

**2023 HOTEL- CONFERENCE CENTER RFI**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Where can I find the Master Plan and Development Guidelines?**

*The Master Plan and Development Guidelines can be found at <http://www.tnresearchpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/UT-Research-Park-Master-Plan-Guidelines.pdf>.*

**The proposed site is shown within the Tennessee Scenic Highway and has height limitations. Is there any additional information regarding this constraint to be aware?**

*The maximum building height is 5 Stories, as outlined in the Master Plan and Development Guidelines Section 2.1.2. The building height is measured per the City of Knoxville's zoning ordinance. We are not aware of any other requirements but of course all local, state and federal building codes and regulations should be followed as appropriate.*

**Is there a specific brand of preference? Is unbranded an option?**

*There is no specific brand of preference, and unbranded is an option. We are seeking high quality facility with at least some amenities outlined in the RFI. A hotel with extended stay room options is also preferred.*

**Have there been any feasibility studies conducted with respect to conference space demand?**

*No feasibility studies have been conducted with respect to conference space demand. However, we believe there is demand from activities at the UT Research Park and UT Medical Center as well as Knoxville related travel due to its close proximity to the UT Knoxville campus and downtown Knoxville.*

*We can provide a point of contact with the UT Medical Center and the UT Knoxville campus if there's a desire to discuss their needs as well as any development plans they may have.*

**I need to know the terms and conditions on the ground lease that would attach to such property. Please give me such details and also the potential extension thereto so we may evaluate.**

*The base term of the ground lease would be 30 years. We will consider extension options beyond the base term. Also, please see response below regarding input UT will have post opening.*

**What is the timeline on the project, anticipated start and completion date of the project?**

*If we find there is adequate interest through the RFI process, a Request for Proposals would be issued to select a developer. This would take approximately 6 – 9 months and we would like construction to begin immediately after ground lease is executed. Given those assumptions, construction could begin in 2024 and be completed sometime in 2025.*

**Are we solely responsible for the entire project? Financing, construction, etc.?**

*Yes, we would expect the developer to finance, design, construct, maintain and operate the hotel conference center.*

**What input will UT have on the hotel post opening?**

*Cherokee Farm Development Corporation (CFDC) is a nonprofit organization separate from the University of Tennessee (UT) that manages the development and operation of the UT Research Park. While we envision UT support and involvement, this would be treated as a private sector project. Post opening, CFDC will ensure the terms of the ground lease are followed, which will include approval of retail tenants, if any.*

*Please note, the ground lease would allow for assignment with landlord (CFDC) approval. In general, the lease would state that the tenant could not transfer its' interest in the lease without CFDC's consent and that tenant would provide information on any proposed assignee, including audited financial statements and tax returns, creditworthiness, intended use and other reasonable and relevant information requested. We would add similar language to the changes in the operator (i.e., requires CFDC consent; information about the quality, experience, etc. of the operator).*

*The ground lease would also include certain maintenance requirements that the tenant must follow including replacement/renewal of certain items including interior finishes, HVAC, roofing, etc. These requirements would be based on industry standard practice for hotels of similar quality.*



**Inquiring about the size of the leasehold acreage/sq. ft. and I suppose we are still referring to Building Site A?**

*We've suggested Building Site A (~3 Acres) as a possible site, however, developers should feel free to recommend other sites they prefer. The parking requirements will need to be included in the parcel leased in the transaction.*

**Are there any restrictions on height build (number of floors) of the hotel and in terms of size of conference center are there any square footage specs or recommendations, or perhaps that is up to us to decide?**

*See response to question 2 regarding building height. The size of the conference center will be determined by the developer based on their market data. We do see a need for conference/meeting rooms that can accommodate meetings for companies located in the park.*

**Is there a feasibility study for the conference center that could help guide the developer on the depth of market, types of groups possible in the micro-market, and proposed occupancy/cash flows?**

*There is no current feasibility study regarding conference center demand available to prospective developers.*

**Does the sponsor have any guidance on the min/max square footage of the required conference space?**

*We have no specific guidance on the size of the conference center portion of the project, although we would like some conference room space to enable hotel guests to meet with potential collaborators during their stay at the Research Park.*

**Can you provide a site plan or survey (PDF and CAD) for the hotel site so we can do some conceptual drawings?**

*Information on the proposed site can be found [here](#).*

**Must a developer respond to the RFI in order to respond to the eventual RFP?**

*No, it is not a requirement to respond to the RFI in order to respond to the RFP. However, the responses to the RFI will be used to determine if there is adequate interest that would warrant issuing an RFP.*

**The PDF link the in RFI answers shows a master property with numbers parcels (not lettered). The answer notes the hotel site is Parcel A but I believe you mean Parcel 1 (3.04 ac) ...can you confirm that?**

*Lot A discussed in the RFI is the same as Lot 1 shown in the attached document.*

Can the surveyor send Parcel 1 (or the whole property in CAD) so we can do a quick layout). This will help us define the size and required parking for the conference space.

*So far, we have not been able to locate a survey of the proposed parcel.  
(referred to as Parcel A in the RFI)*

As it relates to the architectural standards, some hotel brands have prototypes that are pre-defined. May we submit those for discussion with our RFP response to determine whether or not they are suitable or do we need to assume a fully customized façade?

*We understand there will be requirements for certain brands of hotels. At a high level, we would be happy to review those requirements with the understanding that this would not result in any type of final approval of the plans.*

**Special Note:** The proposed outdoor cultural and recreational center, discussed in the pre-proposal meeting, has been submitted for inclusion in the State of Tennessee FY25 Budget. Funding for the project, if approved, would include donor, university and local government funding.

