REQUEST FOR INTEREST

For the Revitalization and Reuse of the Historic Southwest Museum Campus and the Casa de Adobe

March 2019 | Los Angeles, California
The Autry Museum of the American West, with the active participation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Trust’s Southwest Museum Steering Committee, seeks bold, innovative, inspiring, and financially sustainable concepts for the revitalization and creative reuse of the Southwest Museum campus and the Casa de Adobe, a collection of historic buildings in the dynamic Mount Washington/Highland Park neighborhoods of Northeast Los Angeles.
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For more than a century, the historic Southwest Museum campus (234 Museum Drive, Los Angeles) has occupied a vital place in Los Angeles's cultural history. Located on a prominent hillside along the Arroyo Seco Corridor—with a bird’s-eye view of the Downtown Los Angeles skyline, surrounding hills, and mountain ranges, as well as local communities and neighborhoods—the site was an early location of the Southwest Museum of the American Indian, which opened there in 1914 and operated independently until 2003. The site’s distinguished location, architectural features, and historic significance make this a truly special landmark with enormous potential and an exciting role to play as it enters its second century. The site is not without its challenges, as is often the case for notable properties and architectural landmarks, but along with those challenges come unique, exciting, and rewarding opportunities.

The SWM campus is a cherished landmark, and local residents and businesses are keenly interested in its future use and how it will contribute to and be an active part of the surrounding neighborhoods. Because of this, potential uses should consider ways to respect and showcase the architectural character and prominence of the property; spark connections with local sites and institutions; and enhance the community. Respondents are encouraged to consider ways they can strengthen their concepts and overall community impact by teaming with established local nonprofit organizations, institutions, arts and cultural organizations, and/or educational partners.

“On a hill, where it shall See and Be Seen.”—Charles F. Lummis, Out West, May 1907
BACKGROUND

The historic Southwest Museum (SWM) presents an attractive once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the revitalization and/or adaptive reuse of this prominent Los Angeles landmark. Located on a park-like 12-acre hillside campus, the museum is just a few minutes northeast of Downtown Los Angeles along the 110 Freeway and Metro Gold Line. The highly visible and recognizable Spanish Colonial Revival–style museum building from 1914 is the work of the architectural firm of Sumner Hunt & Silas Burns, with substantial input from archaeologist, author, ethnographer, early preservationist, and museum founder Charles Fletcher Lummis.

This Request for Interest (RFI) also includes the historic 1917 Casa de Adobe located nearby (4603-4605 North Figueroa Street). The Casa is a replica of an idealized single-story adobe ranch house surrounding a central courtyard.

Both the SWM campus and the Casa de Adobe are owned by the Autry Museum of the American West (the Autry) as a result of a merger in 2003 between the Southwest Museum of the American Indian and the Autry. Following the merger, the Autry embarked on a comprehensive, multiyear conservation program to save, preserve, and protect the Southwest Museum’s important collections and identify a long-term, viable future for the historic site. In 2015, in collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust), the National Trust’s Southwest Museum Steering Committee, and Los Angeles City Council District 1 (CD1), the Autry was able to initiate a more formal search to identify new owners/operators and potential rehabilitation/development partners with financially sustainable ideas and experience to revitalize the property’s charming and uniquely Southern California character as an attractive community-focused destination. See the appendix for more information on the National Trust for Historic Preservation designation of the historic SWM campus as a National Treasure.

Over the past several years there has been a significantly increased level of collaboration and communication among the Autry, its partners, local community organizations, and community residents. This collaborative spirit and the excitement surrounding the future of the SWM site have enhanced the possibilities for success in a way that could not have been imagined previously. This momentum, along with research gathered during recent years, has created an opportunity to bring to light a range of innovative ideas for publicly accessible uses that will revitalize the Southwest Museum campus and the Casa de Adobe as assets for the neighborhood and Los Angeles as a whole. Much of the information generated by these years of work is included for reference in the Appendix of Supplemental Information.

This intensive outreach and collaboration have been instrumental in establishing common ground and shared priorities for the SWM campus’s reuse and reactivation. Any successful concept should address four core principles (The Four Cs), which are outlined in the next section.

The preferred transaction between the Autry and any new owner/operator is a full transfer of the property, the terms and conditions to be determined between the parties. As a nonprofit, the Autry is subject to applicable legal requirements under California law regarding supporting consideration for the transfer of a charitable asset. Consequently, any response must address the level of nonprofit use proposed for the property. Potential new owners/operators will be asked to contribute to the site’s maintenance and operations costs upon entering an agreement with the Autry.
OBJECTIVES OF THE RFI

To guide the rehabilitation process, the Autry and its partners will use this RFI to identify inventive concepts and land use opportunities that are grounded in market-driven data and community input. The Autry and its partners are inviting respondents to submit concepts that bring the property into productive use in ways that serve the immediate neighborhoods and broader Los Angeles community; support economic activity in the area; and create a compelling asset(s) with the potential to remain appealing and sustainable well into the future to ensure their long-term preservation.

As noted above, the following principles (The Four Cs) should be clearly identified and addressed in all proposed concepts and opportunities. These principles were carefully defined through many months of intensive research, analysis, and community input, and form the foundation for any future use of the site. If your entity is not experienced in one or more of these areas, your response should describe the potential partners or resources you would explore to strengthen your team and/or your concept.

- **Commitment** – Have a clear commitment to preserving the historic structures and celebrating the history of the site and the legacy of its founder, Charles Lummis.
- **Capacity** – Demonstrate the organizational and financial capacity to undertake a project of this scale and complexity, and sustain operations over the long term.
- **Community** – Consider and reflect the priorities that have been expressed by the surrounding community, connecting the property and its uses to its neighborhood and greater Los Angeles.
- **Collection** – Include options for potential programming opportunities that draw on the Autry’s historic Southwest Museum of the American Indian Collection. See **Opportunities for Partnerships with the Autry** for details.

1 Interested respondents will have an opportunity to see the collections by touring the Resources Center of the Autry. See the RFI Schedule for tour dates.
The Autry and its partners encourage responses from a wide variety of organizations and firms, including joint ventures. Those who might want to locate on only a part of the property also are welcome to respond, with the understanding that they may be advised to partner with other respondents to create a stronger and more fiscally sustainable concept.

Potential respondents can include, but are not limited to:

- Foundations and related philanthropic organizations
- Museums, arts, and cultural organizations
- Universities
- Institutions
- Developers
- Brokers
- Designers/architects
- Consultants
- Potential tenants
- Community stakeholders

All potential owners/operators and development partners must be willing to engage in discussions and negotiations with the Autry related to a partnership with the Autry to develop interesting, original public programming that is inspired by and draws on the content of the historic Southwest Museum of the American Indian Collection.
The SWM campus and Casa de Adobe properties are in the Mt. Washington/Highland Park neighborhoods of Los Angeles, approximately five miles northeast of Downtown Los Angeles and seven miles southwest of Pasadena. The communities along the historic Arroyo Seco Corridor are a dynamic combination of residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, with a high concentration of natural and cultural institutions that have a strong history and identity associated with the arts and the Arroyo Seco. Beyond the SWM site and Casa de Adobe, the area is home to the Lummis Home (El Alisal), Ernest Debs Park, the Audubon Center, the historic Judson Studios, Heritage Square Museum, Occidental College, Avenue 50 Studio, a stretch of historic Route 66, and one of the largest historic districts in Los Angeles.

In recent years, Northeast Los Angeles has experienced a marked increase in public and private investment, including the revitalization of Figueroa Street, York Boulevard, and Colorado Boulevard, as well as the Figueroa Corridor in general. The area is home to dynamic and diverse communities, as well as an eclectic mix of cafes, restaurants, shops, art galleries, and independent businesses.

Prominently positioned in Mt. Washington, the SWM campus is highly visible and easily accessible from the adjacent 110 Freeway. With a dedicated “Southwest Museum” Metro station located less than a block away, the SWM buildings and the Casa de Adobe are visible to and accessible by the nearly 100,000 weekly riders of the Metro Gold Line traveling between Union Station, Downtown Los Angeles, Pasadena, and other San Gabriel Valley cities.

“One can argue that Los Angeles came of age in Highland Park, with artists, writers and intellectuals such as Charles Lummis creating the vocabulary on which we now rely when we try to explain what Los Angeles was and could be.”

—KCET Media
“The founder claims that from these towers one has ‘the most beautiful outlook of any public building in America,’ a statement difficult to dispute as there is presented the whole long procession of the tall peaks of the Sierra Madre, a distant view of the ocean and the islands of the sea, the crowded city of Los Angeles, the beauties of Sycamore Grove, Highland Park, and South Pasadena, and winding wonders of the Arroyo Seco.”

—California Outlook, 1913
## SITE AND FACILITIES DESCRIPTION

### MUSEUM SITE AND ACCESS

The SWM campus is located on a sloped and irregularly shaped hillside bounded by Museum Drive on the west, Marmion Way on the south and east, and Crane Boulevard to the north.

Vehicle access is from Museum Drive via Marmion Way or Crane Boulevard. A separate entrance and pedestrian tunnel with elevator service to the 1914 building was added on Museum Drive in 1919. The Gold Line “Southwest Museum” Station is located approximately 400 feet from this tunnel entrance, on the south side of Marmion Way, and is accessible via pedestrian crosswalks.

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### SWM CAMPUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Address</th>
<th>234 Museum Drive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessor Parcel No.</td>
<td>5467018015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>11.820 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>A1-1-HPOZ (Highland Park – Garvanza)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Plan Area</td>
<td>Mount Washington – Glassell Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council District</td>
<td>CD 1 – Gilbert Cedillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Tract #</td>
<td>1851.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Spaces</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
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### BUILDINGS:

<table>
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<th>Building</th>
<th>Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914 Museum, 1941 Poole Wing</td>
<td>~31,000 SF</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977 Braun Research Library</td>
<td>~7,200 SF</td>
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### CASA DE ADOBE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Address</th>
<th>4603-4605 North Figueroa Street</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>5467010002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>30,324 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917 building</td>
<td>~6,000 SF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>RD2-1-HPOZ (Highland Park – Garvanza)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council District</td>
<td>CD 1 – Gilbert Cedillo</td>
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<td>Census Tract #</td>
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<td>Parking Spaces</td>
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</table>
The 1914 poured-in-place concrete museum building is in the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style with smooth exterior stucco siding, red clay roof tiles, and steel sash windows and skylights. The interior space consists of two large exhibition halls on the upper level flanking a large central staircase and entryway. The lower levels are divided into administrative, office, and storage spaces, along with a large outdoor patio area that affords excellent views of the grounds and surrounding neighborhood. The most prominent features are the three-story Torrance Tower at the west end and the seven-story Caracol Tower on the east. The latter contains a unique central poured-concrete spiral stairway and a rooftop with spectacular views of Downtown Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Mountains.

A separate entrance and pedestrian tunnel were added in 1919 to provide street access to the SWM from Museum Drive. One of the earliest expressions of Pre-Columbian Revival in Los Angeles architecture, the dramatic tunnel is lined with 20 square niches. The tunnel originally held WPA-era dioramas in its niches, and it has recently been used for art exhibitions and site-specific music/dance performances. The tunnel terminates in an elevator that provides service to the lower level of the entrance hall in the 1914 building.

The two-story Poole Wing addition was designed by architect Gordon Kaufmann in 1940–1941 and features clerestory windows with an open floor plan on the second floor. The lower level has a series of large windows along the north wall and the floorplan is interrupted by a grid of structural concrete columns.

The grounds are planted with trees and shrubs, with a slightly more formal native plant garden and paths off the terrace on the south side of the main building. There are more natural open areas on the hillsides.

The main buildings are largely unoccupied except for an exhibition hall in the museum open to the public on Saturdays, and the occasional use of the buildings and courtyard for meetings, community events, and pop-up exhibitions. From 2004 to 2016, the museum was primarily used as a temporary conservation lab while the Autry undertook a major multiyear effort to document and conserve the Southwest Museum’s extensive collection of cultural materials and artifacts. These are now housed at the Autry’s Resources Center in Burbank, which is scheduled to open in 2020.

The freestanding Braun Research Library addition was designed by architect Glen E. Cook in 1977 to house archival materials. The small, two-story unreinforced concrete masonry building separates the museum courtyard from the surface parking lot.

A small caretaker’s house and garage is located at the northernmost end of the property on Crane Boulevard. These two residential structures are not designated as historic and are currently occupied.
The nearby Casa de Adobe faces south along Figueroa Street, a major north/south corridor that runs through Highland Park. The property is sited several feet above the street level of Figueroa and located next to a preschool/child care center, residential housing, and the Metro Gold Line tracks.

Constructed in 1917, the Casa was deliberately designed to resemble an early adobe ranch house with four wings divided into small rooms that enclose a central courtyard. The Hispanic Society of California used the location for events and educational programs before the Southwest Museum of the American Indian took ownership in 1922. The property has been closed to the public since 2013 due to water damage and public safety and accessibility issues.
HISTORIC STATUS

The Southwest Museum is listed in the California Register of Historic Places and was designated a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument in 1984. The 1914 building and the 1919 tunnel were nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. That nomination was amended and expanded in 2007 to incorporate the 1941 Poole Wing addition. The museum campus also is a contributing feature within the Highland Park-Garvanza HPOZ district (Historic Preservation Overlay Zone).

The Casa de Adobe was listed as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument in 1990 and has been found eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Places.

These designations make both properties and its rehabilitation expenditures eligible for certain local, state, and federal incentives that can provide considerable gap financing for capital costs. These include the following:

- Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits
- the Mills Act Program
- Preservation Easements

The designated status also allows use of the California State Historic Building Code, which provides alternative permitting regulations for the rehabilitation of original or restored elements and features.

Because of their historic designation, redevelopment plans for either the SWM campus or the Casa de Adobe will be reviewed by the City’s Cultural Heritage Commission. Proposed rehabilitation work, alterations, or additions must comply with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Any redevelopment plans also will be subject to applicable City zoning and general plan requirements, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), along with related plan approval and permitting requirements.

Projects involving the SWM Campus and Casa de Adobe may be eligible to apply for funding from the 2018 CA Proposition 68, which provides grant funding for state and local parks, environmental protection projects, water infrastructure projects, and flood protection projects (Prop 68), as well as Los Angeles County’s Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks and Beaches Measure of 2016 (Measure A).

The properties also are located in a census tract that makes them eligible for the U.S Treasury’s New Markets Tax Credit Program, which permits individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial intermediaries called Community Development Entities.

Additional information about these designations, programs, and incentives is provided in the Appendix of Supplemental Information.
“The architecture is in general that of the Alhambra in Spain, in its outward manifestations—but bent to the requirements and opportunities of California.”

—Charles F. Lummis, *Out West*, May 1907
The Autry, their partners, the City, and community groups have commissioned numerous studies of all buildings at the site, including a Rehabilitation Study of the Museum (2006), a Historic Structures Report for the Casa de Adobe (2006), a City Engineer’s Study that provided updates to both of those documents (2013), a Stakeholder Interview Report (2015), a Feasibility Study for the Casa de Adobe (2017), and market and demographic data (2019). These materials offer helpful and informed insight into the historic and accompanying structures on the site and preliminary evaluations of seismic and accessibility issues, along with a description of possible treatments and estimated costs, depending on the nature of the reuse.

In addition to these, some community groups have prepared their own proposed revitalization and expansion plans and conceptual designs.

Please see the Appendix of Supplemental Information, which contains dozens of important reports and documents for reference.
Proposed reuses should address the core principles (The Four Cs) detailed in the Objectives section, but respondents can achieve this in myriad ways. Concepts can focus on the SWM campus, the Casa de Adobe, or both as components of a larger redevelopment plan. Concepts may incorporate a combination of public, nonprofit, and commercial uses, and respondents are encouraged to seriously explore how multiple compatible uses could be combined to create a vibrant, sustainable, and popular destination.

All potential owners/operators and development partners will have the benefit of a future partnership with the Autry to create public programming that draws on the content of the Autry’s Southwest Museum of the American Indian Collection. Proposed uses should explore the special and valuable opportunities presented by this programmatic partnership.

A range of desirable uses for the SWM campus were identified through many months of stakeholder engagement, public opinion survey, assessment of market conditions and demographics, and evaluation of comparable properties, along with considerable due diligence conducted by the Autry, the National Trust, and other interested potential partners who have previously explored reuse concepts for the property. Based on this information, several possible uses for the property emerged as popular community priorities. Respondents should carefully consider how they might address or incorporate some of these options but are not limited to only those listed below.

- Gallery, museum, cultural, or exhibition space
- Live/work space (short-term) for artist or scholar studios and/or other art production
- Cafe and/or restaurant
- Educational and other public programming uses
- Performance space (dance, music, film, spoken word, etc.)
- Cultural tourism/in-residence hospitality with meeting spaces
- Limited-scale residential use in combination with other public educational and/or cultural uses
- Nonprofit uses (on-property programming, office space)
- Small-scale retail (bookstore, artwork, gifts, etc., preferably local)
- Event, public use, and/or meeting rental
- Adaptive reuse (e.g., the Helms Bakery District in Culver City, the Hauser & Wirth gallery in the Downtown Los Angeles Arts District, Glendale’s Grand Central Air Terminal)
- Publicly accessible open space (park, gardens, trails) associated with the new development
- Urban agriculture/horticulture

The Autry reserves the right to consider combining applicants and concepts, and to recommend partnerships where appropriate.
SITE TOURS

All buildings, except for the caretaker’s house and garage on Crane Drive, will be made available during tours of the properties and grounds followed by discussion with representatives from the Autry, the National Trust, CDI, and the City’s Office of Historic Resources.

One tour of the Autry’s Resources Center in Burbank will be scheduled to provide potential applicants with a better understanding of the Autry’s collections and archives, followed by discussion with conservation and curatorial staff.

Applicant attendance at tours is strongly encouraged but is not required.
**INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN A RESPONSE**

Please structure your response to address the following questions, which will be used as the basis of our review process. If your response contains confidential or proprietary information that you do not wish to be shared beyond the owner and the reviewers, clearly mark those sections as “confidential.”

**RESPONDENT INFORMATION**

- In what capacity would you want to participate (e.g., owner/operator, tenant, developer, etc.)?
- Describe your organization or firm with an emphasis on your qualifications to undertake such a venture, including resumes of the leaders/principals who would be involved with this project (a web link to company information and resumes is sufficient).
- Regarding the role you could play, please address the applicable questions below in your response:
  - If you are a developer, describe your experience with the rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of similar historic properties. Do you have experience partnering with nonprofits or other community-focused organizations?
  - If you are a broker, describe what type of tenant(s) you envision for the property and your experience with similar projects.
  - If you are a consultant, describe your experience with other projects of this type and complexity, and what role you or your firm played.
  - If you are an architect or designer, describe your experience with the reactivation and/or rehabilitation of similar historic structures/campuses.
    - For any of the above roles, please also describe:
      - Your experience with rehabilitation of complex historic structures
      - Your management and financial capacity to successfully pursue a financially sustainable project, including experiences that demonstrate this capability
      - Your Potential Use Concept (outlined below)
  - If you are a potential tenant, describe whether your concept or programming would occupy all or a portion of the property; if there are other organizations or entities you would seek to bring in as partners or fellow tenants; potential funding sources that would sustain rent and ongoing operational costs; and relevant details from the Potential Use Concept section.
  - If you are a community stakeholder, please describe owners, operators, or partners that would be necessary to realize your concept; potential sustainable funding sources that would support your proposed use(s); and relevant details from the Potential Use Concept section.
POTENTIAL USE CONCEPT

• Describe your scenario(s) for potential rehabilitation and reactivation of the SWM campus and/or Casa de Adobe. Your responses may address only part of the property or may combine full use of the facility by one or more entities. Be sure to indicate if you are interested in the SWM campus, the Casa de Adobe, or both properties. If your concept uses less than the full SWM campus, describe which portions or buildings your concept would occupy. Please be specific and include examples or images of similar concepts. Links to online resources are welcome.

• Describe how your concept:
  ▪ Addresses the core principles outlined in The Four Cs
  ▪ Is appropriate in the context of the Mt. Washington/Highland Park community and the wider demographics, trends, and needs of Northeast Los Angeles

• Given the major investment needed,
  ▪ How will the physical rehabilitation, maintenance, and ongoing operation of the property be financed and sustained over time?
  ▪ What do you see as the most pressing challenges, and how do you anticipate these and other potential challenges might be mitigated? Provide references and examples of similar successful projects, where available.
  ▪ How will you measure your project’s success?

• Describe the type of community and public outreach you would pursue for your project concept.
SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
Submit one (1) electronic copy in a single PDF file (20 MB max.)
to SouthwestRFI@theAutry.org by 5:00 p.m. PDT on June 10, 2019.

Responses are limited to 10 pages maximum. Links to online references such as resumes and/or images of inspirational project ideas and peer cases are encouraged. Incomplete submissions may be rejected at the sole discretion of the Autry and its partners.

REVIEW PROCESS
In consultation with the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Steering Committee and the Autry Board, staff of the Autry and the National Trust will review and evaluate all submissions. The most promising submissions will be identified based on applicants’ experience with rehabilitation of historic properties or similarly complex projects; financial capacity; management capacity and history of sustained operations; community benefits of proposed project concept; long-term viability and sustainability of proposed project concept; and commitment to public outreach and communications. These items are articulated in the RFI sections above.

During the review process, we may contact respondents with questions and clarifications, to request one-on-one meetings, or to explore the potential for collaboration between two or more respondents.

At the end of the RFI review process, the Autry will determine the appropriate next steps. The Autry and its partners reserve the right, at their discretion, to determine those steps, which may include but are not limited to the following:
• Entering into a Development or Exclusive Negotiation Agreement with specific respondent(s)
• Drawing on the RFI responses to develop and circulate a Request for Proposal
• Issuing a new RFI with project modifications based on information learned from the initial round or other changing circumstances

Please note that responses to the RFI will not be considered confidential or proprietary unless the respondent has clearly marked their response, or portions of their response, accordingly. The Autry and the National Trust will share a summary of the responses after completion of the RFI review. This summary will include the total number of responses and an overview of the types of entities that submitted responses. Names of specific applicants may be included as examples in the summary, unless confidentiality is specifically requested in the response.

The summary will be posted to the Autry’s website at TheAutry.org/SWMRFI.
Submit all questions about the RFI to SouthwestRFI@theAutry.org no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 31, 2019.

APPENDIX OF SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

See the Appendix of Supplemental Information at TheAutry.org/SWMRFI.