

Request for Proposals: Former Fire Station

381 Main Street
Town of Farmington, New Hampshire



Date Issued: April 22, 2024

Proposals Due: 3PM on Friday, June 7, 2024

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1. UPDATES SINCE THE LAST ITERATION

The first iteration of this RFP was issued on May 5, 2023, in which the Town received several questions and inquiries on the properties, but no submissions (see summary below). A second iteration was re-released on July 21, 2023, and included a reference to an award of Brownfields funding to conduct a Phase II Environmental Assessment that would build off the prior Phase I Environmental Assessment completed by Nobis Group.

This is the third iteration of the RFP. It provides additional information on preliminary results from the ongoing Phase II Environmental Assessment and recent zoning amendments in the Village District that were approved by voters during March (2024) Town Meeting.

2. PREVIOUS QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES

Question: Is the Town requiring developers to redevelop using the existing structure of the Old Fire Station?

Answer: No, it is up to the developer to decide whether they would like to rehabilitate the building or demolish and build.

Question: A single structure would make it more cost effective to be able to do “market rate” or target “workforce housing”, [Given this is slightly different than the conceptual designs attached to the RFP] Would a single structure design be well received?

Answer: We believe that a mixed-use development, whether a single or multiple structure design, will be successful at this location.

Question: Is there an “asking price” for the land?

Answer: There is not a specific asking price at this time. Any interested party seeking to redevelop these properties will have an opportunity to negotiate with the Board of Selectmen.

Question: Would the Town allow for a building taller than three stories?

Answer: The maximum height for buildings in the Village Center is 55 feet.

Question: Would the Town regulate the size of the units?

Answer: The minimum unit size in the Village District is 500 square feet. While not required, the Town would encourage a mix of reasonable options for different needs and incomes, meaning a variety of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units would be preferred.

3. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Town of Farmington (the “Town”) is seeking Request for Proposals (“RFP”) from Real Estate Developers to purchase and develop 381 Main Street, Farmington, NH, 03835, Assessor Map U06, Lots 23, 24, and 25, (“the property”).

Description of the Property

The property includes three parcels and consists of 1.7 acres of land with access to both Main Street and Garfield Street, existing sidewalks, and a nearby crosswalk that provides safe, pedestrian access to the downtown. The Town considers the property to be in a premium location as a gateway into the downtown core that offers a unique blend of mixed-use or commercial development opportunities.

Unique property highlights include:



- Premium location on Main Street and within walking distance to a growing downtown core that includes professional offices, local eateries, retail, and a mixture of housing types; the Library; Town Hall; the Parks and Recreation Department; and Post Office.
- A COAST (Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation) bus stop and shelter that provides public transit opportunities to and from Rochester.
- Zoned for several housing options, including single family, two-family, and multi-family residential and mixed use, as well as a variety of commercial uses.
- Serviced by municipal water and sewer.
- Recent zoning amendments allow for increased residential density in the Village District and clarified that residential uses must be located above commercial or non-residential uses and cannot be located on the first floor.

4. CONDITIONS OF THE SITE

Phase I Environmental Assessment

Historic records indicate that over the last century, the property has experienced various uses, including a gasoline service station (1924) and an auto repair shop (1960). Prior residential uses date back to as early as 1887. The largest parcel (Tax Map U06, Lot 25), which was purchased by the Town in 1975, is the location of the former fire station.

In 2022, the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, in partnership with the Nobis Group, prepared a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for the site as part of due diligence ahead of future redevelopment of the property. Results from that report indicate that three recognized environmental conditions (RECs) exist on the property. As such, the Town applied for funding through the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Brownfields Targeted Assessment Program to conduct a Phase II assessment to evaluate the identified RECs, and if necessary, provide an analysis of cleanup alternatives and activities.

Phase II Environmental Site Assessment

In late 2023, laboratory data from the ongoing assessment indicated exceedances in both Ambient Groundwater Quality Standards and NHDES Soil Remediation Standards. As a result, Nobis Group has amended their scope of work to continue their investigation. This amended scope of work seeks to address regulatory requirements outlined in the state's administrative rules, improve the marketability of the property, and provide valuable data to potential buyers to encourage the successful redevelopment of the site. Several additional wells are also being installed with the goal of achieving a long-term monitoring plan for the site.

If any interested developer would like to request more information or results from either the Phase I or Phase II assessments, please contact Kyle Pimental at the Town's Planning and Community Development Department.

Zoning

The property is in the Village Center zoning district along with roughly one hundred other properties located on Main Street and Central Street downtown. The Village Center is comprised of commercial and mixed-use, including, but not limited to, office space, professional services, retail, and local eateries, as well as single family, duplex, and multi-family residential properties.

In 2021, a zoning amendment was passed to increase the maximum residential density from one dwelling unit per 10,000 square of lot size to one dwelling unit per 850 square feet of gross floor area of available residential space. This, along with requiring that commercial spaces be included on the first floor of any mixed-use development, was brought forth to promote more dense housing opportunities and to encourage more commercial growth through mixed-use in the downtown.

In 2024, several additional housing-related zoning amendments were passed to establish density requirements for all housing types in the Village District, including single-family (one dwelling unit per 8,000 square feet), duplex (one dwelling unit per 4,000 square feet), and multi-family (one dwelling unit per 2,500 square feet). Mixed-use developments, which is the type of development the Town is seeking, provides the highest density at one dwelling unit per 850 square feet of gross floor area of available residential space. These changes were part of a larger effort to respond to the current housing shortage and encourage more dense developments in the Village District and surrounding urban core.

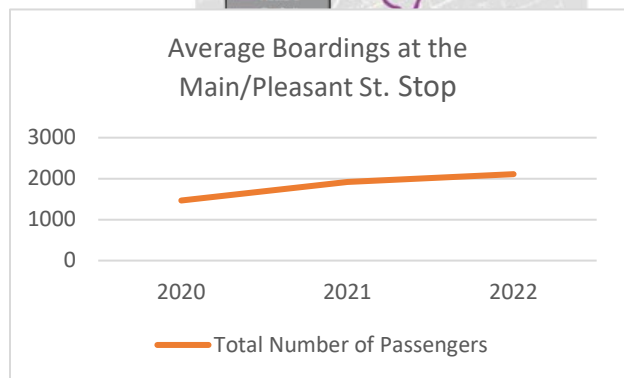
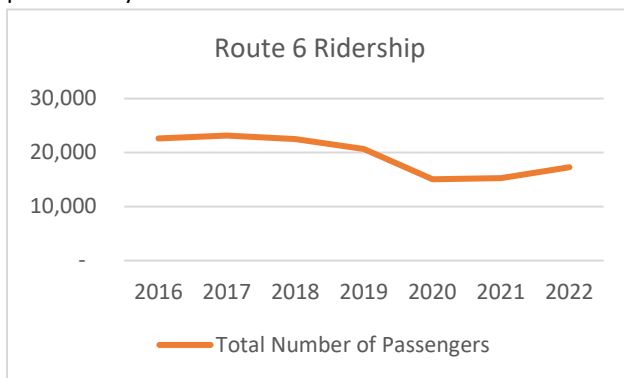
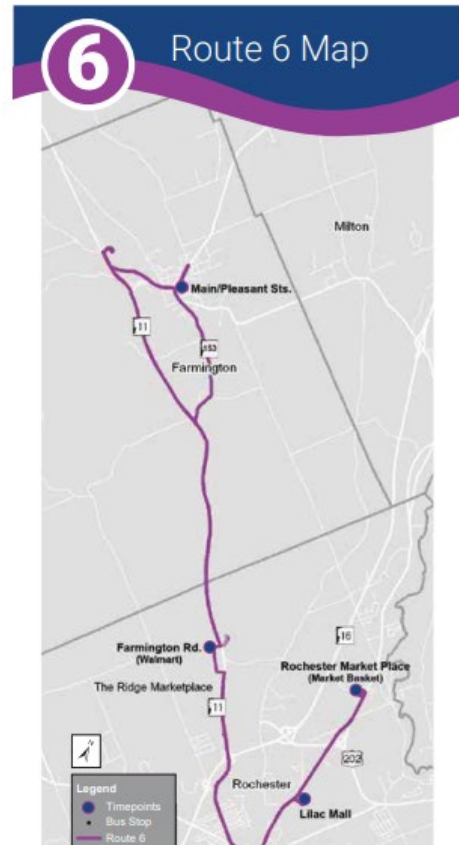
Existing Structure

In 2017, a new public safety complex was built to service the Town’s Police Department, Fire Department, and Emergency Management Center. The former fire station building remains vacant and unused on the eastern portion of the site. The structure is on a masonry slab-on-grade with framing, with vinyl siding on the second and third floors. Some operational components have been left behind in the building; however, most of the items have been cleared. The remainder of the property is paved and is currently being used as municipal parking.

Public Transportation

The COAST bus stop and shelter on the western side of the property provides public transit on the Route 6 – Farmington/Rochester bus to local services, shopping, eating, and larger job centers in Rochester. In addition, the Route 6 bus connects to the Route 14 bus servicing the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard – a major employment center with roughly 7,000 fulltime workers, many of whom live in Dover, Rochester, and Farmington. As noted in a report titled, [“Economic Benefits of COAST: Public Transit’s Importance for Current and Future Economic Development in Southeast New Hampshire”](#) many employees that work in the service industry cannot afford to live in places like Portsmouth and rely on public transit from Dover and Rochester. The same can be said for some individuals working at the Shipyard. As housing prices rise, Farmington is well-positioned to provide affordable living accommodations and regional transit services to the greater NH-ME Seacoast area.

According to data obtained from COAST, over the past seven years the average yearly ridership for the Route 6 bus has been roughly 19,500 passengers with trends showing a return to those higher numbers post-pandemic – this is consistent with regional trends experienced on all COAST routes. Locally, the Main/Pleasant Street stop in Farmington has seen a steady increase in the average number of passengers over the past three years.



5. A VISION FOR A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

The 2021 Master Plan confirms that the downtown serves as an important economic driver and is the anchor to the Town's community character. Revitalization is a high priority and is widely supported by residents as shown from recent community surveys, studies, and plans that all emphasize the importance of the Village Center. As such, the Town is committed to getting this property back on the tax roll and is willing to work with a prospective developer to create a mutually suitable vision and proposal. The Town is particularly interested in mixed-use development proposals that incorporate both residential and commercial uses and will closely look at submitted proposals and prioritize them according to their potential to maintain the neighborhood character, market demand, and highest economic benefit. As such, developers are encouraged to submit creative ideas or alternatives that may positively impact the community, enrich businesses, and are in line with the Town's long-term goal of a vibrant downtown.

In 2018, the Town, in conjunction with UNH (University of New Hampshire) Extension, embarked on a community input effort to discuss housing options, potential zoning amendments, and future uses of the former fire station property as key components to downtown revitalization. With funding being provided by a New Hampshire Municipal Technical Assistance Grant (MTAG), the Town completed a series of key informant interviews and held a community forum to develop recommendations on ways to improve housing choices and revitalize the downtown.

Three potential design concepts were generated by the Arnett Development Group, based on feedback received from the MTAG effort. These concepts include roughly 10,500 square feet of commercial space (professional office, retail, restaurants, and a variety of services are all uses allowed by right in the Village Center) along Main Street with a variety of housing types in the back portion of the lot. The designs estimated that approximately fifteen townhouses, ten cottages, or four duplexes could be constructed on the site; however, these estimates were developed prior to the recent zoning amendments that were passed to allow for an increase in the maximum allowed residential density. The designs also suggest a single access point off Garfield Street with areas for community-shared space and opportunities for streetscape improvements. Parking needs range from 16 spaces up to 30 spaces. According to a 2020 Downtown Parking Study there are a total of 49 spaces on the site; it is the goal for the Town to purchase or lease some of these spaces, so they remain available for public use. Parking is an important need of the Town, especially the downtown area, to keep it populated and meet demand.

Throughout 2023, the Town continued to pursue avenues to address the housing shortage by partnering with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission to hire a Housing Navigator, applying for an receiving a Housing Opportunity Planning grant, and putting forth a series of zoning amendments to incentivize increased density in areas services by municipal water and sewer. Additionally, the Town was awarded a grant to conduct feasibility assessments on both the Municipal Building and the Town Hall to determine potential adaptive reuse opportunities, which may also include a future mixed-use or housing component.

While proposals should remain in conformity with the general concept of a mixed-use development, proposers are not limited to these examples and are welcome to incorporate or present innovative ideas.

Appendix A provides illustrations of the three design concepts.

***** IMPORTANT: Notwithstanding anything stated above, the awarded developer will be solely responsible for the development, this is not a joint-development project between the developer and the Town. Further, nothing above guarantees that any of the above-listed uses/proposals/number of units/etc. will be approved by the Town's**

land use boards. Any development of the properties must still comply with the Town's Zoning Ordinance (or seek and obtain any necessary variance relief from the Ordinance) and must submit Site Plan (or possibly Subdivision) review to the Planning Board. These land use boards are independent boards from the Board of Selectmen and the Selectmen cannot guarantee a certain outcome before these boards. ***

6. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposers should carefully follow the format and instructions outlined below. Proposals must contain the information and documents described below. A checklist of minimum information and document requirements is included in this request and shall be completed and attached to your submission.

Requests for clarification relative to the contents of the RFP may be emailed to Kyle Pimental, Planning and Community Development Director at kpimental@strafford.org.

The RFP must be received prior to 3PM on June 7, 2024, to Town Administrator, 365 Main Street, Farmington, NH 03835. Late submissions will not be accepted.

The proposal must include the following information:

A. Cover Page

1. Title of RFP
2. Proposer Name and Contact Person
3. Business Address
4. Business Phone
5. Email Address
6. Web Page if applicable

B. Executive Summary

A high-level summary highlighting the proposer's interest in developing the site.

C. Table of Contents

An outline of the primary areas of the proposal. All pages should be numbered and correspond to the Table of Contents.

D. Development Team and Organization

State the members of your development team, management company, architect, planners, engineers, legal, marketing, contractors, financial partners, and any key members to the development or operation of the project. If a role has not been filled, please include that in this section.

E. Development Plan

In this section, please include your concept plan for the property, including preliminary specifications, amenities and finishes, landscaping plans, and parking plans (number of public and private spaces), project amenities, and other planned improvements, sufficient to clearly communicate the development proposal. The proposal should be sufficiently detailed to enable the Town to understand the Proposer's plan for the property. A narrative should be included describing any proposed improvements not easily depicted in drawings. Sufficient information should be presented on the volume and type of traffic generated and any off-site improvements needed within public streets.

F. Conceptual Design Standards:

Proposers shall familiarize themselves with the design concepts generated by the Arnett Development Group (see Appendix A) for guidance prior to submitting their proposals.

1. Submit a Conceptual Development Site Plan design narrative that describes:
 - a. The goals of the proposed design and development mix; and
 - b. Characterization of design style, quality level, or other information that would give the Town a better understanding of the character of the buildings, public improvements, and project.
2. Please submit the materials in physical form and a digital copy. Physical copy should be either 8.5x14 or 11x17. Key design elements and proposed site materials color coded.
3. Site plan layout that depicts the mixed uses, location of each development or alteration, footprints, architectural elevations, not less than one perspective rendering which serves to communicate the character and details of each of the key elements within the project, and any other graphics that the proposer considers to be helpful in displaying their vision for the property.

G. Project Schedule

Include a timeline with projected milestones for the full project and its component parts, from commencement through occupancy of the final phase. Schedule should be presented in a graphic format, allowing understanding of any cause-and-effect relationships between major elements.

H. Environmental and Public Approvals Plan

Outline the major environmental and/or public approvals that are required for the project along with the key issues and time frames. Include any permitting requirements for the three parcels.

I. Developer Qualifications and Financial Capacity

1. Approach to Financing – Description of the approach to financing the project, including a cost budget with hard and soft cost estimates, financial resources to fund the development and stability to execute development in accordance with project schedule, as well as an estimated marketing analysis supporting the viability of the proposed development.
2. Track Record – Summary level narrative of the developer's and project team's experience in successfully executing mixed use projects. Include the years in business, description of the history of the development entity, experience, legal structure, qualifications, understanding of requirements, similar projects they have developed (Name, description, cost, contact person and contact information, and role in the project). Additionally, the team architect's prior and relevant work experience and successfully completed projects.
3. Litigation – A description of any litigation filed by or against the proposer for the last five years (governmental, private, employee or sub-contractor). Provide a description of and include the nature of, outcome or projected outcome, and costs involved. Include if the outcome could result in adverse effects of being able to move forward with this project.
4. Bankruptcy – Description of all bankruptcy filings and foreclosure events associated with any project of this development entity or any principal of this entity.
5. Financial reports – Certified summary level financial reports of the prime development group for the last five years (see section on Confidential Materials). A description of the approach to financing the project, specific financial sources (committed and anticipated), and construction permanent debt and equity (amounts and sources). Along with an illustration of the level of financial commitment (constraints, time sensitive terms and conditions) to the project.

J. Submission Materials

1. All submission materials must be submitted on paper sheets, tabbed by section, and bound. One set of presentation boards containing the conceptual design may also be included but not required.
2. Confidential Materials. A Proposer must clearly designate the portions of its proposal, if any, that it contends are confidential and place such material in a sealed envelope within its proposal. In addition to labeling such material as confidential, the Proposer shall include a brief assertion as to the reasons for confidentiality (e.g., financial information, proprietary business information, etc.). All confidential materials will be handled under the provisions of RSA (Revised Statute Annotated) 91-A.
3. Submit eight (8) bound paper copies and one (1) electronic copy on a disk or thumb drive of the full proposal.

4. The proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope or container, stating on the outside the Proposer's name, and the RFP title to:

Kenneth Dickie
Town Administrator
Town of Farmington
356 Main Street
Farmington, NH 03835

The **DEADLINE** for submission of ALL materials is: Friday, June 7, 2024. No later than 3:00 PM

The Town reserves the right: (1) to cancel this RFP at any time for any reason; (2) to accept or reject any and all proposals, and (3) to request additional information prior to or upon the final selection of a developer.

In its selection of a proposal, the Town reserves the right to negotiate with any or all proposers including without limitation by negotiating all or portions of different proposals or by requesting additional offers from any or all proposers, and to waive requirements of the RFP if it is in the best interest of the Town to do so.

The final proposed agreement will be subject to approval by the Farmington Board of Selectmen.

K. Other Procedures:

1. Notification of any revisions to this Request for Proposals will be posted on the Town's website at <https://www.farmington.nh.us/>, under Administration, Bids & RFPs.
2. Optional pre-submission conference – The Town will hold a pre-submission conference should any of the Proposers consider this to be beneficial. Proposers shall inform the Director of Planning, Kyle Pimental, by email at kpimental@strafford.org no later than May 6, 2024 whether they would like to have such a session. Proposers are encouraged to submit written questions to the Town.
3. Questions to be submitted in writing – Any questions or inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing. To be considered, they must be received by the Planning and Community Development Director no later than May 17, 2024, as referenced in the deadline for receipt questions specified in the RFP timetable. Questions and their answers will be shared with all Proposers.
4. The Town will issue responses to inquiries and any other corrections or amendments it deems necessary in written addenda published on the Town's website prior to the RFP due date.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by Town staff with recommendations sent to the Board of Selectmen for review.

Financials:

The Town will seek compensation for the property in the form of land purchase and developer-funded construction and maintenance/management of public improvements at fair market value. To be based upon the agreed upon program of development, any developer funding of public improvements, development constraints, site conditions, and other pertinent factors that will affect value. The fair market value may be negotiated. The Town will review the project's feasibility, quality, and overall benefit to the Town. The proposal will be reviewed for ability to be implemented in a timely manner.

Developer:

The Town will review developer qualifications, experience, financial capability, and commitment to develop and maintain the property. Developers shall provide additional information to substantiate their ability to complete the project according to the project schedule, management, and commitment in overseeing the development team, tenants, and business owners.

Developers should illustrate their knowledge of the development, marketing, and management experience with project implementation challenges and the effective ways of dealing with them. Specify means and frequency of progress reporting to include confidence levels of the development, schedule, and operations.

Additionally, developers should illustrate their overall responsiveness to the proposal, quality of proposal and concept designs, thought and understanding in the development of site in relation to the Town's needs.

Design and Development:

The Town is seeking a creative design which reflects the overall vision of creating more mixed-use development and enhancing the downtown core. Mixed uses for the property should be highlighted to include the viability and strong market presence. Along with short/Long term uses of the site and structures, off-site impacts, and tax benefits.

Selection Decision and Fees:

Upon being selected as the preferred proposer by the Town, they will enter into negotiations. Any additional costs of the Town's attorneys and advisors needed in the negotiating of the project terms will be added to the closing costs to be paid by the Development Proposer. Additionally, fees relating to the negotiating of the land disposition, development, and other required materials will also be included in the final sale price. A term sheet will be drafted, and costs will be calculated at that time. Amounts to be paid at the execution of the term sheet.

Any fees mentioned above are at the cost of the Proposer.

The parties will then enter into a Purchase and Sale agreement containing a contingency for the buyer/developer to obtain all necessary Land Use Board approvals. The Buyer/Developer shall be responsible for applying for and obtaining said approvals in an expeditious manner, with the timeframe to be laid out in the P&S. If any necessary approvals are denied or not obtained within the stipulated timeframe, the P&S may be voided/canceled, and any payments received not spent on third party costs will be returned to the buyer/developer. If the proper approvals are obtained within the timeframe, any payments received not spent on third party costs will be credited to the purchase price.

6. DISCLOSURES

1. Any submission materials will become the property of the Town of Farmington and will be held within the provisions of RSA 91-A. Each proposal will be reviewed to determine if all requirements in the RFP have been fulfilled. Failure to comply with requirements may result in the proposal being rejected.
2. The Town may reject any and all proposals at their own discretion, may reject parts of a proposal and can cancel, pause or adjust the RFP process as they see fit. The Town assumes no financial or other obligation. The sole risk and responsibility is on the entity submitting the proposal in response to the RFP. No Proposer shall have any rights against the Town for negotiations, terminations, approvals, or rejections.
3. Any proposals received after the proposals due date and time will not be considered. By submitting a proposal, the entity certifies that they have not divulged, discussed, or compared prices, responses, or information with other responders to the RFP.
4. Each Proposer is responsible for doing their own due diligence when reviewing the RFP, any required documentation and determining the accuracy of such documents.
5. **The property is being offered “as is” by the Town for mixed-use development. No representation or warranties are being made as to its condition. Any testing, audits, appraisals, and inspections are at the sole expense of the proposer. Any reports made by the Town are available as public records.**
6. Any exceptions must be submitted in writing and detailed as to why the exception is needed. The Town may reject or accept any exceptions. If proposers submit edits to a proposal the most recent proposal received before the due date will be reviewed.

7. SCHEDULE

Below is the anticipated schedule of the RFP process:

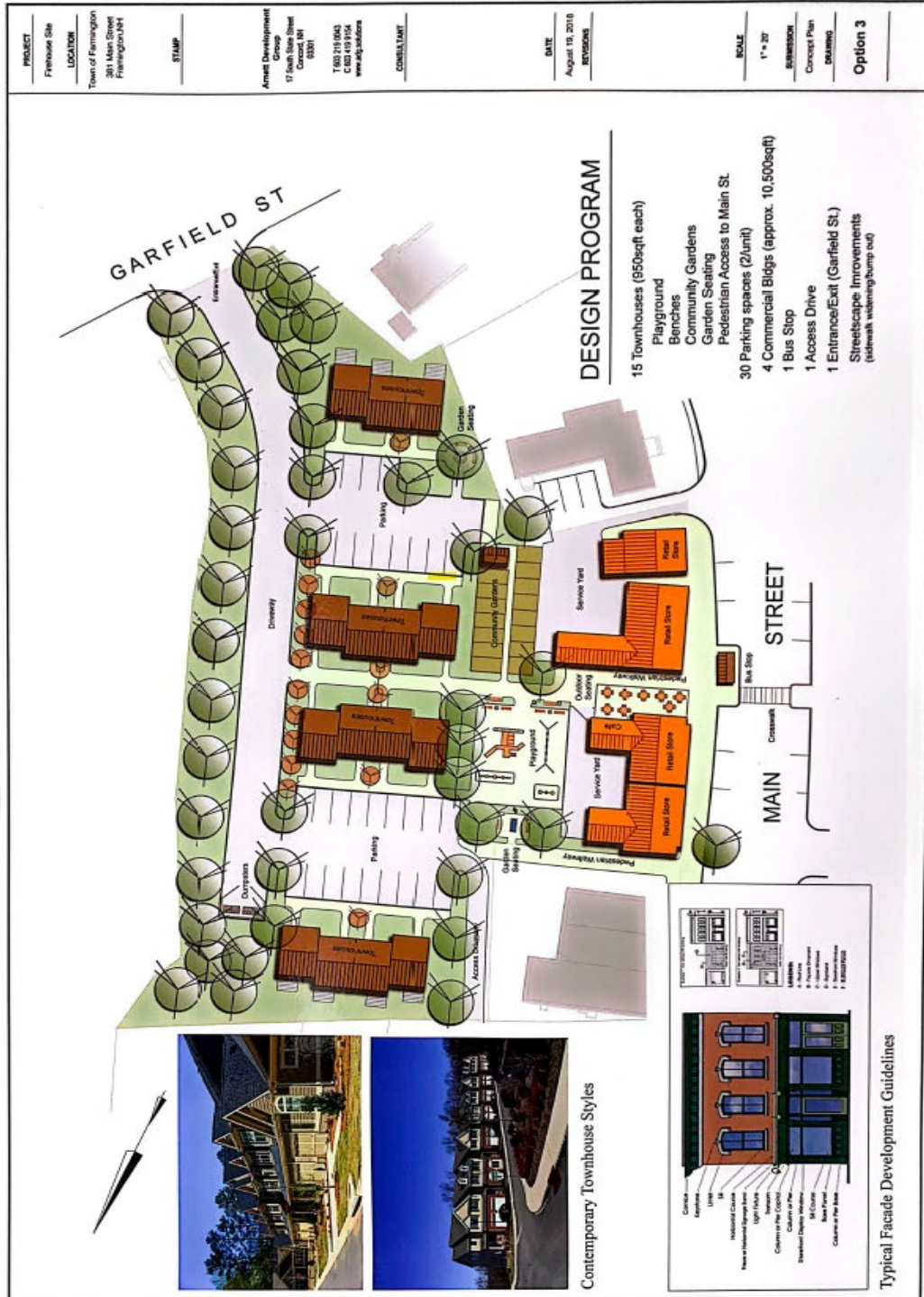
- 1) Request for Proposals Issued.....April 22, 2024
- 2) Deadline for Pre-submission Conference Requests.....May 6, 2024
- 3) Deadline for Receipt of Questions.....May 17, 2024
- 4) Responses to Questions.....May 22, 2024
- 5) Proposals Due Date.....June 7, 2024
- 6) Review of Proposals.....Mid-June
- 7) Developer Interviews.....Early-July
- 8) Notification of Preferred Developer(s).....Mid-July
- 9) Negotiation with Preferred Developer(s)Late-July

8. CHECKLIST

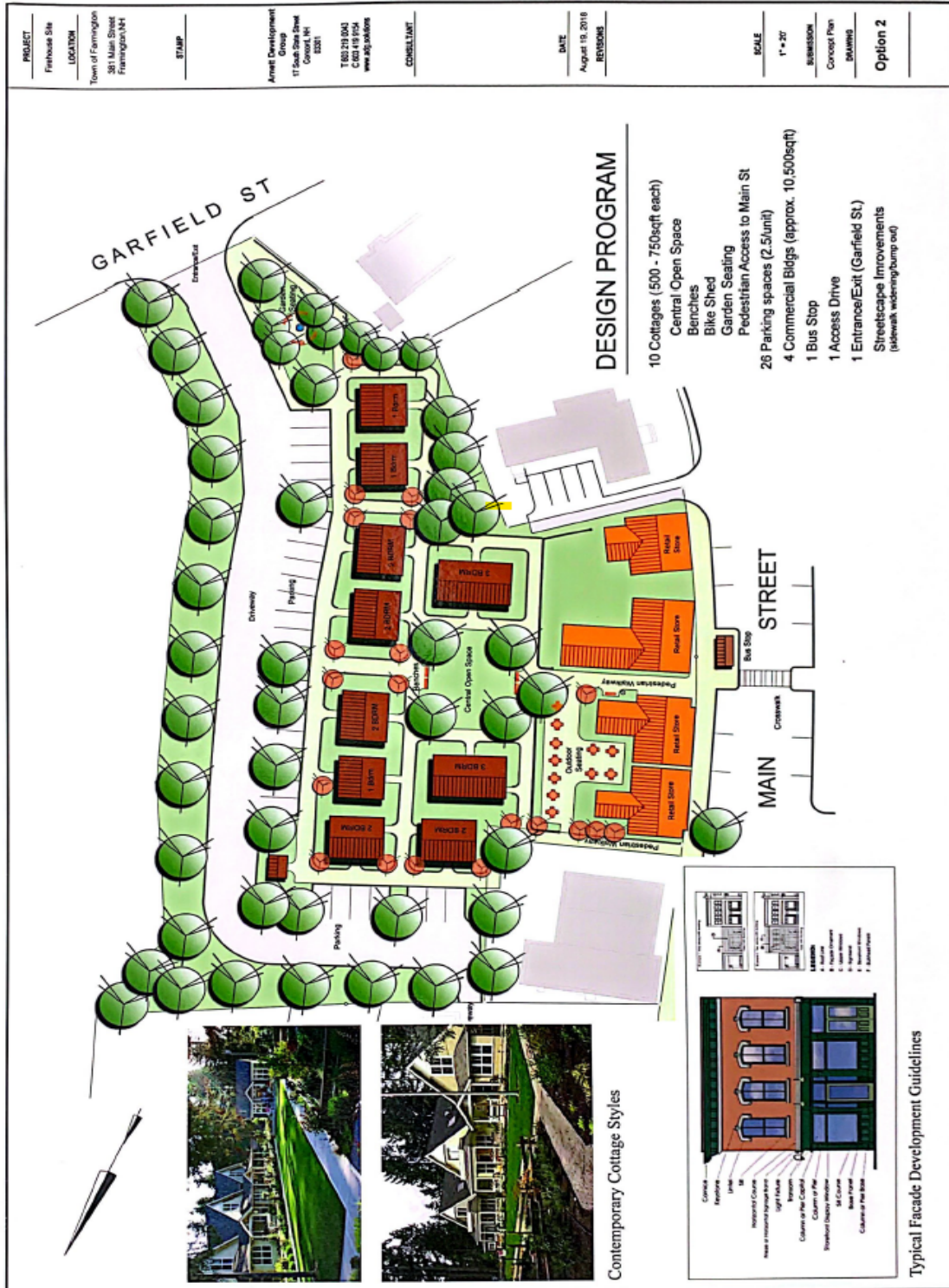
- Cover Page
- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents
- Development Team and Organization
- Development Plan
- Conceptual Designs
- Project Schedule
- Environmental and Public Approvals Plan
- Developer Qualification and Financial Capacity
- Submission Materials

APPENDIX A: REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Concept 1:



Concept 2:



Concept 3:

