



The Town of  
**Mars Hill**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**9 & 15 South Main Street**



The Town of Mars Hill, NC is soliciting proposals for a mixed-use development project in the heart of Mars Hill Main Street.

**ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE:**  
**September 10, 2024**

**DATE REISSUED:**  
**February 4, 2025**

**RESPONSES DUE:**  
**MARCH 21, 2025**

# THE OPPORTUNITY

The Town of Mars Hill is seeking proposals and qualifications from interested developers, or development teams, for the mixed-use development of a three-story building in the heart of Mars Hill Main Street

The proposed site is located at 9 & 15 South Main Street and is an exceptional opportunity for an experienced developer or development team to not only reimagine the design of a building, but to play a pivotal role in defining the character of the entire block. The site is adjacent to the gazebo park, formally named the Trammell Family Park, which is publicly accessible green space owned by Mars Hill University. The site is a short distance from the Mars Hill University campus, Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre, Post Office, Visitor Center, and many downtown retail, restaurant, and service businesses. The site is also a short walking distance to the Mars Hill Public Library, Mars Hill Medical Center, and art galleries.

The Town of Mars Hill is motivated to redevelop the site and is eager to support a developer or development team capable of achieving success in this revitalization process. The Town invites developers with an aptitude for collaboration and creativity and with demonstrated public-private partnership experience to submit their proposal to be considered for redevelopment of the site.

This request for proposals (RFP) contains site information, project objectives, proposal requirements, evaluation criteria, and submission information. The Town will create a selection committee to evaluate all submitted RFPs based on the evaluation criteria. Thank you for your interest in this important project and we look forward to your response.



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# The Site: 9 & 15 SOUTH MAIN STREET

This 9 & 15 South Main Street site, originally constructed by R.S. Gibbs ca. 1915 with additions made in ca. 1930s, is a two-story brick commercial building with an exposed basement with rear access. The building was originally operated as a mercantile business. The property was purchased by JF Robinson and operated as clothing store and grocery on the first floor and several residential apartments on the upper floors from the 1960s to the 1990s. It last housed the Mars Hill University Bookstore until 2016. The Town of Mars Hill purchased the vacant building in 2023 to spearhead the economic revitalization of the building and the entire downtown Main Street area.

The site is technically two separate buildings but share a common wall that has a doorway providing access to the other on the Main Street level. The first floor has five six-light square windows to the north, and a recessed entry flanked by display windows on the south end. The second floor has ten taller windows, which appear to be original to the building. The site is the oldest contributing building to the Mars Hill Commercial Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015.



# PROPERTY INFORMATION

Parcel Number: 9747843663

Location: In the core of downtown Mars Hill Main Street, at the corner intersection of South Main Street and Mountain View Road. Less than 0.1 miles from the campus of Mars Hill University, and 18 miles north of Asheville, NC

Deeded Acres: 0.21 acres

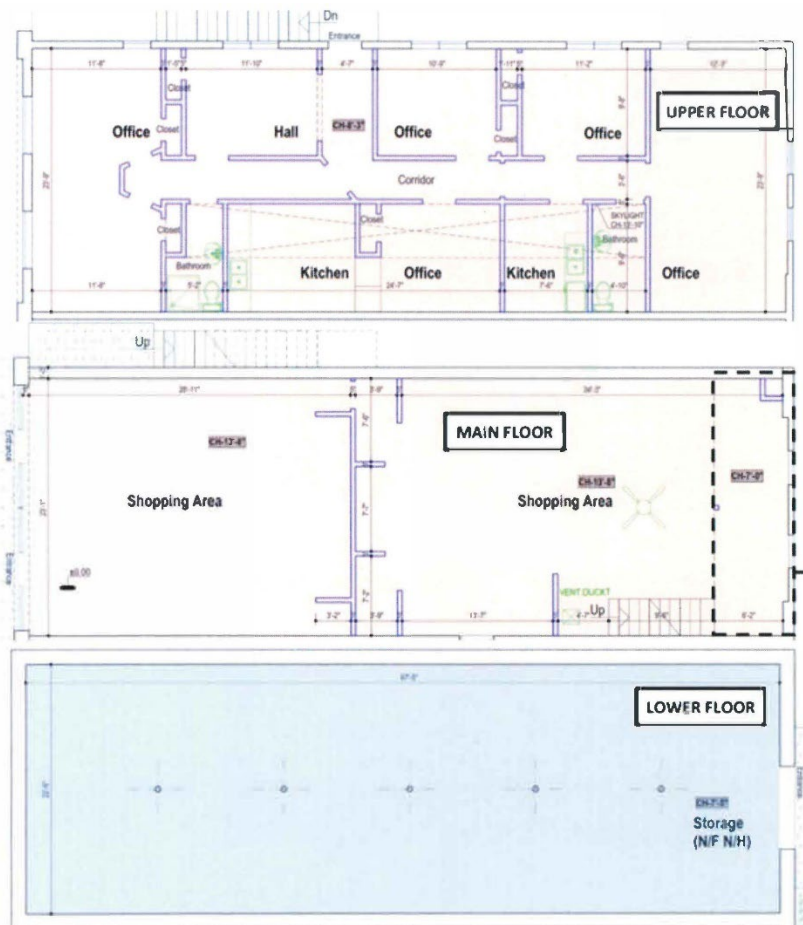
Ownership: Town of Mars Hill

Zoning: Central Business District (C-1)

Current use: Vacant; ready for development

Total Square Feet: 17,000 +/-

## 9 SOUTH MAIN



### **9 S. Main Street**

**Main Floor:**  
1583.42 sq.ft.

**Mezzanine Floor:**  
136.98 sq.ft.

**Upper Floor:**  
1619.73 sq.ft.

**Lower Floor:**  
1511.26 sq.ft.

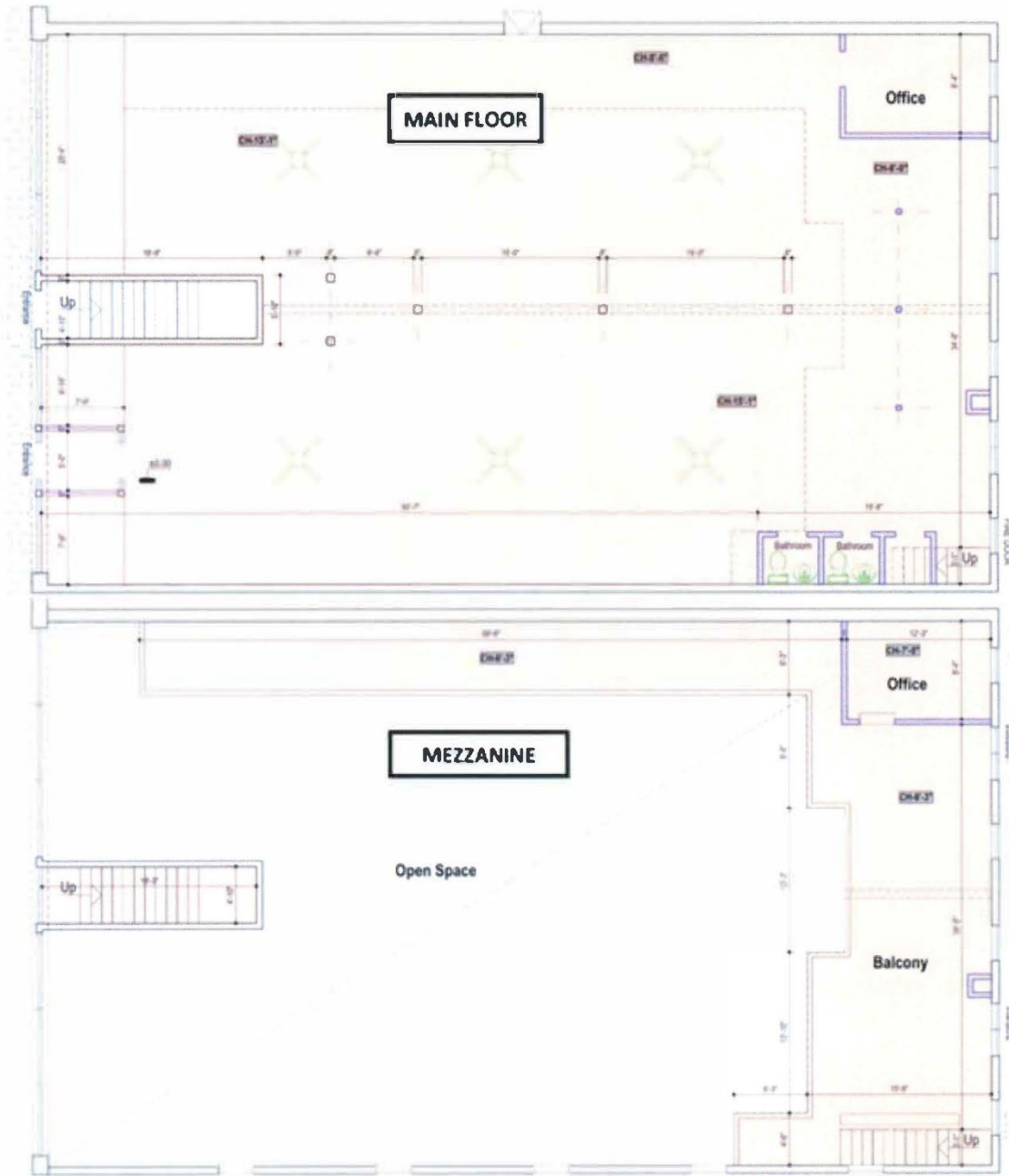
**Total Area:**  
4851.39 sq.ft

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# 15 SOUTH MAIN – MAIN FLOOR

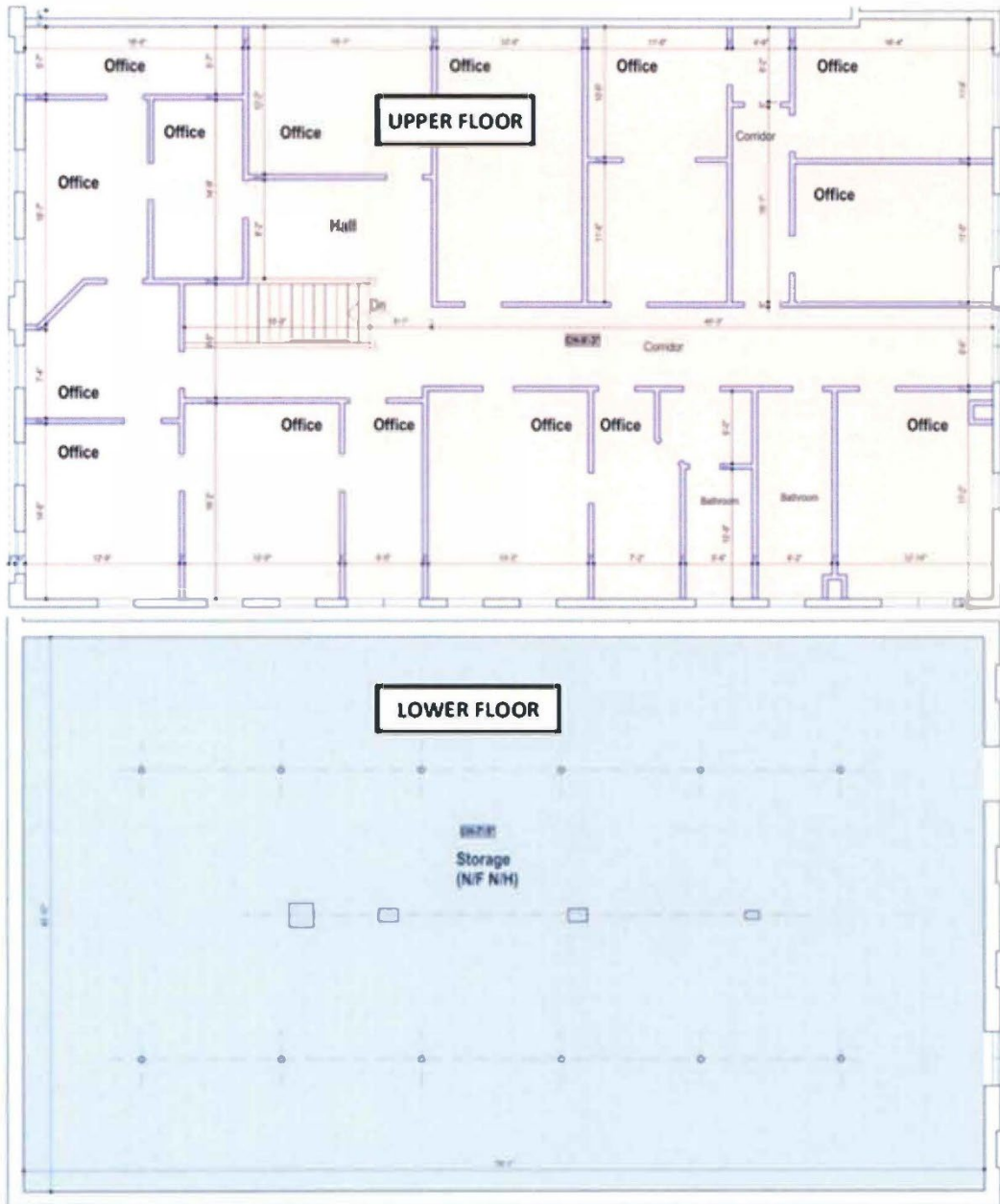


<b><u>15 S. Main Street</u></b>	
<b>Main Floor:</b> 3622.58 sq.ft.	<b>Upper Floor:</b> 3768.87 sq.ft.
<b>Mezzanine Floor:</b> 1161.06 sq.ft.	<b>Lower Floor:</b> 3624.65 sq.ft.
<b>Total Area:</b> 12177.16 sq.ft.	

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# 15 SOUTH MAIN – UPPER & LOWER FLOORS



<b>15 S. Main Street</b>	
<b>Main Floor:</b> 3622.58 sq.ft.	<b>Upper Floor:</b> 3768.87 sq.ft.
<b>Mezzanine Floor:</b> 1161.06 sq.ft.	<b>Lower Floor:</b> 3624.65 sq.ft.
<b>Total Area:</b> 12177.16 sq.ft.	

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# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

## ***Developer Expectations***

The developer (or development team) should have experience partnering and collaborating with municipalities on challenging projects, as well as possess the skills and resources to see a project through to completion. The primary responsibilities of the developer (or development team) are as follows:

- Engage in all design, engineering, land development, entitlement and permitting activities required for the Project.
- Fund and procure all studies necessary for the marketability, financing, and approval processes.
- Develop and execute a financing strategy for the Project, including providing most or all up-front funding and proactively seeking all non-local sources of financing and subsidies.
- Work cooperatively with Town staff on Project elements, layout, and design.
- Work collaboratively with surrounding neighborhood organizations to gain community support for the Project.
- Undertake good faith efforts to engage local, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses.

## ***Developer Objectives***

The overall concept for this site is a mixed-use development, designed to encourage a lively pedestrian realm. The design of the first floor is critical because it will need to provide optimal space while maximizing flexibility for any future tenant.

A potential restaurant and/or retail business is recommended for the first floor with multiple residential units or professional offices on the upper and lower floors. The Town of Mars Hill encourages creativity in the project design and intends to allow flexibility in the development of the site provided the proposal is consistent with the objectives provided in this RFP. The goal is to use quality materials and architectural details that provide elements of scale and visual interest to the public.

# PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be organized in the manner indicated below and must clearly and completely address each of the following items.

- I. **Cover Letter.**
- II. **Project Understanding and Vision.** Describe your preliminary concept for the Site, and how your concept addresses the Project Vision.
- III. **Developer and Development Team.**
  - a. Please provide the following information about the developer:
    - i. Development philosophy and business model;
    - ii. Name and contact information for the primary point of contact during the RFP process and during the development planning and construction process;
    - iii. Profiles and/or resumes of key project personnel;
    - iv. Location of principal offices;
    - v. Description of organization (corporation, partnership, etc.); and
    - vi. Number of years the firm has been in business under the current name, and any other names under which the firm has operated.
  - b. Identify and describe other members of the development team, such as architecture, engineering, construction management and property management firms.
  - c. Include a diagram or illustration depicting the relationship between the lead developer and other team members.
- IV. **Financial Capability.** Information should effectively illustrate Developer's ability to acquire financing for the project. Respondents should provide the following:
  - a. Information about the Respondent's overall financial position, past history of raising capital, and resources available to complete the Project.
  - b. Overview of real estate portfolio.
  - c. Statement indicating that the Respondent does not currently and has not had any loans in default within the past ten years, and has not filed for bankruptcy, had a project foreclosed on, or faced government fines. Alternatively, if any of those have occurred, include a description of the action and the project-related circumstances in which the action took place.
  - d. If applicable, description of any relevant litigation that has been filed against the developer or development team or its members related to real



estate projects during the past ten years, as well as the outcome of that litigation.

- V. **Relevant Experience.** Describe the developer and/or development team's experience by profiling projects with a scope and complexity similar to the Project envisioned for the Site. Projects should highlight the developer/team's experience in public-private partnerships. Each project description should include the following:
- a. Project name, location, and description.
  - b. Role in the project and other key members of the project team (developer, engineer, architect, construction manager, etc.).
  - c. Total project cost, financing structure, and sources of capital.
  - d. If undertaken as a public-private partnership, discuss the major deal points and general nature and structure of the relationship between public and private entities.
  - e. Combination of images, site plans, layouts, written descriptions, and/or renderings.
  - f. Start and completion dates, or current status if not yet complete.
  - g. Name and contact information for at least one reference per project.
- VI. **References.** In addition to those project-specific references, please provide the name and contact information for three references, including at least one public sector development partner, who can attest to your capacity and experience for completing the type of project envisioned herein.

## RFP SCHEDULE

<b>TASK</b>	<b>TENTATIVE DEADLINE</b>
Town of Mars Hill advertise/publish RFP	February 4, 2025
Questions for RFP due	February 28, 2025
RFP Submittals Due	March 21, 2025
Review Committee and Interview	March 24, 2025
Town of Mars Hill Mayor & Board Consideration	April 7, 2025

## PROJECT ORIENTATION

To kick off the project, the contractor shall meet with town staff for a project orientation meeting and tour in order to provide an understanding of project goals and schedule, specific issues, town policies, and opportunities and/or problems related to the development within the Town. The contractor shall be responsible for reviewing and understanding other town plans and policies as may be identified by the town and included in this RFP, as well as all relevant and applicable local, state, and federal law.

# SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND EVALUATION

Provide four (4) hard copies and (1) electronic copy of the Proposal to the following address no later than **FRIDAY, March 21, 2025, at 5:00 PM EST.**

**Proposal should be submitted to:**

TOWN OF MARS HILL  
ATTN: Nathan Bennett, Town Manager  
280 North Main Street (PO BOX 368)  
Mars Hill, NC 28754

**You may submit your electronic responses by email to the following recipient:**

[NBENNETT@TOWNOFMARSHILL.ORG](mailto:NBENNETT@TOWNOFMARSHILL.ORG)

Mailed responses not received by the deadline will not be accepted. No submittal fee is required for evaluation of this Proposal.

**Evaluation**

A Section Committee comprised of Town staff and town-retained consultants will review and score Proposals based upon the following criteria:

- a. Project vision and understanding (0-20)
- b. Overall and relevant experience of Developer (0-20)
- c. Overall and relevant experience of Development Team (0-20)
- d. Experience structuring and completing public-private partnerships (or other projects with a significant public financing component) (0-20)
- e. Financial capacity and experience assembling multiple sources of capital (0-10)
- f. References (0-10)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- This is a reissue of the RFP process released September 10, 2024. Due to Tropical Storm Helene and the ensuing state of emergency and interruption to normal business activities, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen ordered this process to be reopened at their meeting February 3, 2025, in the best interest of our community.
- Town of Mars Hill reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals submitted.
- Town of Mars Hill WILL NOT REIMBURSE costs incurred by a Respondent in the preparation of a Proposal.
- All Respondents will be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion and revision of Proposals. Town of Mars Hill may enter into discussions with Respondents to clarify and assure a full understanding of Proposals.
- Town of Mars Hill reserves the right to extend any portion of the timeline communicated in this RFP.
- Responses to the RFP, once tendered to the Town of Mars Hill, become the property of the Town of Mars Hill. Any restrictions on the use of data in a Proposal must be clearly stated in the Proposal, and although the Town of Mars Hill will try to accommodate requests for confidentiality, the Town of Mars Hill does not guarantee the security of any element of a Proposal.
- Town of Mars Hill reserves the exclusive right to own, possess and utilize all work products, schematics, financial information, and other documentation obtained as a result of this RFP as the Town of Mars Hill determines in its sole discretion. Submittal of a response to this RFP shall be deemed the Respondent's agreement to this reserved right without the necessity of any further agreement between the parties.
- Respondents shall not contact members of the Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen, or any other voting body during the RFP process (i.e., the date of this publication until the date of the public meeting or event where a Respondent is selected).

**END OF DOCUMENT**

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