



Village of River Forest

Madison Street Redevelopment Project #1

Request for Expression of Interest

Executive Summary

The Village of River Forest (“Village”) is offering the opportunity to team with the private sector to redevelop key properties within the Madison Street Corridor, a vibrant mixed-use area that spans the River Forest and Forest Park communities. The Village is seeking expressions of interest from a developer or development team to undertake the redevelopment of an assemblage of properties, including three Village-owned properties, along Madison Street between Lathrop and Ashland Avenues.



Background and Opportunity

The Madison Street Corridor is an active downtown district drawing from a range of surrounding communities including River Forest, Forest Park, Oak Park, Maywood, Riverside, Elmwood Park, and others, and serves as a primary retail, restaurant, entertainment, and residential core. Across River Forest and Forest Park, Madison Street is home to a diverse mix of venues with dozens of restaurants, retailers, shops, and more. The Development Site is located toward the western edge of the Madison Street Corridor, between Lathrop and Ashland Avenues, with the potential to become an important anchor development to the corridor and a signature gateway into River Forest.

The Village's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2019, assessed the Madison Street Corridor as a key opportunity and priority for potential reuse/redevelopment across a range of uses and configurations. The Comprehensive Plan highlighted some of the issues common to parcels along many urban corridors, namely the limitations due to lot depth and resulting constraints to efficient, sizable footprints attractive to today's tenants, parking, and overall site flow. Further, the Comprehensive Plan offered possible solutions through the incorporation of adjacent alleys and lots immediately behind corridor parcels to increase depths, parcel sizes, and overall viability.

Recognizing this important opportunity, the Village has proactively assembled properties over the last four years, including a commercial property along Madison Street and two residential properties to the north, with the goal of facilitating their repositioning, reuse and/or redevelopment. In addition to the Village-owned properties, there are two adjacent commercial properties that remain privately owned. The Village believes that combined, they could offer a wider range of redevelopment options, though the Village equally believes the properties under its control offer scenarios that could work on their own or through a phased approach that accommodates potential expansion should other adjacent sites become available.



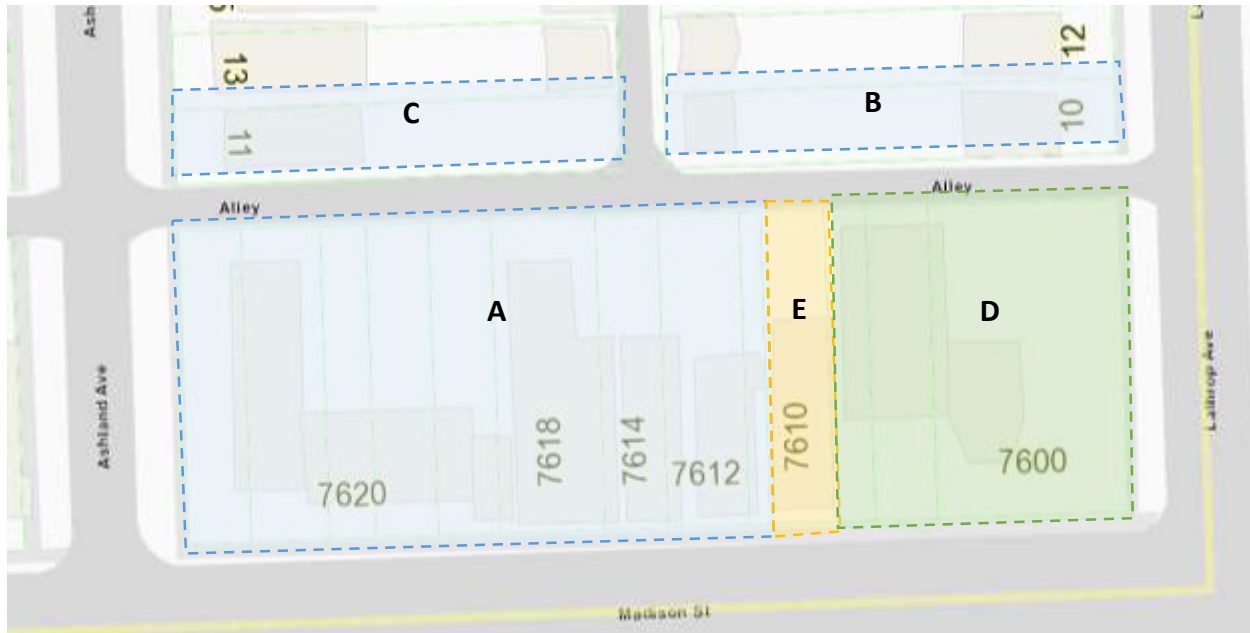
The Village of River Forest established a tax increment financing (TIF) district in 2016 on the entire length of its Madison Street corridor to enable additional tools for redevelopment. The Madison Street TIF district is expected to enhance the economic viability, productivity, appearance, and function of this corridor by encouraging investment and revitalization of existing properties. Future incremental value can be an incentive to development.

Further, the Villages of River Forest and Forest Park also teamed up to improve the overall aesthetic environment of the Madison Street corridor in 2016. Streetscape improvements included the installation of median planters, brick pavers, decorative light poles, pedestrian lighting, planter boxes, planter medians, benches, and more.

The Village is interested in continuing to move key projects forward within the TIF district, particularly exploring the market for development of the Village-owned properties. Having received interest and unsolicited proposals for these sites, the Village would now like to also offer the opportunity publicly and gauge interest from the broader development/investment community. As such, the Village is conducting an Expression of Interest solicitation to 1.) raise awareness of the unique assembly and offering, and 2. to garner interest, ideas, concerns, recommendations, refinements and/or questions from members of the development community who may have interest in a possible development project.

The Development Site / Parcels

The desired project area consists of five parcels including three under Village control (A, B, C) and two adjacent parcels (D and E) under private ownership.



Parcel A

7620, 7618, 7614, 7612 Madison (former Lutheran Children Family Services building)

29,125 square feet

Measures 233' x 125'

Owner: Village of River Forest

Current Zoning: C2 Commercial

Notes: Comprised of one original building and three additions including a two-flat on the eastern side of the subject property.

Parcel B

10 Lathrop

5,408 square feet

Measures 181' x 30'

Owner: Village of River Forest

Current Zoning: R2 Single Family Residential Zoning

Notes: This is a single family residential home with a detached garage.

Parcel C

11 Ashland

5,335 square feet

Measures 178' x 30'

Owner: Village of River Forest

Current Zoning: R2 Single Family Residential Zoning

Notes: This is a two-flat residential property with a detached garage.

Parcel D

7600 Madison Street (Pete's Automotive)

14,175 square feet

Measures approximately 124' x 118'

Owner: Pete Collis

Current Zoning: C2 Commercial

Notes: Pete Collis is the owner of the business and property and has indicated that he does not want to sell his property at this time though the Village has had discussions with him.

Parcel E

7610 Madison Street

4,227 square feet

Measures approximately 124' x 26'

Owner: Pelafas Family

Current Zoning: Current Zoning: C2 Commercial

Notes: Two flat with business on the first floor and an apartment on the second floor – The property is owned by the Pelafas family who also use the building as their office for the realty business. The Village and the Pelafas family have discussed a possible purchase, but could not yet agree on terms.

Solicitation Intent / Recommendations for Response

While the Village controls a portion of the development site, the Village is looking for developers to opine on their interest in working on a project that encompasses some or all of the parcels. This is intentionally not yet a formal request for proposals (RFP), as the Village is looking initially for feedback on interest, key questions/concerns, the site, conceptual approaches/options, market, and sense of viability. The Village is not interested nor wishing to burden developers with full development proposal requirements but welcomes any material, written or graphic, which help provide this feedback (e.g. conceptual ideas, precedents, bubble sketches, and narratives).

The Village anticipates that a project of this size will required zoning entitled under the Village's planned development ordinance, which allows developers to seek relief from the Village's underlying zoning restriction while balancing the need for greater consideration of a development's impact on surrounding properties and the Village in general.

To provide further information on the Village's considerations, the Village suggests interested respondents take into account the following:

1. Phased approach – As previously stated, the Village owns three parcels and believes the entire site would offer the best development options. The Village encourages a dialogue between the developer and the owners of Parcels “D” and “E” to determine how and if deal terms could be agreed upon. For purposes of this process, the Village would assume these property owners are not selling at this time and look to facilitate a phased approach where said properties could potentially be redeveloped at a later time. Developers are encouraged to offer interest and feedback on the viability of developing just the three properties, the whole site, or a phased approach
2. Adaptive Reuse – While scraping the site for redevelopment is a possibility, the Village would entertain adaptive reuse of some or all the existing properties. The Village can provide some information regarding the conditions of the existing buildings and arrange property walk-throughs if interest warrants.
3. Concept/Program - The Village believes a mixed-use project (two to four floors) of ground-floor retail and residential or office above could fit contextually within the district.
4. Cost and Viability – While the Village aims to achieve a fair market return on the property it acquired, it is also willing to engage in a broader discussion regarding the needs of the development community to ensure a viable, high-quality project.
5. Sensitivity to the Neighbors – The subject property is near single family residential property and any development should be sensitive to that fact and aim to be congruous.
6. Affordable Housing – The Village recently approved an affordable housing plan and is interested in understanding the potential to integrate that into new development as well as the impact on development, viability, etc. The Village’s Affordable Housing Plan is available online at www.vrf.us/affordablehousing.
7. Integration of Comprehensive Plan – The Village’s Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2019) and available online at www.vrf.us/comprehensive-plan discussed this area as follows: *This block serves as a gateway into River Forest and is a prime candidate for redevelopment. Several sites, including the former Lutheran Family Services properties, are likely and desirable candidates for redevelopment. The automotive repair use at the corner of Lathrop, although a successful business, is in need of enhancement – façade and signage improvements, and outdoor storage screening and landscaping. The sight is an appropriate candidate for possible relocation and redevelopment. Possible expansion of the commercial areas for commercial development should be considered given an appropriate and desirable development proposal.* The Comprehensive Plan offered possible solutions through the incorporation of adjacent alleys and lots immediately behind corridor parcels to increase depths, parcel sizes, and overall viability.

Response Deadline

Please offer your interest by July 9, 2021.

The Village is willing to discuss this further by email, phone, or possibly conduct a property walk-through if interest warrants. For more information, please contact Lisa Scheiner, Acting Village Administrator via email at lscheiner@vrf.us or by telephone at (708) 714-3520.

Related Links

[Village of River Forest Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Village of River Forest Affordable Housing Plan](#)

[River Forest Community Profile](#)

[Madison Street TIF District](#)

[Development Approval Process](#)

[Madison Street Development Site](#)