

# Request for Proposals

Vacant Lot Reuse

Issued by:



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Issue Date: March 3, 2013

## **Introduction**

Lawrenceville United (LU) works to improve the overall quality of life for Lawrenceville residents and stakeholders. LU has worked over the past 10 years to eliminate blight throughout Lower, Central, and Upper Lawrenceville by targeting nuisance and problem properties and prioritizing the demolitions, acquisition and redevelopment of such properties.

As part of this process, we have acquired and maintained properties throughout the neighborhood to ensure that they experience a higher, more effective and positive use in the future for the residents of Lawrenceville. LU acquired many of these lots working with the City of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group's Vacant Property Working Group, the Elm Street Program, and working with various other agencies and partners.

Lawrenceville United has acquired several vacant lots throughout the neighborhood with the majority located in the Elm Street District of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ward of Lawrenceville. We have worked through the Elm Street Program to rid these properties of blight. The Elm Street Program was created by the State of Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development to complement the Main Street Program. The program was designed to strengthen older historic neighborhoods adjacent to business districts with the understanding that healthy communities have both strong commercial and residential counterparts.

In 2005, following a successful proposal for Elm Street designation, the section of Lawrenceville bounded by Stanton Avenue, Dresden Way, Keystone Street, and 55th Street became designated as an Elm Street district. An Elm Street Plan was created by the LC, LU, and the Lawrenceville Stakeholders, and this plan is being implemented by the LC's Elm Street Committee.

The Elm Street mission is to revitalize the neighborhood, and supporting the acquisition and demolition of many of these properties was a first step in making transformative change in the district. We now hope to transfer these properties to responsible neighbors who will invest in them, while also raising their own property values.

## **Scope of Project**

We are inviting responsible and interested property owners to submit proposals to acquire each of the eligible LU-owned vacant parcels. We are hoping that residents will play an important role in helping us transform the lots into side yards, back yards or propose another use that will enhance the character of our neighborhood.

## **The Request for Proposals Process**

1. Submitting a Proposal
  - a. Each interested resident will submit a formal proposal for the lot of interest. Each applicant must provide proof of the requirements and qualifications listed below.
2. Selection Committee Review
  - a. Each proposal will undergo review by a Selection Committee and will be rated according to the Selection Criteria detailed below. The most competitive proposals will be chosen to participate in a lease-to-own agreement.
3. Lease-to-Own Agreement
  - a. Each approved applicant will enter into a lease –to-own agreement with LU for a period of one year. During the year, the parcels will be monitored and according to the lease the parcel must be maintained as outlined in the approved proposal. LU will schedule a 6 month review with the tenant. At the end of one year, the Housing Committee will review the parcel to confirm that it has been maintained and improved as outlined in the proposal. Upon a successful review and approval from the committee, a closing date will be scheduled.
4. Title Transfer

- a. Each approved buyer, after successful lease-to-own agreement, will purchase the parcel and a closing will be scheduled to complete title transfer of that property to the new owner.

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## **SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL**

### **Eligibility**

The interested resident or neighbor must provide documentation confirming:

1. The resident owns property near lot(s) of interest.
2. The resident is current on all taxes.
3. The resident is current on all water and sewage bills on the properties he or she already owns.
4. The resident does not have any outstanding Bureau of Building Inspection violations.
5. The resident has homeowner's insurance.

### **Submission Content and Format**

Each submission should include separate sections detailing:

1. The proposed short- and long-term use of the lot (i.e. sideyard, backyard, parking pad).
2. A timeline of potential improvements that will be made to the lot, including a detailed list of the materials being used.
3. A maintenance plan for the lot.

### **Deadline**

The buyer must submit one original and three separate copies of all documents required as part of the RFP. Submission must be hand delivered, delivered via postal service, or emailed by March 28, 2014. Any proposals received after 4:00 pm will be considered late and will not be eligible. Submissions lacking one or more of the requested documents without explanation may be considered incomplete. LU reserves the right to reject any incomplete proposal.

## **SELECTION COMMITTEE REVIEW**

### **Eligibility/Property Viability**

The Lawrenceville United Housing Advisory Committee (LUHAC) will review each proposal and verify that issues related to property location, taxes, and inspections are in order. The committee will also confirm that you satisfy the previously stated requirements. Applicants meeting the enumerated standards will then be considered for a criteria-based review.

### **Selection Criteria**

LU believes that neighbors with a personal investment and a shared commitment to our mission are best equipped to own these properties. In furtherance of this belief, the Selection Committee will make a subjective decision based on the standards enumerated below.

- Adjacent and proximate resident property owners will be given preference in a contested bid for a lot. Please see chart on last page of proposal that indicates which spaces may be given preference, if not for other information.

- Re-use proposals which serve Lawrenceville at-large—including but not limited to: public safety, aesthetics, cultivating community and the like—are also preferred.
- The character of a specific lot will also be considered, and certain re-use proposals may not be feasible.
- The preservation of green space benefits the community at large and is considered to be a higher and more effective use.

### **Disclaimer**

LU will be the sole judge as to which proposal is selected for each property. LU reserves, at its sole discretion, the right to reject any proposals received, to waive any submission requirements contained within this RFP, or to waive any irregularities in any submitted proposal.

### **LEASE TO OWN AGREEMENTS**

If a resident's bid is selected, he or she will be invited to enter into a lease-to-own agreement. These agreements will vary depending on the character of the lot and the nature of the proposal, but they will include obligations the resident must meet to receive the property at the end of the lease-to-own period.

### **Obligations of Lessees**

Once a proposal is selected LU will enter into a lease agreement with each buyer.

1. Each buyer will lease their vacant lot from LU for \$1 per month for the duration of one year, and will reimburse Lawrenceville United for any tax, insurance costs incurred during that year at a total cost not to exceed \$150.00.
2. After one year, if LU is satisfied that the necessary improvements have been made, according to the conditions of the agreement, a closing date will be agreed upon. At that time, you will need at least \$1,000.00 to cover closing costs, deed recording fees and transfer taxes.
3. You may begin using and maintaining the lot immediately, any improvements that require building permits will need to be approved by LU.
4. While you are leasing the lot, LU will monitor the property to ensure it is being well maintained, and that you are making improvements as outlined in the proposal.

### **OWNERSHIP**

### **TERMS OF OWNERSHIP**

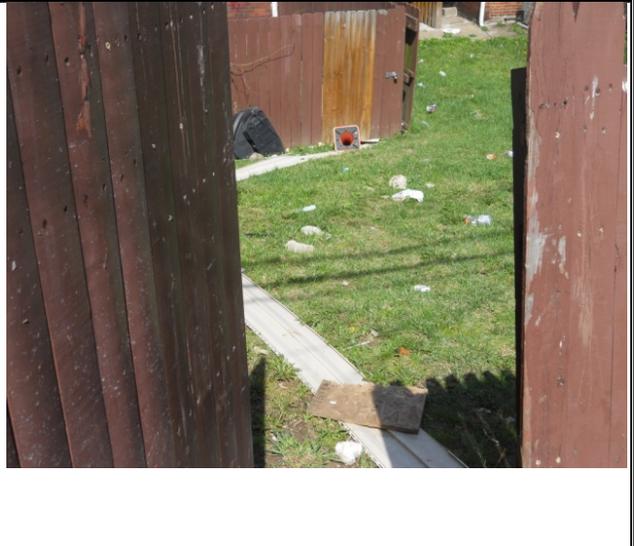
- Taxes, liability insurance, site security, property maintenance, and all aspects of owning the property shall be the full responsibility of the buyer at the time of sale.
- These properties were once the site of blighted houses and have been eyesores in the community for quite some time. Lawrenceville United would like to see improvements made to the property as soon as possible.
- The buyer will be required to fence in the property by a date agreed upon by LU and the buyer. The buyer will also be required to maintain the property, this includes but is not limited to, cutting the grass/weeding and keeping it free of debris. If these terms are not met, LU will be able to re-purchase the property from the buyer.
- The terms and conditions of this option will be agreed to and the option agreement executed simultaneously as the sale of the properties.
- There must be a dwelling on the buyer's existing property.

- The vacant lot in question must be used for a side yard, back yard, or off street parking. If used as off street parking, the buyer must follow the City of Pittsburgh’s guidelines for curb cuts and zoning. LU has the right to accept or reject any proposal.

**VACANT LOT ADJACENT TO YOUR PROPERTY**

The following vacant parcels, with description, below is open for proposed uses.

PARCEL DESCRIPTIONS:

<p><b>Street Address: 5136 Dresden Way</b>  <b>Number of Parcels: 1</b>  <b>Ward: 10<sup>th</sup> Ward</b></p>	<p><b>Lot and Block No.: 80-G-209-A</b>  <b>Zoning: RIA-VH</b></p>
	
<p><b>Street Address: 5235 Natrona Way</b>  <b>Number of Parcels: 1</b>  <b>Ward: 10<sup>th</sup> Ward</b></p>	<p><b>Lot and Block No.: 80-D-120</b>  <b>Zoning: RIA-VH</b></p>
	

Street Address: 5413 Dresden Way

Number of Parcels: 1

Ward: 10th Ward

Lot and Block No.: 119-S-103-1

Zoning: RIA-VH



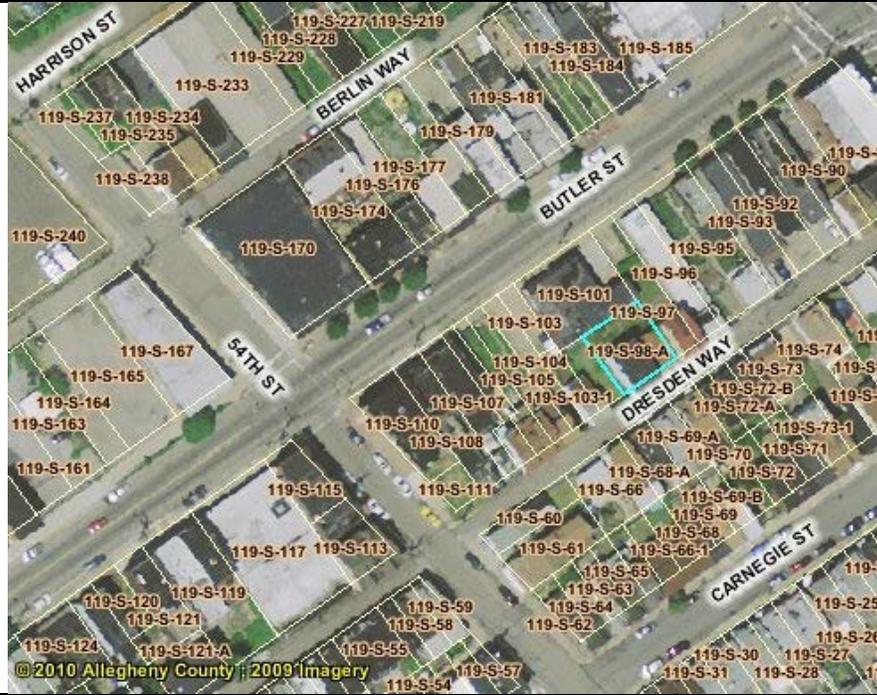
Street Address: 5417 Dresden Way

Number of Parcels: 1

Ward: 10th Ward

Lot and Block No: 119-S-98-A

Zoning: RIA-VH



Responses are to be mailed or delivered to:

Lauren Byrne  
 Lawrenceville United  
 4839 Butler Street  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15201