



Four teams compete to develop downtown Miami Dade College property

HIGHLIGHTS

College wants museum, conference center and theater

Competitive process began after art collector Gary Nader submitted unsolicited bid

Related Group, Gregg Covin and Chad Oppenheim among the competition



A rendering of the project proposed by Nader + Museu LLP

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Four development teams will compete to partner with Miami Dade College on a downtown cultural center and build out a prime piece of real estate on Biscayne Boulevard.

Related Group, Gregg Covin Development/Oppenheim Architecture and Pi Art Tech and Trade Center at MDC were among the teams to respond to a competitive solicitation by the college for its 2.6-acre parking lot directly south of the Freedom Tower, facing Port Boulevard. The developers planned projects around the college's desire for a roughly 100,000-square-foot museum, a 1,600-seat theater and a college conference center able to seat at least 3,000 people.

Miami Dade College sought solicitations late last year after receiving an unsolicited proposal from a team led by art collector Gary Nader, FR-EE Architects and the Sofran Group's Roberto Rocha. Nader said he wanted to donate some \$60 million from his collection to the college to be housed at a museum his team would build, along with a theater, conference center, parking garage and two luxury condo towers.

When the college chose to consider Nader's bid for a public-private partnership, state law required that other interested developers be given a chance to compete for the high-profile piece of downtown land. Teams — some of whom complained about Nader having an advantage — were given until Tuesday afternoon to submit bids.

The project drew the interest of Related Group, whose CEO, Jorge Pérez, has his name on the Pérez Art Museum Miami a few blocks to the north. Developer Gregg Covin and architect Chad Oppenheim, who according to real estate blogs sought years ago to build out the 520 Biscayne Blvd. site in a process the college ultimately aborted, have applied again. And Jorge Brugo, of Pi Art Tech, rounds out Nader's competition.

Nader was allowed to resubmit the same proposal or submit something different. However, details of the different projects remain confidential, said Miami Dade College's director of purchasing, Roman Martinez. A first look may come Jan. 29, when a college selection committee convenes for the first time.

A final decision will be made by the college's district board of trustees.

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"Teams — some of whom complained about Nader having an advantage — were given until Tuesday afternoon to submit bids."

Hey, in this world it pays to be proactive. Kudos to Nader and company for being just that.

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