

Addendum 1: Diamond District RFI – Questions and Answers

This addendum lists the questions the City received from potential respondents to the Diamond District Request for Interest (RFI) via email and during the RFI Virtual meeting on January 12, 2022 (video recording [available here](#)) and the RFI Site meeting on January 19, 2022, and provides responses to the questions. Similar questions we received are grouped together with one response. Visit www.rvadiamond.com and www.rva.gov/economic-development/diamond for more information throughout the process.

Are there any CAD backgrounds or drawings for site plans?

There are GIS shapefiles available on the City's website: <https://www.rva.gov/assessor-real-estate/gismapping>.

Can you speak about community engagement? Is there any documentation on the community engagement that has already happened? Will the chosen development team lead engagement going forward?

We hosted several meetings/surveys during the Richmond 300 (R300) process. During the development of the Greater Scott's Addition Small Area Plan (GSA SAP), which is included in R300, we had four meetings specific to the GSA SAP. We hosted three surveys (with nearly 1,000 responses) related to the development of the GSA SAP as well.

As the RFI process unfolds, City staff will meet with council members and constituents to continue to explain the development opportunity and process and answer questions. The City will lead engagement but once a development team(s) is selected, we may need to align community engagement efforts to maximize public input and awareness.

Are you looking for the proposers to rethink the site, or would that introduce another step in the process knowing that R300 has already been adopted?

Generally speaking, the Master Plan for this area depicts a new street grid, green/public open space, mixed-use buildings, a gateway destination, and a baseball stadium. The redevelopment of the Diamond District does not need to adhere to the exact building massing, street grid, and location of the parks or baseball stadium as shown in Master Plan. The redevelopment of the Diamond District should follow the vision set forth in the Master Plan and the goals outlined in the RFI, but the redevelopment need not replicate the exact plan shown in the Master Plan.

Is adaptive reuse of the Diamond out of the question to bring it into compliance?

Major League Baseball (MLB) has brought Minor League Baseball (MiLB) under their purview and in doing so, MLB has set requirements for MiLB stadiums. All MiLB teams must come into compliance with the new baseball stadium requirements for the 2025 season (April 2025). The reuse of the Diamond has been considered and the structure is physically restrictive and therefore it is cost-ineffective to renovate the Diamond to meet the MLB requirements for MiLB stadiums. There are certain behind-the-scenes requirements that cannot be completed within the physical space of the Diamond.

Does the City of Richmond have a preference for the location of the new baseball diamond? If so, can you please share that location?

The RFI states on page 12 "...constructing a new baseball stadium just south of the existing baseball stadium along North Arthur Ashe Boulevard..." The GSA SAP showed the baseball



Addendum 1: Diamond District RFI – Questions and Answers

stadium along Hermitage Road; however, due to timing, the grassy site along North Arthur Ashe Boulevard may be more feasible.

Can the City please confirm that the land underneath Sports Backers Stadium is available for use in the new Diamond District development (for either the ballpark or mixed-use development)? If the new ballpark may be located on any part of that parcel, can the City confirm that Sports Backers Stadium can be demolished immediately upon award and start of work? If not, can the City provide a date by which Sports Backers Stadium would be available for demolition? Assuming the new ballpark will be located or partially located on that parcel, the parcel will need to be available for construction in the near term in order to get a new ballpark built before the 2025 baseball season.

Yes, the land underneath Sports Backers Stadium is available for use in the new Diamond District redevelopment. The Sports Backers Stadium functions need to be relocated prior to demolishing the facility. The Sports Backers Stadium functions will be included within the VCU Athletic Village. Due to the need to provide the baseball stadium in time for the 2025 season, the new baseball stadium, will likely need to be located on the grassy site along North Arthur Ashe Boulevard.

Will the stadium have a DAS system/Division 27?

The detailed specifications of the baseball stadium have not yet been determined. The new baseball stadium will need to meet the MLB requirements for MiLB stadiums.

Any broadening discussion of women's athletics use of stadium?

Not at this time. VCU does not have a women's baseball team nor a women's softball team (softball would require a different size field). Several women's sports will be accommodated within the VCU Athletic Village.

Will the same owner of the ballpark be the new owner, or will that change? Would the operator possibly change?

The current baseball stadium is owned by the City of Richmond. The future ownership has not been determined. We are looking for solutions that ideally take the City's financial responsibility as close to zero as possible. There's currently a stadium use agreement between Squirrels/City for the Diamond. We don't see any other minor league team besides the Squirrels in that ownership position.

Will the ballpark be a City owned facility or privately owned for the exclusive use of the Squirrels?

This has not been fully determined, but most baseball stadiums in the AECOM study are owned publicly by municipalities. See the RFI Appendix D.

What is the Arthur Ashe relocation and Sports Backers relocation? What is the expectation in terms of assisting? Will they be part of the deliverable?

The majority of the functions within Sports Backers Stadium and the Arthur Ashe Jr. Athletic Center (AAJAC) will be incorporated within the VCU Athletic Village. Other than practice fields, which have to be in pristine condition, the public will be able to use the facilities at the VCU Athletic Village. The goal is to have the doors open 350 days a year for public use of amenities



Addendum 1: Diamond District RFI – Questions and Answers

such as an indoor track and tennis courts. The City would like to redevelop the entirety of the 67 acres of the Diamond District and doing so relocate the functions at Sports Backers and AAJAC to newer facilities that better serve Richmonders.

I hadn't heard any further discussion on any other individual programmatic components - such as hotel, multifamily - is that still a part of this?

The RFI includes many development program goals (see page 13 of the RFI) which include hotel, residential, office, and retail, among other uses. We see the Diamond District developing as a mixed-use urban village that includes many components. We are not looking for a singular use proposal; we are looking to build a new neighborhood in line with the city's Master Plan. This property was rezoned as TOD-1, and we are looking at high density – by right, up to 12 stories. We would be willing to entertain SUPs to exceed those height limits.

I am inquiring as to whether there will be any funding support for the affordable housing portion of the project?

There are many affordable housing funding sources. None have been specifically earmarked for this project; however affordable housing funding sources may include Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Affordable Housing Trust Fund loans, and myriad other grant programs to fund affordable housing.

Are there any municipal building needs/wants for this area or in general, including those mentioned in the City Center plan?

There could be a future need for a municipal function on this site. However, the City does not have a specific municipal function planned for this site.

I noticed the conceptual design includes a bridge over CSX – what dialogue has happened with them?

Conversations with CSX haven't happened yet.

Any current leads on feasibility of additional Amtrak station around site?

The DC to Richmond Southeast High Speed Rail project has identified Staples Mill Road and Main Street Station as the rail stations for future Amtrak high-speed rail. For more information please visit: <https://dc2rvarail.com>

What financial info (level of detail) is the City looking for right now in this process?

Respondents are not required to include detailed financial analysis in their response to the RFI. In the RFO stage we will look for detailed financial information. At the RFI stage, we want to know about your finance approach for the project, and the public & private tools you may utilize to finance the project. We would like to see your experience utilizing public-private financing tools that you may suggest. Any examples of past mixed-use developments where you've used public-private financing tools would be useful.

Looking ahead, can you speak to Admin Approval process? How by-right is this project? Are there any other layers of approval besides city approval?

In order to sell the property, we would need 7 out of 9 Council votes. In order to use public financing, we would need 5 out of 9 Council votes. If the property is redeveloped according to



Addendum 1: Diamond District RFI – Questions and Answers

the requirements outlined in the TOD-1 zoning district, development if by-right and the site plan will go through the City's Development Review Process. If the property is redeveloped outside of the TOD-1 requirements, a special use permit will be required. A special use permit is reviewed by the City Planning Commission and requires 6 of 9 Council votes for approval.

Is it possible that more than one developer would be chosen for the various districts or is it all going to be one developer?

The evaluation panel may choose one development team or multiple teams (see page 21 of the RFI) to recommend to City Council.

Who will be on the Evaluation Panel?

The evaluation panel will include City administrative officials, City council members, and a VCU administrative official.

Will the RFI responses be available to the public or posted digitally in any way?

No, the RFI responses will not be posted publicly during the evaluation and selection process (which runs from the RFI submission date to the final approval of the development team(s) and corresponding contract(s) by City Council).

The RFI responses may be posted publicly after contract(s) resulting from the solicitation have been awarded. Therefore, if any respondent provides information it believes is exempt from mandatory disclosure under Virginia law, the response shall include the following language on the title page of the response: "THIS RESPONSE CONTAINS INFORMATION THAT IS EXEMPT FROM MANDATORY DISCLOSURE." In addition, on each page that contains information that any respondent believes is exempt from mandatory disclosure under Virginia law, the respondent shall include the following separate language: "THIS PAGE CONTAINS INFORMATION THAT IS EXEMPT FROM MANDATORY DISCLOSURE." On each such page, the respondent shall also clearly specify the exempt information and shall state the specific Code of Virginia section and exemption within which it is believed the information falls.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this RFI, although the City will generally endeavor not to disclose information designated as confidential, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure, the City will independently determine whether the information designated by respondents is exempt from mandatory disclosure, as the City must abide by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and all applicable law regarding public records. Moreover, unless release of such information is otherwise prohibited by law, the City shall have no liability for releasing any information regardless of whether it was exempt from disclosure. (See page 23 of the RFI)

