



PARTNERSHIP

Development Opportunity-RFEI

Riverside North Development, La Crosse, Wisconsin

70 Acre Site, 40 Acres +/- Development Area

Prime Downtown Location-Mississippi, Black and La Crosse River Frontage

Transit Oriented Development Opportunity



Dear Sir or Madam:

The City of La Crosse is soliciting Requests for Expressions of Interest from development companies and investors for a phased development entitled Riverside North. The site is centrally located at the north gateway to the downtown area and includes the geographically important confluence of the Mississippi, Black and La Crosse Rivers, offering exceptional recreation and scenic opportunities. The site also boasts transit adjacency, greenway system linkages, a large grocer neighbor, several urban hotels within walking distance and several major universities within 1 mile of the site.

We are actively pursuing a public-private partnership, leveraging city assets and financial resources to develop a notable urban mixed use development, adding to the attractiveness of La Crosse's remarkable historic downtown. We look forward to your response and consideration.

Sincerely Yours, **Jason Gilman, AICP**

Director of Planning and Development, City of La Crosse

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Department of Planning and Development, 400 Main Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601



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Executive Summary

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Executive Summary.

Located along Copeland Avenue/US 53 at the confluence of the Mississippi, Black and La Crosse Rivers, the design for the +65-acre Riverside North project re-imagines the former industrial properties as a vibrant, new, mixed-use waterfront neighborhood. Site master planning continues the City's downtown revitalization efforts, embodying principles of sustainable design, realistic and market responsive development, and interactive community engagement. Master planning for project was conducted using a seven-day community design charrette process hosted by the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) of the City of La Crosse. By employing this week-long, highly collaborative community design process, the master reuse plan reflects the values and priorities of key stakeholders and the broader community while simultaneously responding to a myriad of environmental, social, cultural, and economic forces.

The Redevelopment Authority has had interest expressed in this property over the years however the Redevelopment Authority has resisted uncoordinated development of this area until a master reuse plan was developed. As part of the charrette planning process, the Redevelopment Authority's consultant team included Maxfield Research Group out of Minneapolis and the market does show a demand for 300-500 residential units in various configurations and rental/price points as well as some waterfront commercial and civic space and commercial along Copeland Avenue as depicted on the charrette master plan.

The Redevelopment Authority of the City of La Crosse is opening a competitive process to secure a master developer for the first phase and/or multiple phases of the Riverside North Project area. The Redevelopment Authority will select, through this RFEI process, interested developer teams to receive a Request for Qualifications and Requests for Proposals. The RDA's goals beyond the RFP process include awarding a development agreement for the eventual sale and redevelopment of the Riverside North site.

The Redevelopment Authority completed a master site planning process in 2014 through a week-long charrette using the National Charette Institute's NCI Charrette System™ and LEED ND® planning process, intended to offer a publicly driven conceptual master plan that offers the developer a project vision and a predictable level of support. The outcome of the charrette produced a final community-supported master plan, market analysis and regulating plan. The charrette documents are available on the City's economic development website - grandrivergreatcity.com. A copy of the charrette master site plan is attached as Appendix A.



Project Goals

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In respecting the City's extensive investment, and the site's unique assets, eight key goals were established for the project:

Project Goals

G2. Broad community support

The voice of the community as part of the development process is imperative to the project's success.

G3. Economically feasible

Acquisition, demolition, remediation, and infrastructure costs are higher for redevelopment sites. Taxable development must be sufficient to pay for these higher up-front costs, and the proposed development must be realistic and marketable to the private sector.

G4. Long term development

Cities like La Crosse rarely have a chance to redevelop 65 acres in the heart of the City. It took more than 30 years to acquire the land for this project and the City must ensure that the development is not disposable in the next 30 years, but rather a project that will endure and stand the test of time for several generations (more than 75 years).

G5. River, open space, environment

"Design with Nature" as legendary landscape architect, Ian McHarg taught and practiced. The waterfront must be in public ownership and not be a sliver of land but a substantial swath of public space. With one-half of the site in the floodway, wetlands and riparian shoreline, the redevelopment must preserve, enhance and protect all living things.

G6. Sustainability, connections and linkages

Redeveloping a brownfield site and developing in the City are already sustainable practices, but we can do more. This project needs to find the opportunities to push the envelope on environmental design to weave both the built and vast natural amenities on this site together. This site is the connection to Riverside Park and Historic Downtown La Crosse from the north, it links the north and south sides of the La Crosse River to the downtown and to neighborhoods and jobs. Most importantly, the redevelopment of this site links the community to the confluence of the Black, La Crosse, and Mississippi Rivers.

G7. Inspire investment

This opportunity comes once in a City's history and that alone should inspire investment. With an impressive community investment in public open space and amenities, the private sector will be excited about having opportunities for public/private partnerships and leveraging and fostering long term investments in the site's redevelopment.

G8. Internationally significant

There are few sites on the Mississippi River with this majestic setting; where three rivers meet. The community must think boldly about the scale and scope of the development and be constantly reminded that this development will serve the City of La Crosse and the region for many years to come.



Economic Data

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Residential Market

The projected household growth for the City of La Crosse to 2020 is currently estimated at 2,940 households. Projected household growth for the Greater La Crosse Area is estimated at 4,764 households. Between 2020 and 2030, the City of La Crosse is projected to add another 760 households while the Greater La Crosse Area is projected to increase by 2,335 households. In considering the development potential of the site to 2020 and its location within the City of La Crosse, the subject project could capture approximately 8% to 10% of the projected growth of the city and the Greater La Crosse Area which accounts for baseline demand estimates of between 235 to 480 units of housing that would incorporate a variety of housing products including medium-to-high-density rental and ownership units. The anticipated full build-out of the property will require a period of between eight and twelve years. Depending on demand and the final additional units could be accommodated on the site.

Housing products on the site should consist of a mix of rental and ownership and various price points including products that would appeal to young new households, young families, and older adult households that may want to consider easier to maintain alternatives.

As the plan develops and is refined, more specific development concepts will be defined that include building sizes, price points, unit sizes, and mix and estimated development costs.

At this time, we estimate that rental rates would average about \$1.25 to \$1.30 per square foot for rental units (2014 dollars) and between \$200,000 and \$350,000 for mid-level ownership products. A portion of all housing products would be targeted to upper-income households.

Retail Market

The potential for new retail development in La Crosse and at the Riverside North site is influenced by overall market conditions in the Trade Area, also referred to as the Market Area. The Trade Area for Riverside North is considered to be the City of La Crosse, although customers that commute back and forth from outside of La Crosse along Copeland Avenue and other drive-by traffic are also considered to be potential customers for commercial retail development at Riverside North.

Summary highlights of consumer expenditures for retail goods and services in La Crosse in 2013 include:

Housing expenses account for approximately 30% of total consumer expenditures in the La Crosse Metropolitan Area with residents spending between 15% and 20% less than the national average. The roughly 55,000 households in the La Crosse Area spent a total of \$3.0 billion on retail expenditures in 2013. With the number of households projected to grow to 58,000 in 2020, they would generate an additional \$51 million in expenditures annually, not factoring in inflation.



Site Details

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Site Details

The City of La Crosse Redevelopment Authority adopted and recorded a Redevelopment Project Plan in 1995 known as the Riverside Redevelopment Project. The Redevelopment Project Plan was amended in 1998. The project plans were created pursuant to Section 66.1333, Wisconsin Statutes.

The Redevelopment Authority has spent over 15 years in acquiring property in the area north of the La Crosse River and west of Copeland Avenue. The Redevelopment Authority recently acquired another 11 acres and the City and Redevelopment Authority now own over 65 acres. The three main acquisitions to date include the former Western Wisconsin Ready Mix site, 8.3 acres, the Exxon Mobil Oil site, 25 acres, and the Patros site, 11 acres.

In addition, the City owns a large wetland complex (approximately 15 acres) as well as a former rail road right-of-way. Appendix G contains a map depicting the location of the site relative to the downtown area and an aerial photo depicting the features of the site.

During the 2014 community charrette planning process the "Mobil Oil Site" was renamed the Riverside North Project. The site consists of approximately 67 acres and several adjacent parcels are under consideration for purchase by the Redevelopment Authority along Copeland Avenue including a key parcel needed for signalized transportation access as well as a commercial building currently housing one tenant.

The Riverside North site is bordered by:

North - Causeway Boulevard

South - La Crosse River

East - Copeland Avenue (WIS 35) 34,000 cars per day

West - Black and Mississippi Rivers





Financial Development Opportunity-RFEI

Public Partnership Opportunities

As indicated in the adopted Charrette Master Plan documents, the City of La Crosse Redevelopment Authority is committed to fostering a collaborative, productive relationship with the developer team in order to reach a successful outcome around the strong vision for the project.

Considering the potential for the massive positive economic, social and environmental outcomes, the City understands its role in being an active partner in contributing to the creative solutions necessary to effectuate a feasible development project.

The following is a list of available considerations for the development “toolbox” that can be negotiated with each phase given proposed project impacts:

1. **Tax Incremental Financing.** The City Adopted TID 12 in 2005 having an expenditure period ending in 2020, with the purpose of assisting in the funding of the Riverside North Development project. The TID 12 project plan includes infrastructure, fill and recreational amenity costs.
2. **Property Ownership.** The City has assembled a large portion of the project area over time allowing the City to consider the value of the land in the negotiation of a development agreement.
3. **Grants.** Due to the unique nature of this site, with its extensive recreational linkages, adjacency to major natural areas and proximity to the urban core, many grant opportunities may be considered.
4. **Tax Abatement-Tax Credits.** With a multi-use project in mind, depending upon the developer’s direction and mix of investments, there may be tax abatement or credit programs available to the project.
5. **Loans.** The City of La Crosse currently administers a number of economic development loan programs. Depending upon the development strategy, both City, County and State loan programs may be available to assist in long term financing.
6. **Bonds/ Debt Issuance.** Given the magnitude of the project and its potential long term impact on the City’s economic sustainability, the City may consider various forms of bonds including but not limited to general obligation bonds, revenue bonds and developer funded TIF options.
7. **Technical and Project Management Support.** The City’s Planning and Development staff will be committed to the successful outcome of this project and will be available for project support to be determined in the developer’s agreement.
8. **P-5 Opportunities.** Given the visibility and impact of this project, there may be numerous local partners offering assistance in public, private, non-profit, philanthropic and volunteer capacities.
9. **State and Federal Assistance.** The project’s location, size and multi-faceted features, offers many opportunities for additional public support. The Wisconsin DOT is currently considering the feasibility of a major transportation linkage through the site from Interstate 90. The site may also be a desirable location for dredge fill from Army Corp of Engineer sources.
10. **Clean Energy Programs.** The opportunity to plan and develop a sustainable project may offer additional assistance through clean energy programs through State tax incentives, utility programs like Focus on Energy and others. See the Wisconsin State Energy Office’s guide entitled, “Financial Incentives for Energy Projects in Wisconsin”.



Submission Requirements Development Opportunity-RFEI

Submission Requirements

The City RDA seeks a highly qualified master developer to plan and execute the initial and potentially subsequent phases of the development process. The developer/team shall be a master developer capable of managing the land planning, environmental remediation, infrastructure development, site preparation, financing and project management that will be required to support vertical development.

For this RFEI, the City RDA is requesting the following from interested firms/teams:

- Letter of interest
- Contact information for key staff people
- Brief qualification statement highlighting experience with projects of similar size and complexity
- Questions relative to the project parameters
- Availability for a city-developer briefing

Evaluation Process

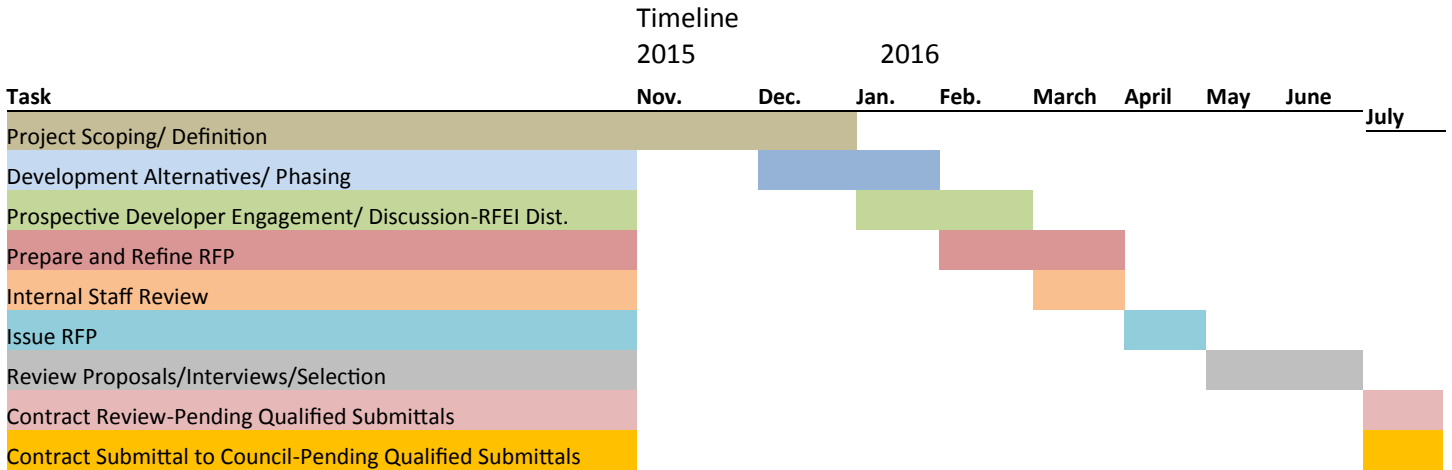
The City and RDA will develop a short list of development teams from which to solicit proposals based upon the following information ascertained from the RFEI submittal:

- **Qualifications and Experience of Developer**-particularly those who demonstrate they are qualified to execute the delivery of a development opportunity with the complexity and magnitude of Riverside North.
- **Project Vision and Development Approach**-those who best articulate their creative vision for the implementation of a world-class mixed use development at Riverside North.
- **Project Financial Feasibility and Development Team Capacity**-those who best demonstrate their financial capacity to develop a project of this scope.
- **Reputation**-those who have a track record of successful public private partnerships built upon trust, integrity and a desire to achieve a project that is a win-win for the developer and the City.



Timetable Development Opportunity-RFEI

2015-2016 Riverside North Redevelopment
City of La Crosse Department of Planning and Development



The RDA in conjunction with the Department of Planning and Development has developed the schematic timeline shown above. This timeline is a current estimate of the phases and tasks to be completed in 2016. This timeline may be adjusted pending the evaluation and negotiation with the successful development teams.





Due Diligence Development Opportunity-RFEI

Prior to submitting an Expression of Interest, respondents are encouraged to review any and all publicly available sources of information regarding Riverside North, the site and the 2014 Charrette process.

The City's "site file" contains but is not limited to the following information:

- The October 14, 2014 Charrette Master Plan Report
- The May, 28, 2015 Wisconsin DNR Final Case Closure with Continuing Obligations Letter
- The Tax Incremental District 12 Project Plan
- The May 19, 2014 Trade Area and Market Report prepared by Maxfield Research
- The Applied Ecological Services Ecological Evaluation of the Riverside North Site
- The July 2014 Short Elliot Hendrickson Preliminary Construction Cost Estimate for Infrastructure





Miscellaneous Provisions

Development Opportunity-RFEI

Reservation of Rights

The City of La Crosse RDA reserves the right to:

- Cancel or withdraw the RFEI prior to or after the submission deadline
- Modify or issue clarifications to the RFEI prior to the submission deadline
- Reject any submission it deems incomplete or unresponsive to the submission requirements
- Consider a submission that is in non compliance with the submission requirements
- Reject all submissions that are submitted under the RFEI
- Modify the deadline for submissions or other actions
- Reissue the RFEI, a modified RFEI, or a new RFEI, RFQ or RFP whether or not any submissions have been received in response to the initial RFEI issuance.

Notice of Modification

The City of La Crosse RDA may post on the City's official website (cityoflacrosse.org) notices or information regarding cancellations, withdrawals, modifications to deadlines, and other modifications to this RFEI. Developers shall have the obligation to check the website for any such notices and information, and the RDA shall have no duty or obligation to provide direct notices to developers.

Ownership and Use of Submissions

All submissions shall be the property of the City of La Crosse and the City RDA may use any and all ideas in any submission, whether the submission is selected or rejected.

Further Efforts

The City of La Crosse RDA may request that developers clarify their submissions and/or submit additional information pertaining to their submissions. The RDA may request best and final submissions from any developer and/or request an oral presentation from any developer.

Non-Binding

The selection by the City of La Crosse RDA of a developer indicates only an intent by the RDA to continue with the selection process and/or negotiate and the selection does not constitute a commitment by the City of La Crosse or RDA to execute a final agreement or contract with the developer.

Non –Liability

By participating in the RFEI process, the developer agrees to hold the City of La Crosse, RDA and its officers, employees, agents, representatives, and consultants harmless from all claims, liabilities, and costs related to all aspects of this solicitation.



Appendix

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Appendix A The October 14, 2014 Charrette Master Plan Report

Appendix B The May, 28, 2015 Wisconsin DNR Final Case Closure with Continuing Obligations Letter

Appendix C The Tax Incremental District 12 Project Plan

Appendix D The May 19, 2014 Trade Area and Market Report prepared by Maxfield Research

Appendix E The Applied Ecological Services Ecological Evaluation of the Riverside North Site

Appendix F The July 2014 Short Elliot Hendrickson Preliminary Construction Cost Estimate for Infrastructure

Appendix G Site Map/ Aerial Photo