

Gateway Block Combined Request for Proposals (RFP) – DRAFT

Memorial Auditorium and Gateway Parking Lot Community and Economic Development Department October 19, 2015

The Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) of the City of Burlington is soliciting redevelopment and development proposals for the Gateway Block, which includes Memorial Auditorium and the City-owned corner parking lot at the intersection of South Winooski Avenue and Main Street in downtown Burlington. Proposals may include one or both properties. Redevelopment of either parcel will involve significant public processes, and both sites are eligible for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) through the City's Downtown TIF District.

I. Background

A. Memorial Auditorium (145 South Union Street)

Memorial Auditorium is an historic structure built in 1927 that includes a gymnasium with a proscenium stage, large lower level room that currently houses Generator (a maker space), pottery and arts studio currently occupied by Burlington City Arts (BCA) programs, the 30-year home of Burlington Parks Recreation and Waterfront's (BPRW) music venue 242 Main, and major server operations for Burlington Telecom. The 57,562 SF (45,148 finished) building sits on a 0.88-acre corner lot. (See attached Assessor record and State Register of Historic Places description.) The building has served as an event space for years, and important events still take place there – most significantly the Burlington Farmer's Market in cold weather months – though they have dwindled significantly in the last 15 years. The building also serves as a memorial to those who have died in military service (see attached 9-28-2013 BFP story.)

It is operated by BPRW. The on-site parking facilities serving the building are limited, but there are several parking garages and lots within several blocks of the property. The property is bounded to the south by Main Street, the east by Union Street, the north by the College Street Congregational Church and the Library parking lot, and the west by a privately owned mixed use duplex (234-36 Main St) currently housing a tattoo business and residential uses.

The building has extensive deferred maintenance detailed in three separate reports from 1991, 2008, and 2014 – available upon request. The building costs the City of Burlington roughly \$250,000 annually to operate before addressing any deferred maintenance and currently generates no property tax revenue and limited tax revenue from its events. In a recent memo to the Mayor and City Council (October 13, 2015,) Martha Keenan of the Department of Public Works reported that \$260,000

of immediate investment in the building's roof and heating system is necessary to minimize further deterioration of the building and prepare for a potential failure of the boiler system. In addition, a further \$4M plus is required in the following two fiscal years in order to safely support current building activities. Significant additional spending would be necessary to reconfigure the building for any other uses.

B. Gateway Parking Lot (220 Main Street)

The City-owned 0.23-acre corner parking lot at Main and South Winooski currently serves as transient parking for downtown visitors, with just over 40 parking spaces. (See attached Assessor record.) It has a varied history that includes in its earliest days as a ravine that drained the higher ground to north and east of the site and was the site of an early railroad station. The ravine was later filled but still carries a key part of the City's stormwater system. As a result, a significant amount of non-structural fill underlies the parking lot (see attached 8-3-2013 BFP story and 5-2-1991 engineering report.)

The parking lot sits at one of the primary entrances to the downtown and is currently operated by the Department of Public Works (DPW). The property is bounded to the south by Main Street, to the east by the privately held Mid-Town Motel (230 Main St), to the north by a Burlington City Fire Station #1, and to the west by North Winooski Avenue. Some environmental assessments have already been conducted and are available upon request.



II. Development Goals

The City has multiple development parameters/objectives for the redevelopment of these two sites. These include:

A. Memorial Auditorium Goals

- Adaptive reuse of this prominent and important civic building located on the gateway to the city's downtown core.
- Preserve and restore the historic character and façade of the building, particularly on the sides facing Union Street and Main Street.
- Preserve and/or honor in some fashion the memorials within the building.
- Generate positive cash flow to the City's finances through adaptive reuse of the building, to the benefit of taxpayers and fiscal stability.
- Address all deferred maintenance.
- Preserve or specifically address the relocation of the Burlington Telecom hub in redevelopment plans (estimated moving cost approximately \$1M).
- If Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is proposed as a redevelopment source, generation of new tax dollars must be created in sufficient increment at either or both development sites to support the requested public investment; and the proposal should indicate how "but for the public investment" redevelopment as proposed could not occur.
- Work with City-based entities with existing uses in the building to determine whether or not a future development of the building is the appropriate place to re-house an iteration of those uses or not. If not, include a proposed process to determine potential new locations with a commitment to assist with relocation.

B. Gateway Parking Lot Goals

- Utilize great urban design:– architecturally innovative and forward-looking but grounded in context of downtown Burlington.
- Active first floor uses are required – with a two-story high retail corner at Main & S. Winooski as a goal.
- Minimum 15-foot wide active pedestrian area along Winooski Avenue frontage.
- Height should be maximized within current zoning; density is a priority for downtown developments in this location or a strategy for rezoning should be proposed.

C. Shared Goals

- Parking
 - No at-grade, street fronting parking (off-street).
 - If proposed, any parking structure should be right-sized and shared-use, based on the principles of the Downtown Parking Plan.
 - If proposed, any parking structure MUST participate in whatever parking

management district is formed to serve downtown through the City's ongoing Downtown Parking efforts; if a new structure is proposed to be built utilizing City dollars, it is highly likely that structure will be owned by the City or downtown-wide parking entity.

- Parking spaces must be unbundled from units/leasable space.
- Bike parking and bike amenities should be prioritized.
- Housing is highly encouraged at one or both sites and will be considered favorably, but is not a required parameter.
- The reintroduction of on-street parking on Main Street, if deemed workable by the City's DPW.
- Utilize sustainable design practices and green infrastructure extensively.
- Public art should be incorporated into the interior and exterior.
- Should have thoughtful interfaces with firehouse, library, existing Church, and other neighbors. Project proposals that support and incentivize successful re-development of Memorial are a priority.
- Loading and unloading should be shielded from the street.
- Waste and external services should be shared as much as possible for efficiencies.
- Reference Plan BTV: Downtown & Waterfront for broader conceptual framework.

III. Proposal Process

Proposals will be accepted from:

- Developers seeking to develop solely one property or the other;
- Developers seeking to develop both properties;
- Separate developers working in partnership to develop both parcels;
- Proposals from or partnering with adjacent land owners; and
- City of Burlington departments.

The City reserves the right to proceed with one property and not the other based on proposals received, staff capacity, and available funding.

Proposals will be vetted by a CEDO-led team, but will also go through a public process to ensure citizen input on the project(s). If a project seeks Tax Increment Financing, the project will ultimately have to go through a public vote.

Sale of either or both properties is possible, but respondents are strongly urged to consider ground lease proposals or other mechanisms that give the City a measure of long-term control of the parcel itself, with more flexibility for the ownership structure of the developments.

The City will conduct a two-tier submission process.

A. Tier One Submission Materials (Request for Qualifications)

Proposals are limited to no more than 12 pages total (6 pages double-sided or 24 single-sided.)

1. Proposed Concept – address how each City parameter is met, include one visual
2. Finances – project cost estimate
3. Experience – Brief annotated list of comparable projects

Public input will be solicited on the concepts at this stage, and two to three finalists will be chosen to advance to the second tier based on the response to the qualifications.

B. Tier Two Submission Materials (Request for Proposals)

Proposals are limited to no more than 24 pages total (12 double-sided or 24 single-sided).

1. Proposal narrative detailing how each applicable parameter will be addressed in the project proposal.
2. Proposed financial structure:
 - a. Acquisition purchase price and/or general proposed lease terms.
 - b. Requested Tax Increment Financing with anticipated annual tax revenue generated by the project(s) to support the TIF investment
3. Rough time estimate for project (the start date is unknown as the schedule of the public process has not yet been clearly defined).
4. Detailed experience of project team.
5. At least 3 visuals of the project, including at least one viewpoint from the middle of Main Street east of Memorial Auditorium looking west.

C. Proposals Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- The proposed development's adherence to the parameters above.
- If critical to the development proposal, demonstrated partnership with adjacent site owners OR commitment to achieve a formal partnership within 90 days of submission with adjacent site owners. If no partnership is formed, and adjacent sites (not owned by the City) are critical to the redevelopment, the proposal will NOT be considered.
- Experience working in urban sites, and if proposing for Memorial, with redevelopment of historic structures.
- Experience working within complex regulatory environments, including with Tax Increment Financing
- A documented history of delivering projects on-time and on-budget.
- Experience working within public processes and highly scrutinized projects.
- Proposed financial terms.

Commented [JF1]: If proposals are going to be scored, the scoring matrix should be included in this RFP.

D. Timeline

Submit one digital copy to YYYY, the project manager at CEDO, and 5 hard copies by 5:00 PM on Month, XX, 2015. Late submittals will not be accepted.

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