



## **Request for Qualifications Riverfront Gateway Project**



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## **Request for Qualifications**

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## **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

### **A. Statement of Purpose**

The City of Waterville has issued this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from developers interested in proposing a plan for the City's riverfront area known locally as *Head of Falls*. It is the City's goal that the Head of Falls property be improved to incorporate the community's vision of quality mixed-use development with attractive, green, public spaces.

Thus, the objective of this Request is to identify a developer or development team to partner with the City to develop a Riverfront Gateway project which will complement and enhance the current downtown revitalization initiative and the investments the city has made at the site.

Waterville is at a unique point in its history. Colby College and associated partners have injected \$65.5 million in Main Street investments, which has spurred additional private investments throughout the downtown. Today, the City and Colby College have embarked on an ambitious plan to revitalize the downtown and waterfront area. This has included Colby College purchasing six (6) downtown development sites, and the opening (Summer 2018) of a 25.5 million dollar facility – *The Bill & Joan Alford Main Street Commons* – a civic-retail-mixed use facility, which has created new student housing units for approximately two-hundred (200) students in the downtown. Prior to this, Colby College completed the renovation of a 25,000 sq. ft. downtown property, which now is home to a leading global software development firm (re: CGI). Additionally, a new approx. 42 room boutique hotel with restaurant is currently in the planning and development phases.

The City recently completed a \$1.5 million RiverWalk at the Head of Falls which heralds Waterville's *Return to the River*. The RiverWalk project – designed by Mitchell & Associates of Portland, ME – is comprised of open space, amphitheater, gazebo, walkways, public art as part of a 1,200-foot walkway along the Kennebec River.

We anticipate that a Riverfront Gateway Project will not only enhance our *Return to the River* but will also serve as a critical component of our downtown revitalization efforts.

## **B. Background & Site Description**

The Head of Falls project area consists of approximately 12 acres of undeveloped land with 4,600 feet of frontage along the Kennebec River. This property was developed as an industrial site in the mid to late 1800's and remained so until Urban Renewal came to Waterville in the late 1960's. By 1973, the old Wyandotte mill was gone along with all of the nearby housing. Some of the materials from the structures and ancillary buildings were buried on site and the City entered into a Voluntary Response Action Plan (VRAP) through the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) to address proper handling of the buried materials on the site.

The City engaged the community in a comprehensive planning process in 1999 and selected Coplon Associates of Bar Harbor, Maine, to assist with the development of a Riverfront Master Plan. This report can be viewed on the City's website <http://www.waterville-me.gov/head-falls-development-studies/>.

In order to facilitate development of this property, a Market Analysis was developed in 2009-10 and can be viewed at the Head of Falls site on the City's website cited above.

The City completed construction of \$1.1 million worth of public infrastructure improvements in the Fall of 2005. Water, sewer and electrical facilities were installed along with an expanded parking area. A gateway plaza was completed in November 2010 offering much improved access to the historic Two Cent Bridge. In 2011, major repairs and structural improvements were completed to the bridge, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and is the longest pedestrian toll foot bridge in United States.

The attached map indicates the proposed area for development (approximately 1.5 acres) although the city will consider any and all suggestions as to how best to create a Gateway project for the riverfront. This property is within the City's Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.

## **C. Site Development Objectives**

Although the Master Plan for the Head of Falls property has evolved and changed since it was first developed, the City still envisions a mixture of public facilities and private development. As such, eventual proposals for development should meet the following objectives:

- Create jobs through mixed use development (i.e. residential and commercial development), which will support uses such as commercial office space, retail, restaurants, etc.
- Strengthen the downtown revitalization by increasing the number of people living, working, shopping in the greater Main Street area.

- Enhance and support recreational use and the use of open, public space at Head of Falls.
- Recognize the historic importance of the site by increasing opportunities for arts and cultural activities.

At this time, the city is not yet requesting specific proposals for building size(s) or location(s) on the site. We are most interested in hearing how developers view the site for potential uses and general design based on prior development experiences.

#### **D. Submission Requirements**

Interested parties are encouraged to submit preliminary concepts for how they believe their development vision of the site coincides with, and supports, the City’s stated objectives for the Head of Falls property. Any project concepts or expression of intent should clearly explain the qualifications and experience of the development team. Additional information regarding the development team will be especially helpful to the City’s review and should include:

##### ***Management Experience***

1. Identify person(s) with the authority to represent and make legally binding commitments on behalf of the development team.
2. Identify members of the development team, including engineering, architectural and economic and financial consultants and provide resumes of each.
3. Indicate the role of each in implementing the development and managing the completed project.

##### ***Relevant Development Experience***

1. List and describe the development entity’s experience in developing and operating comparable development projects, with emphasis on the following:
  - Present a list of previously completed projects, preferably similar to the project proposed. Provide the name and location of each project and enough detail about the components of each project to enable a comparison to this project. This information should give the City an understanding of the developer’s ability to complete a successful project as proposed
  - Integration of private development with active open space
  - Distribution of mixed uses type (both as proposed and as implemented)
  - Project and property management
  - Public/private partnerships

##### ***Project Financing***

1. Describe how the project will be financed and whether assistance will be requested from any public sources (e.g., TIFs, etc.)

## **E. Selection Process**

Responses will be reviewed and evaluated by the Head of Falls Planning Committee and recommendation will be submitted to the Waterville City Council.

The criteria for evaluation shall be as follows:

### ***Development Team***

- Development team's relevant credentials, particularly related to mixed use development(s) that integrate public green spaces in an urban context
- Development team's demonstrated ability to effectively execute the work in a timely manner
- Proven ability to work effectively and productively with the community and public agencies
- Development team's track record in contributing to the revitalization of adjacent neighborhoods (most notably downtowns)

### ***Development Vision***

- Development team's creativity and overall development vision for this site
- Development team's design aesthetic, as demonstrated in previous projects
- Responsiveness to the City's goals and design guidelines

### ***Development Financing***

- Developer's financial capacity to develop, manage and maintain the project
- Review of any expectations for public financing through any/all sources
- Ability to deliver the project on time

### ***Other***

- Completeness and quality of submission
- Other compelling information and materials as provided by the team
- Demonstrated success in partnering with arts and cultural organizations in the planning and execution of the development.

**F. Submission Deadline & Contact Information**

Please submit 5 (five) bound paper copies and one electronic copy no later than 5:00pm on **February 28, 2019**.

City of Waterville  
Attn: Sarah Bowen  
RFQ Response  
One Common Street  
Waterville, ME 04901

Any questions regarding this request should be directed to:

Garvan Donegan, Director of Planning & Development  
Central Maine Growth Council  
50 Elm Street Street  
Waterville, ME 04901  
[gdonegan@centralmaine.org](mailto:gdonegan@centralmaine.org)  
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**G. Resource Materials/Site Visit**

For “Coplon RiverFront Master Plan 2001” and “Waterville, Maine Head of Falls Market Analysis” please visit <http://www.waterville-me.gov/head-falls-development-studies/>.

