

Orillia shortlists developers for downtown waterfront project

For immediate release (June 27, 2019) – Orillia has reached another milestone in the downtown waterfront redevelopment project as the City shortlists three development proponents to advance to the next phase of the 70 Front St. N. property sale.

The three successful proponents invited to submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the waterfront redevelopment project are Amico Properties, Fram Building Group and TPI Acquisitions (Tribal).

“Our goal through the Request for Qualification (RFQ) process was to find proponents who share Council’s vision for the site and have the overall experience, financial capacity and mutual desire to deliver a project of this magnitude,” said Mayor Steve Clarke. “We are confident that the three shortlisted developers have what it takes to deliver a proposal that is in keeping with Orillia’s character, while bringing the downtown waterfront vision to life.”

In 2012, the City adopted the Downtown Tomorrow Plan, which set out a long-term vision to better connect the downtown core and waterfront area. In 2016, the City purchased 70 Front St. N., an underutilized parcel of land which contained a large commercial plaza, with the intent to extend Coldwater Street to Centennial Drive and facilitate redevelopment of the southern portion of the plaza.

As a shared vision between the City and the developer is crucial to the success of this project, the 9.75-acre site is being sold through two phases. The first phase was the RFQ, which determined the shortlist of qualified proponents who share Council’s vision. The second phase is the RFP, which invites the shortlisted proponents to submit their detailed redevelopment proposal for the site.

The RFQ, which included 12 development principles to guide the redevelopment process, was released in April 2019. The development principles include priorities such as compatibility with the surrounding land use, enhancement of both the resident and visitor experience and alignment with the City’s Downtown Tomorrow Plan.

The City’s evaluation team used the development principles and criteria including the proponent’s financial capabilities, vision alignment, and past experience to determine if proponents had the capacity and depth of knowledge to carry out a project of this size and scale. Interviews were subsequently held with the Waterfront Working Group and the evaluation team and there was unanimous endorsement to move forward with the three selected candidates.

The waterfront redevelopment project received significant interest from the development community, with interest expressed on a regional, provincial and international scale. Deloitte, the City’s project consultants, expressed excitement about the number and quality of RFQ

submissions, noting that Amico, Fram and Tribal each have strong reputations within the development community and extensive experience undertaking complex developments.

“Now that we understand which proponents have the capacity to deliver this ambitious project, it’s time to work towards development concepts,” said Laura Thompson, Manager of Real Estate and Commercial Development. “After years of planning and preparation the community will soon have a chance to see what the area may look like in five to 10 years, and help shape the transformation of the waterfront area by providing their feedback.”

The RFP document is being developed and will reiterate the development principles and set out criteria by which the proponents should develop their concepts. Concurrently, the City is continuing work to resolve existing lease and tenant matters which will ensure a smooth transition between the City and future owner of the site.

Public consultation is anticipated to be held later this year to share the three developers’ concepts and gain the community’s feedback before Council selects the final proponent to redevelop the site.

For more information on the project, visit orillia.ca/waterfront and sign up for updates through the waterfront mailing list. Information about each of the three successful proponents will be available on the project webpage starting next week.

The City of Orillia is a city of 31,000 people in the heart of Ontario’s Lake Country on the shores of Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe. Visit our website at orillia.ca.

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