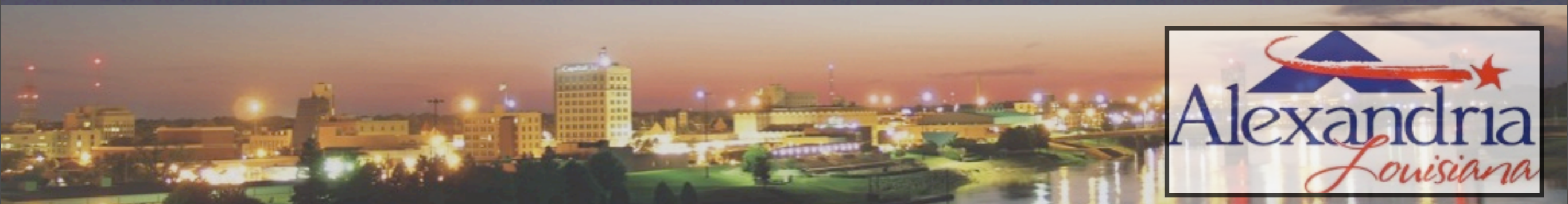




# SPARC: A PROGRESS REPORT

## YEAR ONE



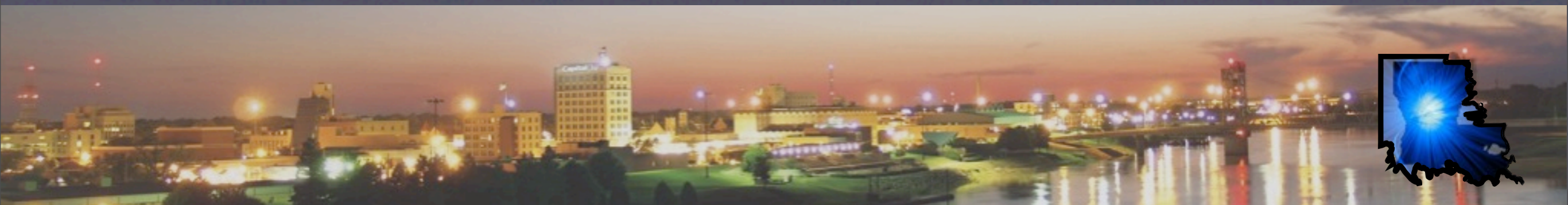


# BACKGROUND:

On September 10, 2008, the City of Alexandria bonded \$40M and assigned an additional \$16M in capital funds to create **the largest redevelopment project in City history**, known as S.P.A.R.C. (or Special Planned Activity Redevelopment Corridors). The City will also seek an additional \$10M in bonds and \$30M in state and federal matching funds; all told, **SPARC is a \$96M project.**

**SPARC seeks to capitalize on nearly two decades of adopted but unimplemented master and strategic planning, without the need for new or additional taxes.**

In order to quickly and most effectively accomplish the goals of SPARC, the City has designated three distinct areas, known as Cultural Restoration Areas (CRAs), in need of investment, stabilization, and enhancement. Each of these three CRAs contains important activity corridors. With the exception of the Riverfront, these corridors are all roadways: **the Riverfront and Lower Third (CRA-1), Bolton Avenue and North MacArthur Drive (CRA-2), and Masonic Drive and Lee Street (CRA-3)**. By targeting infrastructure investments along these corridors and by adhering to smart growth principles, **SPARC seeks to encourage and augment private-sector development, enhance quality of life, and stabilize adjacent and contiguous neighborhoods.**

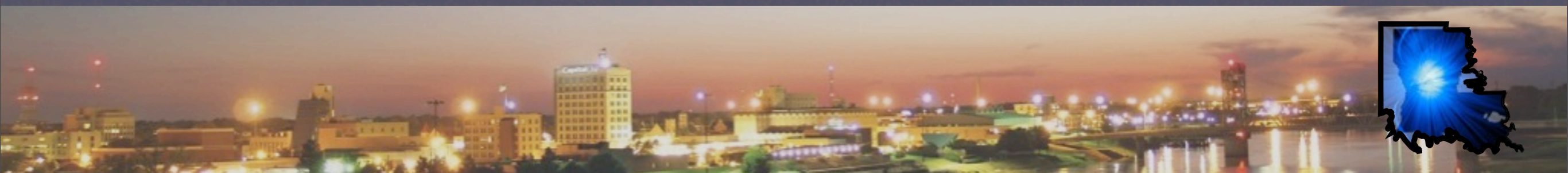
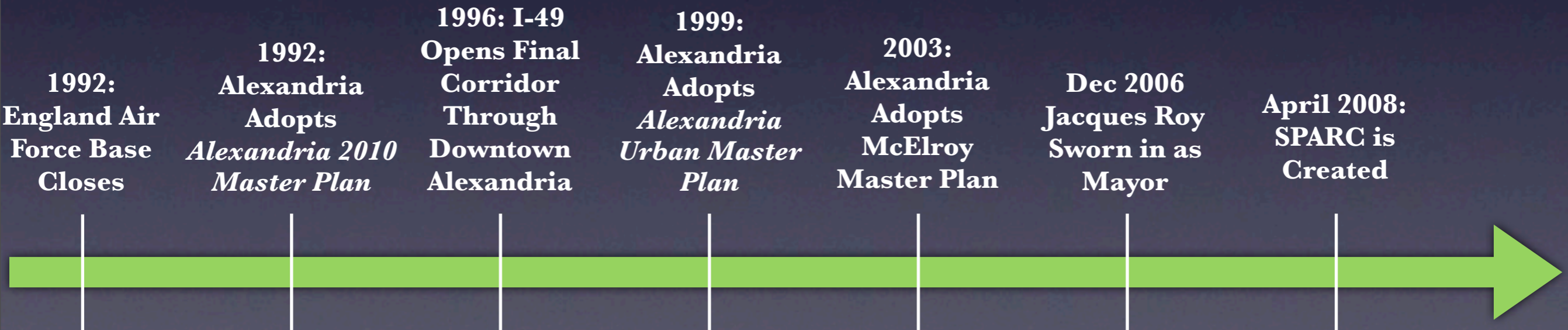




# SPARC PLANNING PROCESS

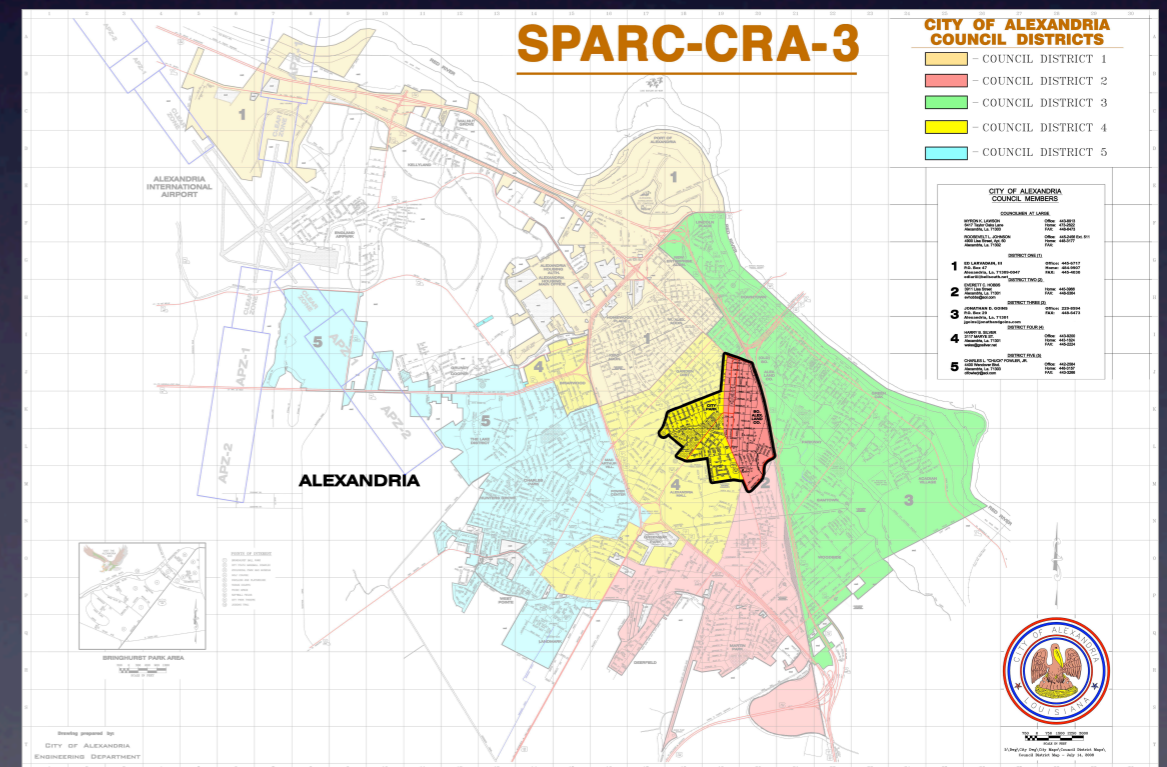
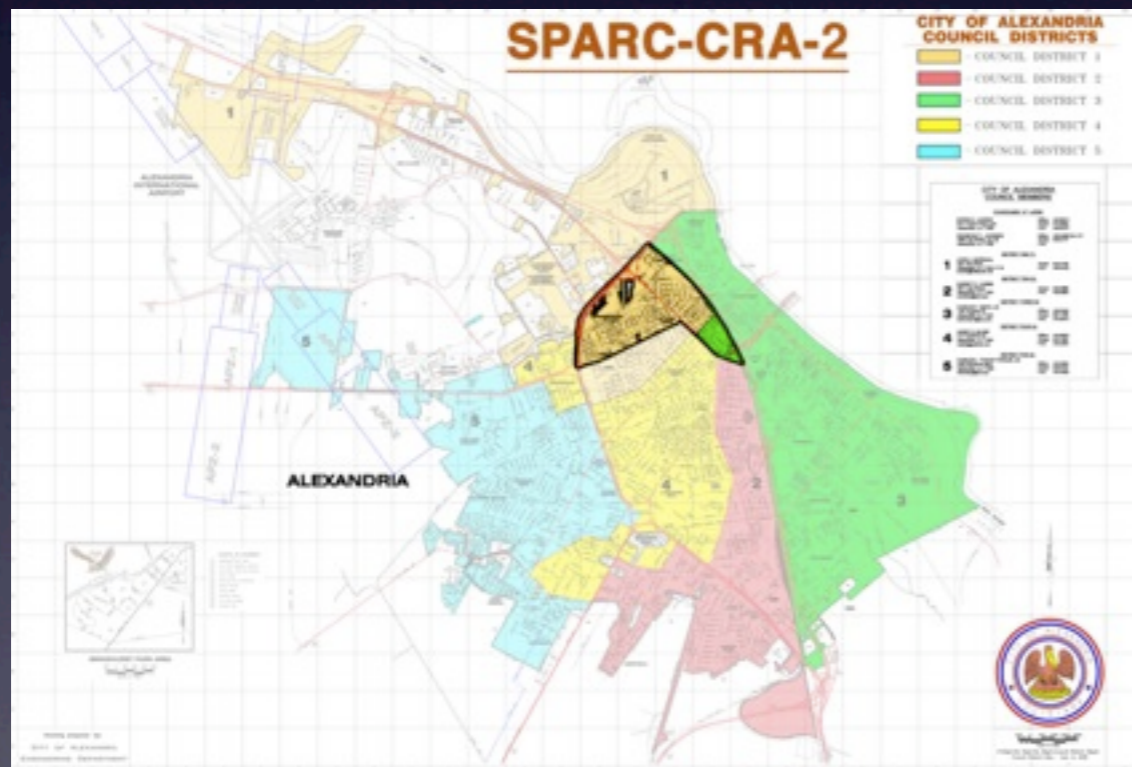
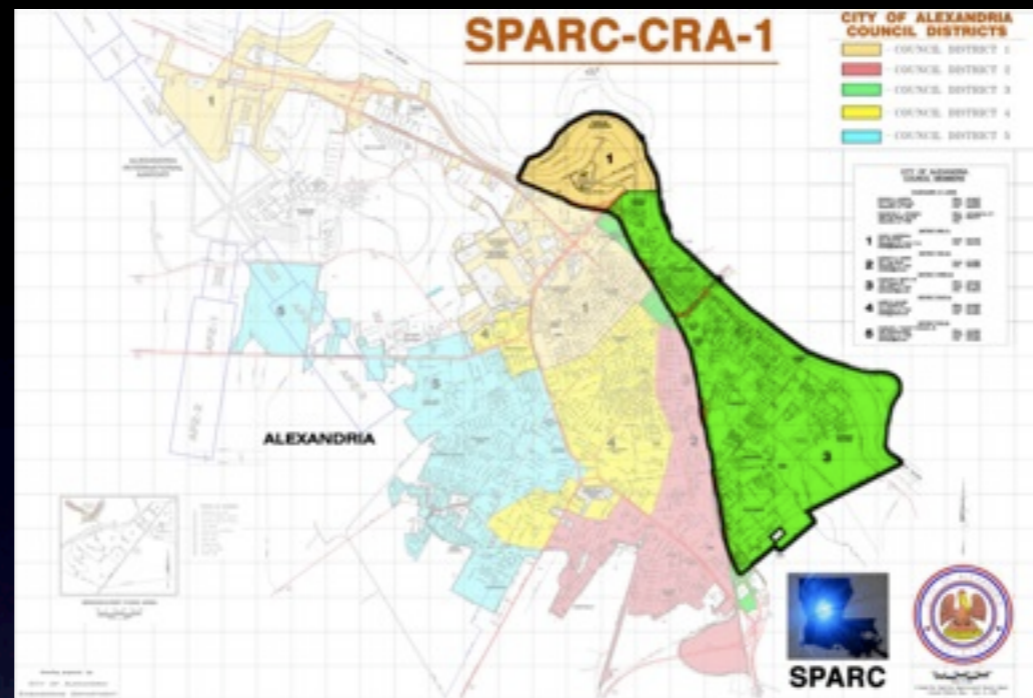
**SPARC is built on nearly twenty years of extensive strategic and master plans, most of which was paid for by your tax dollars. Yet, for a number of reasons, these plans have never been adequately implemented.**

**SPARC creates the financial capacity to finally implement plans that, until now, had been collecting dust, while, at the same time, inviting and encouraging residents, businesses, and planning professionals to augment and update those plans with new and innovative concepts for public infrastructure investments.**





# SPARC'S THREE CULTURAL RESTORATION AREAS:





# CITY-WIDE SPARC PROJECTS:

## Wayfinding, Informational, and Gateway Signage

SPARC will invest in new wayfinding, informational, and gateway signage throughout the City. The need for updating and improving the City's wayfinding signage is well-established. Alexandria's lack of a clear wayfinding system creates confusion for both visitors and residents.

On February 24, 2009, the City issued a Request for Qualifications for a Directional Signage Study. After an extensive selection process, the Administration will recommend contracting with a team of expert professionals, led by Alexandria native Jeffrey Carbo. Mr. Carbo's team includes an internationally award-winning wayfinding consultant, a professional community outreach firm, and distinguished engineers and architects.



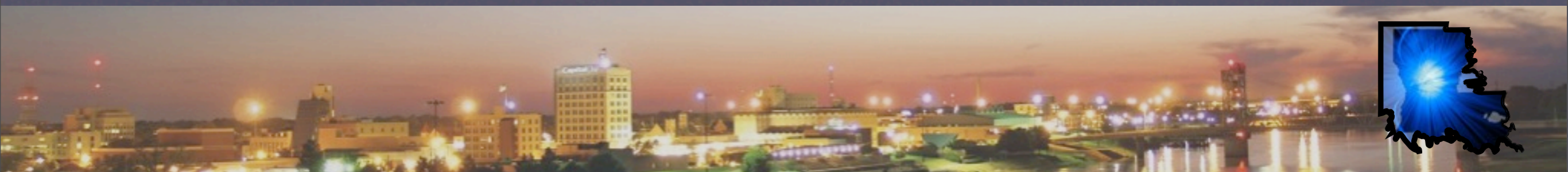
**Feb 09: City Issues RFQ**

**April 09: RFQ Statements Due**

**June 09: Interviews Conducted**

**Sept 09: Contract Introduced to Council**

**Oct 09- July 2010: Work Conducted and Completed**





# CITY-WIDE SPARC PROJECTS:

## Fire Station Relocations and Renovations



Four years ago, Alexandria completed an extensive study of its Fire Department. The study underscored the need to relocate four fire stations in order to more effectively respond to its service area.

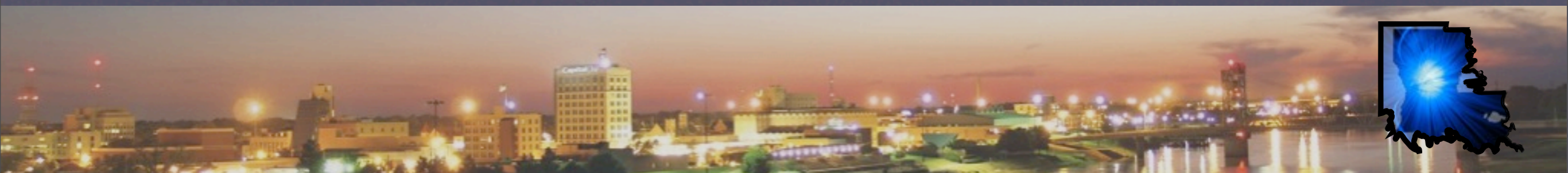
SPARC is assigning \$7.5M toward the construction of these new stations and is seeking to match those funds with Assistance to Firefighters Grant money. Additionally, the City has already begun extensive renovations on Fire Station #4, located at the corner of Masonic Drive and Lee Street.



This investment is critical to ensure Alexandria maintains its fire rating, which is used to determine the fire insurance rates.

The City is in the process of selecting sites and acquiring property to construct these four new stations.

**This project is expected to be completed by late 2011.**





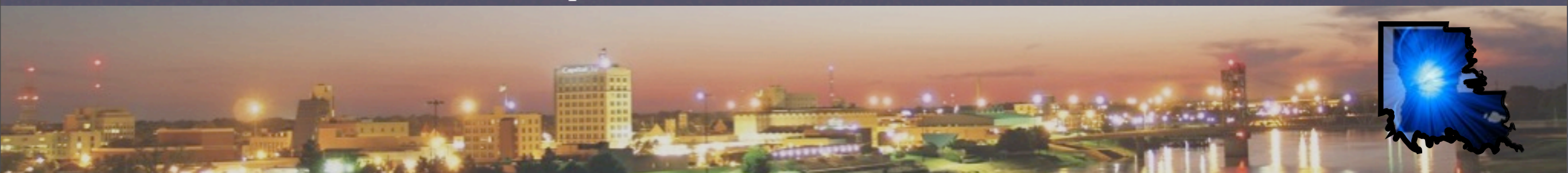
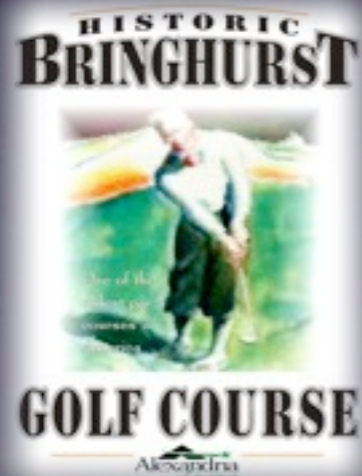
# CITY-WIDE SPARC PROJECTS:

## Parks and Recreation Improvements

In July 2008, the City entered into negotiations with recreation planning professionals, Lose and Associates, to conduct a thorough study and analysis of Alexandria's parks and recreation programming. After an extensive community input process, Lose and Associates issued a draft report in June 2009. The final report is expected to be released by the end of August.

It will include recommendations on park upgrades, new park construction, organizational restructuring, and programming. Once adopted by the City Council, this plan will form the basis of Alexandria's parks and recreation strategy.

In addition to completing a parks and recreation master plan, the City has also assigned \$2M of SPARC funds toward the enhancement and improvement of Alexandria's most important recreation asset, the Alexandria Zoo. Already, the City has constructed a new kitchen at the Zoo, and thanks to the volunteer efforts of the Brame family, Bringhurst Golf Course has been restored to its former grandeur. It will be open for play in late September.





# CRA-1 SPARC PROJECTS:

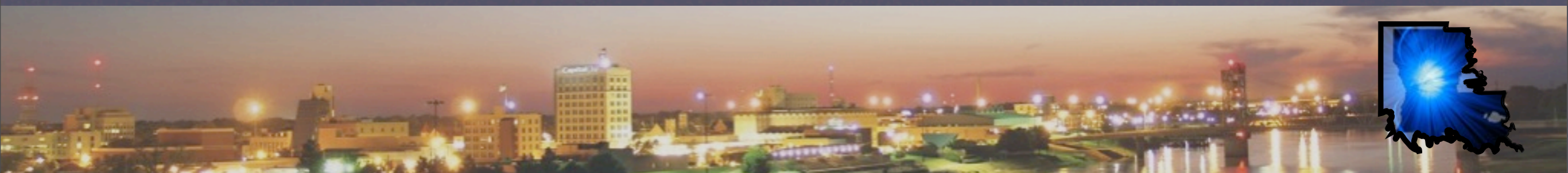
## Lower Third Streetscape



SPARC money will be used to leverage \$3.4M allocated by Congressman Rodney Alexander for the purpose of improving and enhancing the Lower Third streetscape. In February 2009, the City issued a Request for Qualifications for the project, which attracted national competition.

After a series of interviews and community meetings, the Administration will soon recommend a team of professionals, led by Meyer, Meyer, Lacroix, and Hixson and including award-winning landscape architects, an expert community planning consultant, and an international urban design firm.

This project will dramatically improve the physical landscape of the Lower Third corridor, and it will be driven and designed by area residents and business owners.

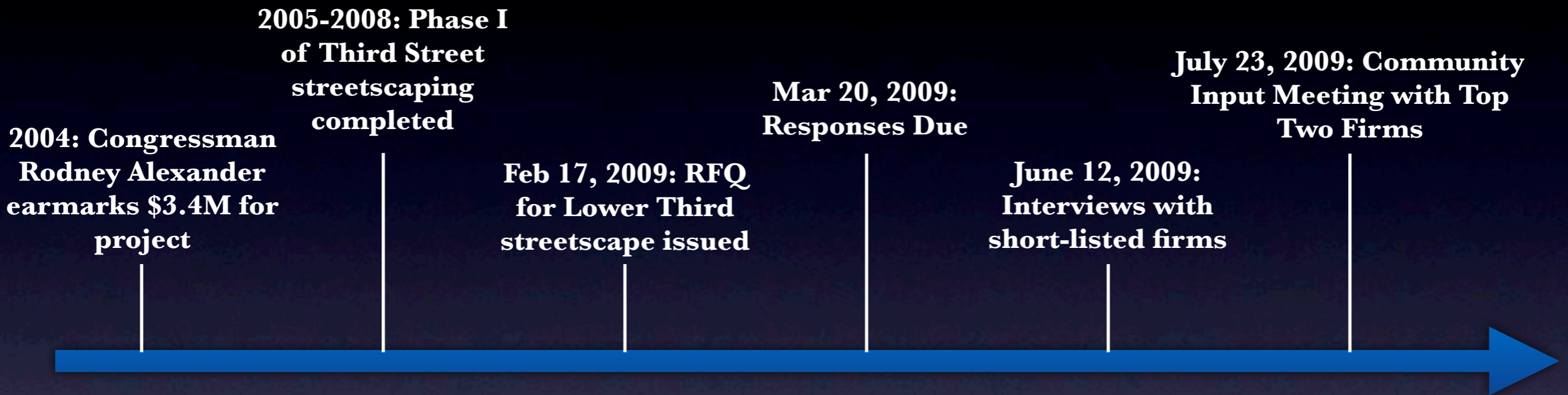




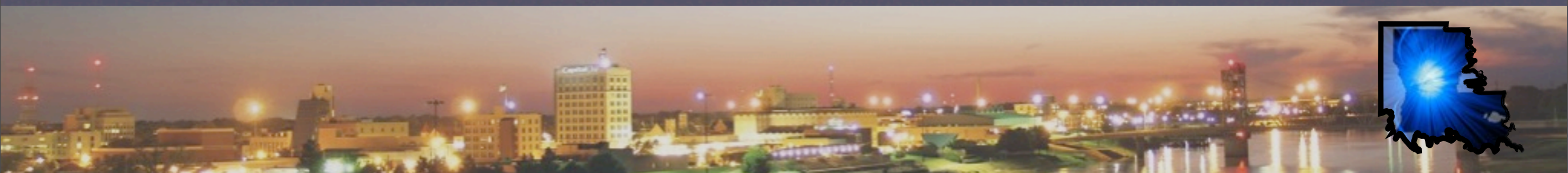
# CRA-1 SPARC PROJECTS:

## Lower Third Streetscape

### A Timeline:



- ★ **August- September 2009: Recommendation for contract issued to the Alexandria City Council.**
- ★ **October 2009- June 2010: Planning, community input, and construction documentation work completed.**
- ★ **Late Summer/Early Fall 2010: Construction begins.**





# CRA-1 SPARC PROJECTS:

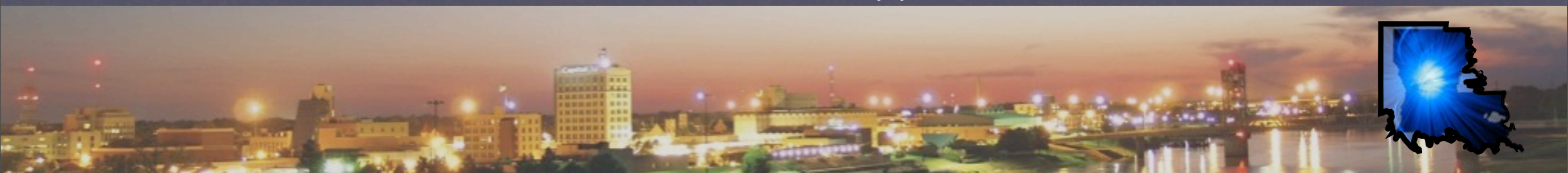
## The Hodges Stockbarn

The revitalization and reuse of the 14-acre Hodges Stockbarn is one of the most significant projects in the history of the Lower Third corridor.

After an extensive RFQ process, the City selected a private developer, who will invest nearly \$8 million to develop a gated, moderate-income rental community of 48 housing units.

Development experts agree that the most effective way of stimulating commercial development is by increasing and improving residential conditions, and the City's data, collected by J-Quad, suggests that the Lower Third Neighborhood is in need of new, moderate-income housing.

The Stockbarn project is a flagship of SPARC, representing the largest single investment in Lower Third in over thirty years.



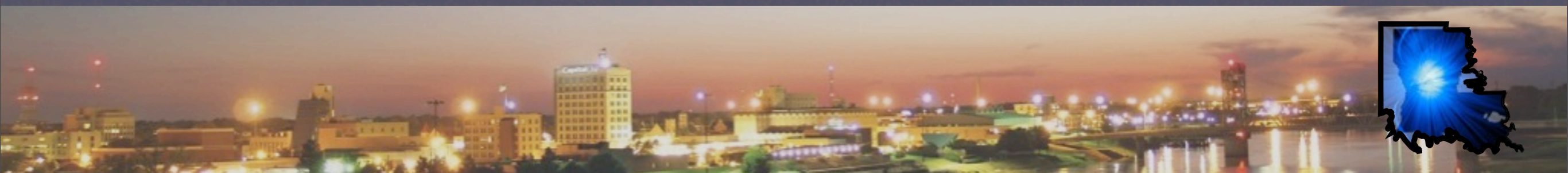


# CRA-1 SPARC PROJECTS:

## The Hodges Stockbarn

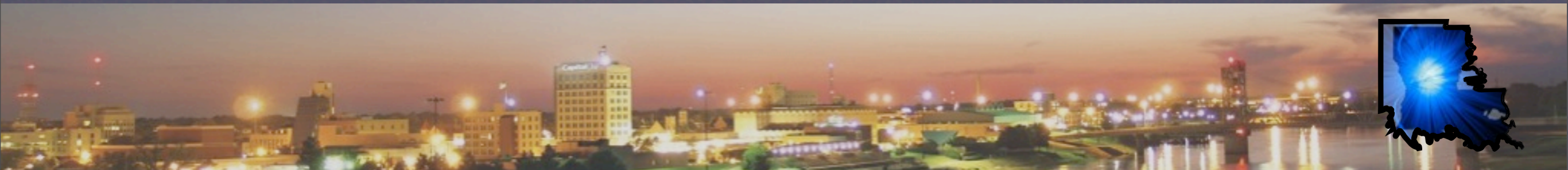
In order to return the property to commerce and stimulate private-sector investment along the corridor, the City, through SPARC, developed a mixed-use site plan for the property: a balance of much-needed moderate income housing in the back six acres and an eight-acre commercial site fronting Third Street.

Even before a single shovel was turned, the redevelopment of the Hodges Stockbarn had already won an award: \$1.25 million in federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds.





# CRA-1 SPARC PROJECTS: The Downtown Hotels Initiative





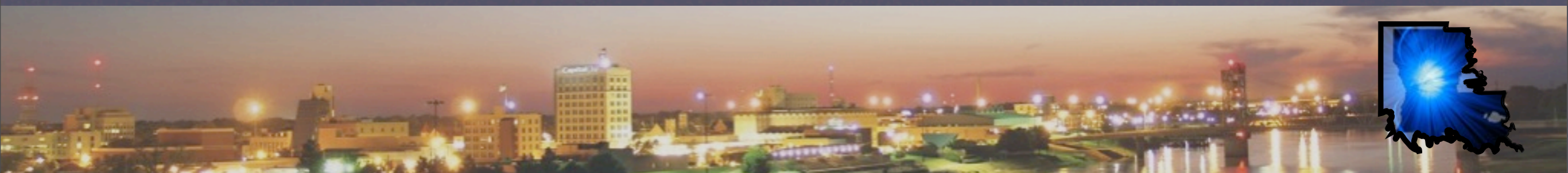
# **CRA-1 SPARC PROJECTS:**

## **The Downtown Hotels Initiative**

**We are fortunate to be home to one of the most spectacular hotel properties in the American South, the Hotel Bentley. Last year, as the Bentley entered its 100th year, it remained closed for business, as it has since 2004. Across the street, the Alexander Fulton Hotel, having lost its Holiday Inn affiliation, declared bankruptcy.**

**The success of both hotels is physically and financially connected to the vitality of the publicly-owned Alexandria Riverfront Center. Without nearby hotel rooms, Alexandria's ability to compete for regional convention and conference business is greatly diminished.**

**After years of false starts and empty promises, the City Administration, with the support of the City Council, decided to aggressively pursue a global solution for the Downtown hotel and convention center business.**





# CRA-1 SPARC PROJECTS: The Downtown Hotels Initiative

## Our Objectives:

1. Pursue and locate a global solution for all three assets, ensuring the hotels complement with, and not compete against, one another.
2. Protect the public's investment by requiring that any potential developer demonstrate their financial stability, professional experience, and knowledge of the hotel business.
3. Eliminate political or personal biases by requiring that all potential proposals must be evaluated by an objective, outside expert in real estate development and market feasibility.
4. Require a long-term strategy for success and a plan not exclusively reliant on the short-term value of tax credits and government incentives.
5. Require that any solution involves private equity.

## Timeline:

Oct 09 - Mar 2010: Finalize Negotiations; Begin Renovations and Public Infrastructure Improvements

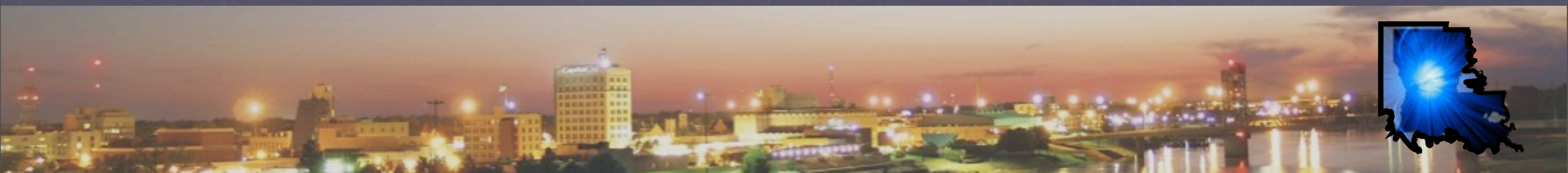
Mar 09: Issued RFP for Downtown Hotels Initiative

May 09: Letters of Intent Due

Aug 09: Proposals Due

Sep 09: RKG Provides Recommendations to COA

Oct 09: Begin Negotiations





# **CRA-1 SPARC PROJECTS:**

## **Future Projects**

### **\* Main Street/Broadway Streetscapes:**

**Enhance and improve the physical landscape of Main Street and Broadway Avenue through targeted investments in publicly-owned infrastructure, including but not limited to the construction of sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and street furniture.**

### **\* Alexandria Riverfront Amphitheater and Riverfront Convention Center Improvements:**

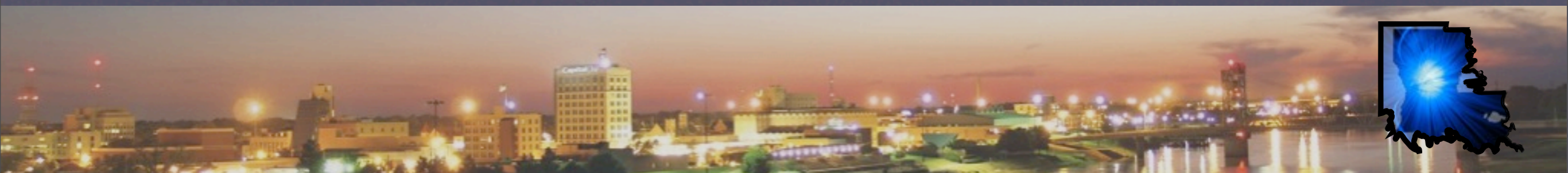
**Augment outdoor connectivity between the Convention Center and the Amphitheater, install stadium seating and restroom facilities at Riverfront Amphitheater, enhance landscaping along the riverfront.**

### **\* Ruston Foundry Master Development:**

**The City Administration is in the beginning stages of formulating a plan of action and Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of the Ruston Foundry. Over \$5 million in SPARC funds have already been assigned to this project.**

### **\* Extension of Sixth and Foisy Streets:**

**In order to better connect Downtown with both Lower Third and North MacArthur Drive, the City is currently in the process of extending Sixth and Foisy Streets. Funding has been assigned and allocated, and currently, the City is working with a professional engineering firm to complete Phase One, the construction of a bridge over Cotton Street.**





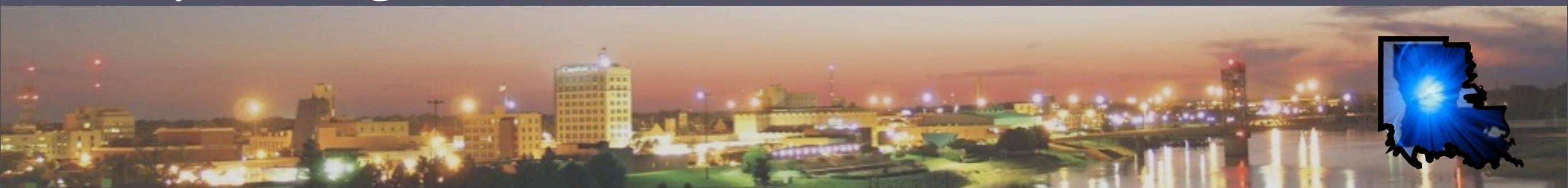
# **SPARC CRA-2: BOLTON AVENUE**

**Once Alexandria's most important commercial corridor, during the last four decades, Bolton Avenue has fallen into disrepair and is plagued by blight, disinvestment, and crime.**

**A revitalized Bolton Avenue is critical to the economic vitality of Alexandria's inner city.**

**Its central location, its rich inventory of historic properties, and its connection to adjacent working and middle class neighborhoods make Bolton Avenue an integral part of the Alexandria landscape.**

**Prior to launching SPARC, the City worked closely with the Central Louisiana Red Cross to facilitate the purchase and renovation of Bolton Avenue's most significant landmark, the Cotton Brothers Bakery Building.**





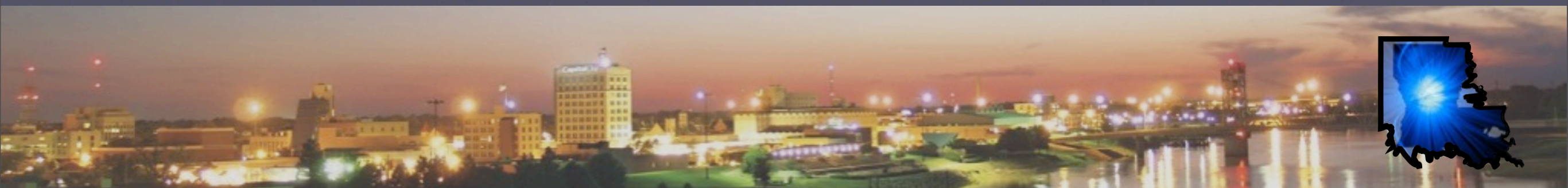
# SPARC CRA-2: BOLTON AVENUE

## The Renovation of the Cotton Brothers Bakery Building:

**In its prime:**



**Built in 1932, the Cotton Brothers Building is one of Alexandria's premiere art deco structures and Bolton Avenue's most notable anchor.**



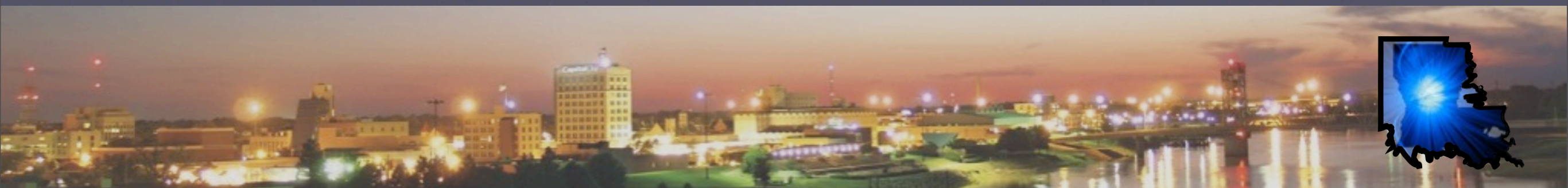


# SPARC CRA-2: BOLTON AVENUE

## The Renovation of the Cotton Brothers Bakery Building:

**In February 2007, a local demolition contractor purchased the building, and after failing to locate a buyer, indicated their intention to demolish the structure.**

**The Alexandria Historic Preservation Commission successfully lobbied to place the building on the Louisiana Trust's Top Ten Most Endangered Properties list.**





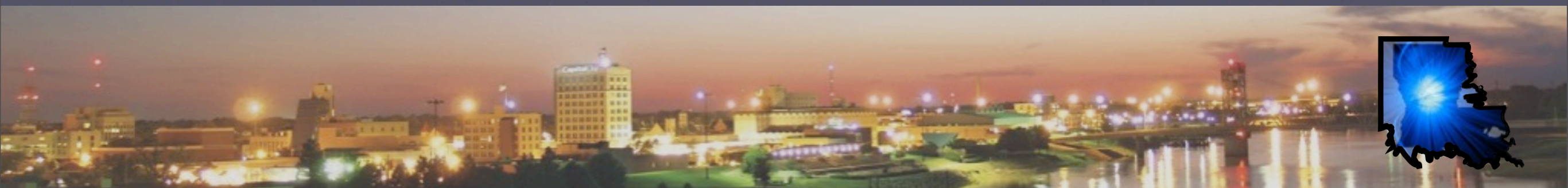
# **SPARC CRA-2: BOLTON AVENUE**

## **The Renovation of the Cotton Brothers Bakery Building:**

**Today, thanks to the leadership of the Central Louisiana Red Cross, a generous donation from the Canadian Red Cross, and contributions from GAEDA, the Martin Foundation, the Coughlin-Saunders Foundation, and the Huie-Dellmon Trust, the Cotton Brothers Building is undergoing an extensive \$1.5M renovation.**

**Once completed, the building will return to commerce as the regional headquarters of the Central Louisiana Red Cross.**

**The renovation of this historic building represents the largest private investment on the Bolton Avenue corridor in over twenty years.**





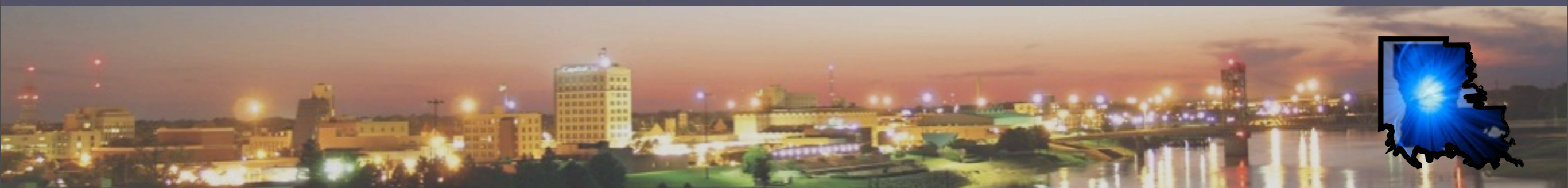
# **SPARC CRA-2: BOLTON AVENUE AND NORTH MACARTHUR DRIVE**

## **Streetscape Project:**

**On June 26, 2009, the City issued a formal Request for Qualifications for a flagship SPARC project: \$7.5M in streetscape enhancements on both Bolton Avenue and North MacArthur Drive.**

**On July 17, 2009, the City received five statements of qualifications from some of the nation's most distinguished and award-winning urban design and architectural firms.**

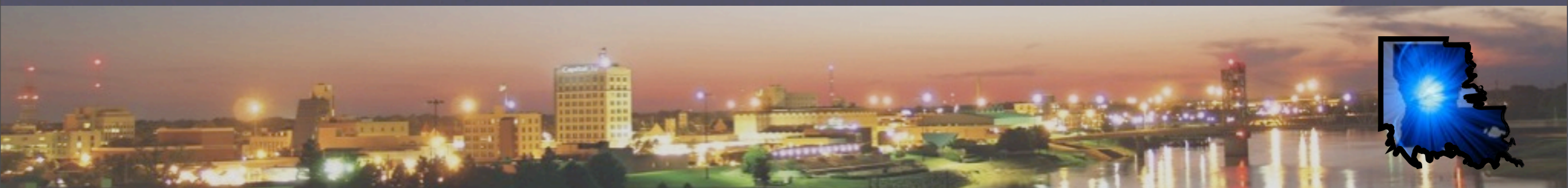
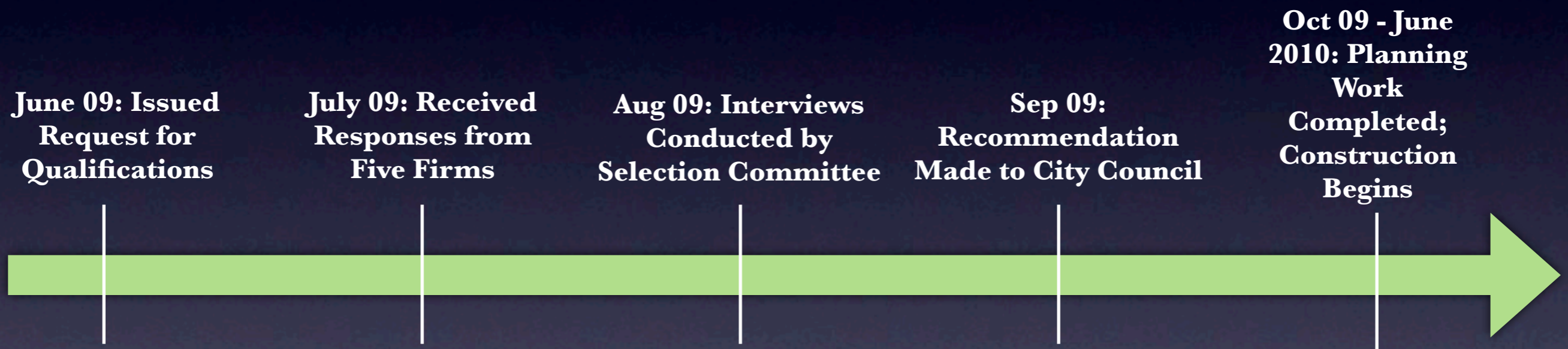
**A selection committee of planning professionals, neighborhood activists, preservationists, and economic development officials conducted personal interviews with all five firms and are currently in the process of formalizing a recommendation to the City Council.**





# SPARC CRA-2: BOLTON AVENUE AND NORTH MACARTHUR DRIVE

## Streetscape Project A Timeline:

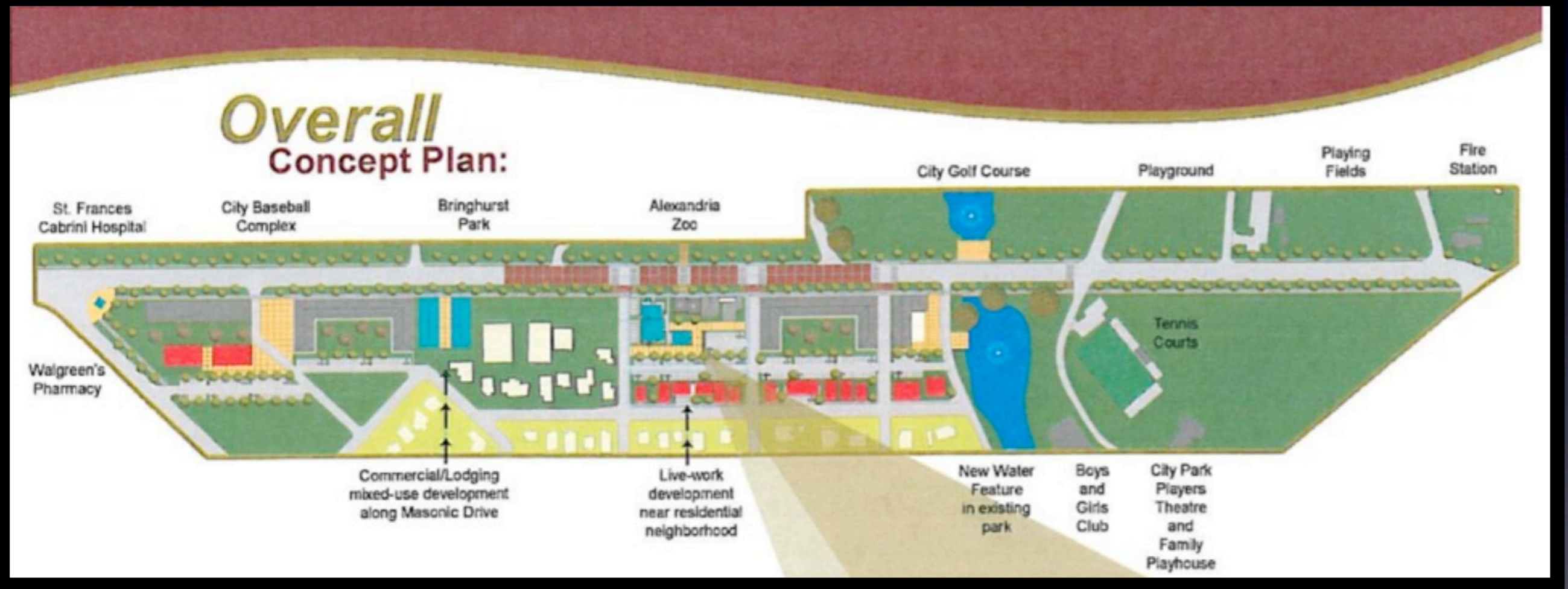




# SPARC CRA-3: MASONIC DRIVE:



During the last two years, the Greater Alexandria Economic Development Authority (GAEDA), led by Clifford Moller, has committed significant resources toward the redevelopment of Masonic Drive.





# SPARC CRA-3: MASONIC DRIVE:



**GAEDA's plan calls for \$2M in streetscape enhancements, including but not limited to the installation of sidewalks, utilities relocation, landscaping, and improved lighting.**

**In early 2009, the City assigned \$2M of SPARC funds toward this project and expects to leverage an additional \$1M - \$4M for this project.**





# SPARC CRA-3: MASONIC DRIVE:



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# **SPARC CRA-3: MASONIC DRIVE: WHY MASONIC DRIVE?**

**Masonic Drive anchors Alexandria's most significant parks and recreation complex, the Alexandria City Park. Approximately 75% of the property along the targeted corridor is publicly-owned.**

**An investment in this public infrastructure enhances the value, the marketability, the safety, and the connectivity of Alexandria City Park.**

**Masonic Drive also anchors one of the largest employers in Central Louisiana, St. Frances Cabrini Hospital, which is currently completing construction on a \$75M expansion.**





# SPARC CRA-3: MASONIC DRIVE:

**Masonic Drive is home to the Alexandria Zoological Park, the most popular tourist destination in the Alexandria/Pineville area. The Alexandria Zoo, one of only three accredited zoos in the State, is home to over 600 animals, including nearly 30 endangered species, and is visited by over 160,000 people every year.**

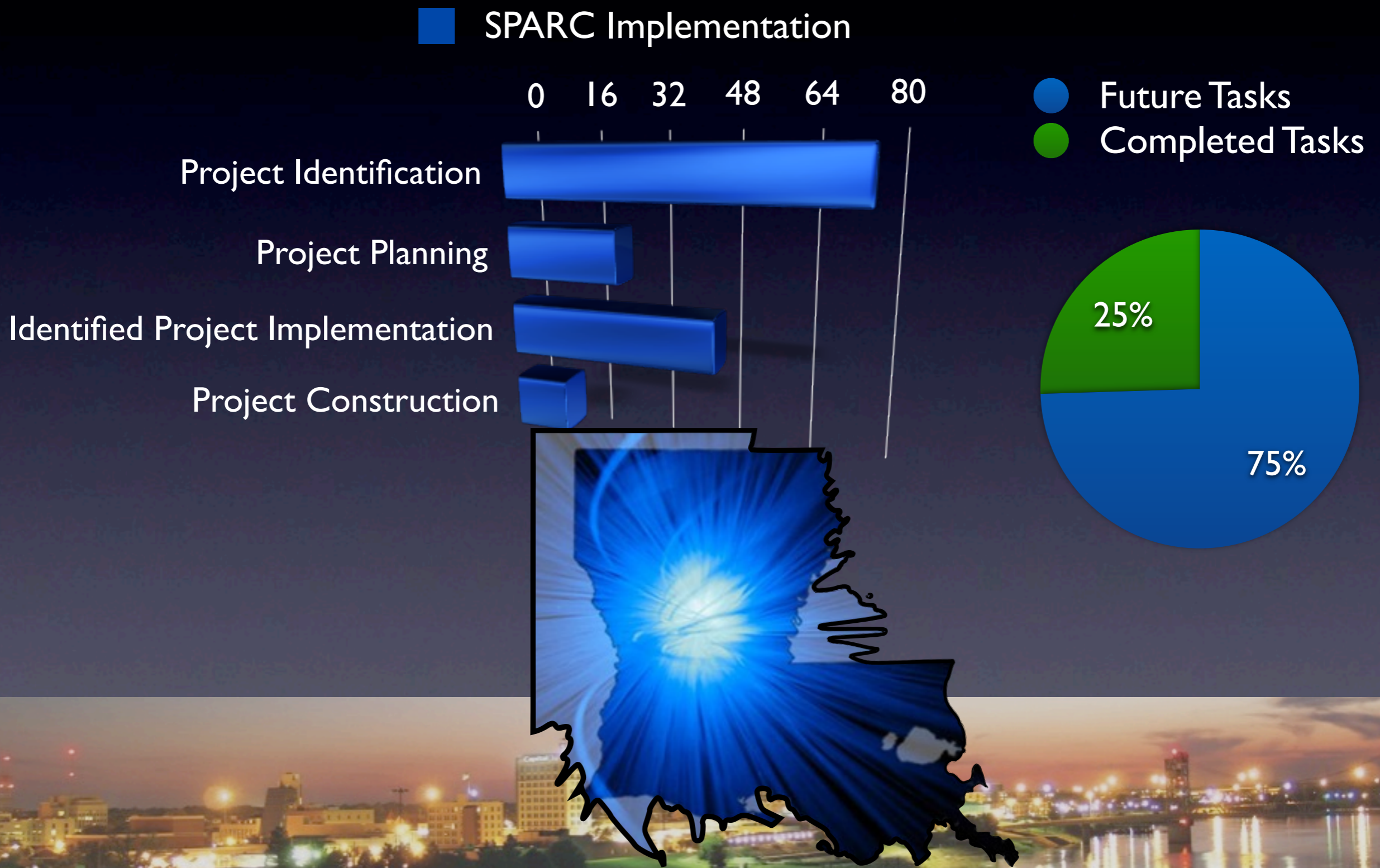
**Improving the physical landscape and infrastructure around the Zoo will increase its competitiveness and marketability, ensuring for the future viability of this important public asset.**





# SPARC: A PROGRESS REPORT

## Summary:





# QUESTIONS?

