

# A Request for Qualifications Implementation and Project Management

Special Planned Activity Redevelopment Corridors



**ISSUE DATE: WEDNESDAY MARCH 18, 2009**

**DUE DATE: MONDAY MAY 18, 2009**



Issued by the Greater Alexandria Economic Development Authority and the City of Alexandria, Louisiana



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## 1.1 Letter from the Mayor

Alexandria is embarking on the largest redevelopment project in its history, the SPARC project. The City has funds in the bank; plans on the books; and is ready to work.



The state of Alexandria is very sound as it moves into 2009, but to maintain that stability, particularly during this time of economic uncertainty, our community must be efficient and responsive and truly create stimulus opportunities. Infrastructure reinvestment is nearly always appropriate spending because it invests in our future and the future value of a city in the same way one might invest in a home and education. It augments capacity.

Sound infrastructure is necessary for increasing and sustaining the capacity of any community. It is the community's ability to handle increasing economic activity—from a trained workforce, to drainage, to the ability of public safety to provide adequate protection and services. We must build capacity in our communities, and that starts with building in the places most in need of help—whether that is human or “soft” versions of infrastructure or “hard” items. SPARC addresses both. In our City, areas have been neglected: roadways need attention and severed passages need to be reconnected. Forty years of sprawl development in Alexandria have created enormous opportunity for some, though, at the same time, it has drained significant resources and attention away from Alexandria's historic neighborhoods and inner city.

This reinvestment plan heralds a new day by altering, updating, and lifting our community. SPARC is no give away; it is reinvestment in business and capital improvements. You know as experts in large-scale program management that infrastructure reinvestment has a huge multiplier effect. SPARC is about sustainability over time, not fixes on the cheap.

SPARC addresses our problems in three ways: targeting help to identified areas where change has the greatest impact, providing those areas with new or fixed transportation improvements, and offering unique incentives to business entrepreneurs.

In the most basic of terms, the \$96 Million investment in the most blighted and under-served areas of our inner-city involves 90% investment in permanent and publicly-owned infrastructure: improved roadways and sidewalks, better parks and community centers, police substations and new fire stations.

Alexandria is in a strong position to make this investment, with no new taxes and despite the current economic conditions. We have seen, all across the nation, cities that invest in their inner cores are cities that succeed, are better able to attract and retain a modern workforce, and can best combat poverty, unemployment, and blight. We know the best way to ensure for our future success is to invest in ourselves, right now.

SPARC is not about displacing or reinventing Alexandria; it is about using our collective inheritance to improve the quality of our built environment, to the benefit of all of us who live and work in Alexandria. After decades of planning and discussion, Alexandrians can no longer afford to wait for this reinvestment. It is time to go to work.

Sincerely,

Jacques M. Roy  
March, 2009



## 1.2 Intent

The City of Alexandria and GAEDA hereby issue a Request for Qualification Statements (RFQ) from Professional Firms and Consortia to assist in the implementation, management, and coordination of the SPARC program in the areas of public input, leveraging funds, technical assistance, and outcome reporting. The City of Alexandria and GAEDA intend to award one Prime-Consultant contract for professional services associated with this RFQ, assuming a project manager can demonstrate a clear value over the S.P.A.R.C. life cycle keeping in mind the need to stimulate large-scale development.

## **Section 2: What is SPARC?**

### **2.1 A Vision for Revitalization**

S.P.A.R.C. (or Special Planned Activity Redevelopment Corridors) is a \$96 Million infrastructure investment project in Alexandria's most blighted and under-served areas, which are defined as three separate Cultural Restorative Areas (CRAs). The City has identified distinct "activity corridors," which will form the backbone for redevelopment (please see Attachments A, B, and C for more information). The three corridors are:

1. **CRA-1: Downtown, Riverfront, and Lower Third.** Throughout the past twenty years, no area of Alexandria has been so thoroughly planned and discussed as Downtown. The public has invested tens of millions of dollars in developing museums, a convention center, a performing arts center, and, now, a hotel. Yet the Downtown economy remains considerably short of its potential.

Today, tens of thousands of square feet of Downtown commercial space sit vacant, the historic Hotel Bentley remains shuttered, and the Alexander Fulton Hotel, having just declared bankruptcy, is now relying on public subsidization in order to keep its doors open.

Alexandrians want Downtown to reemerge, and they also understand that there isn't a single panacea. The City does not wish to be a landlord or a management group, and as a whole, the public agrees. SPARC was created to stimulate private-sector investment by making targeted improvements to publicly-owned infrastructure and assets.

SPARC is not primarily concerned with a single, catalytic investment. Instead, SPARC seeks to augment existing infrastructure to enhance Downtown's connectivity throughout the entire area, not simply along the Riverfront, and improve Downtown's marketability.

That said, the Riverfront will always be an important component of the success of Downtown, and SPARC seeks to complement the efforts of others in order to entice private-sector investment and commerce along the Riverfront.

CRA-1 also includes the Lower Third corridor. Lower Third generally refers to the neighborhood east of the Pineville Expressway, and, for decades, it has been in need of intervention. With the construction of Interstate 49 and the Pineville Expressway / Purple Heart Memorial Bridge, Lower Third has remained choked off from significant investment. Its housing stock, with few exceptions, is aging and in need of repair. Banks are currently unwilling to locate even an ATM in the area because of crime, and residents must drive miles away simply to pick up a bag of groceries.

Still, Lower Third remains a promising place for redevelopment. Although the countless vacant and/or derelict commercial buildings are currently eyesores, the recently-renovated Olive House illustrates how dramatically the landscape can be altered simply by targeting renovation. Last year, the City, together with a number of non-profit agencies and foundations, worked to save the 109-year-old Armour Building from imminent destruction.

SPARC envisions Lower Third not only as a thriving neighborhood, but also as a gateway into the City.



2. CRA-2: North MacArthur Drive and Bolton Avenue. Of all of the SPARC corridors, North MacArthur Drive is easily the most visible and the most heavily-trafficked. For many visitors to Alexandria, North MacArthur Drive is their first impression, and unfortunately, as a result of poor planning and uneven development, North MacArthur Drive lacks an identity. It is Anywhere, USA.

SPARC seeks to dramatically alter the appearance and the function of this important corridor, reclaiming it as an important part of Alexandria's built environment.

The restoration of Bolton Avenue will be tied to the work on North MacArthur. Bolton Avenue, once Alexandria's thriving commercial hub, has struggled for decades to regain its footing.

With the construction of Interstate 49 in the 1990s, many of the neighborhoods surrounding Bolton Avenue fell into disrepair. SPARC will invest significantly to improve Bolton Avenue, and the aim, in the process, is to lift up an entire neighborhood.

3. CRA-3: Masonic Drive and Lee Street. For more than three years, the Greater Alexandria Economic Development Authority (GAEDA) has been working to revitalize Masonic Drive, a critical corridor that connects our City Park complex with Downtown and South MacArthur Drive. Masonic Drive's most important community asset, City Park, remains unprotected.

SPARC embraces GAEDA's vision for the future of Masonic Drive. Already, SPARC is moving forward with a \$2 million streetscape enhancement project, creating an eighteen-foot wide promenade extending from the newly-constructed spray pad all the way to the Little League fields, all of which is already publicly-owned.

SPARC is equally committed to improving Lee Street, which is the only thoroughfare that connects Downtown with the Alexandria Mall complex. Lee Street and Masonic Drive cradle one of the most blighted areas in Alexandria, much of which was decimated when I-49 was constructed, and intervention is critical.

## **2.2 SPARC Developmental Criteria and Goals Background**

The COA intends development projects to assess the following goals in their proposals. Please note that the anticipated scope for this project implementation RFQ can be found in Section 3.

- Adhere to existing master planning and facilitate immediate development action as well as increase the guarantee of long-term success.
- Leverage financial value with the immediate influx of substantial public spending, provided business plans are sound.
- Create the opportunity for rehabilitation tax credits and/or New Market Tax Credits for restoring significant and historic structures, particularly as they relate to preserving community character, affordable housing, central business districts, and Main Street economic development activity.
- In the case of any listed project, relate to alleviating urban flight (and blight), property abandonment, and economically distressed neighborhoods—and as a tool for sustainable and environmentally-conscious development.
- Provide the potential for mixed-use.
- Promote diverse ownership and partnering.
- Preserve not displace, separate or marginalize our city and its neighborhoods and people.



Moreover, the COA Administration concurs with the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), which has publicized its “Principles for Infrastructure Stimulus Investment.” ASCE believes that all projects supported by an economic stimulus investment must meet the following fundamental criteria:

- Projects must create and sustain employment increases;
- Investments must provide long term benefits to the public (such as congestion relief);
- Long term maintenance and upkeep needs of all infrastructure projects – existing and new – must be taken into account; and
- To ensure accountability and transparency an auditing program must be established to review the program and measure desired outcomes.

In order to ensure the above criteria are met, the following principles will guide SPARC selection decisions:

- The project should deliver measurable improvements in public health, safety and quality of life;
- The project should provide substantial, broad-based economic benefit;
- The project should be designed and built in a sustainable and cost-effective manner, and proper consideration must be given to life-cycle costs; and
- The project should have a significant environmental benefit such as area restoration, improved air quality through reduced congestion and better watershed management through eliminating vulnerabilities in a system.

## **2.3 SPARC Management Structure and Commission**

1. COA / GAEDA Management Structure. GAEDA and the City of Alexandria have partnered to share the management and implementation of the SPARC program. GAEDA, the City of Alexandria, and the S.P.A.R.C. Commission will be responsible for prioritizing all projects for presentation to the Alexandria City Council and general public.

GAEDA and the City of Alexandria will co-manage CRA-1 projects, which include Downtown Alexandria and the Lower Third Street Corridor. This also includes the proposed 6th Street and Foisy Street transportation project to reconnect Downtown with Lower Third. The Sugarhouse Road transportation project will continue to be managed by the City of Alexandria.

The City of Alexandria and the Alexandria Historic District Preservation Commission will co-manage improvements to the Bolton Ave. Corridor in CRA-2. The City of Alexandria will manage improvements and transportation projects in the North MacArthur Drive Corridor, which are also in CRA-2.

GAEDA has already performed significant due diligence for the Masonic Drive Corridor, and \$2M has been approved by the Alexandria City Council for streetscape and walkability improvements proposed by GAEDA. GAEDA, therefore, is responsible for the primary management of CRA-3, the Masonic Drive / Lee Street Corridors.

The City of Alexandria has made \$2M available for housing initiatives, \$1M for the Lower Third neighborhood in CRA-1 and \$1M for the South Alexandria neighborhood in CRA-3. These will be managed by a special team of the City of Alexandria and private participants. The J-Quad Planning Group is primarily responsible for the management and implementation of these initiatives.

SPARC funds and the City's Capital Outlay process leaves significant remaining funds for zoo, parks, and recreation improvements. The Alexandria Recreation and Education Programs Commission



(A.R.E.P.) will be responsible for oversight of parks and recreation expenditures based on the recommendations of the Lose and Associates Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. The City of Alexandria and the Friends of the Alexandria Zoo (FOTAZ) will be responsible for all management, implementation, and oversight of improvements to the Alexandria Zoological Park.

2. Commission Responsibilities. The S.P.A.R.C. Commission will be a volunteer mayoral commission charged with hearing and evaluating proposals from development consortia for targeted corridor improvements and "soft" business incentives. The Commission is responsible for making recommendations on S.P.A.R.C. proposals in a timely manner to the Alexandria City Council for approval of funding. Commission oversight does not extend to strictly transportation projects, such as the 6th and Foisy Streets project or the Sugarhouse Road project.
3. Administrative Review. All recommendations by the S.P.A.R.C. Commission must be certified by the City of Alexandria Finance Director and City Attorney before being forwarded to City Council for approval.
4. City Council Review. The Alexandria City Council has final authority to enter into General and Professional Services Agreements for the expenditure of City capital and operating funds. Architectural & Engineering services under \$25,000.00 are not required to be approved by the Alexandria City Council.
5. Competition and Bids. Selection of firms for all work under the S.P.A.R.C. program will be undertaken in conformance with relevant statutes of the State of Louisiana and the Purchasing Policies and Procedures of the City of Alexandria. Architectural, Engineering, and Design work for selected projects may be undertaken by respondents that submitted proposals under the original SPARC Request for Submissions (RFS) process. The awarded firm under this RFQ may be asked to provide technical assistance for the purpose of cost savings or resource efficiency when other contractual work is required for S.P.A.R.C. projects, including but not limited to environmental assessments, ecological and cultural impact statements, and traffic studies.
6. Bond Requirements. Under the rules of tax-exempt municipal bonds, the issuer must reasonably follow arbitrage requirements to avoid penalties. Moreover, the COA will limit ten (10) percent of issuance to cooperative economic development with significant "claw backs" and capture of future value so that investment incentives are paid back by investors over time. Ninety (90) percent of issuance will be used for permanently-owned public infrastructure.
7. SPARC Funding Mechanism.
  - a. Alexandria will bond: \$50M (of which \$40M is in the bank and available)
  - b. Alexandria will seek to leverage: \$30M
  - c. Alexandria will fund from municipal capital outlay (and is available): \$16M
  - d. **Total package of investment: \$96M**



## 2.4 Signature Projects

| Area  | Project                                  | Status                                                   |
|-------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| CRA-1 | 6th and Foisy Streets                    | Phase I awarded. Phase II in need of community planning. |
|       | Sugarhouse Road                          | Phase I awarded.                                         |
|       | Downtown Hotels Initiative               | RFP issued.                                              |
|       | Ruston Foundry                           | Awaiting donation of adjacent property.                  |
|       | Hodges Stockbarn                         | RFP issued. Funding request submitted.                   |
|       | Lower Third Housing Initiative           | Revitalization Master Plan adopted.                      |
|       | Lower Third Corridor Enhancements        | Phase I in design phase.                                 |
| CRA-2 | Bolton Avenue Corridor Enhancements      | In planning phase.                                       |
|       | N. MacArthur Drive Corridor Enhancements | In planning phase.                                       |
| CRA-3 | Masonic Drive Corridor Enhancements      | Project approved.                                        |
|       | Lee Street Corridor Enhancements         | In planning phase.                                       |
|       | City Park and Zoo Improvements           | In implementation phase.                                 |
|       | South Alexandria Housing Initiative      | Revitalization Master Plan adopted.                      |

## 2.5 Demographic Information and Declaration of Need

According to the 2000 Census, the population of Alexandria was 46,342. This was down from the 1990 Census, which recorded a population of 49,188, though the 2008 population for the City has been estimated to be 50,236. There were 17,816 households in the City in 2000, nearly 66 percent of which were family households. While elderly householders are relatively evenly dispersed in the City, SPARC areas have a higher concentration of female-headed households with children. In 2000, median household income for the City was over \$26,000, with 27.6 percent of Alexandrians living below the poverty level. Most census tracts within the SPARC-CRAs, however, had median incomes below \$20,000 and over 40 percent of residents below poverty. 55 percent of residents within the City of Alexandria are African-American, and in many SPARC areas the African-American population is over 80 percent. As a whole, 27.6 percent of Alexandrians over 25 had less than a high school education in 2000; in much of the SPARC area, that number was over 40 percent. Unemployment in Alexandria has impacted African-Americans most significantly, recorded in 2000 as being 13.5 percent, compared to less than 4.5 percent for whites.



The home ownership rate in the City of Alexandria was 57 percent in 2000. For whites, the rate was over 68 percent, while it was under 47 percent for African-Americans. Residents in most areas of the SPARC-CRAs live in rental units, though in some pockets home ownership is strong. The overall median home value in the City in 2000 was \$72,200, up significantly from 1990, though in most of the SPARC area median home values were below \$50,000. In most areas, 20 - 40 percent of homeowners were paying over 30 percent of household income on housing; in some areas, over 40 percent of ownership households were cost burdened with housing expenses. For renters, the cost burden of housing was more pronounced. In all but one census tract in the SPARC-CRAs, between 30 to 50 percent of renters paid more than 30 percent of household income for housing; in three tracts, over 50 percent of renters were cost burdened.

In the inner-core neighborhoods of Alexandria, between 60 and 80 percent of the housing stock was constructed prior to 1960. A recent housing survey conducted by J-Quad Planning Group identified a total of 8,839 parcels in the City's CDBG target areas. J-Quad found:

The survey documented 3,869 residential buildings in need of minor repairs, 1,249 major repairs needed, 468 dilapidated buildings, and 2,223 vacant lots. Therefore, 84.4% of residential buildings are in need of minor or major repairs, or dilapidated and vacant lots account for 25.1% of total parcels in the target areas. A large number of these vacant lots and some properties with structures are also a part of the adjudicated property inventory of tax foreclosure properties transferred to the City or properties awaiting Sheriff's sale.

This survey, taken in light of the above demographic information, led the Administration of the City of Alexandria on September 17, 2008 to preliminarily find the existence of blighted and depreciated areas in the City of Alexandria, declare the elimination of this blight to be a matter of public policy, and set forth a workable program to rehabilitate and redevelop blighted areas. On February 24, 2009, the Alexandria City Council declared by resolution two Declarations of Need, one for the general elimination of blight and the other to specifically address housing deficiencies in the City of Alexandria.

## **2.6 Revitalization Master Plan**

The SPARC-CRAs are located primarily within Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) target areas. The City of Alexandria receives annual block grants and HOME program money from HUD, which is used to fund community investments in recreation, infrastructure repair, and low-income housing incentives. In order to mitigate the growing number of foreclosures, HUD has also recently implemented the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), which the City will utilize to increase incentives for housing and commercial development projects in the SPARC-CRAs. Moreover, the City has contracted with J-Quad to take a comprehensive look at the City's housing policies. J-Quad has recently completed a Revitalization Master Plan, which will allow the City to gain clear title to, expropriate, landbank, and redevelop vacant and dilapidated properties in an effort to reduce blight and stimulate economic development. This initiative will soon move into the implementation phase, which, in addition to establishing a redevelopment authority to manage the expropriation process, will recommend expanding community outreach programs and restructure City housing expenditures to maximize the use of these funds.

## **2.7 Other Development Tools and Initiatives**

Much of the City of Alexandria falls within the Central Louisiana Rural Renewal Community, which allows area businesses to receive certain tax breaks, credits, and deductions for their investments in jobs and property redevelopment. This includes a zero-percent capital gains tax if the property is held for at least five years; job, wage, low-income housing and New Market tax credits; and commercial revitalization and environmental clean-up deductions. Additionally, all of the SPARC-CRAs fall within Alexandria's Downtown Development District, which allows for developers to apply for property taxes to be frozen at pre-improvement levels for five years, with an option to reapply for another five years. Moreover, the City of Alexandria Historic District Preservation Commission is two-thirds completed on its work to document the number and condition of historic properties in the City's three Historic Districts. This information will be compiled in a publicly-accessible database, which the City's Historic Preservationist will use to promote state and federal historic tax credits for the renovation of the City's many historic structures.



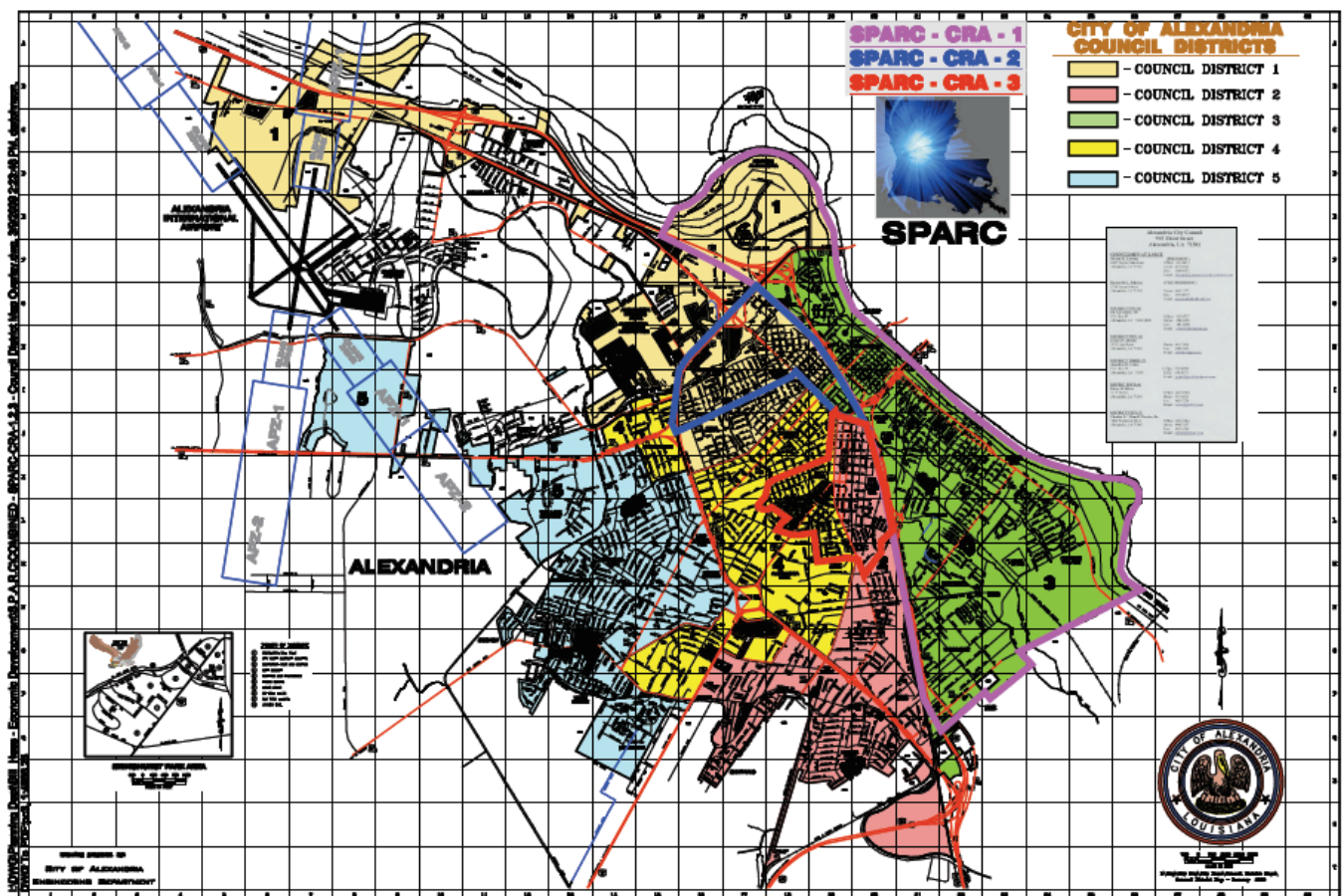
The City of Alexandria has also contracted with Lose & Associates to develop a comprehensive parks and recreation plan to guide capital improvements to park facilities and restructure the City's youth and recreation programming. Through the City's *FastTrack* Capital Outlay program and SPARC funding, the City has made available \$4 - \$5 Million in direct parks improvements, with an additional \$2 Million in capital investment to the renowned Alexandria Zoological Park.

## 2.8 Alexandria Urban Master Plan

In 1999, the engineering firm Barron, Heinburg, and Brocato, along with Moore Planning Group, developed the Alexandria Urban Master Plan (AUMP), which was subsequently adopted by the Alexandria City Council. During the last ten years, only some aspects of the plan have been implemented, and some of its recommendations are no longer feasible. However, AUMP contains numerous recommendations that may still be viable, and SPARC will rely on AUMP to inform the decision-making process for the Downtown portion of CRA-1. More information about the Alexandria Urban Master Plan can be found at [http://www.cityofalexandria.com/business/economic\\_development/edurban.asp](http://www.cityofalexandria.com/business/economic_development/edurban.asp).

## 2.9 SPARC Maps

Downloadable high-resolution SPARC maps can be found at <http://www.sparccommission.com>.



## **Section 3: Project Scope**

### **3.1 Anticipated Scope of Work**

The scope of the contract award will deal with four areas of implementation assistance: public input, leveraging of funds, technical assistance, and outcome reporting.

1. Public Input - The selected firm should have significant experience conducting community meetings and synthesizing public input in a meaningful and usable manner. The selected firm should be comfortable in preparing visual aids for public meetings such as drawings, designs, maps, and diagrams. **GAEDA and the City of Alexandria do not seek at this time to conduct a broad master planning effort or hold general planning charettes, and as such community meetings should be task and project oriented.** Meetings will be used primarily to gain input on proposed new transportation pieces and public improvements to identified activity corridors. In some cases, stakeholder involvement will be focused on residents of impacted neighborhoods. In other cases, such as the downtown expansion of 6<sup>th</sup> and Foisy Streets, stakeholders must be recruited from all segments of the City, including business, government, religious, and community institutions and organizations. This may also require preparatory or follow-up meetings with select stakeholders. When discussing the methodology below, the respondent should remember that as an agent of GAEDA and the City of Alexandria, communications for the purpose of gaining public feedback will generally be considered public record. The selected firm should be able to organize and store primary-source recordings or transcripts in the event further clarification on an issue is needed.
2. Leveraging of Funds - The selected firm should also have experience writing and managing federal, state, and other grants and programs for infrastructure improvements, and in aiding public entities in garnering other public appropriations. The sizable commitment of local bonded capital towards SPARC should signal to other agencies and organizations that the City of Alexandria is serious and proactive in modernizing its infrastructure and stimulating economic development. GAEDA and the City of Alexandria will require the selected firm seek out funding to leverage local commitments. This may include but is not limited to numerous opportunities from the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (La DOTD); the Small Business Administration (SBA) and Louisiana Economic Development Department (LED); the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); the Louisiana Lt. Governor's Office and the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism (CRT), State of Louisiana Capital Outlay, Federal appropriations and stimulus, and others. The respondent should be aware that a portion of the compensation for the implementation and management of SPARC may be contingent on the selected firm's ability to match and leverage outside funds to maximize the impact of the SPARC initiative. The respondent's expectation of the method for determining appropriate performance-based compensation should be detailed in the qualification narrative.
3. Technical Assistance - The selected firm under this RFQ will be asked to provide technical assistance for the purpose of cost savings and resource efficiency when other contractual work is required for S.P.A.R.C. projects, including but not limited to environmental assessments, ecological and cultural impact statements, and traffic studies. The selected firm should also have knowledge and experience with LEED standards and other best-practices in sustainability and urban design. The selected firm is expected to encourage other firms receiving bid work for SPARC projects to incorporate these standards and best-practices into design and construction phases, and provide concurrence on plan review when requested. The selected firm may also be responsible for evaluating the energy-efficiency, accessibility, resource conservation, environmental quality, and public health performance of projects implemented under the SPARC program. Project prioritization shall ultimately be determined by the Administration of the City of Alexandria as to the availability of funding, but this shall in no way hamper the autonomy of the Commission and Managers.



4. Outcome Reporting - The selected firm should have considerable experience and ability in tracking and reporting the outputs and outcomes of a large-scale redevelopment program, and familiarity with best-practice models for evaluating programs and providing ongoing feedback. The impetus and design of the SPARC program have been evidence-based and inclusive of established best-practices in government, and GAEDA and the City of Alexandria are committed to accurately determining and faithfully reporting the impact of SPARC on the community. The selected firm will be responsible for establishing baselines and tracking a number of measures, including but not limited to leveraged public and private-sector investment, job creation and wages, and changes in property values and commerce. Reporting and feedback may also necessitate the use of qualitative measures, such as case studies and surveys. The selected firm will also be required to make periodic reports to the Contract Monitor for both overseeing the progress of the selected firm and evaluating the progress of the overall SPARC program.

### 3.2 Deliverables

|                             |                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Public Input</b>         | ★ Transportation Projects and Activity Corridors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Foisy Street</li> <li>• Lower Third Street</li> <li>• Masonic Drive / Lee Street</li> <li>• N. MacArthur Drive / Bolton Avenue</li> </ul> |
| <b>Leveraging</b>           | ★ \$30M in Leveraged Appropriations              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Capital Outlay</li> <li>• Federal Appropriations</li> </ul>                                                                                                   |
|                             | ★ State and Federal Grants and Programs          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation Match Grants</li> <li>• Economic Development Grants</li> <li>• Community Development Grants</li> <li>• Sustainability Programs</li> </ul>            |
| <b>Technical Assistance</b> | ★ Cost Saving and Resource Efficiency            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFP / RFQ / Bid Solicitations</li> <li>• LEED and Sustainability Standards</li> </ul>                                                                               |
| <b>Reporting</b>            | ★ Leveraged Investment                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergovernmental Leveraging</li> <li>• Non-Profit Leveraging</li> <li>• Private Sector Investment</li> </ul>                                                       |
|                             | ★ Jobs and Wages                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct Infrastructure Jobs</li> <li>• Direct Business Incentive Jobs</li> <li>• Indirect and Ancillary Jobs</li> <li>• Estimated Payrolls</li> </ul>                |
|                             | ★ Value and Revenue                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in Property Values</li> <li>• Changes in Sales Revenue</li> </ul>                                                                                           |
|                             | ★ Qualitative Measures                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Studies</li> <li>• Surveys</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          |



## **Section 4: Rules Governing Competition**

### **4.1 Examination of Qualifications**

Applicants should carefully examine the entire RFQ, any addenda thereto, and all related materials and data referenced in the RFQ. Applicants should become fully aware of the nature of the work and the conditions likely to be encountered in performing the work.

### **4.2 Questions**

Questions regarding this qualification shall be submitted in writing (email acceptable) to the City of Alexandria at:

Lamar White, Jr.  
Mayor's Office of Economic Development  
P.O. Box 71  
Alexandria, LA 71309  
(318) 449-5009  
[lamarw@gmail.com](mailto:lamarw@gmail.com)

All questions received in writing before April 8, 2009 will be posted and answered online at <http://www.sparccommission.com> by April 22, 2009.

### **4.3 Addenda, Rejection and Cancellation**

The COA reserves the right to revise any part of the RFQ by issuing an addendum to the RFQ at any time prior to the submission deadline. Issuance of this RFQ in no way constitutes a commitment by the COA to award a contract. The COA reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or part, all Qualification Statements submitted and/or cancel this announcement if it is determined to be in the COA's best interest. All materials submitted in this response become the property of the COA and selection or rejection of a submittal does not affect this right. The COA also reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive administrative informalities contained in the RFQ.

### **4.4 Modification / Withdrawal of Qualifications**

A respondent may withdraw a qualification at any time prior to the final submission date by sending written notification of its withdrawal, signed by an agent authorized to represent the agency. The

respondent may thereafter submit a new or modified qualification prior to the final submission date. Modifications offered in any other manner, oral or written, will not be considered. A final qualification cannot be changed or withdrawn after the time designated for receipt, except for modifications requested by the COA after the date of receipt and following oral presentations.

### **4.5 Oral Change / Interpretation**

No oral change or interpretation of any qualification contained in this RFQ is valid whether issued at a pre-qualification conference or otherwise. Written addenda will be issued when changes, clarification, or amendments to qualification documents are deemed necessary by the COA.

### **4.6 Preparation Costs**

The COA will not be responsible for costs associated with preparing the RFQ, or for costs including attorney fees associated with any challenge (administrative, judicial or otherwise) to the determination of the highest-ranked applicant and/or awarded contract and/or rejection of qualification. By submitting a RFQ each respondent agrees to be bound in this respect and waives all claims to such costs and fees. This shall not waive or negate the right of S.P.A.R.C. to award retroactively costs or preparation investment.

### **4.7 Confidentiality and Disposition of Qualifications**

The content of all submissions are generally not confidential. All materials submitted in response to this RFQ, absent qualified confidential information under law, shall be the property of GAEDA and the COA. These responses are, and shall be treated as, public records after initial qualifying periods to avoid the misuse of intellectual property or concepts of competitors. One copy shall be retained for the official files of both GAEDA and the COA and will become public record after award of the contract.



## **Section 5: Qualification and Submission Requirements and Instructions**

### **5.1 Qualification Submission**

Eight (8) copies of the qualification (RFQ) must be received by the COA by 4:00 p.m. Monday, May 18, 2009. It is recommended that all proposals be submitted via certified mail or other commercial courier services in order that the applicant will have a written record of the delivery. All copies of the qualification must be plainly identified as "SPARC Project Implementation" and delivered or mailed to:

Kay Michiels  
Director of Planning  
P.O. Box 71  
Alexandria, LA 71309  
or  
625 Murray St. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Alexandria, LA 71301  
(318) 473-1170  
[kay.michiels@cityofalex.com](mailto:kay.michiels@cityofalex.com)

### **5.2 Late Submissions**

Qualifications received after 4:00 p.m. Monday, May 18, 2009 will not be considered and will be returned unopened after recommended of award.

### **5.3 Signature Requirements**

All qualifications (RFQs) must be signed and sealed. An officer or other agent of a corporate firm, if authorized to sign CONTRACTS on its behalf; a member of a partnership; the owner of a privately-owned firm; or other agent if properly authorized by a Power of Attorney or equivalent document may sign a qualification. The name and title of the individual(s) signing the qualification must be clearly shown immediately below the signature.

### **5.4 Minimum Personnel Requirements**

At a minimum, the management team/consortia should have the following personnel:

1. One (1) Certified Planner (AICP), and
2. One (1) of the following:
  - Certified Architect (AIA)
  - Certified Professional Engineer (PE)
  - Certified Planner (AICP)

### **5.5 Qualifications Format**

Qualifications are to be prepared in such a way as to provide a straightforward, concise delineation of the applicant's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFQ. Emphasis should be placed on conformance to the RFQ instructions, responsiveness to the RFQ requirements, and overall completeness and clarity of content

To achieve a uniform review process and obtain the maximum degree of comparability, the qualification shall be organized in the manner specified below. Qualifications shall not exceed fifteen (15) pages in length (excluding resumes, title page(s), index/table of contents, attachments, or dividers). Information in excess of those allowed will not be evaluated. One page shall be interpreted as one side of single-spaced, typed (minimum 12 font size) 8½" x 11" sheet of paper.

### **5.6 Title Page**

Show the RFQ title, the name of your firm, address, telephone number(s), name of contact person, and date.

### **5.7 Letter of Transmittal (Limited to 2 pages)**

1. Identify the RFQ project for which the Statement of Qualifications has been prepared.
2. Briefly state your firm's understanding of the services to be performed and make a positive commitment to provide the services as specified.
3. Provide the name(s) of the person(s) authorized to represent the respondent's firm, their title(s), address, and telephone number(s).
4. The letter of each qualification must be signed by a corporate officer or their individual who has the authority to bind the firm. The name and title of the individual(s) signing the qualification must be shown immediately below the signature.

### **5.8 Table of Contents (1 Page)**

Clearly identify the materials by Section and Page Number.



## **5.9 Qualification Narrative (Limited to 15 Total Pages)**

### **A. Firm Experience (25%)**

- Detail the firm's experience in the same or similar areas of expertise, and its adaptability to provide the required services for this project.
- Provide at least three (3) references for which your firm has provided the same or similar services. Include a point of contact, current telephone number, and a brief description of the services provided.
- Detail the firm's performance on similar projects, especially noting these types of tasks. Please provide a point of contact for all noted experience. A current telephone number should also be provided if applicable.

### **B. Project Manager (10%)**

- Provide detailed information on the qualifications and relevant experience of the Project Manager as it relates to the required services.
- Include project reference contact name(s) and current telephone number(s).

### **C. Key Project Staff and Sub-Consultants (10%)**

- Identify key project staff, along with their availability, to provide services on behalf of the firm. Resumes should be included for each of the individuals, which detail their relevant experience.
- If any sub-consultants will be employed, they shall be clearly identified in the qualification.
- The consultant shall notify GAEDA and the City of Alexandria, in writing, of changes in key staff and GAEDA and the City of Alexandria shall have the right to terminate or renegotiate the contract if these changes will affect the work product or time schedule.

### **D. Business History and Available Resources (25%)**

- Provide information on size, resources, and business history of the firm, including how much business the firm conducted in the previous year (< \$500K, \$500K - \$1M, \$1M - \$5M, or \$5M +).
- Provide information on personnel resources available to the firm, which indicates access to the services necessary to perform the work in the time available and within the required standard.
- Describe the firm's location where the primary services are to be provided and the ability to meet in person when required during the performance of this contract.

### **E. Project Methodology and Approach (30%)**

- Provide detailed information on the firm's methodology in meeting the scope of work requirements in Section 3.
- Describe overall approach to the project as well as any details that may be unique to your firm.
- Indicate how appropriate payment is anticipated to be determined.



## **Section 6: Evaluation and Award**

### **6.1 Qualification Evaluation Period**

Consultant selection is anticipated to be announced within sixty (60) calendar days of the submittal deadline. All offers must be complete and irrevocable for ninety (90) days following the submission date.

### **6.2 Qualification Evaluation Process**

A committee of individuals representing GAEDA and the COA will perform an evaluation of the qualifications. The committee will rank the qualifications as submitted.

GAEDA and the COA reserve the right to award the contract solely on the written qualifications depicted in the RFQ. GAEDA and the COA also reserve the right to request oral interviews with the highest-ranked respondents (short-list). The purpose of the interviews with the highest-ranking firms is to allow expansion upon written responses. If interviews are conducted, a maximum of three firms will be short-listed.

### **6.3 Contract Negotiations**

The highest-ranked applicant may be invited to enter into final negotiations with GAEDA and the COA for the purposes of contract award. If an agreement cannot be reached with the highest-ranked applicant, GAEDA and the COA will notify the applicant and terminate negotiations. The second highest applicant may be contacted for negotiations. This process may continue until successful negotiations are achieved. However, GAEDA and the COA reserve the right to terminate negotiations with any applicant should it be in the best interest of the SPARC program. GAEDA and the COA reserve the right to reject any and all qualifications.

### **6.4 News Releases**

News releases pertaining to the award resulting from RFQs shall not be made without prior written approval of the COA.

### **6.5 Insurance Requirements**

During the term of this contract the consultant will carry professional liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000.00. The prime-consultant may require any sub-consultant to carry professional liability insurance. This insurance will be written on a "claims made" basis.

Prior to executing the contract, the consultant will provide a Certificate of Insurance to GAEDA and the COA showing evidence of such professional liability insurance.

GAEDA and the COA may require inclusion as Additional Named Insured to the consultant's professional liability coverage.

### **6.6 Compensation**

The respondent should indicate in the qualification narrative how appropriate payment is anticipated to be determined.

### **6.7 Contract Time**

The consultant shall proceed with the services specified herein after the execution of this contract and upon receipt of a written Notice To Proceed from GAEDA and the COA. The overall contract time to complete this project is estimated to be no longer than thirty-six (36) months. The delivery schedule for each task shall be negotiated between the consultant and GAEDA and the COA.



## **6.8 Minority and/or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Firm Participation**

Under the City's AFEAT (Alexandria Fairness, Equality, Accessibility, and Teamwork Program), participation by minority and/or disadvantaged business enterprise firms is encouraged. The AFEAT Program should be inquired about through the Division of Finance. The goals for qualifying disadvantaged, minority and female owned business in the use of professional service agreements with prime contractors will help effectuate the goals of increasing: the competitive viability of small business, minority, and women business enterprise by providing contract, technical, educational, and management assistance; business ownership by small business persons, minority persons, and women (including professional service opportunities); and the procurement by the City of professional services, articles, equipment, supplies, and materials from business concerns owned by small business concerns, minority persons, and women.

Prime contractors offering subcontracting should take specific action to ensure that a bona fide effort is made to achieve maximum results towards meeting the established goals. Primes shall document efforts and shall implement steps at least as extensive as the following in a good faith effort to reach or exceed the established goals:

- A. Establish and maintain a current list of minority and female owned businesses in Alexandria, in Rapides Parish, and in the State of Louisiana.
- B. Document and maintain a record of all solicitations of offers for subcontracts from minority or female contractors and suppliers in Alexandria, in Rapides Parish, and in the State of Louisiana.
- C. Secure listing of minority and women owned businesses from the City of Alexandria Purchasing Department, the Central Louisiana Business Incubator, and the State of Louisiana Department of Minority Affairs.
- D. Participate in associations which assist in promoting minority and women owned businesses such as the Central Louisiana Business League, the Central Louisiana Business Incubator, and the Entrepreneurial League System.
- E. Designate a responsible official to monitor all activity made in the effort to achieve or exceed the established goals; record contacts made, subcontracts entered into with dollar amounts, and other relevant information.



## **Attachment A – SPARC-CRA-1 Executive Summary**

### **DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Third Street Corridor and the R.I.V.E.R. Act**

September 17, 2008 Summary and Discussion of Proposals for SPARC-CRA-1

Existing planning and targeted public investment can dramatically alter the Alexandria landscape in a relatively short period of time. Moreover, existing planning and proper investment will achieve the needed goal of shifting policy/planning toward a more sustainable, long-term goal orientation and fairer allocation of resources to areas of the community most in need of community intervention.

Because SPARC-CRA-1 covers such a large footprint, applicants must possess a working knowledge of the specific types of intervention and investment needed in key areas. For example, the needs of the Cultural Arts District are unique but related to the needs of Lower Third.

With regard to the hotel issues, anchoring the properties to better withstand market fluctuations and protect public investments must be carefully studied in order to avoid the cyclic issues seen to date.

With regard to the Third Street corridor, significant help is needed to spur reinvestment and rebuild failing infrastructure in order to attract business and potentially residents.

Moreover, it is an obligation of the City to protect citizens from the negative effects of blight and public safety deficiency. Every citizen has a right to live in peace and not unduly fear unlawful activity around his or her home, simply by virtue of where in the City one lives.

Citizens pay for neglecting “disinvested” areas currently. The costs for failing to reinvest in the Third Street corridor will only escalate over time, and without reinvestment, blighted areas will continue to negatively impact the quality of life of citizens. To be sure, housing opportunities and infrastructure improvements have shifted some elements of negative behavior to other areas of the City, demonstrating the power of reinvestment. However, the opportunity for real anchoring is now.

First of all, this area is already identified for focused growth, intervention, and, in some cases, life support by existing master and comprehensive planning.

Secondly, the potential plans, in conjunction with the expansion of roadways, will link the City and leave it with better connectivity than without the projects.

Thirdly, detailed incentives tied to firm deliverables and public partnership can be required for maximum benefit: incentives can be offered in exchange for public safety, recreation, and transportation that add permanent public infrastructure to the area and entice business development consistent with other areas of the City.

Commitments or letters of intent could be solicited immediately and begin the process of leveraging financial value with the immediate influx of substantial public spending.

A *preliminary* draft for a resolution (or Findings of Necessity) leading to a Certificate of Appropriateness and Need (COAN) has been submitted to the City Council.



## **Attachment A – SPARC-CRA-1 Executive Summary (continued)**

Between 66% and 79% of Alexandrians support S.P.A.R.C. defined in this fashion: “a bond issue called S.P.A.R.C. that would invest public dollars into Alexandria’s blighted areas, just like investing in your home or property, and which would not raise taxes or create any new taxes and would involve an open process and opportunity for public debate on where and how to invest the funds.”

All economic development plans must fit overall S.P.A.R.C. objectives and regional growth considerations, which may include participation and, in limited cases, approval by Louisiana Economic Development (LED) officials.

For comparison and contrast, “tightly structured” incentives with guarantees tied to milestone requirements were offered in a Lake Charles deal boasting the creation of 2900 jobs. State incentives totaled \$210M with the local government matching another \$22M. At about \$7500 per job, Lake Charles invested significant dollars into this promising venture.

The total for SPARC-CRA-1 job creation is expected to exceed 200 medium-paying jobs.

The infrastructure investments create a multiplier effect ranging from 3:1 for every public dollar to as much as 15:1. Smart growth advocates have long insisted that the public’s return on investment is significantly higher with in-fill infrastructure projects than “sprawl” infrastructure.

Using a conservative standard analysis, the range on the return on investment for SPARC-CRA-1 road expansions should yield as follows:

- \* \$5.0M for Sugarhouse Road: \$15.0M - \$30.0M return
- \* \$10M for Sixth and Foisy Streets: \$30.0M - \$60.0M return

This suggests that, even using a conservative multiplier, the transportation improvements alone will generate a return between \$45.0M to \$90.0M.

Activity Corridor Leaders in the PHASE I process should best address those needs with redevelopment strategies preserving and responding to the culture, heritage, and history of the area.

The Commission should consider the highest and best use of existing public infrastructure and recommendations for spending on new, or improvement to, infrastructure as a primary determination of the viability of the project.

### *Third Street Corridor (Multiple Third Street Developments)*

The City is considering investment packages totaling \$2.0M in incentives and Third Street Housing S.P.A.R.C. monies, including hard infrastructure costs. This means the public would own significant properties and have a significant investment in the area.

### A Public Safety Complex:

The City of Alexandria will offer to partner with the Rapides Parish Sheriff’s Department to develop a jointly-funded, owned, operated, and maintained public safety substation, under separate commands but with unified community policing (and unified command protocols in times of need). Sheriff Wagner has already expressed his willingness to consider such an endeavor. The complex would be located and proposed for the area between Broadway and Willow Glen on Third Street/Highway 1.



## **Attachment A – SPARC-CRA-1 Executive Summary (continued)**

This area maximizes community policing to the Riverbend Subdivisions, potential new subdivisions, Acadian Village, as well as Willow Glen and the adjacent neighborhoods. A complex of this type could provide a beacon signaling the City's commitment to attract private development and sustain that development in this disinvested area.

### **Reuse and Redevelopment of Hodges “Stock Barn” and Mixed-Use Housing and Retail**

The City of Alexandria solicits development of the stock barn site with the potential use of the property totaling 13 acres, a portion of which totaling 8 acres could contain housing opportunities similar to Riverbend Subdivision but in the form of apartment space. The City of Alexandria could provide infrastructure and recreational support, including a walking area and a water effect facing Third Street.

The City could aid with the development of an adjacent retail center—to potentially include grocery, banking, and other retail opportunities in this 5 acre tract, which would also be supported by the proposed public safety/community policing initiative.

### **Highway One and Lower Third Corridor, Lower-Upper Third Gateway**

The City of Alexandria solicits concept proposals for providing significant gateway effects signaling the entrance into Alexandria at or around the City of Alexandria corporate limits on Highway One in the Lower Third Street corridor.

The City of Alexandria may commit to infrastructure in the nature of a significant water effect with related recreation component, *e.g.* lake, walking trail, horseback riding trails, stables, children's equine center, and roadway infrastructure and utility placement. These items would support and be included within a mixed-use housing and future retail corridor to tie in with the Sugarhouse Road expansion.

From the SPARC-CRA-1 funding, general capital outlay, and operations budget:

- \* \$100,000 for land acquisition costs
- \* Tax credits and renewal application matches totaling \$1.0M
- \* Abatement application value commensurate with COAN and FON, commercial viability, workforce development
- \* Additional incentives if good faith efforts at partnering for whole scale redevelopment efforts in the entire corridor based on economic distress
- \* Streets, drainage, and utility aid totaling \$2.0M in conjunction with Sugarhouse Road and Sixth and Foisy Streets projects

Also, in conjunction with the potential re-use of the Armour Building and the Ruston Foundry site, an additional redevelopment area with SPARC-CRA-1 is being considered. Multiple tax incentives and tax abatements can be considered for these properties.

**Electronic presentations are available for review on Ruston Foundry specifications.**

### *Cultural, Arts, and Science Sub-Corridor*

The City of Alexandria seeks a proposal from developers to locate museums and children's activities into the downtown area.

The City of Alexandria suggests the location of a planetarium and IMAX theater using existing properties and investment in new properties.



## **Attachment A – SPARC-CRA-1 Executive Summary (continued)**

As an incentive, the City of Alexandria may be able to locate offices and share space, allowing long-term partnering and anchoring. The City of Alexandria also seeks to partner or build on existing space a multi-level parking garage. While this type of parking can involve higher costs than horizontal parking, its compact use of space is desirable as a principle of smarter growth and development.

The Hotel Bentley and other downtown properties offer numerous choices and opportunities to partner. **(Masonic Drive, included in SPARC-CRA-3, is also a candidate for a recreation, science, and health corridor.) (The COA plans to issue a joint CRA-3 RFS with GAEDA in the final quarter of 2008).**

### *Hotel Bentley Mixed-Use Model*

From the SPARC-CRA-1 funding, general capital outlay, and operations budget:

- \* \$2.0M-- immediate infrastructure and then paid back over 6-7 years
- \* \$100K-- per annum, funded through SPARC-CRA-1
- \* \$50K-- per annum, GAEDA solicitation
- \* \$1.0M-- Utility incentives over 5-10 years, subject to pay back or forgiveness on meeting certain economic milestones and partnerships
- \* \$400K-- Miscellaneous and delineated in package, shared infrastructure and backing out of O/M and capital expense for public entities

### *Hotel Bentley Straight Hotel Model*

From SPARC-CRA-1 funding:

- \* \$200K-- immediate infrastructure and then paid back over 6-7 years
- \* \$100K-- per annum, funded through SPARC-CRA-1
- \* \$50K-- per annum, GAEDA solicitation

### *Other Points of Consideration*

Although the COA seeks proposals that articulate a unique vision for SPARC-CRA-1, applicants should consider the benefits of conforming with existing master planning and relevant surveys and studies. To that end, the COA will make available, upon request, any and all master and/or comprehensive plans related to the development of CRA-1. Applicants are highly encouraged to consult with those plans.

Applicants are also encouraged, though not required, to consider the following observations of the City Administration, the Mayor's Office of Development, and the City Planning Division:

1. The economic impact and importance of the sustained development of the Port of Alexandria. Attention should be paid to the replacement of the O.K. Allen Bridge and the connectivity of the Port of Alexandria with the City of Pineville and the Alexandria Central Business District.
2. The economic viability of businesses and industries located on Upper Third Street. The closure of a portion of Third Street due to a hospital expansion could present a challenge for those businesses and industries.
3. The substantial investment the COA and other partners have made in the Downtown portion of Third Street. Attention should be paid to the existing themes of the streetscape and the Cultural Arts District.
4. The need to foster development around the publicly-owned Coughlin-Saunders Performing Arts Center.
5. The need for an additional 600 parking spaces in the Downtown area. Applicants are encouraged to make recommendations on the location(s) of any new parking garages and/or lots and articulate how their plan can serve existing and new developments.



## **Attachment A – SPARC-CRA-1 Executive Summary (continued)**

6. Any plans for the development of the Ruston Foundry site should consider the consensus of the residents in the surrounding neighborhoods that the site become a commercial and/or light industrial hub, not necessarily a seasonal or recreation development.
7. The environmental sustainability of redevelopment. Applicants are encouraged to pay particular attention to both the short-term and long-term effects development may have on the City's environment.
8. The need to create opportunities for downtown living.
9. The high vacancy along the Downtown portion of Lee Street. Applicants are encouraged to consider Lee Street's direct connection to two prime and city-owned facilities: the Coughlin-Saunders Performing Arts Center and River Oaks.
10. The best way to maximize the use of the Alexandria Riverfront Amphitheater.

## **Attachment B – SPARC-CRA-2 Executive Summary**

### **DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** **North MacArthur Drive and the Bolton Avenue Corridor**

October 17, 2008 Summary and Discussion of Proposals for SPARC-CRA-2

Existing planning and targeted public investment can dramatically alter the Alexandria landscape in a relatively short period of time. Moreover, existing planning and proper investment will achieve the needed goal of shifting policy/planning toward a more sustainable, long-term goal orientation and fairer allocation of resources to areas of the community most in need of community intervention.

The City of Alexandria believes there are substantial opportunities along North MacArthur to take advantage of already-commenced investment. This corridor can lead back into the heart of the downtown and mid-City border which is Bolton Avenue as well as represent completion of attention to Alexandria's current economic spine, Middle and South MacArthur Drive. This spine creates several crossroads points as major arteries open into the main commercial corridors of Jackson Street, Highway 28, and North Mall Drive. Notably, this spine sets up to finish connecting Masonic, a third CRA area not yet completed. In the future, Sugarhouse Road, Broadway, and Sixth and Foisy make the tail end of South MacArthur—after North Mall—more viably connected.

SPARC-CRA-2 contains two distinct corridors: North MacArthur Drive and Bolton Avenue. A coherent redevelopment strategy must recognize the distinct uses and functions of these corridors as well as the way in which they interplay.

North MacArthur Drive currently serves as a principal gateway into the City of Alexandria. Unfortunately, due to years of "patch" planning and void left by major transportation projects, particularly the reworking of the former "North" MacArthur traffic circle, the corridor is in need of intervention and additional infrastructure improvements.

For many visitors, North MacArthur Drive is their first impression of Alexandria. More importantly, because of the significant number of hotel rooms now located in the corridor, North MacArthur Drive is where most of Alexandria's over-night visitors spend the night. The infrastructure must be improved to accommodate and respond to the needs of hotel guests and large-scale development.

Accordingly, a commercial corridor of significant mixed-use and commercial opportunity seems most appropriate. The opportunity might be a series of developments or a single "mega-development." A large development could have the needed impact of "altering" the City "overnight." Although much focus seems to center on downtown hotels, given the availability of existing infrastructure in this area and its connection to the City, a mega-development here makes the most sense for a true "destination" development. Perhaps, it is because there is room for a new development while



## **Attachment B – SPARC-CRA-2 Executive Summary (continued)**

using existing infrastructure, being located within the City, and drawing on the connecting economic corridors of activity stemming off MacArthur Drive.

Possible softening of the roadway includes traffic calming methods, increased landscaping, and the installation of sidewalks. Applicants should also address future land use planning, ensuring that zoning conforms to current development and can spur responsible future development.

Although Bolton Avenue once served as the primary commercial corridor in Alexandria, today, it has fallen into disrepair, despite various attempts at intervention. Due in large part to the construction of Interstate 49, many of the surrounding residential neighborhoods have become blighted and property values continue to diminish. Future land use planning is also an important consideration. Moore Planning Group provided the previous administration with future land use plans for those neighborhoods. The City now seeks a strategy for implementation.

J-Quad, which consults with the City on issues related to adjudicated properties, recommends naming the Bolton Avenue corridor as a “conservation neighborhood,” which may provide for more flexibility than “historic districts.” However, a more detailed and specific plan of action is required.

Bolton Avenue contains a significant stock of art deco structures, many of which are currently vacant or blighted. The City seeks a redevelopment plan that will be sensitive to these architectural and historic assets, one that can thematically frame the corridor around those assets.

Activity Corridor Leaders in the PHASE I process should best address those needs with redevelopment strategies preserving and responding to the culture, heritage, and history of the area.

The City is considering investment packages totaling \$28M over three to ten years as incentives and hard infrastructure cost sharing or direct investment. This means the public would own significant properties and have a significant investment in the area—investment that would be used and enjoyed by citizens on a daily basis.

### *Bolton Avenue Corridor*

#### A Bus Transfer Station:

The City of Alexandria is in the beginning phase of developing a new bus transfer station, potentially a multi-use facility, on Bolton Avenue. This station would replace the current downtown station and would serve as the principal hub for the ATRANS bus service. Due to its proximity to Florence Avenue (also known as Mansion Row), the City will ensure that the station’s architectural design conforms to surrounding properties and thematically complements Bolton Avenue.

This significant public investment (exceeding \$5M) will likely increase pedestrian activity, stimulating surrounding commerce. Traffic calming methods must be employed to ensure the safety of pedestrians and residents. Strategies may include widening and improving sidewalks, increasing landscaping and lighting, reinstalling Bolton Avenue’s streetcar line or a “mock” version, and/or narrowing vehicle lanes.

#### Reuse and Redevelopment of the Cotton Brothers Bakery Building:

The Central Louisiana Chapter of the American Red Cross recently purchased the historic Cotton Brothers Bakery Building on the corner of Bolton Avenue and Elliott Street. During the next few months, the Red Cross will begin



## **Attachment B – SPARC-CRA-2 Executive Summary (continued)**

restoring and renovating the building, and, once completed, the building will serve as the Red Cross's regional headquarters. The second floor of the building will feature classrooms and a large meeting room, which may be open to the public.

In addition to making a \$1.5M investment on Bolton Avenue, the Red Cross will also employ at least three full-time employees and will provide hundreds of citizens with volunteer opportunities.

### The Don Theater:

Once a premier entertainment destination, today, the Don Theater is in disrepair and, for all intents and purposes, vacant. Local and state historic preservationists have identified the Don Theater as a significant property, both because of its unique art deco architecture and because of its history in the community. However, notably, the Don Theater is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, though it does qualify.

The City of Alexandria encourages the rehabilitation and the creative reuse of the Don Theater. Although the structure may no longer be feasible for a movie theater, it has the potential to become a small performing arts theater, restaurant, or bookstore, among other things.

The "Don" is a contributing structure in a prime location and needs to be a part of any redevelopment plan.

### The Bolton Neighborhood (also known as West Alexandria):

In 1999, Moore Planning Group described the neighborhood, known colloquially as the Bolton Neighborhood, as follows:

This neighborhood is in serious decline; it is characterized by blight, poverty, and high incidence of crime. However, it is bounded and constrained by Bolton Avenue, Rapides Avenue, and Jackson Street, three major thoroughfares all of which sustain viable commercial enterprise. I-49 forms its Northern boundary. This excellent transportation access alone creates tremendous revitalization potential. The plan suggests the transformation of 13th and 14th Streets into a major thoroughfare which would compliment the existing access network and open up along I-49 for redevelopment. The recycling of this formerly pleasant neighborhood is critical to the successful revitalization of this Master Plan. Further decline would seriously impact the City's supply of affordable housing.

Unfortunately, during the past nine years, there has been little intervention in this neighborhood. Moore Planning Group's recommendations were not followed, and the neighborhood continues to be in serious decline.

Future land use planning, intervention, and stabilization strategies are needed.

### *North MacArthur Drive*

In the model we imagine, there could be a single or twinned large-scale development with significant economic development implications—*i.e.*, new additions to the tax base and workforce opportunities with outside dollars flowing into the community by way of creating a destination place. Such a large-scale development would justify public investment and partnering. From traffic solutions and directional modifications with the State as a partner to the potential for sharing in infrastructure expense, the costs for development would be borne by the private developers and



## **Attachment B — SPARC-CRA-2 Executive Summary (continued)**

public partners, with the public providing appropriate infrastructure and fast tracking for the development process to move efficiently.

The City envisions a *Perkins Rowe* style development, with the full panoply of mixed use opportunity—from office space in which to work, to multiple restaurants and shopping suites, and with greenspace and shared public space opportunities including living quarters.

The \$300-million plus, 750,000-square-foot, mixed-use project in Baton Rouge known as Perkins Rowe “features office, residential, retail, entertainment, and restaurant components in four- to six-story buildings positioned around a ‘town square’ area.” This style development is transformative of a community already on the move; for Alexandria a vision this large would work, is within grasp, and should be pursued.

Creation of this destination commercial corridor will add to the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhoods, create jobs, enhance walkability, and show Alexandria’s arrival on the planned development scene.

Unique zoning requirements should be experimented with to enhance compactness, living spaces, and attract retail and office space.

The hurdles include construction lending and clearing right-of-way issues to develop a significantly large and contiguous piece of property. We believe this is achievable now.

## **Attachment C — SPARC-CRA-3 Executive Summary**

### **DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Lee Street and Masonic Drive Corridor**

December 30, 2008 Summary and Discussion of Proposals for SPARC-CRA-3

Existing planning and targeted public investment can dramatically alter the Alexandria landscape in a relatively short period of time. Moreover, existing planning and proper investment will achieve the needed goal of shifting policy/planning toward a more sustainable, long-term goal orientation and fairer allocation of resources to areas of the community most in need of intervention.

Unlike SPARC-CRA-1 or SPARC-CRA-2, most of CRA-3 has not been the subject of extensive master planning or future land use planning. While the need for intervention has remained apparent, other areas have been given higher priority, at least on the conceptual level. As such, with the exception of GAEDA’s work on a portion of Masonic Drive, the reuse and revitalization of CRA-3 will be constructed on an entirely new and original set of ideas, which will allow applicants and partners unique flexibility in assisting with this project.

CRA-3 has been identified for intervention for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. The considerable public interest and investment in the Alexandria City Park complex.
2. The preeminence of the Alexandria Zoo as Central Louisiana’s top tourist destination.
3. The substantial private sector investment—the hospital, the mall, and the surrounding retail establishments.
4. The need for coherent and consistent land use policies and zoning continuity. Solutions may include zoning overlays or the creation of a special district, particularly along Masonic Drive.
5. The decline of Lee Street—vacant and abandoned properties, crime, and blight.
6. As identified by the former Undersecretary of Housing and Urban Development, Helen Dunlap, the area’s stock of middle-class housing is in need of stabilization in order to prevent rapid decline and deterioration.
7. In particular, the area known colloquially as “the Sonia Quarters” is in need of immediate and wide-ranging intervention.



## **Attachment C – SPARC-CRA-3 Executive Summary (continued)**

By issuing this RFS, the City of Alexandria is requesting private-sector solutions and strategies, which can be facilitated and assisted by S.P.A.R.C.

The City of Alexandria, along with GAEDA, will immediately begin both soft and hard infrastructure improvements in and around Masonic Drive and Lee Street, in accordance with existing plans and studies. In addition, there are at least two areas outside of the corridor identified for bond fund reinvestment: infrastructure upgrades and new recreation assets to and in Martin Park and Deerfield neighborhoods.

### *Masonic Drive Corridor*

The City will consider multiple strategies for improving the Masonic Drive corridor. City planners have previously proposed the creation of a special overlay district for the area around City Park and the Alexandria Zoo. Such a district would allow the City to better control the future land use of surrounding and contiguous properties, ensuring, for example, the future exclusion of liquor stores, adult video stores, and bars and encouraging design standards and guidelines.

#### **City Park:**

With respect to soft and hard infrastructure investments, the City has already committed at least \$2.0M toward improving the facilities and exhibits at the Alexandria Zoo. It has also set aside funds toward the construction of an adjacent spray park, and this year, thanks to the efforts of the Brame family and others, Bringham Golf Course is currently in the process of a \$100,000 renovation.

As a result of Hurricane Gustav, the City Park Players building burned to the ground, and now, the City must rethink the footprint of the portion of City Park located across from Bolton High School (which currently includes Ben Bradford Field, tennis courts, and the Boys and Girls Club).

In the future, the City will consider complementing those improvements through enhanced landscaping and security, including the installation of perimeter fencing and lighting.

#### **GAEDA:**

GAEDA's plan for Masonic Drive calls for the installation of sidewalks (contingent on La DOTD approval), the improvement of landscaping and streetscaping, and the construction of a mixed-use facility at the site of the old Cavalier Motel. Applicants are encouraged to consider this project as a part of their proposal. Incentives are available, both through S.P.A.R.C. and GAEDA.

#### **Housing:**

Additionally, the City may consider using Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for South Alexandria, the neighborhood located directly north of the Alexandria Mall complex (east of Masonic Drive), and the residential area north of City Park known colloquially as the Ivy Leagues. These areas have been specifically identified by a national housing expert as in need of neighborhood stabilization and, given their locations near institutional anchors and their well-built stock of middle-class homes, the City also believes these neighborhoods are important to protect and maintain.

### *Lee Street*

Currently, Lee Street is the only arterial in Alexandria that directly links Downtown with South MacArthur Drive. However, due to years of neglect and disrepair (coupled with the extensive investments made in the Alexandria Mall complex), Lee Street is, for the most part, underutilized as a connection. The restoration of this vital thoroughfare is important for the sustained viability of the entire area.

Additionally, Lee Street contains a great number of abandoned and vacant historic commercial buildings and land, the reuse of which will be considered one of S.P.A.R.C.'s priorities. Improving residential conditions throughout the area will require infill strategies sensitive to both the architectural vernacular of the area and the needs of residents in the community.



## **Attachment C — SPARC-CRA-3 Executive Summary (continued)**

S.P.A.R.C. will provide \$1.0M toward a housing initiative that specifically intervenes in South Alexandria, specifically the neighborhood known as the Sonia Quarters. This area has long suffered extreme conditions of blight and disrepair and is in need of drastic intervention. However, due to the extreme number of vacant lots, there is an opportunity for creative, infill redevelopment strategies, such as the development of “key lots” as parks or changing the way site development is construed.

Traffic patterns have changed significantly in recent years in South Alexandria, specifically along Mason and Overton Streets after the completion of the Purple Heart Bridge and Pineville Expressway. S.P.A.R.C. will seek to take into account the impact of changing traffic flow on infrastructure and residents, and take action to improve accessibility and safety where necessary.

A large development, such as the one described in SPARC-CRA-2 (though perhaps slightly smaller), may be viable for Lee Street Extension and could directly benefit those who are employed in the Alexandria Mall or Cabrini Hospital. Examples could include a large, gated apartment complex with adjacent grocery store or a gated senior living facility.

As it will on Masonic Drive, the City would also consider dramatic streetscape improvements along Lee Street, including the installation of sidewalks, improved lighting, and landscaping—particularly in concert with a private development. If appropriate and necessary, the City will also consider a special zoning designation for a portion of the street most in need.

### *Deerfield and Martin Park*

Although not indicated on the CRA-3 map, \$500,000 has been marked for use in District 2 from the S.P.A.R.C. bond funds. Significant infrastructure upgrades due to drainage issues are also indicated in these areas.

