

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DIVISION OF CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE &  
NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**One Ashburton Place, 15<sup>th</sup> floor**

**Boston, MA 02108**

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**Northern Essex Community College  
Haverhill Campus Health and Wellness Facilities**

***REQUEST FOR INFORMATION***

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**March 8, 2023**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI), in collaboration with Northern Essex Community College (NECC), to seek information related to opportunities for partnerships to improve health & wellness facilities on Commonwealth-owned property at NECC's Haverhill Campus (the "Campus").

DCAMM is seeking information from potential partners with the capacity to design, permit, finance, construct, and operate facility improvements on the Campus to achieve three main goals:

- I. Advance NECC's mission by better serving their students of today and the future with health and wellness offerings;
- II. Enhance NECC facilities in a cost-effective way; and
- III. Foster better connectivity with the surrounding community to advance shared values and attract and retain students.

The information and ideas from potential partners should focus on a mutually beneficial partnership that is financially feasible.

### **Background**

Northern Essex Community College was founded in 1961 and has campuses in Haverhill and Lawrence. Its Haverhill Campus sits on 106 acres bordered by residential neighborhoods and greenspace and is composed largely of buildings built in 1971. A 2007 Masterplan identified a general need for modernization of most of the Campus' original buildings, including the Sports and Fitness Center ("Building D").

Building D and the surrounding athletic fields face deficiencies which hamper the Campus' ability to serve their students and offer high-quality health and wellness programming. Building D has various deferred maintenance needs, including accessibility upgrades and out-of-date mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) systems. The adjacent athletic fields, including a baseball field, softball field, and asphalt track, suffer from drainage issues and do not meet the Campus' needs. Taken together, the cost of these deferred maintenance needs is estimated at approximately \$9 million.

These deficiencies undercut NECC's ability to offer competitive sports programming for their students. It is NECC's expectation that quality athletic facilities could help attract and retain new students through increased program offerings, improve mental health for the Campus community through physical well-being, and more opportunities to build relationships with the surrounding community.

## 2. PLAN FOR PARTNERSHIP

The Commonwealth plans to identify a development partner to design, permit, finance, construct, and operate the improvements on Campus. Redevelopment of the Campus is expected to be implemented through a long-term lease of the property to a partner in which the Campus retains primary or privileged use of some portion of the improvements.



**Figure 1. Campus map and site boundary [For reference only. Not to be relied upon]**

NECC is planning to add new sports programming, including women's basketball, and is interested in potentially adding other athletic offerings such as women's soccer, women's softball, men's volleyball, flag football, and wrestling in the upgraded facilities. With improved facilities to accommodate them, NECC may also explore adding certificate and degree programs in personal training, nutrition, sports management, physical therapy, and other hands-on health and wellness offerings at the Campus.

As a public higher education campus, NECC is interested in improvements that benefit the larger Haverhill and Merrimack Valley communities, such as offering publicly accessible greenspace,

field time for city and local youth leagues, healthy and sustainable food options, and affordable childcare.

In addition to meeting the primary needs of the Campus, potential types of third-party services for this partnership may include, but are not limited to:

- Athletic facilities, gyms, fitness centers, and community centers
- Competitive sports programming including baseball, soccer, softball, etc.
- Childcare services and programs
- Healthy food services and advertising ancillary to the main sports and fitness uses
- Physical therapy, sports medicine, and other health and wellness facilities

A successful development partner will bring a commitment to collaboration to serving the health and wellness needs of the Campus and community and help the Commonwealth achieve its three main goals.

### **Current Facility Users**

Building D and the adjacent fields are used primarily by the Campus athletics department. The Campus also operates a Police Academy in conjunction with the Massachusetts Police Training Committee (“MPTC”), which uses the facilities for recruit training. The Police Academy serves the Campus’ mission by providing workforce development opportunities to underrepresented demographics and supporting meaningful engagement with the surrounding communities.

The Campus has identified the following use-patterns for users of the facilities. While the Campus is willing to be collaborative to facilitate a quality partnership, the partner will need to develop a spatial and programmatic strategy to manage and accommodate these uses in addition to general student and campus-user access to the facilities when feasible.

#### **Athletics Department**

- Use of locker rooms, showers, fitness equipment, and training rooms
- Basketball Court
  - August - April: 3pm-9pm for team practices and intercollegiate
  - January – March: 12pm-3pm for spring sports teams as needed
- Outdoor Fields
  - August – May: 12pm-6pm for soccer, baseball, and softball

#### **Police Academy**

- Use of fitness facility physical training equipment Monday-Friday 6am-9am
- Use of jogging track; occasional use of fields

- Use of locker rooms and showers

### **Minimum Requirements**

A successful partner will need to address the following minimum requirements:

- Address deferred maintenance and accessibility needs of Building D and the fields either through renovation or replacement;
- Identify a strategy to manage shared uses of the facilities that is satisfactory to the Campus; and
- Propose a feasible financial plan to design, permit, construct, operate, and maintain the improvements on Campus

### **3. PURPOSE OF RFI**

DCAMM and NECC are using this RFI to determine the interest, potential partners, types of services, and funding mechanisms that would support the Commonwealth's vision for the Campus. DCAMM is seeking a self-sustaining partner(s) and hopes to use information collected through the RFI to understand the potential models and partnerships that could be created to deliver on the vision. Specifically, DCAMM is requesting information about programming approaches and available financing tools that would enable a partner(s) to finance the design, permitting, and construction of the project as well as the ongoing management of the site.

Responding to this RFI is completely voluntary and will in no way affect consideration of any proposal submitted in response to any procurement if one is issued. Whether or not a party has responded to this RFI will not be considered in any eventual procurement selection process.

This RFI may result in the submission of documents, which may assist DCAMM in identifying the benefits and cost associated with procuring partners for the Campus. DCAMM, NECC, and the Commonwealth are under no obligation to incorporate any of the comments or recommendations made as part of this process into a procurement. Please note that an RFI is not a procurement. In a procurement process, the Commonwealth would require approval from the Asset Management Board (AMB) to release an RFP or other procurement vehicle that would allow it to enter a long-term lease of the property, via a competitive developer selection process.

Responses to this RFI are subject to public records laws. DCAMM & NECC plan to publish responses, along with the RFI, as part of the project's public comment period. Financial information provided in response to this RFI will be kept confidential pursuant to G.L. c. 4, s. 7, clause Twenty-sixth (g).

#### 4. RFI QUESTIONS

DCAMM requests responses to any or all of the following RFI questions. Responses should be clearly labeled with the question number followed by the question text. Please submit responses to question 12 in a separate document.

1. What programs would you propose for the athletic facility and fields? Describe the associated site and building improvements that would be required. Provide a site plan if one is available.
2. Do you foresee any challenges in permitting or financing this project?
3. Is there a particular ground lease term that is critical to project feasibility?
4. How would you manage the various users of the facilities, including the scheduling of shared spaces and/or designation of exclusive-use spaces?
5. What ancillary uses would you envision to complement the core athletic and wellness uses on site?
6. Do you foresee any challenges in meeting the minimum requirements for this project?
7. Identify your preferred timeline and phasing of key milestones to get to project delivery. Please provide a timeline and project plan, if possible.
8. Describe your envisioned mission-alignment with NECC, and how a partnership on Campus would benefit your organization, the Campus community, and the Commonwealth at large. What are some opportunities for community engagement and collaboration that would benefit this project?
9. Provide examples of past experience with similar projects or partnerships, or other case studies that may be good models.
10. What else should the Commonwealth consider to achieve the three main goals as outlined in this document? Are there any programs or opportunities that may have been overlooked?
11. What, if any, additional information (beyond that provided here) should the Commonwealth make available to help inform responses to the eventual RFP for this project?
12. Describe what funding sources you would deploy to finance the development of these improvements. Please provide a sources and uses table if possible.

#### 5. RFI RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS AND TIMELINE

DCAMM requests that RFI responses be submitted by **April 19, 2023 by 4:00 P.M. Eastern Time.**

**Interested Parties are invited to respond to any or all of the above questions.** Parties interested in responding to this RFI should prepare a response that states the respondent's name, title, organization, telephone number, e-mail address, and URL address.

Please submit your response by email to [Leo.Stella@mass.gov](mailto:Leo.Stella@mass.gov) with the subject line "NECC RFI."