Chattanooga Riverfront District Strategic Planning & Development
Request for Proposal

Requested by:

RIVER CITY COMPANY
WORKING TO KEEP DOWNTOWN WORKING
Friday, May 31, 2019

RE:  RIVERFRONT DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLANNING

Dear Professional,

Thank you for your interest in moving downtown Chattanooga forward. For over thirty years, River City Company has played an integral role in downtown’s growth and development. As a private nonprofit entity, we benefit from strong partnerships with government, foundations, downtown stakeholders, and private developers, who work hand in hand with us on projects that have garnered a worldwide reputation for their vision, quality, and authenticity.

Through this process, River City Company seeks to identify a team of architects, urban designers, engineers, and other professional consultants to conduct a comprehensive planning and programming study of the Riverfront District. This effort is intended to build upon our accomplishments over the last thirty years in the creation of a world class riverfront district and to refocus our attention on a vision for moving forward into the future.

We are excited about the prospect of further enhancing our Riverfront District in a way that not only recognizes but even more completely fulfills the value and significance of this area to the civic life of Chattanooga and the vibrancy of our entire city.

Should this development opportunity be of interest please review the following Request and submit a Proposal no later than Noon, Friday, July 12, 2019.

Sincerely,

Kim White
President and CEO
Project Understanding

River City Company is requesting a proposal for conducting a Comprehensive Master Plan for the Riverfront District. The study would include a stakeholder/public engagement process to solicit community input to help define the vision for the district. Desired outcomes include not only physical planning and improvements but also an economic market analysis and strategies for branding, marketing, and programming.

River City Company will work collaboratively with the Chattanooga Design Studio, the City of Chattanooga, the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (CHCRPA), and others to establish and achieve the vision and goals for the district. Throughout the process, the multidisciplinary team will engage stakeholder groups and focus on opportunities to optimize use of the city’s historical investments and existing assets in the district.

We have structured the Scope of Services into a series of distinct goals.

It is anticipated this study will:

a) Clearly define the role of the district by and for Chattanoogans while also serving our strong tourism industry;
b) Provide a roadmap to reenergize the Riverfront District as a civic and cultural center for all Chattanoogans;
c) Act as a catalyst for new, high quality development and uses that will enhance the vitality, accessibility, and civic appeal of the area;
d) Contribute to a quality public realm that relates to the human scale experience;
e) Respond to the district’s history and character, development patterns, and future potential;
f) Integrate civic art and landscape design into the public realm;
g) Provide for legibility of design and function, clear to locals and visitors alike;
h) Promote adaptability to change in use over time.

Utilizing these guiding principles:

a) Access/Connection
b) Authenticity
c) Destination
d) Diversity
e) Comfort
f) Quality
History and Background

River City Company has a long and storied history with the redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown Chattanooga and particularly the Riverfront District. In 1986, private funds of $12 million launched this non-profit to implement a 20-year riverfront and downtown redevelopment plan, which included acquiring tracts of key riverfront property that would become home to many of the following projects, thereby bringing many of the ideas in the Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan to life.

River City Company was created with the mission of implementing the Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan, Chattanooga’s twenty-year, twenty-two-mile blueprint for riverfront and downtown development. As a result, we’ve worked in partnership with local government, the private sector, and the philanthropic sector to support and develop specific real estate projects in Downtown Chattanooga. The Planning and Design Center, a department within River City Company, not only facilitated the planning and design of many of these projects but gave citizens a voice by engaging them in the planning process.

By working with local government, the private sector and the philanthropic sector, River City Company supported and developed specific real estate projects in Downtown Chattanooga. From the fulfillment of the initial recommendations of the Moccasin Bend Task Force for the development of the Tennessee Riverwalk, to the development of the Tennessee Aquarium, the redevelopment of the Kirkman High School site, fulfillment of the 21st Century Waterfront Plan, the Majestic Theater, The Block and Miller Park, River City Company has been most successful as a public purpose development company.
**Study Area**

The study area has been defined generally from the Tennessee River (north) to 4th Street (south) and Bluff View Arts District/Georgia Avenue (east) to Cameron Hill/Marine Max (west) and illustrated as follows (larger map at the end of this document):

![Study Area Map](image)

**Key Areas of Interest and Focus**

While this study is intended as a comprehensive and equitable plan for the entire district, many areas and parcels are well established and don’t require the focus and interest of a concentrated effort that comes from this type of planning study. Therefore, different parts of the district will require a different focus of effort and attention.

**District Wide Needs:**
- Walkability/Multi-modal
- Public Realm/Streetscape
- Branding and Marketing
- Defining the Experience
- People Friendly

**Focused Needs:**
- Streets
- Parcel Development
- Programming
- Civic Activities
- Identity
Priorities [keyed to map on page 4]

A. **Tennessee Riverwalk** – The Riverwalk loses clarity through Ross’s Landing, joining a wide sidewalk along Riverfront Parkway. While alternate paths may not be viable or desired, the newly completed extension of the Riverwalk to the south requires a clearer connection than currently exists through this area.

B. **4th Street** – This multi-lane divided artery is a “great divide” for non-vehicular users due to its width and high speed of vehicular traffic. The team should consider ways to bridge the gap between the Riverfront District and adjacent blocks to the south in a way that creates a more pedestrian friendly, appealing space while still allowing for the flow of traffic to offices and the university. Particular attention should be given to the intersections at Broad and Market and the need to make them both people and business friendly with public spaces that support commercial viability.

C. **Riverfront Parkway** – The transformation of this “highway” was a significant part of the 21st Century Waterfront Park but should re-examined in consideration of current and proposed future uses.

D. **Broad Street** – As indicated by its name, Broad Street and its terminus at the Tennessee Aquarium have a wide right-of-way at approximately 120’. The current four lane configuration exceeds vehicular traffic demands. A growing focus on pedestrian activity, multi-modal transit, and the civic significance of the space should invoke a reimagination of this street, at least in the two blocks within the study boundary.

E. **Riverfront Parking Lots (3A/3B)** – These parking lots created with the 21st Century Waterfront Park have always been placeholders for future development. Planning studies starting with RPA’s *Downtown Plan – Chattanooga 2025* and most recently *The Ramble – Chattanooga Art Promenade.*

F. **Chattanooga Lookouts (Hawk Hill)** – Potentially the most impactful site in the study by sheer size, the Lookouts have expressed their desire for a new stadium and location south of downtown. The idea was introduced and supported in the South Broad District Study and shown on US Pipe/Wheland Foundry property near I-27. While it remains to be seen whether this move will occur, the potential need to rethink the use and role of this site merits consideration.

G. **Chattanooga Green and Surrounding Lots** – The Chattanooga Green is an important part of the civic infrastructure of the Riverfront District, but this exceptional riverfront space is typically used only a few occasions throughout the year for special events. Considering its location and prominence, thought could be given to how this special space could be better used and incorporated into the life of the city, especially considering possible development on adjacent lots and on Hawks Hill.

H. **Creative Discovery Museum Parking Lot** – While parking tucked into the hillside adjacent to a busy state highway does make some sense, this could certainly take a different and more comprehensive planning approach with the previous notion of the Lookouts moving from Hawk Hill. Even if the Lookouts remain, concentrating parking in a structure is a possibility worth consideration.
I. **Aquarium Parking Lot** – This prime location directly in front of the Tennessee Aquarium could serve a higher and better use than surface parking. In the context of the surrounding civic complex, similar consideration could be given to the role of the smaller lot just across Broad along First Streets.

J. **River Side of the Aquarium** – The Aquarium was always intended to have a strong connection to the Tennessee River. The Aquarium also must accommodate a large amount of bus traffic and bus drop-off, which currently occurs on Broad Street, which may not be the best access point. Combining the need to provide a strong connection from the Aquarium down to the river and the need to easily accommodate bus traffic, in conjunction with possible reinvention of Broad Street, some consideration might be given to the creation of a bus access and drop off from Riverside Drive instead of Broad Street that simultaneously creates an opportunity to enhance connections from the river up to the Aquarium.

K. **Firestone Lot** – As a prime location in the heart of the Riverfront District, utilization of this large, urban lot for surface parking is not an optimal use but perhaps one that could be integrated with other uses.

L. **Haney Parking Lot** – River City Company is under obligation with a local developer for a development on this gateway location along 4th Street. While still conceptual, River City intends to move forward with development on this lot, which should be considered in the planning process.

M. **First and Market Parking Lot** – Across Market Street from the Tennessee Aquarium and on The Ramble up to the Bluff View Arts District, this is a key infill parcel with high visibility along a high vehicular traffic corridor/connector (Market Street Bridge) to the North Shore.

N. **Market Street Crossing** – This key intersection is located along the path that connects the Aquarium complex to The Ramble, Walnut Street, and the Bluff View Arts District and is the entrance point to the Passage, the pedestrian link from downtown Chattanooga to the Tennessee River and the outdoor exhibit that has been created to mark the beginning point of the Trail of Tears. Despite the importance of this key intersection, it is not pedestrian friendly, discernible as the important crossing point and public space that it should be, or well signed. The use of space at this landing of the Market Street Bridge needs some rethinking.

O. **John Ross Building** – One of the last remaining un-redeveloped structures in the study area. This building continues to be an eyesore in a high-profile location along 4th Street. Recently purchased by a local businessman with intentions on making improvements for potential uses such as hotel, restaurant, retail, entertainment, and office.

P. **Other Surface Parking Lots** – The planning process should incorporate concepts that are in pre-development and identify remaining opportunities for redevelopment, such as properties owned by UNUM along Fourth and Lookout that could be incorporated into the vision for the Riverfront District.
Relevant Work and Context

- Tennessee Aquarium Plaza – SITE
- 21st Century Master Plan, Renaissance Park – Hargreaves & Associates
- Urban Design Challenge – 4th Street Corridor – elemi architects, et. al. (available upon request)
- The Ramble-Chattanooga Art Promenade Master Plan – WMWA Landscape Architects and Urban Design Associates (available upon request)
- Ross’ Landing Studies – Jones & Jones (available upon request)
- US 27 Realignment – Tennessee Department of Transportation
- Chattanooga Downtown Parking Study – Nelson/Nygaard Consulting (available upon request)
- West End Vision – Dover, Kohl & Partners (available upon request)
- Charrette to Reimagine Broad & Market – Dover, Kohl & Partners (available upon request)

Partners and Stakeholders

- Benwood Foundation
- Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce
- Chattanooga Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Chattanooga Design Studio
- Chattanooga Downtown Redevelopment Corporation
- Chattanooga Land
- Chattanooga Lookouts
- City of Chattanooga
  - Mayor’s Office
  - Transportation
  - Public Works
  - Parks and Open Spaces
- Creative Discovery Museum
- Kinsey, Probasco, Hays
- Lyndhurst Foundation
- McKibbon Hospitality
- Noon Development/Management
- River City Company
- Riverfront Business and Resident Partnership
- SportsBarn
- Tennessee Aquarium/IMAX Theater
- Vision Hospitality
The Team

It is expected the design team should include (but not limited to) the following professionals, disciplines and consultants:

- Urban Planner/Designer
- Architect with Urban Focus/Experience
- Landscape Architect
- Public Artist
- Market and/or Economic Analyst
- Branding and Marketing Consultant
- Programming and Event Consultant
- Others as needed or desired
Scope of Services

Inventory Analysis
Gather and assemble information regarding the study area and surrounding features, including any public and private development plans already in place, in process, or being contemplated. This information will be derived from existing resources and will include items such as the history, topography, basic demographic data, tourism data, zoning, context of the area, including infrastructure features, transportation modes, parking inventory, land use development patterns, and other relevant plans and studies. We will work with City staff to assemble available data necessary. The outcome of this effort will be a comprehensive inventory and understanding of the physical and social characteristics of the district, as well as the larger Chattanooga community.

While much of this task can be completed remotely, there will be some requirement for data and inventory collection in Chattanooga.

Kickoff Meeting
We will conduct a kickoff meeting in Chattanooga to discuss the scope of work, schedule for meetings, deliverable dates, lines of communication, desired program elements, potential site development issues, identification of risks, and the measures of success for the study.

Stakeholder Interviews
The client will identify key stakeholders who can provide useful information and perspectives on the various issues affecting the study area. Possible stakeholder groups could include community foundations, Chamber of Commerce, CDOT, TDOT, Public Works, CVB, and key business and property owners. We propose organizing the various stakeholders into the following planning groups:
- Transportation and Parks
- Community and Elected Officials
- Tenants and Property Owners
- Economic Development

Public and stakeholder engagement is a significant piece of this proposal. Our approach would target groups and citizens who have a stake in the project, and our team will work to build consensus among key stakeholders to revitalize the physical and economic context of the Riverfront and build on the idea of this being the civic center of activity for all Chattanoogans.

Visioning Workshop and Charrette
The project team will conduct stakeholder workshops in Chattanooga over the course of several days. These activities will be designed to provide an opportunity to provide meaningful input and feedback on the vision and design solution options being considered for the district.

The meetings should begin with an orientation of the project and preliminary findings based on the work conducted above. A visual preference survey would be conducted with the larger group to understand what the group would like to see in terms of included placemaking elements, design details, and aesthetics. The input process and outcomes of the visioning workshop will be the foundation for recommendations and will be documented in the master plan report.

From the above work and input, the project team will develop and test ideas and concepts through a charrette process. This will include the client and key team members including the Chattanooga Design Studio and others as needed for this exercise to be effective.
**Concept and Design Elements**

Based on the input and charrette process, the team will further develop a framework plan for study area. This includes analyzing the collected data and stakeholder input to consider context-sensitive solutions. The team will develop and evaluate viable alternatives to address the project needs in the following categories:

1. Framework Plan
2. Street Sections
3. Transit and Parking Analysis
4. Landscaping and Signage
5. Economic Strategies
6. Programming and Marketing
7. Branding and Signage

**Preliminary Draft Plan and Presentation**

Develop a draft summarizing the previous tasks. The Master Plan (11”x17” landscape) will include:

1. Summary of process
2. Economic analysis
3. Framework plans for strategic development on key parcels within the district
4. Transportation strategies to improve streets and the public realm
5. Parking strategies to address development and needs of the district
6. “Experiential Plan” to support and strengthen all use sectors of the district
7. (Year round) Programming strategies for both Chattanoogans and visitors
8. Branding and marketing strategies
9. Action plan and implementation roadmap

Interactive exercises will be conducted to gauge support or assess changes to be incorporated into the final plan. The comments provided will be documented and incorporated into a final draft report.

**Final Plan**

Building on the previous tasks, the team will address comments and incorporate them into the final Master Plan document.

The project team will include a final presentation to stakeholders in Chattanooga.
Proposal Submittal

Timeline

1. Distribution of RFP – Friday, May 31, 2019
2. RFP submissions due Friday, July 12, 2019 by NOON
3. Short list of project teams interviewed – week of July 22, 2019
4. Negotiation with selected firm – week of July 29, 2019
5. Project Kick-Off – August, 2019

Submission Requirements

1. Project Team qualifications including prime and all consultants
2. Staff assigned to project and qualifications
3. Evidence of expertise and experience in response to the project description
4. Professional qualities and methodology that make your group uniquely qualified
5. Examples of relevant previous work, both completed and proposed
6. Relevant references and clients
7. Estimated total project fees, including breakouts by consultant
8. Estimated project schedule

Respondents shall submit five (5) hard copies of all proposal documents as well as a digital file (.pdf format) of the documents. Proposals must be submitted (mailed or hand-delivered) to:

CHATTANOOGA RIVERFRONT STRATEGIC PLANNING
Attn: Jim Williamson
RIVER CITY COMPANY
850 Market Street, Suite 200
Chattanooga, TN 37402

Selection Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria with a rubric scoring method:

1. Project Team qualifications and experience
2. Evidence that Project Team understands the vision and goals set forth and clearly communicate that through this Proposal
3. Completed relevant work and its impact
4. Fees and Schedule, while relevant and important in our evaluation, will not be a singular deciding factor in our selection of a Project Team

Questions and Clarifications

Please direct all questions or any other correspondence to:

Jim Williamson, Vice President, Planning and Development
River City Company
(423) 265-3700
jwilliamson@rivercitycompany.com