



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Request for Concepts (RFC)

**For Development of the Former rkMILES Properties,
at 249, 256, and 258 Bay Street**



Introduction

The Town of St. Johnsbury is seeking innovative concepts for the acquisition and future use & development of Town-owned properties located at 249, 256, and 258 Bay Street, located next to the Trailhead Pavilion in a rapidly developing area of downtown St. Johnsbury.

The Town has recently acquired these properties, as well as the adjacent 145 Bay Street, to support the Town's goal to improve daily resident use, as well as make St. Johnsbury a desirable destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts centering around the terminus of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) and river access along Bay Street.

This Request for Concepts is intended to identify potential partners, projects, and development approaches that align with the Town's goals, and help inform future decisions by the Town regarding potential sale or development of these properties. Concepts may include any combination of parcels, or may be submitted as an individual solution for a single parcel.

The Town of St. Johnsbury will review submittals and consider next steps this fall. This Request for Concepts is exploratory in nature and does not constitute a solicitation for bids or proposals. The Town reserves the right to accept, reject, modify, or further explore any concept submitted, at any point in the submission timeline. Submission of a concept does not guarantee selection, partnership, or development rights.

Background

Downtown St. Johnsbury is experiencing a renaissance as the community transitions from its historic roots as an industrial center to an experiential economy fueled by arts & culture, outdoor recreation, and hospitality. **In the past five years, a net of 37 new businesses has opened downtown**, spurred by key investments in infrastructure and recognition of the town's assets as a cultural and service hub in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

Based on community priorities identified in the 2011, 2017 & 2025 Town Plans, as well as the Vermont Council on Rural Development's 2015 Community Visits process, the Town **has taken a leadership role in development of the Bay Street area**. The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail—New England's longest rail trail which spans 95 miles across the state between Swanton and St. Johnsbury—is a key part of that development. The Town completed one of the first sections of the LVRT a decade ago and constructed a Trailhead Pavilion at 195 Bay Street in 2020. Further projects for development include construction of an extension path along Bay Street to directly connect the trail terminus on South Main Street with the Pavilion—slated to be completed in 2028, improvements to parking and river access, and private sector development of adjacent properties.

In the spring of 2026, an opportunity became available to purchase four parcels adjacent to the Trailhead Pavilion, 145, 249, 256, and 258 Bay Street (commonly referred to as the former rkmiles campus) to build out much-needed parking and greenspace infrastructure while maintaining control of commercial spaces to ensure future use that supports the Town's goals for the Bay Street riverfront corridor. The Town will retain 145 Bay Street to develop daily and overnight parking and green space that will support residents, trail users, and periodic events. **The three other parcels (249, 256, and 258 Bay Street) are available for developments that bring visitors & residents alike downtown to access amenities and services to enhance their access to outdoor recreation and strengthen St. Johnsbury's downtown business core.**

This development approach is aligned with the goals for reuse of the properties identified through community feedback gathered in two public input sessions facilitated by the Northern Forest Center, and

further developed by a Bay Street River Corridor Advisory Group composed of St. Johnsbury Town staff, business owners, citizens, and organizations with direct ties to St. Johnsbury and its downtown.

Future Uses

Based on the Town Plan and community input, the Town seeks potential partners with a vision for use of the properties that advances one or more of the following priority sectors:

Outdoor Recreation

- Enhance access to trails, cycling, fishing, paddling, or other recreational opportunities
- Support recreation-based tourism and local participation
- Provide amenities for visitors and residents
- Create connections between downtown and surrounding natural resources

Arts and Culture

- Create opportunities for artistic expression, performance, exhibition, and education
- Celebrate local history, heritage, and creative enterprises
- Support artists, makers, and cultural organizations
- Provide spaces for community gatherings and cultural events

Vermont Food and Agriculture

- Support Vermont farmers, food entrepreneurs, and producers
- Encourage year-round food-related activities and programming
- Create opportunities for markets, culinary experiences, or food education

Community and Economic Vitality

- Strengthen downtown activity and foot traffic
- Support local businesses and entrepreneurship
- Expand commercial and housing opportunities
- Foster year-round use and broad community benefit
- Demonstrate financial and operational sustainability

The Town is particularly interested in concepts that:

- Improve incremental property value and demonstrate economic benefits
- Leverage the property's downtown location and nearby recreational amenities
- Include year-round public access and gathering opportunities
- Strengthen connections among recreation, culture, and local food
- Reflect St. Johnsbury's character and sense of place
- Incorporate multiple community benefits
- Are realistic and implementable

Property Details

249, 256, and 258 Bay Street are three separate parcels.

- 249 Bay Street—comprises a 9,000-sf commercial/retail building, plus multiple out-buildings and a sizeable parking lot,
- 256 Bay Street—a 9,000-sf warehouse building,
- 258 Bay Street—a small parking area south of the warehouse building.



See Attachment A: property cards and maps, and Attachment B: property market analysis.

All three parcels are within St. Johnsbury's Designated Downtown District boundary, which provides business incentives for qualifying property improvements. All three properties are within walking distance of downtown businesses, community facilities, and recreational assets.

Prior to the Town's acquisition of the properties the Town hired an environmental consultant who performed the following environmental assessment activities:

- ESA Phase I
- ESA Phase II
- ESA Phase II Supplemental
- Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plan Addendum (SSQAPPA)

The Town is currently working with its environmental consultants, the EPA, and the VT DEC to finalize work plans for the remediation of hazardous materials and implement the plans to mitigate the environmental issues prior to the transfer of the properties. Environmental documents are available upon request.

Submission Requirements

Interested parties are invited to submit a brief concept package no more than 2 pages long for any combination of parcels, including:

1. Business/Organization Information: entity or individual name(s), address, phone number, emails, and brief history or description of activities
2. Concept Summary containing the following elements:
 - Identify which parcel or parcels are of interest
 - Preliminary business or operational model
 - Proposed uses and activities, including if additional partners are identified
 - Description of community benefits & economic impact

- Desired implementation timeline
- Optional site plan, sketches, or illustrations

Timeline

- RFC Issued: September 10, 2026
- Questions Due: October 8, 2026 (questions and responses will be provided to those who respond to the RFC by October 15, 2026)
- Submissions Due: November 16, 2026
- Town Consideration of Next Steps: November & December 2026

The Town hopes to identify next steps, which may include (but are not limited to) public listing of available properties, issuance of a request for proposals, or pursuing a purchase & sales agreement with potential partner(s) January-March 2027. All submitters will be contacted at that time with notification of next steps.

Contact Information

Please direct questions, requests for information, and concept submissions to:

Joe Kasprzak
 Assistant Town Manager
 Town of St. Johnsbury, VT
jkasprzak@stjvt.com
 (802) 863-3452

Enclosures:

- Attachment A: property cards and maps
- Attachment B: property market analysis

Links to studies and plans:

- VCRD Action Plan ([St. Johnsbury Community Visit Report - 2015 - Vermont Council on Rural Development](#))
- St. Johnsbury Town Plan ([St. Johnsbury Town Plan](#))
- [Vita Nuova Bay Street Area Market Assessment and Reuse Plan](#)
- [SE Group LVRT Economic Impact Study](#)

All documents and project updates can be found on Town of St. Johnsbury's project webpage at [Town of St. Johnsbury Bay Street Corridor Redevelopment Project](#).