



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway National Recreation Area

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Request for Expressions of Interest FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

Gateway National Recreation Area, with the advice of the Fort Hancock 21st Century Federal Advisory Committee, has issued a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for the historic Fort Hancock area of Sandy Hook. In exchange for a long term lease, new leaseholders would agree to rehabilitate historic Army buildings with outstanding views in a serene location. Historic tax credits are also available. For more information, visit <http://forthancock21stcentury.org/>.

1. How long/short can the lease term be? What determines the lease term?

A lease may run as long as 60 years. Final determination is subject to negotiation. The lease term is the length of time necessary to return the investment to fair market value.

2. What is a “historic tax credit” and how can I get one?

A 20% tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of “certified historic structures” as determined by the Secretary of Interior. Fort Hancock is an official Historic Landmark District. Repairs must comply with the Secretary’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Work is reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Offices and the NPS. More about historic tax credits: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/before-you-apply.htm>

3. Can new buildings be built? Can additions to existing buildings be made? Can buildings be joined?

Additions to existing buildings and demolition of unstable structures will be considered. New buildings are not allowed.

4. Why is the NPS not allowing construction of new buildings?

The mission of the National Park Service is to preserve not only the buildings themselves, but the historic landscape itself. **Adaptive reuse** allows historic structures to be altered for new purposes in desirable areas which are otherwise unavailable on the market.

5. Will the NPS cover any cost to restore the buildings?

The NPS does not plan to cover any of the restoration cost.

6. What is the financial obligation of the lease?

There are two fees: a common area fee, which covers services such as trash and snow removal and grounds care, and a monthly rental fee. Regulations require NPS to charge fair market value rent. Rent may be offset by how much a leaseholder spends to repair the property. Indeed, rent can be zero for several years, depending on the individual lease. Leaseholders must also pay for their own utilities.

7. What is the assigned leased area?

Leases may authorize occupancy of selected buildings and associated land for a term not to exceed sixty years. Subject to certain exceptions, a lease is awarded through a competitive selection such as a Request for Proposals (RFP).

8. What kind of uses or businesses will be allowed?

All legal proposals, compatible with the program of the National Park Service as stated in 36 CFR 18.4(d), will be considered, whether for private use or commercial, education or not-for-profit organizations.

9. Will there be designated parking for specific buildings?

Fort Hancock currently has about 600 spaces for parking. The historic footprint, including the parade ground, cannot be altered to add more parking. Additional parking may be available in other locations. Unlike beach parking, where there is a fee during the summer months, parking at Fort Hancock is free year-round. The NPS values sustainability; we will consider proposals for transportation alternatives.

10. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the building?

The NPS will make sure that buildings with leases have necessary utilities and services. Regular maintenance will be the responsibility of the leaseholder, who will pay a monthly common area charge for services such as snow removal and trash pickup. Leaseholders must pay their own utilities as well.

11. Will this impact access to Sandy Hook's beaches?

No. This RFEI concerns Fort Hancock's historic buildings. The NPS is not considering any changes to the public beaches or any structures near them. Access to the beaches will remain the same, since the Fort Hancock area has separate parking from the beach areas.

12. Will this impact historic programming?

Rehabilitation of historic buildings at the fort may improve historic programming as adaptively reused buildings will anchor the historic landscape may offer programming opportunities.

13. What is the relationship between Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook?

Fort Hancock Historic Landmark District is located within the Sandy Hook Unit, which itself is part of Gateway National Recreation Area, a national park within the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

14. What is the role of the Fort Hancock 21st Century Advisory Committee?

This federal advisory Committee was appointed to solicit the talent, expertise and creative ideas of the local community to formulate the best plan for preserving historic Fort Hancock. The Committee includes experts in science, historic preservation, education and real estate; most live in the local community. Several local elected officials serve on the Committee as well.

15. Who will review the proposals? How will they be evaluated?

Submissions will be reviewed by the Fort Hancock 21st Century Advisory Committee and the NPS at a meeting on January 10, which will be open to the public. Your submission will become part of the public record and may be seen by anyone. The NPS will make the final evaluation of RFEI submissions with input from the Committee. A draft of the evaluation form can be found on the Committee website at

http://forthancock21stcentury.org/meeting_materials/november_1_2013.

16. Will the NPS provide feedback on RFEI submissions?

Yes. Feedback is intended to help guide future submissions should the NPS issue a Request for Proposals (RFP).

17. What if I have feedback and/or criticism of the RFEI process itself?

This process is open and transparent; your comments are welcome. You may choose to speak to someone from the NPS or to share it with a member or members of the Committee. Please be aware that any written communication to Committee members will become part of the public record. Committee meetings also include a segment for public comment; signup is first-come, first-served.

18. Will my submission be made public? Will it be discussed in a public meeting?

Yes and yes. The executive summary of each proposal will be made public as will each full response that does not include confidential and/or proprietary information.

19. What is the next step after the RFEI?

The NPS, with the advice of the Committee, will evaluate the proposals and devise the next step, which is to issue a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP). That is the final step before leases are awarded.

20. If I do not respond to the RFEI, can I respond to a future Request for Proposal (RFP)?

Yes, you can take that chance. However, responses to the RFEI will help the NPS and the Committee refine plans for Fort Hancock. The NPS also reserves the right to decline to issue a RFP based on the response to the RFEI. Therefore it is in the interest of any potential leaseholders to develop an RFEI proposal. It will also help you prepare for your RFP later.

21. I have more questions! Who may I contact?

You may email us at forthancock21stcentury@yahoo.com.