Once again, NASA is asking for ideas to rescue Hubble from certain death

The Hubble Space Telescope still shines in the eyes of astronomers after 36 years in orbit, but it is not as nimble as it once was. Left alone, the observatory will plunge back into the atmosphere in the early-to-mid-2030s, closing the book on one of the most famous scientific instruments of the century.

NASA last raised the orbit of Hubble in 2002, when the Space Shuttle *Columbia* visited the observatory for a servicing mission. The final shuttle servicing flight in 2009 did not reboost the telescope's orbit, and with the retirement of the shuttle fleet two years later, Hubble has steadily lost altitude with no way to stave off eventual destruction.

The space agency released a Request For Information (RFI) on Thursday asking commercial companies for ideas on how to reboost, service, or a controlled disposal of Hubble. Responses are due November 30. Specifically, NASA is looking for information about companies' current and near-term capabilities for capturing Hubble and boosting it to an altitude of at least 373 miles (600 km), enhancing the telescope's performance, or guiding Hubble to a controlled reentry.

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