



# THRIVE Rural WI Team & Vilas County Economic Development Corporation

Jeremy Ryan – Town Supervisor, Town of Phelps, WI &  
Kathy Schmitz – Executive Director, VCEDC

## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

### Lillian Kerr Hospital Redevelopment Site - Town of Phelps, Vilas County, Wisconsin

**Release Date:** January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

**Statements of Qualifications Due:** April 1, 2026 – 4:00 p.m. (CST)

**Submissions to:**

Jeremy Ryan, Town Supervisor - Town of Phelps, WI  
Email: Supervisor.Ryan@phelpswi.gov

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### PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

The **Town of Phelps, Wisconsin** is looking for qualified and experienced development teams interested in redeveloping the former **Lillian Kerr Hospital site** into a high-quality mixed-use development that supports housing, small business growth, and long-term community vitality.

The purpose of this RFQ is to find two to three development teams with a demonstrated record of success in similar projects. Following the initial selection, the Town may invite shortlisted teams to submit a more detailed Request for Proposals (RFP) based on the concept plans prepared by Cedar Corporation in partnership with the Vilas County Economic Development Corporation (VCEDC).

While the concept plans are not binding, the Town seeks developers who respect the intent, scale, and spirit of the planning effort and who are willing to collaborate in delivering a transformative project that responds to local housing and economic needs.

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### PROJECT OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

**Project Name:** Lillian Kerr Hospital Redevelopment Project

**Project Description**

The Lillian Kerr Hospital Redevelopment Site represents a **rare, shovel-ready opportunity** in Northern Wisconsin. The Town of Phelps has taken proactive steps to position this property for redevelopment by acquiring the site, demolishing the former hospital structures, and preparing the land for new development.

The Town partnered with the **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)** through the **Thrive Rural Wisconsin Program** to secure planning and technical assistance funding. This effort resulted in professionally prepared **mixed-use redevelopment concept plans** illustrating feasible development scenarios that comply with existing zoning and infrastructure conditions.

The Town is now seeking a development partner capable of implementing a project that may include housing, commercial space, live/work units, and community-oriented amenities that enhance Phelps' role as a year-round Northwoods destination.

## Objectives

- Increase availability of workforce and market-responsive housing.
- Support small business and entrepreneurial activity.
- Create a development that strengthens year-round economic stability.
- Leverage public-private partnerships to reduce development risk.
- Deliver a project that complements Phelps' character, scale, and natural setting.

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## PROJECT LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

- **Address:** 2383 State Highway 17, Phelps, WI 54554
- **Site Size:** Approximately 5.06 acres
- **Ownership:** Town of Phelps
- **Zoning:** Community Business (CB) and All-Purpose (AP)
- **Utilities Available:**
  - Municipal water
  - Sanitary sewer
  - Electric
  - Natural gas
  - High-speed broadband
- **Access:** Direct access from WIS 17 via Hackley Circle
- **Context:** Adjacent to North Twin Lake with nearby public water access

The site is located along a key tourism corridor in Vilas County and benefits from consistent year-round visitation driven by outdoor recreation, second-home ownership, and regional employment centers.

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## DESIRED PROJECT COMPONENTS

While the Town is open to creative approaches, desired elements include:

- Mixed-use commercial and residential development
- Live/work units supporting entrepreneurship.
- Workforce and/or market-rate housing
- Small-scale retail, dining, or service uses.
- Pedestrian connectivity and public gathering spaces
- High-quality architecture consistent with the Northwoods character

The Town encourages proposals that create a neighborhood-scale environment rather than isolated buildings and that contribute to long-term community cohesion.

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## CONCEPT PLANS

Concept plans prepared by Cedar Corporation illustrate two potential development scenarios that comply with current zoning regulations. These plans demonstrate site capacity, massing, circulation, and integration of public spaces.

These plans are conceptual only and are intended to guide discussion, not restrict innovation. Developers are encouraged to propose refinements, phasing strategies, or alternative solutions that align with community goals.

(Concept Plans are included in the Appendix.)

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## SELECTION CRITERIA

Development teams will be evaluated based on demonstrated experience with:

- Mixed-use or community-scale developments
- Workforce or attainable housing projects
- Quality design and placemaking
- Financing projects of similar scale and complexity
- Working collaboratively with municipalities
- Creative approaches to development feasibility

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## SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Interested development teams shall submit one (1) digital PDF Statement of Qualifications that includes the following, in order:

1. **Cover Letter**  
Summary of interest, understanding of the project, and team qualifications.
2. **Project Team**  
Description of all team members, roles, and organizational structure. Identify the prime developer and include resumes of key personnel.
3. **Relevant Experience**  
Descriptions and images of completed or active projects, including location, size, unit counts, project value, and your role.
4. **Development Approach**  
Narrative describing your proposed approach to development, phasing, ownership model, and long-term operations.
5. **Financial Capacity**  
Overview of financial resources, assumptions, and experience securing financing, grants, or tax credits.
6. **References**  
Contact information for one to three municipal or public-sector references

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## PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

- **RFQ Released:** January 2026
- **Deadline for Questions:** March 15, 2026
- **Statements of Qualifications Due:** April 1, 2026
- **Potential RFP Issuance:** TBD

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## DISCLAIMER

The Town of Phelps reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, waive irregularities, request additional information, or modify the process as deemed in the Town's best interest. All costs incurred by respondents are the sole responsibility of the development team.

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## WHY THIS OPPORTUNITY IS DIFFERENT

Unlike many rural redevelopment sites, the Lillian Kerr Hospital site offers:

- Municipal ownership
- Completed demolition.
- Existing utilities
- Professional concept planning
- Active municipal partnership

This project is **ready for action**, and the Town is committed to working with the right partner to make it successful.