

VISION STATEMENT FOR REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST*

The National Park Service has released this Request for Expressions of Interest for the development of the Fort Hancock Historic District of Sandy Hook, New Jersey. A broad range of developers, nonprofits, institutions and other interested groups are invited to submit visionary ideas and offers for this historic and truly unique property. The National Park Service welcomes commercial, educational and cultural uses that take advantage of the unmatched potential of Fort Hancock Historic District and make a meaningful contribution to its future.

BACKGROUND

Gateway National Recreation Area was created by Congress in 1972 "In order to preserve and protect for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations an area possessing outstanding natural and recreational features." This legislation included the "Sandy Hook unit - the entire area between Highway 36 Bridge and the northeastern point of the peninsula." The entire area was known as Fort Hancock prior to the transfer of the installation from the U.S. Army to the National Park Service in 1976.

The legislation further directed that " In the Sandy Hook Unit, the National Park Service shall inventory and evaluate all sites and structures having present and potential historical, cultural or architectural significance and shall provide for appropriate programs for the preservation, restoration, appreciation, interpretation, and utilization of them."

This RFEI presents the opportunity for other entities to work in partnership with the National Park Service to preserve, interpret and appropriately utilize the lands and buildings within the historic district.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Fort Hancock Historic District includes 37 buildings and associated property in the northern portion of what the Army called Fort Hancock and is currently known as Sandy Hook. The entire area provides opportunities to:

- enhance visitor experiences through additional opportunities for extended stays and food services
- expose visitors to the key aspects of American history, technology and the defenses of New York Harbor
- provide opportunities for cultural and educational enrichment

- promote recreational activities including hiking, biking, swimming, boating, surfing, and other park resource based activities
- provide business opportunities that are within the scope of National Park Service purposes

OPPORTUNITY

In recent planning documents, the National Park Service has determined that Gateway National Recreation Area should serve as a gateway to the National Park experience, giving visitors an opportunity to experience the natural wonders of the great outdoors, America's rich history and the benefits of an active lifestyle.

As Gateway moves forward to achieve its mandate to bring the National Park experience to the people of the metropolitan area, it needs to find practical, long-term solutions to preserve the Fort Hancock Historic District without impairing the serenity of Sandy Hook. This should be accomplished without detracting from its pivotal role as an ecological oasis and as a prime recreational destination for millions of visitors. These buildings and their historic landscape not only reveal the social and defense aspects of the garrison that defended New York Harbor from Fort Hancock throughout a turbulent century, but also provide adaptive opportunities for utilization which can benefit local communities with employment opportunities as well as educational, scientific and cultural experiences.

The National Park Service seeks expertise and advice from all concerned citizens to create a vital future for the buildings and grounds within the Fort Hancock Historic District where historic preservation, interpretation, community and visitor opportunities work hand in hand.

In summary, this RFEI presents an extraordinary opportunity for anyone with an interest in the future of the Fort Hancock Historic District. With this RFEI the National Park Service seeks individual, nonprofit, corporate, institutional or governmental entities that can articulate and realize a vision for new uses for the Fort Hancock Historic District worthy of this unique site and sustainable for the future.

* Prepared by Vision Working Group of the Fort Hancock 21st Century Advisory Committee

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Note from Linda Canzanelli:

Consider changing or expanding the second paragraph under "Opportunity", the first sentence where it talks about the mandate of Gateway "bring the National Park experience to the people of the metropolitan area..." Gateway provides a unique National Park experience for national and international visitors by being a destination park. It also serves an important role of introducing people from the metropolitan area to the National Park Service and the National Park System. Because of its location adjacent to a large number of people, unlike the once in a life time visit to Yellowstone, people from the local community are able to come back regularly for repeat visits where they can be introduced to new things and learn new skills to help them appreciate and explore the outdoors and America's rich cultural heritage.