



**Request for Expressions of Interest
For Reuse of Former Watchman Residence
at 1826 W. 91st Street in Dan Ryan Woods
(RFEI #22-80-23)**

Issued by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County
Department of Planning and Development

Posting Date: May 13, 2022
Due Date: September 16, 2022
Time: 10:00 A.M.
Solicitation #2280-007808

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ARE TO BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY AT:
<https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/online-solicitation-bid-submission-forest-preserves>

Toni Preckwinkle
Forest Preserves of Cook County
Board President

Thomas J. Conlon
Purchasing Agent

1. Purpose and Objectives

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the “Forest Preserve” or “FPCC”) is seeking expressions of serious interest from any party interested in reuse of a former watchman’s residence located at 1826 W. 91st Street in Dan Ryan Woods in the City of Chicago. Built in 1894 for E.S. Pike, the house known as the Pike House is located near the 91st Street Metra station in the North Beverly neighborhood and is in a national register-listed historic district.

The house has been vacant since 2015 and is in urgent need of funding for rehabilitation and a new use. The cost to repair the exterior was estimated at roughly \$225,000 in 2017.

The Forest Preserve has determined that continued use of the house as a watchman residence would provide limited benefits to the Forest Preserve. Conversion of the house to another Forest Preserve use such as a small nature center or offices was also considered but not pursued because of recent investment in office space at a new Visitors Center and other challenges described in Section 3. Therefore, the Forest Preserve is seeking an individual and/or organization with expertise and capacity to develop and implement a reuse strategy for the building as follows:

- **Services or programs that are open to the public and advance [the Forest Preserve’s mission](#).** These uses may be eligible for matching funds provided by the Forest Preserve. Additional parameters for such services and programs are described in Section 3.
- **Use by a private individual or business that preserves the historic property.** These proposals are not eligible for Forest Preserve matching funds. Additional parameters for such private use are provided in Section 4.

All uses will be subject to certain terms and conditions that will ensure the preservation of the primary historic exterior and keep the land in Forest Preserve ownership.

This Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) is being issued strictly for the purpose of gaining knowledge of parties with historic preservation, planning, economic development or community development expertise and the capacity to secure financial resources needed, and serious interest in assisting the Forest Preserve with these objectives. It should not be construed as an offer or promise to enter into an agreement. The responses to this RFEI will determine the appropriate next steps, which may include issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a more specific partnership, concession or license agreement.

2. Background Information

2.1 Property Information. The Pike House is located at 1826 W. 91st Street within the Dan Ryan Woods Forest Preserve, a short distance from the 91st Street Metra Rock Island station. The vacant 2-story house is surrounded by the Forest Preserve on three sides and is immediately adjacent to a Forest Preserve landscape maintenance facility with a large parking lot, two garages and fuel pumps.

Size: 1,600 s.f. first floor, 1,400 s.f. second floor (plus ~ 1,400 s.f. unfinished basement)

Zoning: Although located in the City of Chicago and zoned POS-1 for public open space, Forest Preserve enabling law states that Forest Preserve properties are subject to Cook County building code and land use codes but the state law does not specify what zoning district applies (See [here](#)). FPCC has not yet applied for any building permits with Cook County Building & Zoning or applied for rezoning to a Cook County

zoning classification pending determination of Pike's House future use or demolition but is willing to work on any necessary rezoning for a partnering organization, concessionaire, or licensee.

Tax Status: Currently tax-exempt. Future reuse may affect this status.

2.2 Historic significance. The Pike House was built in 1894 as part of the private estate of Eugene S. Pike. The house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing structure to the Ridge Historic District. It is also listed in the American Institute of Architects' AIA Guide to Chicago (2014). Landmarks Illinois included it on its [2022 list of Most Endangered Places in Illinois](#) to raise awareness of the building's importance and to encourage and assist with its rehabilitation and reuse. The building has also been identified as potentially significant in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey (CHRS) and is color-coded orange under the CHRS. As such, the Forest Preserve is seeking a reuse that will preserve the character-defining exterior features of the building. The building is not currently a Chicago or national landmark; however, the Forest Preserve is open to considering landmark designation if it would be beneficial for a proposed reuse. For more information on incentives and responsibilities associated with Chicago Landmark status, visit: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/provdrs/hist.html>

2.3 Property Condition. The building ceased functioning as a watchman's residence in 2015 because of necessary roof and furnace replacement needs that far exceeded the capital reserves for the Forest Preserve's watchman residence program. Exterior roof replacement and masonry repair and tuckpointing is urgent. A portion of the rear masonry wall collapsed in 2018 and was repaired on an emergency basis. There has been no functioning electricity or ventilation in seven years. Replacement of virtually all mechanical, electrical, plumbing and flooring systems is needed. See Attachments A and B for complete feasibility study report and exterior repair cost estimates.

2.4 Estimated Rehabilitation Cost. Professional cost estimates obtained by the Forest Preserve for exterior rehabilitation only (roof replacement, masonry tuckpointing, etc.) in 2017 can be viewed via the link for Attachment B of this RFEI. Total exterior repair cost was estimated at roughly \$225,000. Interior cost would depend on the reuse, and would require a new feasibility study and cost estimates to obtain current repair and rehabilitation costs. Conversion to a non-residential use would require other upgrades, including reinforcement of floor joists, higher capacity HVAC equipment and accessibility and fire code improvements.

3 Services or Programs that are Open to the Public and Advance the Forest Preserve's mission

Desirable mission-related reuse ideas that were considered but not pursued due to lack of capital funding and relatively recent investment in other nearby Forest Preserve buildings where some of these uses could be provided, include:

- A **volunteer resources center** with meeting rooms, workspace and storage space.
- **Classroom space for environmental education programs** such as Mighty Acorns.
- **Research space for visiting scientists** and satellite to the Poplar Creek Wildlife field office.

Nature center. The idea of a small nature center was also suggested in the past but rejected due to the building's small size and difficult access. The first floor of the Pike House is roughly 1,600 square feet, less than half the size of the Forest Preserve's smallest nature center: Hal Tyrrell Trailside Museum in River Forest. Further, vehicular access to the Pike House is complicated by a barrier on 91st Street and circuitous roadways from the west. Moreover, a 2013 Master Plan for Dan Ryan Woods proposed a nature center at another location in Dan Ryan Woods with access off Western Avenue, ample parking and room for construction of a building more comparable in size to other Forest Preserve nature centers.

Artist in Residence house and studio. The idea of renovating the house for artists who could also provide nature-based art programs at other nearby Forest Preserve buildings (such as the Visitors Center or the Dan Ryan Woods Pavilion) has been suggested but not pursued due to lack of capital funding and no expression of interest from local arts organizations in response to the 2018 Request for Ideas.

Parameters: Current options for allowing long term use of Forest Preserve property are limited to long-term licenses, partner agreements or concession agreements. The Forest Preserve would be open to providing matching funds and cooperating with partners to seek grants or other funding for uses that result in the delivery of nature-based services or programs to Forest Preserve visitors. Additional information on the Forest Preserve's current process for concessions, partnerships, and licenses is available [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

4 Use by a Private Individual or Business that Preserves the Historic Property.

The Forest Preserve could enter into a long-term license with a preservation organization and a private party that has the financial resources to rehabilitate and maintain the historic exterior and manage the private use of the building and adjacent outdoor yard space.

In addition to a private residence, other ideas that have been suggested include use as lodging (bed and breakfast, etc.), professional office or studio space. These ideas are subject to legal vetting.

Parameters for private residential or business uses:

- Private parties would be required to agree to partner with a planning or historic preservation organization as the licensee or co-licensee to support and guide the rehabilitation and on-going maintenance of historic exterior.
- Licensee(s) or Co-Licensee(s) would be required to pay for building rehabilitation and maintenance costs with little to no direct operating subsidy from the Forest Preserve.
- Impact on property tax obligations would be determined based on proposed use.
- Term of license would be negotiable and subject to approval by the Forest Preserve's Board of Commissioners but could potentially be 25 years or more.
- At the end of any agreed license term, the Forest Preserve may consider renewal if the arrangement is working well for both parties but would be subject to approval by the Forest Preserve's Board of Commissioners. If not renewed, the license holder would be required to either vacate the rehabilitated building or move it at their expense to another location.

5 Potential Subsidies and Incentives

Subsidies from the Forest Preserve will only be considered for a reuse that results in the delivery of nature-based services or programs to Forest Preserve visitors. The Forest Preserve is open to providing matching funds and pursuing incentives together with interested organizations that are committed to entering into a partnership agreement, concession agreement, or license agreement.

6 Schedule and Pre-submittal Conference

The Forest Preserve anticipates the following schedule and pre-submittal conference.

Item	Date
Posting Date	May 13, 2022
Site Visit and Pre-Submittal Conference (in person or via Zoom teleconference) (optional)	June 15, 2022
Deadline for Questions from Firms (Submit questions to Tom.Conlon@cookcountyil.gov)	July 29, 2022
Deadline for Addenda from Forest Preserve	August 10, 2022
Expressions of Interest Due	September 16, 2022
Notice of RFP or other proposed FPCC plans	October 14, 2022

7 Site Visit and Pre-Submittal Conference

Date & Time: June 15, 2022; 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

In Person at: 1826 W. 91st Street, Chicago IL (additional parking from east at Calumet Division HQ). If special accommodations are required for a submitting party to attend the pre-submittal site visit, please contact Purchasing Agent, Thomas J. Conlon, at FPD.Purchasing@CookCountyIL.gov no later than three (3) business days before the event

And via Zoom:

<https://fpdcc.zoom.us/j/82175179005?pwd=N2I3dCsxY0JucEhqUDdZeHNYV1FsUT09>

Meeting ID: 821 7517 9005

Passcode: 589557

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,82175179005#

Mandatory Non-Mandatory

Note: The site visit and conference are not mandatory, but participation is strongly recommended. Staff will post questions and answers from the conference as an addenda and will make every effort to accommodate requests for additional building access after the site visit and conference. All requests for additional access should be directed to the Purchasing Agent, Thomas J. Conlon, at FPD.Purchasing@CookCountyIL.gov.

8 Expressions of Interest – Information Requirements

All expressions of interest should include the information described below in a letter format addressed to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County at the submission email address provided below with subject line:

Re: RFEI #22-80-007808 Reuse of Former Watchman Residence at Dan Ryan Woods

1. **Proposed Reuse.** Describe the type of reuse that is of interest and how it advances a mission-related reuse described in Section 3 or use by a private individual or business that preserves the historic property described in Section 4.

2. **Potential Partners.** Describe the involvement and level of commitment of any planning, preservation or funding partners.
3. **Commitment to Feasibility Study.** Describe the Respondent's commitment to conducting and paying for a reuse feasibility study with cost estimates to update information provided in the 2018 Kuklinski + Rappe Architects study (see link below under "Attachments").
4. **Funding Sources and Strategies.** Describe proposed potential funding sources and strategies to cover rehabilitation costs, including any special improvement needs such as school bus access or a catering kitchen, and on-going maintenance. Could funds for at least exterior repair be raised by 2023?
5. **Comments.** Please provide any other concerns or comments that could help in securing funding or partners.

Please note that responses to this RFEI may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Any part of Respondent's proposal or any other material marked as confidential, proprietary, or trade secret, can only be protected to the extent permitted by Illinois Statutes.

9 Submittal Deadline

Submittals are to be made electronically to:

<https://www.cookcountyl.gov/service/online-solicitation-bid-submission-forest-preserves>

All submittals must be received by **Friday, September 16, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. Central Time**. No Responses will be accepted after the deadline. All questions and comments during the posting period should be addressed to the Forest Preserve's Purchasing Agent, Thomas J. Conlon, at FPD.Purchasing@CookCountyIL.gov

Attachments

Attachment A: Watchman Residence Conversion Feasibility Study (Kuklinski + Rappe Architects, 2018)
2018-09-27 1826 W. 91st Street-.pdf
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/13h53ag5loj5vmi/2018-09-27%201826%20W.%2091st%20Street-.pdf?dl=0>

Attachment B: Cost Estimates for Exterior Repairs (Concord Group, August 18, 2017)

Cost Estimate for Exterior Repairs 1826 W 91st St.pdf
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/09uiow0svwwfeig/Cost%20Estimate%20for%20Exterior%20Repairs%201826%20W%2091st%20St.pdf?dl=0>