

CITY OF WHITEWATER, WI BLUFF ROAD PARCEL #/A323600002 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

ISSUED: September 14, 2026

DUE: October 16, 2026 / 4:00pm



CONTACT:

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CITY SNAPSHOT

The City of Whitewater, located in Walworth and Jefferson Counties, was incorporated in 1885 and provides accessible travel to Milwaukee, Madison, and Chicago. The City of Whitewater is the largest City in Walworth County with a population of approximately 14,646 (Wisconsin Department of Administration 2025 estimate).

- **Education & Culture:** The city is heavily influenced by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, bringing a diverse, youthful, and educated population. Due to the university's presence, the city offers amenities typically found in larger areas, including a lively downtown and a variety of housing options.
- **Recreation:** Known for its "white water" (white sand) creek, the area boasts 22 parks and 4 lakes, including Whitewater Lake, offering fishing, boating, and proximity to the Ice Age Trail.
- **Economy & History:** Many companies call Whitewater's Business Park home, maintaining the area's tradition of manufacturing and production. The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater continues to be the largest employer in town, serving over 12,000 students between its Whitewater and Janesville campuses.
- **Atmosphere:** Described as having a friendly, "Midwest nice" feel, featuring a mix of suburban and urban settings with high walkability.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Community Development Authority of the City of Whitewater, Wisconsin (CDA) invites proposals from qualified developers, businesses, development teams, and end users for the acquisition or long-term ground lease and private development of CDA-owned parcel /A323600002 along Bluff Road (the Property).

The CDA's objective is to return the Property to productive, privately held and privately taxed use through a development that creates durable assessed value, provides a useful neighborhood or community service, and is compatible with nearby single-family housing. The CDA welcomes a single-user project, a small multi-tenant project, or another well-supported concept that advances these objectives.

The parcel sits within an established but transitioning commercial node along Bluff Road. Immediately nearby are three active commercial anchors: Solstice Health (a direct primary care clinic), a Kwik Trip convenience store/fuel station, and a Dollar General discount store. These uses give the corridor a neighborhood-service character rather than a regional highway-commercial character.

At the same time, single-family homes are currently under construction directly to the east along Bluff Road, signaling that this stretch of the corridor is becoming a residential edge rather than a purely commercial strip. Any use placed on this 1.01-acre parcel needs to coexist comfortably with those new neighbors — in hours of operation, traffic, noise, lighting, and building scale.

ITEM	PROPERTY
Parcel identification number	A323600002
Owner of record	Whitewater Community Development Authority
General location	Bluff Road, City of Whitewater, Walworth County, Wisconsin
Approximate size	1.01 Acres (approx., 44,000 square feet)
Current zoning	B-3, Highway Commercial and Light Industrial District
Current tax status	Publicly held and rtax exempt while in CDA ownership
Disposition considered	Sale or negotiated long-term ground lease, subject to CDA approval and definitive agreements

Just down the street, the City-owned parcel A405400001 (1127 E. Bluff Road, 7.21 acres, directly behind the east-side Kwik Trip) is the subject of a non-binding letter of intent, considered by the Common Council on June 16, 2026, for a coordinated development anchored by a 30,000-sq.-ft. Piggly Wiggly grocery store and a 12,000-sq.-ft. early childhood education/childcare center serving roughly 150 children. Taken together, the context calls for uses on parcel A323600002 that are complementary neighbors to both the existing service cluster and the emerging grocery/childcare hub, and that are good neighbors to the new homes next door.

The B-3 district carries forward general retail, personal-service, and professional-office uses allowed in the B-1 district and also permits or conditionally permits other commercial and light-industrial uses. Respondents must confirm the applicable zoning path with the City's Community Development Department.

Because the Property adjoins residential use to the east, proposals should account for the zoning district's residential-adjacency requirements, including a buffer of at least 30 feet or the building height, whichever is greater, and the applicable height limitation near residential use. Site design should also minimize impacts from lighting, noise, traffic, loading, waste collection, and hours of operation.

The CDA's preferred outcome is a financially feasible project with a clear path to construction and occupancy. Proposals should demonstrate thoughtful site planning, attractive architecture, appropriate landscaping, and an operational plan suited to the neighboring homes and the corridor's growing family-service character.

Given the Property's size and immediate residential adjacency, the CDA does not favor uses dominated by heavy trucking, outdoor storage, fumes, late-night activity, high-intensity vehicle circulation, or substantial noise and glare. Examples include gas stations, car washes, vehicle repair or sales, taverns or high-intensity entertainment uses, light industry, warehousing, motor freight uses, and large-format retail. A proposal involving such a use must clearly establish exceptional site compatibility and a feasible approval path.

RFP DETAILS

TIMELINE (TENTATIVE)

Activity	Deadline
RFP Release Date	September 14, 2026
Responses to the RFP	October 16, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

A public announcement of Preferred Developer, following a thorough review, interviews, and discussions, will follow. The City may amend this schedule at any time. Written notice of any changes to the schedule will be provided to all respondents to the RFP.

Send responses to:

Whitewater Community Development Authority

Attn: Mason Becker, Executive Director

312 W. Whitewater St., Whitewater, WI 53190

Email: mbecker@whitewater-wi.gov

A successful submittal will demonstrate a proposed project that creates or retains jobs, maximizes future property tax revenue generation for the City, shows ability to secure funding for the project, and presents an aggressive but realistic timeline for construction.

The response format being requested by the City is detailed in the following sections of this RFP. The submission of a concise, professional, and complete response to the RFP will help the City identify the most qualified development teams and will be indicative of the level of the respondent's commitment to the desired project. Any questions that arise during preparation of a submittal should be addressed to Mason Becker via email at mbecker@whitewater-wi.gov.

Respondents must demonstrate the experience, resources, and expertise needed to design, develop, and operate a successful project. Past design and development experience, especially with similar projects, will be critical in evaluating the RFP responses. Current financial capacity, access to funding sources and the ability to complete the project in a timely manner will also be important factors in determining the most qualified RFP responses.

Responses to this RFP shall not exceed a total of 15 pages, including any appendices, and should use a minimum font size of 11. Respondents must submit one copy electronically to mbecker@whitewater-wi.gov. Hard copy submittals are optional.

Submittals must be received by the City no later than October 16, 2026 at 4:00 PM. Submittals received after this due date and time will not be accepted. Delivery of the RFP response to the specified location by the prescribed time and date is the sole responsibility of the respondent.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

The submission must include a transmittal letter on official letterhead that provides contact information for the person with authority to negotiate on behalf of the development team. The letter must also include an affirmative statement that the respondent agrees to the minimum business terms identified in the RFP.

The respondent must certify that the RFP response and exhibits are true and correct. Unsigned and/or undated submissions will not be accepted.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The respondent must identify the developer and other key members of the development team, including the project leader for day-to-day management and the key consultants that will be responsible for implementing said project. Also, provide a succinct narrative de-scribing the role and relevant expertise of each of the firms and key individuals that would be involved in the project's implementation.

PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT SCOPE

Provide a one-page narrative that describes the development concept that is envisioned for the Site. As part of this description, identify any responsibilities proposed to be imposed on the City and/or the CDA. At the respondent's discretion, up to three graphics, such as a conceptual site plan, may also be provided.

EXPERIENCE

Provide descriptions of at least two, but no more than four, projects that the respondent has undertaken within the past five years that are directly analogous to the project being proposed for the Site. Each description should include the following information:

- The project's name and location.
- Development Scope:
 - If a commercial project, the name of the operator or user.
 - A project description that identifies the square footage and the number of units or spaces, and/or development size and configuration.
 - A description of the quality level, market mix and amenities provided at the project.
 - Photographs of the project. Renderings of projects in process are also acceptable.
- Financial Characteristics:
 - The total development costs.
 - Detailed explanation of how the project was funded.
- A description of the role the respondent and other team members played in the development and operation of the project.
- Public Sector Contact:
 - Provide contact information for the representative of the jurisdiction in which the project is located, including telephone number and email address.
 - Indicate if the project was undertaken as a public/private partnership. If so, describe the responsibilities accepted by the public sector partner.

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Provide evidence of the development team's financial ability to undertake and successfully complete the proposed project including the following:

- Include an explanation of how the project will be funded, including mix of sources, and if additional investors will be sought in order to fund the project.
- Provide a statement identifying any targeted threshold rate of return requirement anticipated to be imposed on the proposed project. The threshold can be presented as a stabilized return on total investment or an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) on total investment. Other established metrics are acceptable, with explanation.
- List and explain any litigation or disputes any member of the development team is involved in that could result in a financial settlement that has a materially adverse effect on the ability of the development team to complete the proposed project.
- Provide a statement detailing if any member of the development team has ever filed for bankruptcy or had projects that have been declared in default or foreclosed upon. If the answer is 'yes' to any of these questions, list the dates and describe the circumstances.
- The Whitewater CDA recognizes the sensitive nature of the financial capacity information that is requested in this RFP.

RFP SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process will be divided into the following three phases:

- The City will evaluate the responses to the RFP and will select a short list of one or more development teams to move on to the Developer Review stage of the selection process.
- The short-listed development teams will be asked to respond to the City in a format that requires the teams to provide more detailed information about the proposed project. This will include: Identifying an operator (if a commercial project), creation of preliminary design drawings, preparation of a pro forma analysis, and a description of any proposed lease terms.
- At the completion of the evaluation process, the City intends to enter into a negotiation period with the selected development team for the purpose of negotiating the terms of a development agreement.

RFP EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following RFP evaluation criteria will be used to select the short list of development teams that will be invited to move on to the Developer Review stage of the selection process for the Site

- The respondent's agreement to abide by the minimum business terms identified in this RFP.
- Development of projects of a similar scope and scale.
- Financial capacity to undertake a project of the proposed magnitude.
- Overall quality of the development team.
- Experience with similar public/private development agreements with public sector entities.
- Quality and completeness of the RFP response.
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed project, and overall fit within the neighboring area and the downtown

DECLARATION AND ADDITIONAL INFO.

The Whitewater CDA's Rights Pertinent to this Solicitation:

- The CDA reserves the right to reject all submittals for any legally permissible reason without indicating the reasons for rejection.
- The CDA reserves the right to amend this RFP by addendum. The CDA is bound only by what is expressly stated in this RFP and any authorized written addenda to be posted on the City website.
- The CDA accepts no financial responsibility for any costs incurred by the respondent during any phase of the selection process. All submittals shall become the property of the CDA and may be used in any way deemed appropriate.

WITHDRAWAL OF SOLICITATION

The CDA reserves the right to withdraw this RFP at any time without prior notice and makes no representation that any agreement will be awarded to any respondent. Additionally, the CDA expressly reserves the right to postpone opening responses to this solicitation for its own convenience, and/or to waive any informality or irregularity in the responses received.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All submittals in response to this RFP are considered confidential until the CDA makes a selection, at which time the submittals will become public information and available to the public for review. However, the financial capacity information portion of each submittal will be treated as confidential and will not be available for public review at any time.

EXAMINATION OF SOLICITATION

The respondent understands that the information provided in this RFP is intended solely to assist the respondent in preparing a submittal. To the best of the CDA's knowledge, the information provided is accurate. However, the CDA does not warrant such accuracy, and any errors or omissions subsequently will not invalidate this RFP.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Respondents must comply with the requirements imposed by all applicable federal, state and local laws, including those pertaining to conflict of interest. All members of responding development teams must disclose any and all circumstances that could give rise to any potential conflict of interest or appearance thereof with its participation in the project with the CDA or the City of Whitewater, and its agents, representatives and consultants.

ADDENDUMS

There are two addendums attached to this RFP:

1. Site Map
2. B-3 Zoning code

Addendum 1: Site Map



Addendum 2: B-3 Zoning code -

https://library.municode.com/wi/whitewater/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT19ZO_CH19.33HICOLIINDI