OPEN COMPETITION INFORMATION
Purpose

The City of Sacramento (City) is pleased to solicit concept design entries from firms or teams that will support the creation of a regional destination on the Old Sacramento Waterfront.

Deadline

Entries are to be uploaded to https://woobox.com/jrtiue by 12:00pm PST on March 11, 2019.

Background

In 2017, Mayor Darrell Steinberg, Vice Mayor Steve Hansen and City Manager Howard Chan requested a plan to identify targets of opportunity to enhance the waterfront as a destination that would attract greater visitation, improve the region’s quality of life and encourage mixed-use urban development.

City staff subsequently offered a strategy to leverage the City’s existing waterfront assets by redeveloping Old Sacramento, and thereby creating a premiere waterfront destination.

Old Sacramento Waterfront in 1875 and today.

That strategy focused on organizational changes to Old Sacramento Waterfront operations and improvements to City and State-owned waterfront properties. The City recently completed an $8 million renovation of the waterfront Embarcadero boardwalk and a rebranding program and now seeks to leverage that work to reimagine and reenergize the Old Sacramento Waterfront.
The Waterfront Ideas Makers Program (WIM or Program) is an outgrowth of these activities.

The City has selected five firms to participate in the Waterfront Idea Makers Professional Program. The City also values the ideas and talent of the public and would like to invite the public to participate in the Waterfront Idea Makers Open Competition. The City seeks concepts to activate the iconic waterfront destination through the enhancement of the historic ambiance, visitor experience, interpretive value, and connectivity of the Old Sacramento Waterfront.

The designs will be presented in community and web-based exhibits for stakeholders to examine and express their opinions for the City and its partners as they work to develop a set of implementable projects to revitalize the waterfront.

**Program Compensation**

Teams will compete for a $5,000 People Choice award to be determined through a popular vote at a waterfront community event of presentations and on-line voting. Additionally, the winner of the Open Category, determined through popular vote will receive a $1,000 award. Entrants may have a preference to continue work on their concepts as the City works to implement selected projects.

**Program Services**

The concept designs should meet the Design Goals for the Old Sacramento Waterfront Primary and Secondary Design Areas (Attachment 1 - Introductory Brief).

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**Waterfront Idea Makers Program Goals:**

- **Activation**
  - Increase the attraction of the Old Sacramento Waterfront as a regional destination.

- **Reconnection**
  - Enhance the District's connections to the surrounding amenities.

- **Iconic Waterfront Destination**
  - Connect the energy and relevance of Sacramento's history with today's audiences.

- **Visitor Experience**
  - Improve and enhance the visitor experience to the Old Sacramento waterfront.

- **Interpretive Value**
  - Make our river's historic environment more meaningful, relevant, and transformative.
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Old Sacramento Waterfront 1880

Sacramento River looking towards Old Sacramento Waterfront, circa 1945.
Old Sacramento Waterfront in 1955.

Old Sacramento Waterfront in 1961.

Old Sacramento Waterfront Today.

**Attachments**
Attachment 1 – Introductory Brief
Attachment 2 – Contextual and Historical Background
**Revitalizing Sacramento’s Urban Waterfront**

The Waterfront Idea Makers Program (WIM or Program) is an initiative of the City of Sacramento to develop a set of projects to revitalize Sacramento’s historic waterfront. The City will engage design firms to develop design concepts that will help create a regional destination of the waterfront.

The City’s goal is to develop a program of implementable design ideas that can be funded by the proposed waterfront fund. Preference may be given to selected entrants to work with the City on future phases of the project.

**Background**

In 2017, Mayor Darrell Steinberg, District 4 Vice Mayor Steve Hansen and City Manager Howard Chan requested a plan to identify targets of opportunity to enhance the waterfront as a destination that would attract greater visitation, improve the region’s quality of life and encourage mixed-use urban development.

City staff subsequently offered a strategy to leverage the City’s existing waterfront assets by redeveloping Old Sacramento into an entertainment district within a historic setting, creating a premiere waterfront destination.

That strategy focused on organizational changes to district operations and improvements to City and State-owned waterfront properties. The City recently completed an $8 million renovation of the waterfront Embarcadero boardwalk and a rebranding program and now seeks to leverage that work through this program to reimagine and reenergize the Old Sacramento Waterfront.

The Waterfront Ideas Makers program is an outgrowth of these activities.

**Program Components**

**Waterfront Ideas Makers Program**

The Waterfront Idea Makers Program, based on a Request for Interest and Qualifications, is an idea lab where selected design professionals will receive a payment for concepts to enhance the historic ambiance, visitor experience and connectivity of the Old Sacramento Waterfront.

The designs will be presented in public and web-based exhibits for stakeholders to examine and express their opinions for the City and its partners as they work to develop a set of implementable projects to revitalize the waterfront.

**University of California, Davis**

Students from University of California, Davis, Sustainable Environmental Design will present work on concept designs for the Old Sacramento Waterfront as part the winter quarter design studio. Additionally, students may be available to work as interns for the firms selected to participate in the Waterfront Idea Makers Program.

**Open Invitational**

An open invitation to the public and children to provide ideas to enhance and activate the Old Sacramento Waterfront. The children entrants will include any child or group of children (school class, Boy Scout/Girl Scout Troop, after-school program, etc.) interested in submitting a concept design.
Community Open House

A public event on the waterfront where Idea Makers and Open Invitational entrants, public and children, will unveil their entries. The community will be asked for input and vote for the $5,000 People’s Choice Award, both at the Community Open House and continuing on-line. The People’s Choice Award winner and the Waterfront Idea Maker’s concept designs will be presented to City Council for consideration.

The City reserves the right to modify the program components based on the number of qualified firms responding to the solicitation.

Design Area

The Waterfront Idea Makers design area consists of two areas: a primary design area and a secondary design area. It is anticipated the Idea Makers will focus on the primary design area while strengthening the links between the primary design area and the secondary design area.

Primary Design Area

The primary design area is between and including Front Street and the Sacramento River, between the I Street Bridge and the Tower Bridge. It also includes certain publicly owned and undeveloped parcels and alley properties within the Old Sacramento Historic District.

Secondary Design Area

The secondary design objectives are the connections between the Old Sacramento Waterfront and current and future waterfront adjacent amenities. These amenities extend from the Powerhouse Science Center and Sacramento Railyards to the north of the Old Sacramento Waterfront and the to the Crocker Art Museum and California Automobile Museum to the south. The Sacramento Valley Station, Golden 1 Center and Capitol building are located to the to the east of the Old Sacramento Waterfront and Raley Field, the Barn and proposed California Indian Heritage Center are located to the west.
Design Goals

The Program seeks implementable ideas to address the constraints listed below by transforming them into opportunities. In addition, the Program has established the following goals to reenergize the urban waterfront:

Activation

Our primary goal is to increase the attraction of the waterfront as a destination...for it to be a great place, full of fun and discovery both to families and tourists during the day and to adults in the evening. And since women make the majority of entertainment decisions, we place a special emphasis on their perceptions.

Reconnections

Since the Old Sacramento Waterfront is perceived as an isolated district, we must enhance 1) its connections to downtown through the Interstate 5 and rail barriers, 2) walking and biking trails to connect waterfront museums and amenities on both sides of the river and 3) create places where people can gather on the river to eat, drink, listen to music and connect with the water.

Iconic Waterfront Destination

Front Street is where it all began. It was the site of the City’s foundational lore, the epic stories of the gold rush, pony express, transcontinental rail and telegraph. It was literally the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in the west. Today as we experience a similar social revolution in the digital age we want to connect the energy and relevance of our history with today’s audiences.

Visitor Experience

Today’s visitor experiences in the district are mixed. We seek opportunities to enhance the experience of the Old Sacramento Waterfront by improving the ambiance, attractions, events and access of the waterfront.
**Interpretive Value**

The waterfront’s rich history allows great story-telling through experiential design, interpretive and play-based experiences and modern story-telling technologies within its mid-1800’s context. We want to add features to make our rivers historic environment more meaningful, relevant and transformative.

**Context and Constraints**

Portions of the Old Sacramento Waterfront have been designated both a National Landmark District and a State Historic Park. Its potential is enormous, but it currently underperforms both as an attraction and a commercial district. The Waterfront Idea Makers program seeks to address the constraints that are hindering the Old Sacramento Waterfront by transforming them into advantages.

**Circulation and Access**

**Constrained Access**

The Old Sacramento Waterfront is an isolated district. Tightly surrounded by Interstate 5, heavy rail lines, elevated bridges and the Sacramento River, access is both physically and psychologically constrained.

**Vehicular Access**

Interstate 5 and rail lines severely limit vehicular access. Structured parking dominates access routes, denigrating approaches to the District, squandering the opportunity to set visitor expectations. On-street parking and parking meters throughout the District further impact the visitor experience.

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Access**

Pedestrian access requires a long, uninspiring walk, dodging traffic or through a tunnel under the freeway, from downtown activity centers via the K Street and I Street approaches. Along the waterfront, the Sacramento River Parkway bicycle trail mixes with strolling pedestrians.

**Waterfront**

**Invisible River**

Because of the elevations of levees and flood walls relative to downtown, the urban Sacramento river has little to no presence until you are next to it. Even from the historic river edge, Front Street, the river is invisible.

**River Edge Activities**

Beyond its intrinsic draw there are too few activities on the river or along the river edges to attract significant visitation to the waterfront by locals and tourists.

**Water Access**

Toes-in-the-water river access is limited but could be a draw especially as a daytime family attraction. Safety is paramount, but splashing water fun should be part of the waterfront experience.
**Historic District/Context**

*Historic Context*
There has been a focused effort to recreate an environment reminiscent of the period of historic significance (1849-1870) with dozens of buildings restored, dozens more reconstructed, and thematic streetscape elements and activities. Both the riverbed and District lands are archeologically rich.

*Historic Discontinuities*
The thematic quality of the environment varies from authentic to kitsch. Views of modern highrises, freeway roar and streets lined with cars depreciate the intent of the immersive historic environment.

**Visitor Experience**

*Clean, Safe and Fun*
Local residents, particularly women, do not generally perceive the District to be clean, safe or fun which depresses repeat visitation.

*Daytime and Evening Entertainment*
The District’s clientele range widely between daytime family and tourist populations and the potential for evening music, food & beverage entertainments for adults.

*Retail Offerings*
While it is a misconception that the District only offers t-shirts and taffy shops, it is true that offerings, particularly food & beverage and music, are limited and operating hours inconsistent.

*Events and Attractions*
There is enormous untapped potential for waterfront events and attractions catering to local visitors and tourists. A new Embarcadero can act as a waterfront stage for daytime and evening events, and the undeveloped Waterfront Park can be developed into an attraction balancing visitor concentrations with the California State Rail Museum.

*Environmental Factors*
Daytime summer temperatures can exceed 100 degrees until cooling afternoon Delta breezes appear. Winter months can be cold, foggy, and wet, sometimes balanced by the thrill of a high and rushing river.
This document contains summary information on amenities, features and context of the Waterfront Idea Makers Program (WIM or Program) Design Areas including sections on:

1. The Urban Waterfront
2. Old Sacramento
3. Old Sacramento Waterfront
4. Historic Context

I. The Urban Waterfront

Sacramento’s urban waterfront is a 3-1/2 mile stretch of the Sacramento River which begins at the confluence of the American River and ends at the Miller Park/Marina.

The waterfront contains a growing number of civic and cultural amenities briefly described here:

City of Sacramento

Sacramento occupies nearly 100 square miles at the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers. With a population of near 500,000, it is the seventh-largest city in California. As one of the most historic cities in California, Sacramento boasts an impressive array of landmarks, parks, amenities and other must-see points of interest.

Powerhouse Science Center

The new Powerhouse Science Center will revitalize the historic PG&E power station—listed on the National Register of Historic Places—and incorporate Robert T. Matsui Waterfront Park into a dynamic new campus right on the Sacramento River.
Matsui Park

Robert T. Matsui Waterfront Park is located along Sacramento River Parkway bicycle trail that connects Old Sacramento to Discovery Park. The project is being developed in phases, with the first phase completed.

Sacramento Railyards

The Railyards is the nation’s largest infill development project, consisting of 244- acres of historically significant land in the heart of Sacramento’s downtown.

Sacramento Valley Station

The Sacramento Valley Station has been in continuous operation as a passenger rail station since it’s opening in 1926 and has grown in ridership to the nation’s 7th busiest station, serving the 3rd ranked Amtrak service on the Capitol Corridor. The historic Depot Building at Sacramento Valley Station has undergone a full restoration, which includes +/-25,000 square feet of mixed-use leasable space for offices, restaurants, and retail.

Old Sacramento Waterfront

The Old Sacramento Waterfront is the focus of the Waterfront Idea Makers Program and is described in detail below.

Golden 1 Center/Downtown Commons

Golden 1 Center, is located within the Downtown Commons lifestyle center, a collection of 1.5 million square feet of retail, restaurant, and entertainment venues located in downtown Sacramento. The Golden 1 Center is a 17,500 seat capacity indoor, multi-use entertainment and sports center hosting events such as professional and collegiate sports, concerts, ice shows, indoor rodeo, trade shows, large graduations, family shows, and other indoor entertainment.

Crocker Art Museum

The Crocker Art Museum serves as the primary regional resource for the study and appreciation of fine art. The Museum campus consists of the historic Crocker Family Mansion and the modern Teel Family Pavilion. It is the only museum in the Sacramento region accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

California Auto Museum

The California Auto Museum has a large collection of cars ranging from early models to muscle cars. The mission of the Museum is to preserve, exhibit, and teach the story of the automobile and its influence on our lives. It is the first automobile museum in the west to be established in perpetuity.

City of West Sacramento

The City of West Sacramento encompasses approximately 22 square miles, with a population just over 51,000 people. The City is bounded by the Sacramento River on the east and is directly across the river from the Old Sacramento Waterfront. The riverfront area, called the Bridge District, is rapidly developing. At full build out, there will be 4,000 residential housing units in this area along with offices and retail.
Plans are underway for a streetcar line that will connect the city’s core with the Bridge District and The City of Sacramento.

**Raley Field**

*Raley Field*, home of the River Cats, the AAA affiliate of the San Francisco Giants, anchors the area. The stadium was opened in 2000. The stadium has a total capacity of 14,014. In addition to hosting baseball games, it is also used as a concert venue and for other events.

**The Barn and Riverfront Outdoor Art**

*The Barn* is an indoor/outdoor events venue located in the Bridge District. It is an iconic structure located adjacent to the Sacramento River. In the same area as The Barn, there is the first of many pieces of *Riverfront Outdoor Art* which will eventually line the riverfront.

**California Indian Heritage Center**

The *California Indian Heritage Center* recently received $100 million in funding to construct a new museum in West Sacramento near the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers. The existing museum is located in Sacramento, near Sutter’s Fort, and is committed to honoring California Native American culture.

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**2. Old Sacramento**

Historic Old Sacramento is where the City of Sacramento began following the discovery of gold on the American River in 1848. Located at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers, the historic waterfront area is where fortune seekers from around the world came to stock up on supplies before
heading to the gold fields. Incorporated as a city in 1850 this area became the hub of commerce, communication and transportation in the region. Old Sacramento was the last stop on the Pony Express route, the terminus of the transcontinental railroad and housed the original California Supreme Court Chambers and California’s first State Library.

Today, it is a National Historic Landmark District and a State Historic Park encompassing 28 accessible acres and home to 53 historic buildings, the largest grouping of Gold Rush era buildings in the State of California. The area’s history is a rich backdrop for exploring all that the Old Sacramento has to offer from dining and shopping to entertainment and culture.

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**California State Railroad Museum**

*California State Railroad Museum* is North America’s finest and most visited railroad museum featuring the artifacts, stories and experiences of the Central Pacific Railroad’s crossing of the Sierra Mountains as part of the Transcontinental Railroad’s westward march to California.

**Old Sacramento Underground Tours**

During the *Old Sacramento Underground Tours*, tour guides tell the story of why the City of Sacramento choose to raise its streets and buildings to avoid further flooding as visitors explore spaces that were created by the city’s successful raising process. This historical tour includes hollow sidewalks, sloped alleyways, and the Underground spaces themselves.

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**3. Old Sacramento Waterfront**

The Old Sacramento Waterfront is that part of Old Sacramento generally between Front Street and the waterfront, and between the I Street Bridge to the north and the Tower Bridge to the south. The lands are owned by the City of Sacramento and the State of California and dotted with leaseholds for restaurants, and boats or undeveloped parcels. Within this area there are a number of amenities and attractions:
Sacramento History Museum

Think about Sacramento’s past and the Gold Rush comes to mind. But that’s only part of the story. The Sacramento History Museum is dedicated to Sacramento’s rich and diverse history. The galleries and exhibits explore the history and stories of the area’s first inhabitants, the pioneers who settled here during the Gold Rush, life on the farm, and more. The Museum also features interactive exhibits that bring to life the people and events of Sacramento and its unique place in the history of California and the nation.

Riverboat Delta King

Walk through the lobbies of the Riverboat Delta King a floating hotel, restaurant and entertainment fixture to explore the history of river travel between Sacramento and San Francisco and the restoration of this historic vessel.

North Public Market

Located on the west side of Front Street between J and K Streets, the current North Public Market is meant to be a reconstruction of the original California Pacific Railroad Freight Depot first constructed in 1864 and extended in 1868. The Freight Depot was then demolished in 1880 and replaced with a new, larger freight building which burned down in 1972.

The North Public Market, largely vacant today, acts as a visual and physical impediment between Old Sacramento proper and the waterfront and is as a key element to the revitalization of the Old Sacramento Waterfront. It plays a critical role as a link between the Sacramento History Museum and the California State Railroad Museum to the north and the restaurants, hotels, merchants and Waterfront Park to the south.
South Public Market

Located on the west side of Front Street between K and L Streets, the South Public Market or “Waterfront Building” consists of five suites which were designed and intended to serve as restaurants or food stands. These spaces are highly visible in a freestanding building on the west boardwalk of Front Street and have the additional advantage of outdoor seating immediately in front of the businesses and at the south end of the public market.

Rail Corridor

The rail tracks between Front Street and the Embarcadero are reminiscent of the original Transcontinental Railroad (where the ceremonial first spike was driven at Front and K Streets) and is now used for rail excursion trips. Since 1984, more than one million guests have taken a ride aboard the Sacramento Southern Railroad, served by all-volunteer crews fully trained and certified under Federal Railroad Administration regulations.

Embarcadero

The waterfront Embarcadero was recently updated and is now a new 1,000 foot waterfront promenade and event stage dotted with viewing platforms and shade structures. Its river edge is a floodwall whose height is fixed. Two restaurants, Joe’s Crab Shack and Rio City Café, operate under lease with the City on the riverside of the Embarcadero. There is an undeveloped City owned riverside parcel between Joe’s Crab Shack and the Tower Bridge and the undeveloped river’s edge north of the Embarcadero is State owned.

Docks and Barges

Since 1987, tour and charter boats have operated from the dock by various concessionaires under agreement with the City. Hornblower Cruises and Events currently has a license for tour boats, charters and special events. The River Otter Water Taxi operated from 1996-2006. The historic riverboat Delta King, which has been operating as a hotel, restaurant and theater since 1992, moored at the K Street Barge.

Waterfront Park/Old Sacramento School House

Waterfront Park is a small undeveloped parcel between the South Public Market service area and the Old School House. It is largely unused. The Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum is a replica of a traditional one-room schoolhouses found throughout America in the late 1800s. The one-room replica schoolhouse, was constructed in 1977 by community volunteers, features a playground, a pot-bellied stove, vintage student desks and other furnishings typical of the period.

4. Sacramento Waterfront Historic Background

The Sacramento Waterfront has been utilized by humans for thousands of years. But in recently history, the waterfront played a key role in opening the American west of the nation and the world. Not only is the waterfront important on a national scale, it was the foundation of the City of Sacramento. It is here that Sacramento became the indomitable city, rebuilding after floods and fires, and the site of many of the City’s most colorful historic storylines.
Native Americans

Native Americans, including the Nisenan and Maidu tribes, have a long history of inhabiting the land in the Sacramento Valley. The tribes prospered along the Sacramento River, taking advantage of the abundance of resources the river had to offer.

Gold Rush

With the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill in 1848, Sacramento’s waterfront exploded with activity. Ships filled with goods for Sacramento’s merchants and the northern California gold mines were arriving daily. Would-be gold miners arriving in California by ship made their final landfall at Sacramento and headed into the Gold Country. The waterfront was so busy, by 1850 it was common practice to tie up surplus sailing vessels along the embarcadero for storage purposes and sell goods directly from the vessel.

Flooding and Fires

In January 1850, a major flood devastated the city. The American and Sacramento Rivers crested at the same time and flooded the City. Two more floods inundated the City in March and December of 1850, prompting the construction of levees.

The first significant fire in the City occurred in 1850 and destroyed several buildings just east of the waterfront. In November 1852, the City caught fire again and 85% of the City was destroyed. The City was rebuilt with buildings constructed of brick instead of wood.

The flood of March 1861 caused widespread flooding, however, the winter of 1861-1862 saw the worst flooding in the history of the Sacramento. The devastation of these floods kept the city and county under water for three months would permanently change the city’s landscape. The City altered the course of the American River moving it away from the central business area and it raised its streets and buildings to create a flood wall to permanently protect the city from another flood of this scale.

Transportation

The Sacramento Waterfront was a hub of wagon train, steamboat and sailing vessel, and railroad transportation. In the 1860’s, Sacramento transportation transitioned from primarily wagons to an industrial age transportation system. By 1869, the transportation evolution would result in a transcontinental railroad, across the nation, and a network of steam ships that connected Sacramento to China, the eastern states, and the whole world.

The Sacramento River was a major route for steamboats traveling between San Francisco and Sacramento with many large ships in operation. These ships docked at the embarcadero and delivered passengers and goods to the Sacramento Waterfront which were then transported by wagons to the surrounding area and gold mines. The ships, wagons, and waterfront facilities to serve them, created a bustle of activity.

A coast-to-coast railroad was made a necessity by the Civil War. In July 1862, Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railroad Act authorizing the Central Pacific Railroad to build east from Sacramento and the Union Pacific Railroad to build west from the Missouri River. The railroad broke ground on the transcontinental railroad at Front and K Streets. This railroad was one of the greatest construction efforts of the 19th century and linked California to the rest of the nation.
Communication and Innovation

The Pony Express came to Sacramento in 1860. Prior to the Pony Express, mail from the east coast took 6 months to reach California as letters were delivered via ship around South America’s Cape Horn. The Pony Express delivered mail from the east coast to Sacramento in 10 days and was the first transcontinental communication.

The Pony Express was in operation for eighteen months and but became obsolete upon the arrival of the First Transcontinental Telegraph. By 1861, Sacramento was linked to the telegraph lines on the other side of the continent.

Industrial Waterfront

By the end of the 1870s the Old Sacramento area was already changing in character from the City’s central business district to a warehouse area. The Central Pacific demolished its old freight and passenger buildings along Front Street and replaced them with huge freight sheds. Warehouses dominated the waterfront through the 1950’s.

Skid Row

In the 1960’s, the Sacramento Waterfront had become a blighted area and home to the City’s skid row. It was a collection of flophouses, bars, diners and pawn shops. This blighted area was further exacerbated by the construction of Interstate 5, which created a physical barrier between the waterfront and associated buildings and the remainder of the City.

Redevelopment

In the 1950’s people began to realize the significance of this area. Redevelopment and revitalization of Old Sacramento to the north of the Tower Bridge began in the 1960s. The Old Sacramento State Historic Park (OSSHP) was founded in the 1960’s to ensure preservation of this historically significant area and providing an authentic scene of the gold rush area between 1849 and 1870. Additionally, in 1965, Old Sacramento received a National Historic District designation.

5. Resources

Central City Community Plan
Riverfront Master Plan
Old Sacramento Waterfront
City of Sacramento, Community Development Department, Preservation
Center for Sacramento History
National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
Old Sacramento State Historic Park General Plan and EIR