

Project Coordination and Technical Expertise Services for the Town of Shepherdstown in its Planning for the Purchase and Use of the Former Shepherdstown Elementary School Property

1. Introduction

The Town of Shepherdstown, West Virginia, ("the Town") is seeking Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from consultants or firms ("consultants") interested in providing project coordination and technical expertise for the Town of Shepherdstown as it examines options for the purchase and future use/redevelopment of the former Shepherdstown Elementary School.

The Town seeks to make a well-informed decision about the purchase of the school property by early December and then select a development/redevelopment proposal that aligns with the Town's values.

The consultant may provide services virtually, but it is expected that the consultant will attend key meetings in person.

Town staff will be available to collaborate with the selected consultant or firm on a limited basis, regarding such matters as meeting logistics and public communications only.

It is anticipated that the engagement will be up to six months from early November 2026 through approximately March 2027. The timeframe is subject to change.

This is a Request for Qualifications. The Town will negotiate a subsequent detailed proposal and contract with one or more respondents.

2. Background

The Town of Shepherdstown Building Commission entered into a purchase agreement with the Jefferson County Board of Education to acquire approximately eight acres of land including the former Shepherdstown Elementary School building located at 662 South Church Street, which is immediately outside of the Town of Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The Town Building Commission plans to finalize the purchase of the property by early December 2026.

Town Actions to Date

The Town is currently administering “due diligence” reviews of the former school property. In addition, the Town is collaborating with its Bond Counsel to identify financing options for the purchase and any updates to the property that are needed and/or redevelopment of the property.

The due diligence review that is currently underway includes the following components. The Town anticipates that reports from these reviews will be available by the end of October 2026.

- In-Depth Appraisal of the Property with Estimated Best Use;
- Phase I Environmental Review;
- Structural / Property Condition Assessment;
- Asbestos Review;
- Asbestos Remediation Study and Cost Estimate;
- Title Search and other legal reviews.

Town Plan for Property Assessment and Development Planning

The Shepherdstown Town Council and the Municipal Building Commission are collaborating to develop information about the property in preparation for purchase, explore potential property ownership formats, identify potential uses for the property and, if the purchase is finalized, to develop a process for recruiting and selecting entities that will manage the property or that will collaborate with the Town in the development/redevelopment of the property.

The Town is using a three-stage “Action Map and Timeline” to guide this effort. See Appendix 1 for the Action Map and Timeline.

3. Scope of Services

The selected consultant will serve as the Project Lead and will manage the project and provide technical expertise. Given that the Town will implement some components of the Action Plan before a consultant is selected for this project, the selected consultant will review and assist the group in finalizing the Action Plan tasks to date. The selected consultant will also review the overall action plan and recommend changes to the plan and timeline as needed.

The consultant will implement the following tasks:

3.1 Overall Project Management

- Serve as Project Lead and provide technical expertise in analysis and decision-making about the property.

- Review the Action Plan and recommend revisions to the plan such as additional tasks and changes to the timeline.
- Facilitate Town and Building Commission meetings from November 1 through March 1, 2027, and track progress against the Action Plan schedule.
- Assist with overseeing separate expert consultants retained by the Town or Building Commission as needed.
- Maintain a running summary that consolidates findings and open questions across all these assessments as they are received, rather than presenting each report in isolation.

3.2 Information Gathering and Analyses Planned or Drafted to Date

- Develop a public communications strategy including posting information on the Town website and planning for monthly updates about the purchase and development of the school property via the Town website and newsletter.
- Review and update all information collected and analyses by the Town Council and Building Commission under the Action Plan, including providing additional background information and analyses where needed:
 - Summary of findings of the initial due diligence studies listed in the background section above, including any additional studies or fact-finding that will be needed to ensure that the Town and Building Commission have sufficient information for its decisions concerning the purchase and potential uses of the property.
 - Background information on specific areas of concern that must be examined in the planning for uses and development/redevelopment of the property.
 - Overview of comparable projects which include former school property and adaptive use/reuse of the property. For each comparable project identified, document the ownership/deal structure used when purchased by a public, non-profit or governmental entity, the financing tools relied upon, and the development partner involved, where applicable.
 - Description of a small number of feasible frameworks for ownership and management of the property (after purchase) with pros/cons for each.
 - Recommendation of a core set of 3-7 prioritized values for evaluating options for use and development of the property.
 - Feasible financing options and recommendations for the project financing needed to purchase the property.

- Preliminary list of feasible options for uses of the property based on the “highest and best use” appraisal and the prioritized values as developed by the Working Group.

3.3 Stakeholder Input

- Design and carry out strategies to solicit and gather stakeholder input including through such strategies as interviews and a public workshop, consistent with the Action Plan.

3.4 Public Communications

- Assist the Town’s Director of Communications to develop and implement a public communications strategy to ensure residents are informed about actions taken by the Town in planning the purchase and development of the property.

3.5 Develop Preliminary and Final Candidate Uses

- Develop a preliminary list of feasible candidate uses for the property based on the appraisal, condition and environmental assessment findings, and stakeholder input. Produce a memorandum that describes the preliminary list which provides the pros and cons identified for each use.
- Create a scoring framework for ranking the preliminary list of feasible candidate uses for the property and facilitate the Town Council in using the scoring framework to identify 2-3 final candidate uses.
- Write a memorandum that describes each of the 2-3 final candidate uses for the property as selected by Town Council.

3.6 Select a Property Development Partner (if needed)

- Assist the Town in identifying potential partners to develop/redevelop the property in keeping with the final candidate uses. The process for selecting a development partner should include such actions as identifying possible partner entities, soliciting proposals from potential partners, managing a process that the Town Council will use to select a development partner based on the proposals submitted, and assisting the Town to finalize a contract with the selected developer.

4. Anticipated Schedule

The Town anticipates the following schedule:

- Consultant start date: Between November 1- 6, 2026.
- Information gathering and synthesis: Through November 20, 2026

- Community and stakeholder input process: Through approximately November 20, 2026.
- Town Council vote on moving forward with purchase of the Property: Targeted for December 2, 2026
- Town Council vote on property ownership structure and planned use of the Property: Mid-January 2027.
- Additional tasks if a development partner is needed:
 - Memorandum for Town Council describing the plan for identifying and selecting a development partner: Mid-December, 2026;
 - Draft RFP soliciting partners to submit suggested development plans.
 - Receive and review responses to the RFP from potential partners.
 - Facilitate Town Council selection of development partner: Early April 2027.

5. Statement of Qualifications — Required Contents

Firms wishing to be considered should submit an SOQ of no more than [15] pages (excluding resumes and appendices) containing the following:

1. Cover letter identifying the firm, primary contact, and a statement of interest in the engagement.
2. Information on relevant experience, with emphasis on: managing multi-phase public redevelopment or reuse processes for municipal clients; synthesizing technical findings (condition, environmental, appraisal) into decision-support material for a public body; designing and facilitating community/stakeholder engagement processes; drafting clear public-facing communications (website content, newsletter updates, public announcements) for a municipal audience; municipal financing analysis; and assisting a municipality in identifying and selecting a private development partner.
3. At least three (3) reference projects, including project description, role performed, client contact information, and status.
4. Identification of the proposed project lead and any key team members, with resumes summarizing relevant qualifications and availability for this engagement.
5. Evidence of appropriate professional liability insurance or the firm's ability to obtain it.
6. Disclosure of any conflicts of interest, including any existing relationship with the Property, the Town, or prospective developers who might participate in a future solicitation for the Property.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Responses will be evaluated by a review committee comprised of Working Group members and Town staff using the following criteria:

- Relevant experience managing municipal redevelopment or reuse feasibility processes (25%)
- Relevant experience designing and facilitating community and stakeholder engagement (20%)
- Demonstrated ability to synthesize technical findings from other consultants into clear, decision-ready material (20%)
- Qualifications and availability of proposed project lead and key personnel (20%)
- Quality and relevance of reference projects (15%)

The Town reserves the right to request interviews with any or all responding firms before making a selection.

7. Submission Instructions

Submission deadline: October 21, 2026

Submission format: One electronic copy submitted to Gino Sisco, Town Administrator, at GSisco@Shepherdstown.gov or via mail at P.O. Box 248, Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Questions: All questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing to Gino Sisco, Town Administrator, GSisco@Shepherdstown.gov by October 9, 2026. Answers will be distributed to all firms that have indicated interest.

Contact: Gino Sisco, Shepherdstown Town Administrator, phone: 304.876.2312 and email: GSisco@Shepherdstown.gov

Town Website: www.shepherdstown.gov

8. General Conditions

- This RFQ does not commit the Town to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response, or to procure or contract for the services described.
- The Town reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, to waive minor irregularities, and to negotiate with any qualified firm.
- The Town may negotiate a contract for services based on information received in response to this RFQ.
- The Town is an equal opportunity entity and encourages submissions from small, minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses.

Appendix 1

Action Map and Timeline -- School Property Assessment and Development Planning Shepherdstown, WV

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	Lead Group	Planned Completion Date	Action
Phase One September - October			Public Communication
	Planning and Communications	Sept 21	Post and maintain new section on Shepherdstown.gov about the planned purchase and development of the Shepherdstown Elementary School property. Produce monthly updates about the purchase and development project in the monthly Town Newsletter starting October 2026.
			RFP for Redevelopment Feasibility Consultant Services
	Administration	Sept 21	Develop and publish RFQ/RFP to select a consultant to coordinate and manage the process of identifying potential uses, developing approaches and partners, and determining project financing.
			Due Diligence Review and Report on Options for Ownership
	Administration	Oct 1	Continue fact-finding currently underway (Managed by Ryan Simonton): - Asbestos Review - Asbestos Abatement Estimate - Phase 1 Environmental Review - In-depth Property Appraisal - Structural/Condition Assessment - Title Search Submit memo to Town Council on findings of due diligence reviews. Submit memo to Town Council with information on three-four frameworks for property ownership with pros/cons of each. The suggested ownership structures should include: - Town is sole owner, responsible for operating/maintaining the property. - Town partners with a private entity (or lease the property to the entity) with an agreement for dedicated space for public benefit.

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			- Town sells the property to a private entity with deed restrictions such as on allowable future uses, dedicated space of public benefit, density, and affordability. - Other options
	Planning and Communications	Oct 1	Submit memo to Town Council with recommendation on core set of 3-7 prioritized values for evaluating options for uses and development of the property. Submit memo to Town Council on specific areas of concern that must be examined in the planning, including such topics as: - Town Run, nearby wetlands, and other environmental factors. - Potential for phased development to include the Shepherdstown middle school at a future time. - Potential for coordination with Shepherd University; and so forth. Submit memo to Town Council on comparable projects in the region, which include, adaptive reuse of school buildings.
	Finance	Oct 1	Submit a memo to Town Council which identifies financing options and presents recommendations on the core project financing based on ownership structure. Analysis should include clarification on allowed uses of funds such as for project planning; the impact of use of tax-exempt bonds on allowed uses of the property. Also identify other available financing options for later phases of the project including the feasibility of Tax Increment Financing, uses of State or county grants, loans, or other support.
			Preliminary Options for Property Use / Development
	Administration	Oct 7	Submit memo to Town Council with preliminary options for uses of the property, based on the “highest and best use” as reported on the In-depth Property Appraisal and prioritized values as developed by the Working Group. Discuss the options at the October 14 Town Council meeting.

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Phase Two			Obtain Community Input on Potential Uses
	Planning and Communications	Through Nov 20	Gather community and stakeholder input and develop a list of uses/redevelopment options that reflect community interests and are economically feasible.
			Identify Feasible Options for Use of the Property
	Working Group	Nov 25	Submit memo to Town Council with recommended action for purchasing the property. If needed, submit second memo to Town Council, with final options for uses of the property. The recommendation for final options for uses will build upon the initial options and include insights from community input. The options memo will include cost estimates, funding options, and pros/cons analysis for each recommended use.
			Town Council Decisions
	Town Council	Dec 2	Special Town Council Meeting for votes for the purchase of the property and, if there is consensus for a vote, to select the planned use.
	Town Council	Mid-January 2027	Town Council vote on planned use of the property (if needed)

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Phase Three			Identify Potential Development Partners (if any)
	Administration	January 2027	Memo to Town Council that identifies firms / partners interested in partnering with the Town to manage or develop / redevelop the property for a recommended use and issue competitive RFP to firms with interest and capacity to support this project.
			Recommendation on Development Partners
	Administration	Mid-February 2027	Memo to Town Council with recommendation based on submitted proposals.
			Town Council Decision
	Town Council	March – April 2027	Special Town Council meeting with vote to select development partner(s) and move forward with the development.