



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA
MAYOR JACQUES M. ROY

FOR IMMEDIATE STAFF USE AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

March 18, 2015
Office of the Alexandria Mayor
Alexandria, Louisiana

ATTACHMENT A—DISCUSSION MEMORANDUM

**This Discussion Memorandum Aids Proposers and Respondents to the
R.I.V.E.R. Act RFI/RFQ by Providing A Non-technical Narrative and
Additional Background Information**

Alexandria, Louisiana—The City of Alexandria is delighted to continue supporting large-scale development projects that transform our City. Now is the time for Downtown Alexandria's continuing revitalization along with redevelopment of the Alexandria riverfront. To do that the City is seeking information.

What kind of development suits our riverfront? Do we need riverfront development?

The answers, we hope, will come from everyone who might have a stake in this development, an idea about what they'd like to see, and an interest in Alexandria's progress. That means we need to hear from citizens, property owners, business owners, developers, architects, and even tourists. Perhaps someone or some group has the definitive project — we welcome your proposal — but then again maybe one person is sitting at home with an idea that recognizes a missing piece or even encompasses the very essence of what this project should be. We need that idea.

We need information and data that tells us what the investments, opportunities, and challenges are for this project. What are the synergies that need to exist among downtown, the riverfront, and the existing assets on the riverfront and in downtown?

We are fortunate that our downtown has multiple anchors to support this project — a thriving medical complex, hotels currently being renovated for the future as well as convention facilities, a growing arts and cultural district with new and existing entertainment and restaurant venues, and, in the near future, a new community college. Research shows many cities, which have taken on downtown revitalization and riverfront development, are successful with just one of the above anchors — education, medical, or arts and entertainment. We have all the ingredients for success.



ATTACHMENT A—DISCUSSION MEMORANDUM

Alexandria's downtown medical community brings thousands to the city everyday, increasing arts, cultural and entertainment venues attract people, the revitalized hotels and increased convention business will again bring in tourists, and the community college will put enthusiastic people in the heart of the city. On top of these assets, downtown sits upon a dual-purpose commercial and recreational navigable waterway, the Red River, offers interstate and rail access, as well as the Red River port, immediately adjacent to the downtown area.

But what else will bring people downtown and to the riverfront, and how do we build on our existing events, activities, assets, and businesses in a sustainable way that will make this project a continuing success?

What brings you downtown now? What are the obstacles that keep you from coming downtown? What would bring you downtown more often? Would you live downtown or on the riverfront and what would your home look like—condos and/or riverfront lofts above stores and restaurants, apartments, duplexes, or single-family homes?

This is a massive undertaking that seeks to modify and invigorate through design the entire landscape for the Alexandria riverfront as it meets downtown. This project will be approached in phases and must involve public- and private-sector investment.

Our approach initially is to request information, but we also welcome developed ideas from qualified groups. The most likely, scenario, however, is this RFI (request for information) will be followed by intense public input followed by an RFQ (request for qualified professional assistance) and then develop core projects through individualized RFPs (request for proposals). The reasons for this approach are because redevelopment on this scale faces numerous logistical, financial, and environmental obstacles.

The current face of the riverfront contains a majority of recreation-related infrastructure, for example, the amphitheater, walking paths, boat launch, parks, and the convention center. The next large-scale public-sector investments should focus on infrastructure that supports private-sector developments friendly toward our existing cultural and recreation-centered assets. The City also awaits what appears to be the first private-sector housing developments within the historic downtown, most particularly condominiums, loft-living, and above-retail apartments.

The City expects to provide a set of incentives to the Project based upon the actions and commitments of the private sector. Alexandria generally seeks at least a 4:1 ratio of private to public dollars over what will be a meaningfully connected period of time.

ATTACHMENT A—DISCUSSION MEMORANDUM

What is the best collaborative model for riverfront development that will serve citizens, stakeholders, and visitors and connect the City to its riverfront?

What projects should be addressed that incorporate innovative, sustainable design to improve the waterline and reflect the City’s commitment to sustainability?

How will the project improve parking, access, and mobility to the riverfront for safe and efficient travel by pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, and river traffic?

How do we create a bold vision that is adaptable over time — a series of core projects that eventually shape the Project’s overall character?

How do we ensure design excellence, consistent leadership, and broad and transparent civic engagement that helps move the project to completion?

What does the City’s part in incenting private development, business investments, and community buy-in look like?

If not this approach, then what is your alternative development plan?

There is much more to consider, but firstly we need data, information, and ideas. The City also wants to ensure that any public-interest firms or planning organizations who are in the business of partnering with municipalities on large-scale resiliency planning are provided with this opportunity to anchor this project or become a full sponsoring party—including co-hosting the entire process to study best practice planning and measure the outcomes.

The City requests the firms, individuals, and any other stakeholders indicate their willingness to partner and submit ideas, proposals, or questions on or before **March 26, 2015**. Next, the city asks that these respondents answer the six feasibility questions in Section 1.2 of the R.I.V.E.R. Act Attachment A on or before **May 15, 2015**.

2015 Timeline of Activity

March 26 LOI/Submit Questions	May 15 Feasibility Responses	May 29 Professional Narratives	July 24 Official Responses	July 24 Additional Processes	August- September Announce		
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Page -4-

March 18, 2015

Information Release—R.I.V.E.R. Act RFI/RFQ

Office of the Mayor

ATTACHMENT A—DISCUSSION MEMORANDUM

In return, the City plans to make every effort to render public determinations and commitments on or before **July 24, 2015**. The complete R.I.V.E.R. Act RFI can be found online at:

[http://www.cityofalexandrialouisiana.com/sites/default/files/rfi_and_feasibility_r.i.v.e.r._act_downtown_alex_now_2015 .pdf](http://www.cityofalexandrialouisiana.com/sites/default/files/rfi_and_feasibility_r.i.v.e.r._act_downtown_alex_now_2015.pdf)

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