

City of New Rochelle

Department of Development

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TO: Honorable City Council and Mayor  
THRU: Charles B. Strome, III, City Manager  
FROM: Michael Freimuth, Development Commissioner  
DATE: April 4, 2012  
RE: Armory RFP – general outline

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Subsequent to the adoption of an MOU with Forest City Residential for the Echo Bay waterfront, the City could seek proposals for the rehabilitation and reuse of the former Naval Armory at 270 Main Street. Such an RFP could be issued within 30 days of Council authorization to proceed.

The Armory has been the subject of considerable interest and may have significant adaptive reuse potential, yet it presents a variety of practical barriers to its redevelopment. These include the cost of the structure's physical rehabilitation, the need to identify self-sustaining programming suitable for a large and unusual space, and the compatibility of any use with the community's general waterfront objectives. Deed restrictions on the property and New York State's alienation laws must also be considered, although these may be addressed through legislative relief.

An RFP should require applicants to describe strategies for addressing these challenges, outline a vision for activating the Armory, and demonstrate the experience and capacity to achieve agreed-upon goals.

In light of the complex issues surrounding the Armory, a reasonably long response period should be provided.

The following structure is recommended for the RFP:

**Section 1: Current Conditions.** The RFP should describe current conditions, including the physical characteristics of the Armory structure and grounds, existing legal constraints on ownership and use, and the history, status and purpose of the City's redevelopment efforts on Echo Bay.

**Section 2: Armory Reuse Concepts.** The RFP should offer illustrative examples of reuse possibilities, such as those in the HR&A report, but should be open-ended with respect to reuse concepts and should not limit the nature or creativity of potential submissions.

**Section 3: Site Plan & Consistency with Echo Bay Vision.** Applicants should be required to provide a preliminary site plan that illustrates the Armory's structure, patterns of ingress and egress, notable architectural features, and programming of internal space. Applicants should be required to demonstrate that any proposal is consistent with the central components of the Echo Bay waterfront plan, including public access to the shoreline, waterfront setbacks, and significant open space and parkland. Applicants will be permitted to determine which elements of the Armory, including the annex portion are necessary for their proposals. Site Plan submission requirements should be made with the understanding that qualified applicants can be asked to submit supplementary information and additional details following an initial screening of submissions.

**Section 4: Financing.** Applicants should be required to present a sound plan for financing the Armory's rehabilitation and for supporting the ongoing operation of the proposed use. To the extent relevant, submissions should include market demand studies, redevelopment cost projections for both the Armory itself and for associated improvements on the surrounding land, sources and uses of funds, projected cash flow and operating pro forma, business plan, desired public subsidies from any level of government, and parking and open space plans. Applicants should provide assurance of financial resources and access to equity; to the extent such assurances are available. The RFP should express a preference for proposals that are not reliant on a City subsidy.

*(Most armories have been renovated through use of public resources and, in fact, the use of historic preservation and federal New Market tax credits to attract equity to the project is quite common in recent efforts. Such financial mechanisms are to be expected and will likely require complex ownership partnerships and corporations. These will have to be fully vetted, especially in light of the municipal liability and the armory ownership structure dictated by current state law.)*

**Section 5: Experience & Capacity.** Applicants should be required to describe the relevant qualifications and experiences of the submission team, including references to projects of similar scale and purpose. Applicants should also illustrate relevant experience in the long-term operation of the proposed re-use.