP and each Role Packet provides all due diligence information and data required for the team to respond to this RFP.







UrbanPlan

# ELMWOOD DISTRICT CONTEXT MAP