



## The City of Middletown



## Request for Qualifications South Cove Development Area

Submittal Deadline  
January 31st, 2003

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The presence of Route 9, between Middletown and the historic Connecticut River, has long been a source of consternation for area planners and residents who rue the day they lost access to it.

As plans evolved to decommission the obsolete riverfront sewage treatment plan and reconfigure the Route 9 / Route 17 interchange in the South Cove area, city leaders began to look at this section of the waterfront and its larger land mass as a long-range development opportunity to reconnect the city with its waterfront amenities.

In 1998, Mayor Dominique S. Thornton convened "The Mayor's Select Committee on Waterfront Development," to involve the broadest possible cross-section of residents, property-owners, planners, business people, and other stakeholders to explore options in the area, and identify community priorities and objectives for its future development. Coordinated by planning director, William Warner, AICP, the meetings were facilitated by two consultants: John Mullin and Associates and Planimetrics. A series of charrettes, attracting over a hundred residents, established Goals, Priorities, and Strategies for the future development of the area, along with a Conceptual Land Use map.

A Brownfields PILOT grant from the EPA provided the city with resources to investigate the environmental effects of 100 years of industrial location in the area. Environmental consultants TRC performed a number of studies, Phase I and Phase II assessments, and reports, the sum of which significantly reduced much of the uncertainty that comes with "brownfield" redevelopment.

In recent months, developers have begun to take notice of this area, prompting the city to take steps to articulate more clearly its vision for how the development should ultimately take shape. Early this year (2002), the city retained renowned waterfront and preservation architect, Arthur Cotton Moore to develop conceptual designs for the waterfront which were unveiled at the end of May.

The City of Middletown, Department of Planning, Conservation, & Development is seeking statements of qualifications from development teams demonstrating their ability to implement the South Cove waterfront development project on the historic Connecticut River. The most qualified teams will be asked to submit proposals. The successful candidate will both write and, as Designated Master Developer, implement a Municipal Development Plan for the South Cove area. City-owned parcels will be made available to the developer through the Redevelopment Agency, who can also assist in general site assembly for the project. The submittal deadline for qualifications is January 31, 2003.

## 1.0 SITE HISTORY



1877 Lithograph of Middletown on the Connecticut River



Current aerial photograph of the project area



Map showing position of highway relative to project site.



The historic Arrigoni Bridge, connecting Middletown and Portland across the Connecticut River.

The project's background is the city's longstanding desire to reconnect to one of its foremost natural assets: the Connecticut River. Once referred to as "the Great River," and one of a select group of designated "American Heritage Rivers," the Connecticut played a central role in the development of Middletown's 350-year history, once making it the largest shipping port in Connecticut.

With the industrial revolution and its environmental aftermath, the waterfront became estranged from its recreational role in the city, gradually fading so far into the background that post-war planners saw little to lose by building a large highway on the river's edge, creating a significant physical barrier between the river and the rest of the city.

Fortunately, the highway's construction did not altogether follow the curvature of the river; a bend away from the highway in the southern section of the river left in tact an 85-acre wedge of land, sloping gradually down to the river's edge. These 85 acres comprise the Project Area.

## 2.0 LOCAL CONTEXT

Middletown's largest local employers are Aetna, United Technologies (Pratt & Whitney), the State of Connecticut, Middlesex Hospital, and Wesleyan University.

Local economic development activities auger well for the waterfront's success. Developers broke ground this month on a four-star, 100-room hotel at the south end of Main Street, while Wesleyan University is signing a long-term lease with the city to convert a historic school building to a community arts center at the north end of the Street. Meanwhile, a grant is underway to illuminate the city's historic Arrigoni Bridge in



Map showing Middletown in the context of the Connecticut River Valley, and the Boston / New York Corridor.

ways we expect to draw more attention to "Harbor Park," another waterfront attraction adjacent to the project area.

### 3.0 REGIONAL CONTEXT

Aptly named, Middletown is strategically located in the middle of an area bursting with population centers, disposable income, and famous tourist attractions. In the middle of the nation's wealthiest state, Middletown,

Connecticut is equidistant from Boston and New York City, occupying a central location in the northeast corridor, incorporating Providence, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. The Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos are within an hour's drive to the southeast, while Six Flags New England is less than an hour's drive north. Yale University is a half hour to the southwest, while Wesleyan University is located a short walk from downtown. The Goodspeed Opera House is twenty minutes to the south. Connecticut's capitol city, Hartford, is the same distance north. A region famous for its maritime heritage, the Mystic Seaport and Connecticut River Museums are both located within an hour's drive.

In addition to the attractions of the region's many developments, Middletown and its surrounding area have many attractive undeveloped areas, including thousands of acres of unspoiled farmland and beaches on Long Island Sound.

### 4.0 CONCURRENT PROJECTS

At the northern edge of the Project Area are two vestiges of the city's industrial approach to its waterfront in the 1950s: an elevated highway interchange for State Routes 9 and 17, and a local sewage treatment plant. ConnDOT, in conjunction with a local advisory committee, has developed plans to reconfigure this interchange to a landscaped boulevard, with an at-grade intersection, providing a pleasing gateway to the Project Area. Also underway is the decommissioning of the old sewage treatment plant, with the Mattabassett District Water Pollution Control Authority, agreeing to take the flows currently treated at the old plant. Finally, as an EPA Brownfield Pilot, the project area has been the subject of extensive Phase I and Phase II Environmental Assessments, which information will be made available to potential developers.

### 5.0 DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, CONSERVATION, & DEVELOPMENT

The City of Middletown's ("the city") Department of Planning, Conservation, & Development ("the department") staffs all development-related boards and commissions, including the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Redevelopment Agency, the Design Review & Preservation Board, the Zoning

Board of Appeals, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, and the Harbor Improvement Agency. It is charged with managing the process of local redevelopment and the disposition of city property. The successful candidate will therefore work closely with the department on the South Cove redevelopment. Heretofore, the department has worked in close collaboration with the administration, the local and regional water authorities, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, project area landowners, consultants, and the city's residents and business owners, to oversee the planning of the area and its development framework for the next phase.

## 6.0 SUMMARY OF PROJECT SCOPE

The successful candidate will enter into an agreement with the City of Middletown to become the project's Designated Master Developer. The scope of the agreement will mainly include the developer's creation of a C.G.S. §8-189 Municipal Development Plan ("Plan") for the project area, and the implementation of that Plan, upon adoption by the city.

## 7.0 SUBMITTALS

Submittals should include the following items on up to three examples of similar projects completed by the developer:

- ◆ Maps and Photographs of the project (ideally, before and after photos)
- ◆ Project teams
- ◆ Tenant lists for the projects
- ◆ Time frame
- ◆ Narrative
- ◆ Two letters of recommendation with contact information
- ◆ Company profiles and resumes of development team members.

The department's website [[www.middletownplanning.com](http://www.middletownplanning.com)] provides additional information, phone numbers, and email addresses, should you have any questions. Please send your submittals in a loose-leaf binder to:

William Warner, AICP  
Director of Planning, Conservation, & Development  
245 deKoven Drive  
Middletown, CT 06457

**DEADLINE:** Submittals must be postmarked by January 31, 2003.