

Oneida County Department of Planning

321 Main Street, 3rd floor

Utica, New York 13501

Request for Expressions of Interest

“The Runway”

Building 101 Redevelopment Project

Oneida County, New York

REI #2026-446

January 2026

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (REI)

THE RUNWAY – BUILDING 101 REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

ONEIDA COUNTY, NEW YORK

1. INTRODUCTION

The County of Oneida (County) invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from qualified, visionary, and innovative development and operating teams for the transformation of Building 101 into “The Runway,” a nationally significant, multi-purpose indoor sports, recreation, and tourism destination. This REI is intended to identify capable partners with the expertise, creativity, financial capacity, and operational experience to deliver a world-class project that will catalyze economic growth, enhance regional tourism, and redefine the Griffiss Business & Technology Park as a premier Northeast sports hub.

The County seeks partners who understand the rapidly growing sports tourism industry, the importance of multi-use recreational programming, and the long-term community and economic benefits of strategic public–private partnerships. The Runway is expected to serve residents, families, athletes, spectators, and visitors from across the United States and internationally.

2. BACKGROUND

Building 101, formerly a U.S. Air Force hangar, is an extraordinary structure comprising more than 400,000 square feet of enclosed, column-free high-bay space. Situated in Rome within the Griffiss Business & Technology Park, the building benefits from robust infrastructure and nearby highway access.

In Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr.’s 2025 State of the County Address, Building 101 was identified as a transformative opportunity to support the region’s rapid growth in sports-based tourism, fueled by the success of facilities such as the NEXUS Center and Murnane Field. Market trends, including the explosive growth of youth tournaments, adult recreational programming, pickleball, wellness services, esports, and holistic fitness, further reinforce the strategic timing of this redevelopment.

Once complete, The Runway will be the largest indoor multi-sport complex in New York State and the second largest indoor facility of its kind in the nation.

3. PROJECT VISION

The Runway is envisioned as a flexible, multi-dimensional sports and recreation campus designed to host tournaments, leagues, training camps, community recreation, and wellness programming. The County intends for The Runway to:

- Serve as a national destination for youth, collegiate, and amateur tournaments.
- Feature multipurpose indoor fields, courts, training zones, fitness and wellness amenities, and community program space.
- Offer adaptable indoor programming including soccer, softball, lacrosse, flag football, basketball, volleyball, pickleball, gymnastics, wrestling, cricket, esports, track and fitness, arts, childcare, senior activities, technology programming, and more.
- Integrate outdoor tournament-capable fields and a pedestrian-focused campus experience.
- Encourage (but not require) complementary commercial and hospitality development such as lodging, dining, food halls, breweries, distilleries, retail, or entertainment.
- Generate measurable tourism, economic activity, job creation, and year-round activation of the Griffiss Park.

The County seeks partners who can design, develop, operate, and maintain this facility with long-term sustainability and national competitiveness.

4. SITE & FACILITY SUMMARY

Building 101 offers approximately 400,000+ square feet, including high-bay areas ideal for multi-sport fieldhouses, court complexes, and fitness/training facilities. Architectural concept plans indicate program components such as:

- 200,000+ sq ft of field sports areas.
- 70,000+ sq ft of court and gymnasium spaces (basketball, volleyball, pickleball).
- 50,000+ sq ft of program, classroom, wellness, arts, childcare, and technology spaces.
- A new main lobby and façade addition.
- Administrative offices and meeting space.
- Elevated walk/jog track.
- Team rooms, locker rooms, sports medicine, and support systems.

The surrounding acreage allows for the development of:

- Up to six multi-purpose outdoor turf or grass athletic fields.
- Expanded parking capacity.
- A pedestrian promenade connecting indoor and outdoor amenities.
- Spaces appropriate for hospitality, commercial, or entertainment development.

5. DEVELOPMENT & OPERATING MODEL

Respondents may propose a wide range of development and operating structures. The County is open to creative, financially sound, and operationally proven models, including but not limited to:

- Long-term operating agreements.
- Lease or sublease arrangements.
- Public–private partnership structures.
- Privately financed buildouts with County-supported site preparation.
- Hybrid developer–operator teams.

Amenities beyond core sports programming (i.e. lodging, restaurants, breweries, retail, etc.) are encouraged but optional. Respondents should also propose their preferred operating term.

6. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions must include the following:

A. Entity Identification & Qualifications

- Team profiles, organizational structure, key personnel, and relevant experience.

B. Concept Vision & Narrative

- Proposed uses, program components, phasing, amenities, and intended user groups.

C. Development Approach

- Construction strategy, design intent, cost framework, and schedule.

D. Operating Model

- Proposed operational structure, staffing, hours, pricing concepts, partnerships.

E. Financial Capacity

- Evidence of financial strength, funding strategies, previous comparable projects.

F. Case Studies

- Examples of similar sports, recreation, tourism, or adaptive reuse projects.

G. References

- References from comparable project partners.

H. Additional Materials

- Any renderings, diagrams, or supplemental narratives supporting the submission.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA & SCORING MATRIX

The County will evaluate submissions using the following scoring framework:

A. Vision & Concept Alignment – 30%

- How well the EOI reflects the County's goals for sports tourism, community use, and economic development.

B. Experience & Qualifications – 30%

- Demonstrated success developing and operating comparable facilities.

C. Financial Capacity & Feasibility – 20%

- Strength of team's financial resources, funding approach, and long-term sustainability.

D. Innovation – 20%

- Creative, forward-thinking design, technology integration, or programming concepts.

8. COUNTY RIGHTS & DISCLAIMERS

A. This REI does not obligate the County to award or enter into any agreements.

B. This submission of an EOI shall not be deemed to create a contract or any obligation on the part of the County.

C. The County reserves the right to amend, modify, suspend or withdraw this REI at any time.

D. All costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an EOI shall be borne solely by the respondent.

E. All EOI shall become property of the County and will not be returned.

F. EOI may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the New York Freedom of Information Law. Respondents should clearly identify any portion of the EOI they believe are exempt from disclosure; however, the County makes no guarantee that such information will be withheld.

G. Oneida County reserves the right to:

- Request clarifications or additional materials.
- Issue a formal Request for Proposals (RFP).
- Determine the process that best serves the interests of the County.

9. NEXT STEPS

Respondents should submit EOI electronically to the County at Planning@oneidacountyny.gov as well as a hard copy to the Oneida County Planning Department, referencing REI 2026-446, Attn: Linda Benjamin at 301 Main Street 3rd Floor, Utica, New York 13501.

EOI submission deadline: April 9, 2026, by 4:00 PM EST.

Any questions concerning the REI must be submitted in writing to the foregoing address, or by email to lmbenjamin@oneidacountyny.gov, by no later than February 23, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Conceptual Program Summary

Includes indoor fieldhouse areas, court configurations, program spaces, administrative zones, wellness and technology areas, childcare, arts programming spaces, locker rooms, elevated track, and support facilities as outlined in uploaded schematics.

Appendix B – Preliminary Cost Overview

Based on the order-of-magnitude cost estimate dated November 18, 2025, the projected project cost for full redevelopment of Building 101 is approximately \$43.1 million for interior buildout, plus an estimated \$12 million for development of outdoor athletic fields. Costs include demo, structural, MEP systems, sports flooring and equipment, finishes, support spaces, site work, contingency, insurance, and CM fee.

Appendix C – Recreation & Wellness Trends Summary

Trends include major growth in pickleball, esports, youth sports recovery, adult fitness leagues, multi-generational programming, holistic wellness, skateboarding, family engagement nights, holiday programming, and instructional kitchen/cooking classes.