

Subscribe to our e-Lerts

By Ina
Cordle

Developers to vie for Miami Dade College downtown site

Bids due in January for a 2.6 acre parcel on Biscayne Boulevard, in partnership with the college

November 06, 2015 04:40PM



Miami Dade College's parking lot at 520 Biscayne Boulevard in Miami

A prime swath of downtown Miami land is about to spark a bidding war between developers — like the Related Group, Dragados USA and a partnership of Gary Nader, Roberto Rocha and FR-EE Architects — all vying to create a mixed-use project for Miami Dade College.

The college is soliciting a developer to enter into a public/private partnership for a 2.6 acre parcel at 520 Biscayne Boulevard. The site is currently used as a surface parking area at the college's Wolfson Campus. The proposals are to include a cultural center with a performing arts theater with 1,600 seats, a conference center that can house 3,000 people, a museum measuring at least 100,000 square feet, and parking.

Miami Dade College earlier this year received an unsolicited proposal for a Nader Latin American Art Museum from a group of partners that includes Miami art gallery owner Nader, Rocha, CEO of Sofran Group, FR-EE Architects and others, which prompted the college to put out its current “supplemental information package, requesting bids.

In addition to the Latin American art museum, the 69-page proposal from [Nader](#) and partners includes a performing arts theater, sculpture garden and conference center, as well as two residential towers with 528 units, a condo-hotel with 144 units, a restaurant space and parking.

“The college has a valuable piece of property, and it has a need,” in part to enhance its cultural offerings, said Frank Zohn, CEO of Ashlin Group, who is working as a consultant to Miami Dade College.

Options could range from selling a portion of the land to a long-term lease to air rights. “Nothing is off the table,” said [Suzanne Amaducci-Adams](#), an attorney with Bilzin Sumberg who represents the college.

It's the second time in a decade that [Miami Dade College](#) has looked for development proposals for its key property. In 2007, the college put out an “Invitation to Negotiate” for the site, but ended up shelving the plan before it ever

chose a winner. Proposers included a partnership between developer Gregg Covin and architect [Chad Oppenheim](#), but no finalist or winner was selected, according to a college spokesman.

“The college had all the intention to reach agreement with the highest qualified proposer, but it was during the negotiation process that the teams found themselves in the middle of the real estate changes that occurred back in 2007/2008 and it was determined by the college’s administration that the risks associated with any of the deals being offered was just too uncertain for the public institution,” Roman Martinez, Miami Dade College’s group director of purchasing, told *The Real Deal* via email.

Now, the college says it will review the recently submitted unsolicited proposal, while also analyzing bids from other developers who submit their proposals by the deadline of January 19, 2016.

“The college wants to make sure what is developed is compatible with downtown Miami, and compatible with Biscayne Boulevard and most importantly, compatible with Miami Dade College,” Zohn said. The college wants to be “an active participant” in the design process, with the developer taking the lead, he added.

More than 50 developers, architects and other professionals attended a pre-proposal meeting earlier this week at the Wolfson Campus, and asked questions of a panel of college representatives, including Zohn.

Among the attendees were executives from the [Related Group](#), Arquitectonica, Dragados USA, Stantec, Coastal Construction, Greenberg Traurig and other firms.

Lissette Calderon, president of Related International, told *TRD* that Related is interested in submitting a bid for the project.

“We want to make sure it is something that is feasible, that can be built and that is in the best interests of everyone,” she said, “while also fulfilling the mission and vision of the college.”

