



Request for Qualifications

Master Developer for Riverfront Redevelopment of the Lawrence Brothers Hardware Complex, Stanley-National Complex and Former Northwestern Steel Parcel

Issued: July 20, 2021

Due: August 27, 2021

Submit Responses To:

Mr. Scott Shumard, City Manager
City of Sterling
212 Third Avenue
Sterling, Illinois 61081
Email: sshumard@sterling-il.gov

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Appendices

Appendix A - Redevelopment Properties

Appendix B – Riverfront Reimagined (2020) Report & Riverfront Park Concept

Appendix C – Existing Conditions Photos

Appendix D – Infrastructure Improvements

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1.0 RECEIPT OF RESPONSES

The City of Sterling (hereinafter referred to as “City”) requests sealed responses from qualified master developers for the redevelopment of the downtown riverfront. Sealed responses are due (Month XX at 4:00 p.m.) Each developer shall submit sealed response documents as detailed below. Staff will not publicly open responses.

1.1 STATEMENT OF NEEDS

The City of Sterling seeks qualifications from qualified developers to provide planning, design, construction, and consulting services to the City on their riverfront which includes the former Lawrence Brothers Hardware property, the former Stanley-National Property, and a portion of the former Northwestern Steel Property.

1.2 RFQ SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Interested master developers should submit their RFQ response in a sealed envelope with the following contents:

- 1) One (1) digital copy in Adobe PDF format on a flash drive
- 2) One (1) printed and bound original copy on 8.5 x 11” paper

Please submit the RFQ response by August, 27, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.:

Mr. Scott Shumard, City Manager
City of Sterling
212 Third Avenue
Sterling, Illinois 61081
Email: sshumard@sterling-il.gov

Responses shall be limited to 20 pages not including tabs, table of contents and cover letter. Pages may be double sided.

The submittal should be formatted in accordance with the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Response Template beginning on page 3. Any respondent that does not submit its qualifications by the stated date and time, will not be considered.

2.0 COMMUNITY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Sterling envisions dynamic anchor properties welcoming people to the City via the redevelopment of the Lawrence Brothers Hardware, Stanley-National Building and Northwestern Steel properties in the creation of a Hardware District. These formerly industrial properties are now prime for redevelopment, with floor plans that can accommodate a variety of uses. The City seeks a qualified developer with the capacity and creativity to assist the City in accomplishing this vision.

As depicted in Appendix A, the City owns the Lawrence Brothers Hardware, Stanley-National and Northwestern Steel properties. The City is seeking to select a master developer that can drive the redevelopment of these properties solely, or with the use of specialty developers or as a partner with the City. The City has expended considerable effort over the years and garnered significant public input throughout that process to plan for the redevelopment of its downtown riverfront (See Appendix B). More recently, an in-depth effort to develop a viable concept for the Lawrence Brothers and Stanley-National properties as a fully integrated multiuse, adaptive reuse redevelopment, has been produced (See Appendix B).

The Lawrence Brothers Hardware and Stanley-National Complexes are comprised of former office and manufacturing buildings that are in downtown Sterling, Illinois. The complexes are bisected by Illinois Route 40 and together occupy nearly 2,000 linear feet of frontage along the Rock River to the south.

The complexes were once home to Lawrence Brothers Hardware and National Manufacturing Company respectively, both of which were known for their global contributions to the builders' hardware markets. The sustained growth of each company in the early- to mid-twentieth century is manifested in the sheer size of the buildings; put together, the complexes have over 688,000 square feet of space.

2.1 Incentives

The following are potential incentives to explore for assisting the redevelopment of the site. In some cases, the City may be willing to act as party to a joint application to pursue funding.

1. Enterprise Zone, providing access to a Building Sales Tax Waiver,
2. Potential for new Tax Increment Financing District creation,
3. Federal (20%) and State (25%) Historic Tax Credits
 - a. The Lawrence Brothers Hardware has received a positive Determination of Eligibility from the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
 - b. The Stanley-National Property is likely eligible but confirmation via the Illinois SHPO would be necessary

2.2 Marketing Study

The recent report (Appendix B, pp 112-171) includes a recent market study executed by Hunden Strategic Partners. It outlines the market demands for uses such as hotel, event space, residential and commercial.

2.3 Public Infrastructure

Public infrastructure improvements that are approved and planned are summarized below and include the following:

- Wallace Street realignment: The road is designed and has been approved by City Council to go to construction in the Fall of 2021 or Spring of 2022 pending the Union Pacific's approval to remove the Wallace Street crossing and spur.
- Riverfront park: The City has conducted a conceptual redevelopment plan that includes riverfront park space on the former Northwestern Steel property. Portions of the plan such as paths and sidewalks have already been completed. The City is seeking additional funding sources to complete the balance of the park. The intent with this RFQ is to have a developer partner who can directly, or via a sub-developer, develop the private lots as shown on the figure in Appendix D.
- In June 2021, the City was awarded an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant to build the already-designed 2nd Street bicycle path as shown in Appendix D.

The City is also committed to have a public use aspect to the redevelopment that would allow the City to pursue United States Department of Agriculture community facilities funding grants and/or loans.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION OF RIVERFRONT PROPERTIES

The environmental condition of the properties has been assessed. In Appendix E is the environmental assessment of the Lawrence Brothers property.

3.1 Lawrence Brothers Hardware

The City has been in pursuit of US Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields funding for supplementing investigative work and remediation. To date, the findings of the City-funded environmental assessment show the site is not as heavily impacted as anticipated and is manageable.

3.2 Stanley-National Complex

Until deeded to the City the Stanley/National property was owned by Black & Decker. The site is in the process of being completely assessed and remediated through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency voluntary Site Remediation Program that will yield a No Further Remediation letter. The IEPA file is far too large to include in this document, but the link below provides access directly to the IEPA files.

<https://external.epa.illinois.gov/DocumentExplorer/Documents/Index/170000157390>

3.3 Northwestern Steel

This parcel has been issued a No Further Remediation (NFR) letter through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) voluntary Site Remediation Program (See Appendix E).

4.0 BUILDING PROPERTY CONDITION

4.1 Lawrence Brothers Hardware

The Lawrence Brothers complex is located at 2 1st Avenue in Sterling. There are four connected buildings on the property totaling 222,691 square feet. The buildings are a combination of reinforced concrete, masonry, and a unique sawtooth structure. In-depth descriptions are within Appendix B, pp 10-19.

This property was taken on abandonment in 2011 by the City from the bankrupt Lawrence Brothers Hardware Corporation. The building is mostly empty, blighted and abandoned. Aerial video of the facility is linked [HERE](#). In 2019, the roof of the five-story building was patched to prevent further water damage to the building. Junk and debris has been removed from the building interior. There is no water, gas or electric to the building other than at the very northwest corner; this section has electric, which is used in the storage area by the City.

The 2.9-acre Lawrence Brothers Hardware site is bounded by:

- A grade-separated rail line to the North owned by Union-Pacific, an active line running over 70 trains daily;
- The Rock River to the South;
- Illinois Route 40 to the West, a state-owned route with an annual average daily traffic of 19,800 vehicles; and
- Wooded river frontage owned by Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) to the East.

A service drive and loading and receiving docks are also located along the north side of the building. Appendix D provides a figure that shows water and sewer information that is known by the City. Appendix C includes Existing Conditions photos.

4.2 Stanley-National Complex

The Stanley-National complex consists of 11 buildings constructed as early as 1907 and continuing into the 1960s. Together, the buildings total over 440,000 square feet. The majority of the square footage, is found in buildings that were previously used for manufacturing and warehouse purposes. Many of the buildings are in sound condition with connected utilities. The buildings at the Stanley-National complex are a combination of heavy timber, masonry, and reinforced concrete.

Buildings 1-8 of the Stanley-National complex are bounded by:

- Wallace Street and the Union-Pacific rail line to the North;
- The Rock River to the South;
- Illinois Route 40 to the East;
- Vacant land owned by the City of Sterling to the West; and
- Industrial land owned by Sterling Steel, an active steel rod producer, further to the West.

Buildings 9-11 are located north of the rail line and are bounded by East 2nd Street and West 2nd Street.

The City is in the process of demolishing two (2) buildings totaling approximately 10,500 square feet. In-depth descriptions are within Appendix B, pp 10-19. Appendix C includes Existing Conditions photos.

4.3 Former Northwestern Steel Property

This parcel has no buildings and has been partly redeveloped into a riverfront park. The plan is to develop the park to include commercial out lots for future development. The figure in Appendix D shows the park plan and highlights in yellow what has been built.

5.0 RFQ RESPONSE TEMPLATE

Use the template below to submit the following information in this format and order.

Section I – Introduction to Firm

- Please introduce your firm. Provide a brief overview of company history, company size, company officers and annual volume of similar work. Highlight specialized fields or features that differentiate your services from competitors. Discuss how the specialized services can assist the City with future projects. Please identify if the firm has worked with other municipalities.

Section II – Projects/Services

- List and briefly describe any ongoing or past projects or services that are similar to those described in this RFQ. Use project examples to demonstrate your approach to these projects and services in the scope of services section. Include substantive or innovative ideas used in past projects or any upcoming projects or services.
- For project examples, include a description, associated project challenges, project services offered, and critical information to demonstrate approach and application.
- Provide a financial strategy you would expect to utilize to redevelop a project of this scale and your record of success with similar projects.
- Limit project examples to last five (5) years.

Section III – Resumes and Organization

- Introduce key members of the team the City will work with. Identify the primary client contact. Please include resumes for the identified individuals.
- Provide an organizational chart identifying disciplines, specific personnel, and role of individuals assigned to each project type.

Section IV – References

- Please provide at least three (3) recent and relevant references for the City to contact about their experience with you and/or your firm.

Section V – Addendum Acknowledgement

- Please acknowledge receipt of any RFQ addenda posted on the City's website.

5.1 RESPONSE REVIEW AND SELECTION

The City's project evaluation team will review and evaluate the RFQ responses in accordance with the weighted evaluation criteria identified below. Staff will also check references.

- Qualifications and Experience – 30%
- References and Resumes – 25%
- Past or Current Experience in Similar Positions – 15%
- Affiliations and Accreditations – 10%
- Knowledge of City Area and Services – 10%
- Ability to Perform Multiple Functions (which could lead to cost savings and uniformity for City) – 10%

5.2 RFQ SCHEDULE

Task Timeline

Issue RFQ	July 20, 2021
Building tours (optional)	August 3, 2021 by appointment **
Questions due	August 17, 2021
Addendums posted*	August 20, 2021
RFQ Responses due	August 27, 2021
Evaluation committee meets *	Sept. 13, 2021
Selection of developer	Sept. 20, 2021
Award, agreement, and notice to proceed	TBD

Upon selection of the qualified developer, the City would anticipate monthly check-in meetings and a conceptual plan and financial strategy developed within a four-month time period for presentation and discussion with staff.

* Staff may require scheduling modifications to accommodate unforeseen scheduling conflicts.

** Appointment times may be arranged by emailing Scott Shumard and Deb Dillow.

Emails: sshumard@sterling-il.gov

ddillow@sterling-il.gov

The City reserves the right to conduct discussions with and require public presentations by firms deemed to be the most qualified regarding their qualifications, approach to the project, and ability to furnish the required services.

6.0 QUESTIONS

Please direct all questions in writing to:

Mr. Scott Shumard, City Manager
City of Sterling
212 Third Avenue
Sterling, Illinois 61081
Email: sshumard@sterling-il.gov, ddillow@sterling-il.gov

Any changes to the RFQ specifications are valid only if they are included by written Addendum. No interpretation of the meaning of the RFQ plans, specifications, or other documents will be made orally. Failure to receive any such addendum shall not relieve responding firms from being evaluated under the RFQ and its addenda. All addenda so issued shall become part of the RFQ documents. Failure to request an interpretation constitutes a waiver to later claim that ambiguities or misunderstandings caused a firm to improperly submit a response. Responding firms are responsible for checking for any addendums posted on the City website prior to the submittal due date. No notification will be sent when addendums are posted.