

Developer Request for Qualifications (RFQ)  
Downtown Transit Oriented Development  
Windsor Locks, Connecticut



The **Town of Windsor Locks, Connecticut** seeks a **transit oriented development** partner for a development site adjacent to the new Windsor Locks Station on the Hartford Line commuter rail system.

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## Development Opportunity

WINDSOR LOCKS seeks developers for a 4.01 (see NOTE on page 3) parcel at 255 Main Street, currently known as Windsor Locks Commons.

The site is adjacent to the Windsor Locks Station on the Hartford Line commuter rail system. The Connecticut Department of Transportation will begin station construction in 2020.

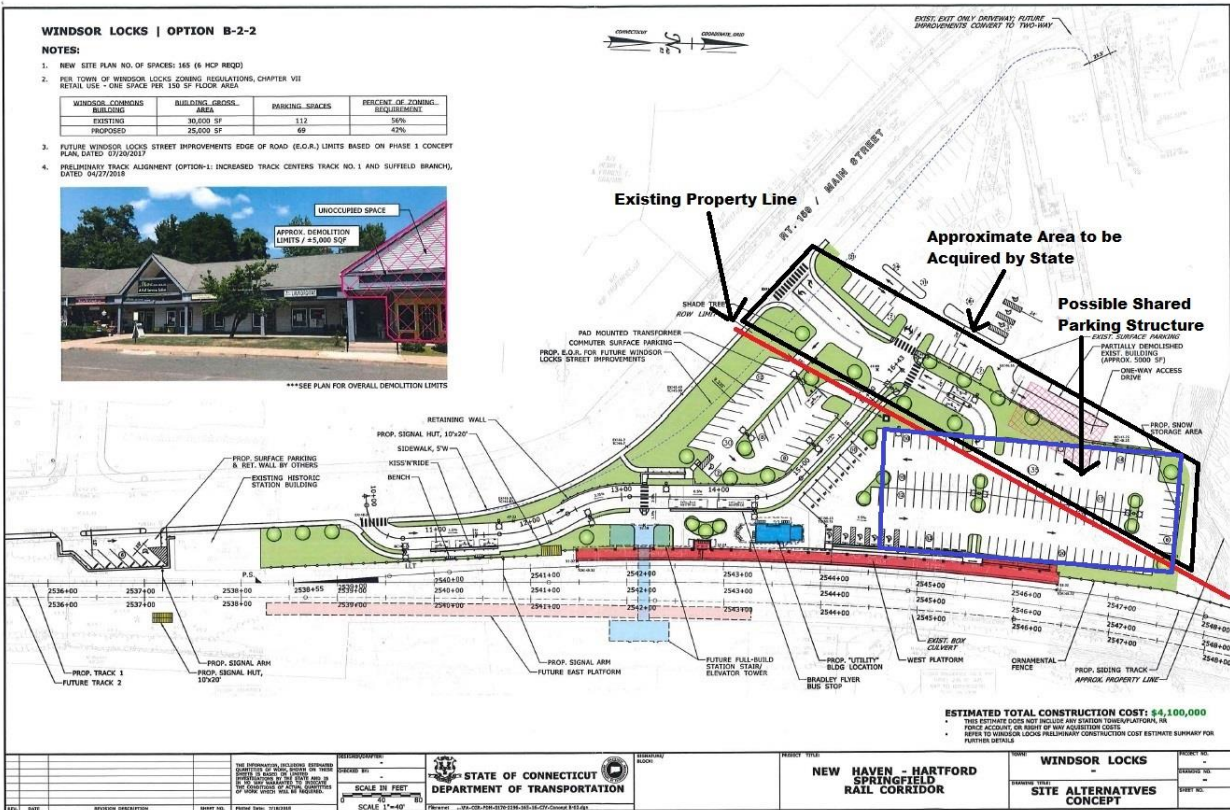
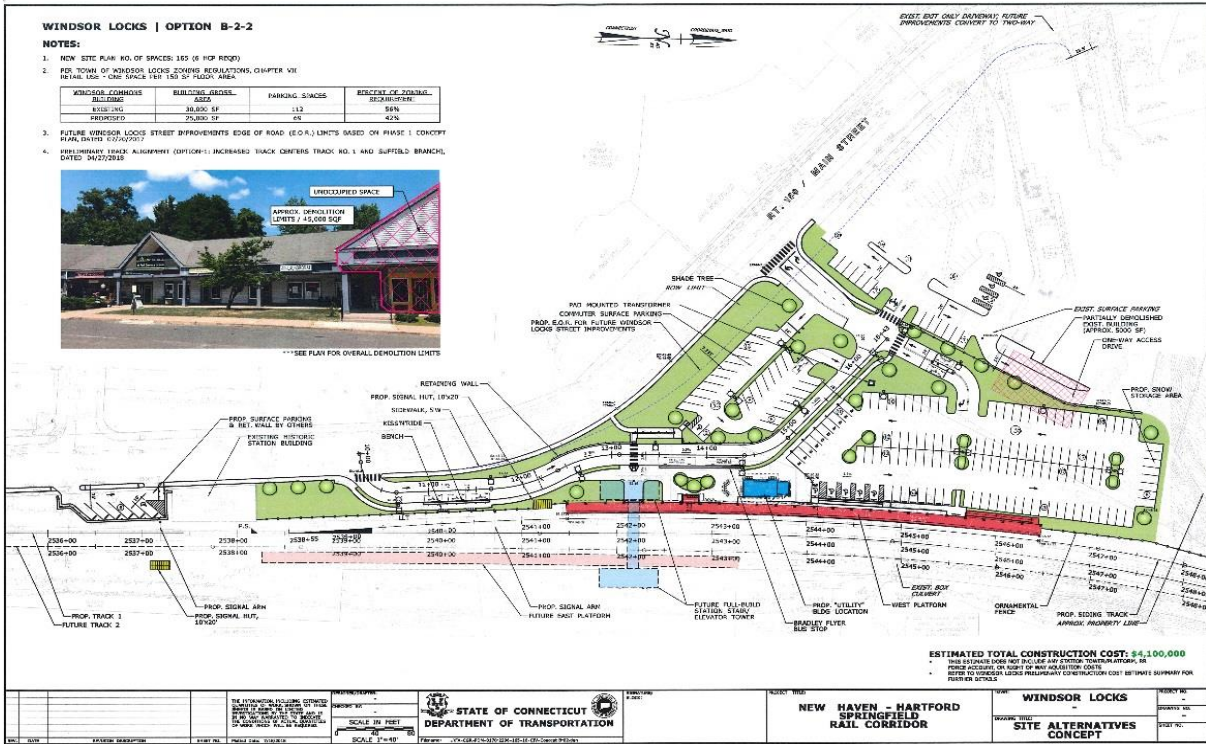
The preferred development for the site would:

- Create a mixed-use project that adds housing units, job opportunities, dining opportunities and shopping opportunities near the Train Station.
- Introduce new commercial development that restores a pedestrian scale and a sense of place in the Station area.
- Stimulate additional development.
- Be consistent with the Windsor Locks Plan of Conservation and Development, the Main Street Overlay Zone and current transit oriented development techniques.
- Introduce a design that complements and enhances other recently completed projects.
- Integrate ingress and egress with the Train Station and the Complete Streets redesign of Main Street.
- Provide up to 30,000 s.f. first floor commercial space for a year-round indoor Public Market.
- Make provisions for the integration of current commercial tenants (within building now situated on the parcel) into any new buildings in a manner that provides the least possible disruption to their ongoing businesses and is consistent with their ability to pay.
- Provide a welcoming, delightful public common area.
- Consider opportunities for use of low impact development techniques.
- Provide for a shared parking scenario which encourages active transportation, maximizes development opportunity and provides for a demonstrated demand. The State of Connecticut has indicated it would consider a proposal to enter into a public-private partnership regarding a shared parking arrangement for the Windsor Locks Station, the Public Market and the subject parcel.



Interested development teams are invited to submit qualifications by the submission **DEADLINE**; please refer to page 9 for submittal details.

Note: A portion of the parcel is expected to be taken by the State of Connecticut for parking and access purposes. The compensation to be paid by the state for the taking has not yet been determined.



## Site Context: *Windsor Locks*

### COMMUNITY PROFILE

- Stunning geographic setting on the Connecticut River and unique canal.
- Host to Bradley International Airport, the second largest airport serving New England. BDL has grown by 23% over the last 6 years and is projected to average 2% year over year growth for the next 20 years.
- New commuter rail stop adjacent to the Connecticut River in the heart of the revitalized Downtown Windsor Locks. In minutes residents can commute at a low cost from Windsor Locks and be at their desks in Springfield, Hartford or beyond. The Station will also feature a direct shuttle to Bradley International Airport (BDL).
- Direct access to Interstate Route 91.
- Low crime rate.
- A community that values education.
- Caring families with rich traditions that go back many generations.
- A forward-thinking municipal government that seeks to reverse the impacts of past “urban renewal”.
- A town administration that proactively created a Downtown Tax Increment Financing District and Main Street Overlay Zone to incentivize redevelopment.
- A community where citizens are engaged in the future of their community and where citizens volunteer readily.
- A community where both historically and currently, different ethnicities, races and cultures thrive together.
- A population of just 12,500 but with more than 1.3 million residents within a 20 minute drive.



## Site Vision

Preferred site concept: Market Village



*Image intended to be illustrative, and the town is open to alternative approaches that advance the goals for the site and fit the neighborhood context.*

The community envisions:

- New buildings, two stories (minimum) or higher, close to the roadway in order to recreate the Main Street “wall” typical of a downtown setting.
- Mixed use space to include first floor commercial space and residential homes above.
- A design that is both compatible with the community’s desired character and unique among the Hartford Springfield rail stops.
- A vibrant focal point that incorporates culture, art, architecture and inclusive design.
- A desirable place for residents, train goers, tourists and local workforce to find necessary resources for everyday living and gather socially for pleasure.
- Constructed space that is flexible, considering the commercial trends and parking needs of today and years from today.
- Active transportation amenities and a parking plan consistent with Transit Oriented Development, opportunity for shared parking with Windsor Locks Station.
- Windsor Locks Public Market will lease or purchase up to 30,000 s.f. of ground floor space.
- The inclusion of low impact development feature(s).

# Development Process

## Master Plan

The Windsor Locks Plan of Conservation and Development provides numerous recommendations to be taken by the Town to improve the economic viability of Main Street and the town center, prioritizing the relationship of buildings to the street, public spaces, traffic, gateways, the pedestrian environment, lighting, signage, mixed uses and the importance of relocating the train station back to the downtown area.

## Zoning

Windsor Locks has a combined Planning and Zoning Commission. For the subject parcel, the Commission would utilize Section 418 of the Zoning Regulations, Main Street Overlay Zone.

Main Street Overlay Zone Purpose Statement. The primary purpose of the downtown overlay district is to create new opportunities for the development or expansion of properties in the area designated within the Main Street Overlay Zone. Specific objectives of the downtown overlay include:

1. To implement the goals and objectives contained within the adopted Town of Windsor Locks Plan of Conservation and Development, this section supports the development and redevelopment of the historic Main Street district to promote a more functional and attractive downtown area.
2. To guide future development by the findings and recommendations of the Windsor Locks Main Street Study authored by Ferrero-Hixon and Associates.
3. To adopt the use of recognized principles of urban design, adherence to historic building placements, the preservation of historic structures and open space, and by allowing developers and land owners considerable flexibility in land use and site design.
4. To promote mixed uses within single or multiple buildings including a mix of retail, office, institutional and residential uses in predominately multi-story buildings appropriate to a downtown setting.
5. To include design elements supporting pedestrian and vehicular accessibility.
6. To provide landscaped public spaces directly accessible from the public right-of-way, appropriate night lighting, sidewalks and landscaped walkways through the parking areas.
7. To require a high level of attention to site and building design to promote attractive and functional development that is most compatible to a historic downtown setting.
8. Simplify parking regulations to ease the downtown development process.
9. To provide incentives and flexible Regulations to promote development of parcels with this Zone.
10. To promote the economic vitality of the Town of Windsor Locks.
11. To create a unique and identifiable place, landmark and destination for residents readily understood as “the heart of Windsor Locks.”
12. To connect the Main Street district to the surrounding neighborhoods to encourage convenient pedestrian and bicycle access.
13. To encourage mostly ground floor commercial space facing Main Street with suitable residential densities located above these facilities to provide a critical population mass to support the downtown district.
14. To take maximum advantage of the potential relocation of the Windsor Locks Train Station to its proper location back in the historic downtown setting and providing appropriate transit oriented development land use and densities.

## Utilities

The site is served by Main Street (Connecticut Route 159).

- Water: Connecticut Water Company
- Sewer: Windsor Locks Water Pollution Control Authority
- Gas/Electric: Eversource
- Storm Sewer: Windsor Locks Department of Public Works
- Streets and Rights-of-Way: Connecticut Department of Transportation

## Redevelopment Ready Community

- Several years of stakeholder outreach and community engagement
- Completed a Main Street Study 2008 and the Once and Future Transit Oriented Development Study 2013, both of which have been incorporated into the community's Plan of Conservation and Development
- Currently implementing Plan recommendations
- In receipt of \$3.6 million in State of CT DOT LOTCIP funding in order to construct Complete Streets in year 2020. This includes the portion of the street adjacent to the subject parcel, providing road diets, traffic calming, wider sidewalks, angled parking, active transportation amenities and street landscaping. Other catalyst projects nearby are underway.
- Updated Downtown Zoning Regulations.
- Town is currently under contract to purchase site. Contract is fully assignable.
- Town owned historic station just south of the subject parcel, currently being restored for an adaptive reuse such as welcome center, coffee shop, bistro, co-working and gallery space.

## Environmental Conditions

### *KNOWN CONDITIONS / BROWNFIELD ELIGIBILITY*

Windsor Locks recommends a full environmental assessment by the selected developer to determine whether any conditions require action to suit the final site plan.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed in October 2004 by Environmental Risk Limited and a Phase I report issued. The site was determined to not be an "establishment" under the Connecticut Transfer Act. An updated Phase I report is pending at this time.

## Market Conditions

### Retail/Commercial Market Potential

#### MARKET INFORMATION

The railroad station will have an impact on Windsor Locks office and retail potential. With the train station and enhanced rail service, Windsor Locks will become a transportation hub and, as such, a focal point in the larger community economy. Essentially, the presence of the train station mitigates market risk and makes Windsor Locks a more attractive investment location.

Over the next 10 years it is reasonable to assume that Downtown Windsor Locks can absorb 20,000 to 40,000 square feet of office space and 38,000 to 48,000 square feet of retail, eating and drinking space. Windsor Locks Commons and locations immediately adjacent to the rail station are well positioned to capture future development potential.

*Source: Office and Retail Market Assessment Windsor Locks Central Business District, W-ZHA, LLC March, 2013.*

### Residential Market Potential

As determined by target market methodology, which accounts for household mobility within the Town of Windsor Locks and the balance of Hartford County, as well as mobility patterns for households currently living in all other counties, an annual average of up to 950 households represent the potential market for new housing units in the Downtown Study area each year over the next five years.

*Source; Residential Market Potential, Downtown Windsor Locks, Zimmerman/Volk Associates, February, 2013.*

## Available Incentives

The following incentives may be leveraged by the developer:

- The parcel is within the Downtown Tax Increment Financing District established in November of 2016 (Windsor Locks was the first municipality in the State of Connecticut to establish a TIF District under the TIF enabling legislation passed in 2015). In addition to requiring that incremental tax revenue derived from increased assessments within the TIF District be used to support District goals, the town may enter into Credit Enhancement Agreements with the owner of any parcel within the TIF District to incentivize redevelopment by rebating for a period of years up to 75% of incremental tax revenue. The town will consider using TIF funds to ease the transition of existing commercial tenants into newly constructed commercial space.
- Although market rate and workforce housing is preferred, the town will consider all reasonable housing proposals. Various programs, incentives and credits may be available to support the type of housing proposed. Although the Connecticut Department of Housing reports that 8.5% of Windsor Locks housing units are considered affordable as calculated for the affordable housing appeals list (Partnership for Strong Communities, February 2018), that figure is expected to increase to 9.9% upon the opening of the Montgomery Mill mixed income housing project in July 2019.



## Selection Process and Criteria

Windsor Locks staff will review and evaluate all complete proposals in response to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify and engage with qualified developers for sites. An initial response to this RFQ must include the following information:

- **Letter of Interest:** Provide a letter (up to 3 pages) identifying the development team and providing a brief description of the team's vision for the site.
- **Concept plans or renderings.**
- **Development Experience / Portfolio:** Provide a short description of past projects of a similar nature completed by the development team (up to 10 pages). Include a description of the projects, cost, completion date, and references.
- **Evidence of development team's fiscal capacity** to undertake the proposed project.
- **Resume** of firm and lead team members.

Staff may seek additional information upon receipt of a development proposal.

The RFQ and responses should not be considered a legally binding agreement. Upon selection of a qualified development team, the town will enter into a pre-development agreement including purchase price, due diligence period, and other terms.

### Proposal Format

Six (6) printed proposals and a PDF version shall be submitted by *DEADLINE*, to:

*Jennifer Valentino Rodriguez*  
*Director of Planning and Development*  
*50 Church Street*  
*Windsor Locks, CT 06096*  
*jrodriguez@wlocks.com*

### Schedule for Review and Selection

The schedule for receipt and evaluation of proposals is anticipated to be as follows:

- **RFQ posted:** May 24, 2019
- **DEADLINE for proposals:** June 24, 2019
- **Evaluation period:** July 1, 2019
- **Finalist team notified:** July 2, 2019
- **Finalist presentation to evaluation committee:** By July 15, 2019
- **Finalize terms of a redevelopment and purchase agreement:** July 31, 2019

### Contact / Questions

Questions may be directed to:

*Jennifer Valentino Rodriguez*  
*Director of Planning and Development*  
[jrodriguez@wlocks.com](mailto:jrodriguez@wlocks.com)  
860 627-1447