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Harriman awarded two Fall River urban renewal projects

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Fall River, MA Harriman has been selected by the Fall River Redevelopment Authority (FRRA) to develop two master plans for the city. The first is an urban renewal plan for the waterfront and the second is an urban renewal plan for the downtown. The resulting documents are intended to identify the most promising prospects for development of key downtown and waterfront areas with the goal of supporting local and regional economic development and increasing quality of life for both local neighborhoods and Fall River as a whole. Each urban renewal plan is expected to be completed in the summer of 2017.

Following two separate request for proposal processes initiated by the FRRA, Harriman was selected to conduct both plans because of its extensive experience with the preparation of evaluations, studies and plans for redeveloping downtowns throughout New England, including the Fall River Harbor and Downtown Economic Development Plan in 2002 when The Cecil Group (prior to merging with Harriman) developed a strategy for transitioning the waterfront from industrial to recreational use. By assigning both plans to one firm, Fall River benefits from efficiencies in time and effort for data collection, technical analysis, and meeting coordination.

“Fall River needs a plan to revitalize their downtown and waterfront into a vibrant, active community, and Harriman is thrilled to be spearheading the initiative. The downtown and waterfront connect physically, economically and culturally, and Harriman is developing strategies to reorganize and reenergize the area,” said Emily Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, senior urban planner of Harriman. “Having the opportunity to enhance and shape a city is an honor, and our experienced team of urban planners, urban designers, architects and engineers are collaborating to help Fall River reach its full potential. The end goal is a plan that attracts businesses, residents, and visitors and strengthens the local economy.”

The relationship between the downtown and the waterfront is more than just the physical connection of streets and sidewalks.

The plans will outline proposed public infrastructure improvements, such as how to connect the waterfront to local neighborhoods with improved pedestrian and bicycle access, as well as future connection to the larger region that includes new access to the Veterans Memorial shared use path and the future site of the proposed South Coast Rail expansion. New parcels for development will be identified to encourage private entities to establish restaurant, retail, housing and tourism options

within the area.

All urban renewal plans in Massachusetts must be created under the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B, and follow the format and content requirements of the Department of Community Housing and Development 760 CMR 12.00. Critical components of a redevelopment plan include defining the area to target for revitalization, prescribing public actions that will create incentives for the private market to reinvest in the defined area, and involving the community in a public process throughout both the planning and approval stages. The urban renewal plans are designed to identify the most cost-effective use of the FRRA's resources, with catalyst projects devised as incentives to encourage the private market to invest.

Harriman's portfolio includes planning efforts throughout the Northeast for mixed-use redevelopment of downtowns, urban waterfronts, former mill districts, and transit-oriented development. Relevant projects include the award-winning urban renewal plan for downtown Salem, Mass., which included an extensive set of guidelines to ensure that new infill development would be compatible with the historic district, and preparing the urban design studies and strategic components for the urban renewal plan for Assembly Sq. in Somerville, Mass., which involved envisioning the eventual buildout of nearly 11 million s/f of mixed-use development, including a new transit station, parks and open space, and a new network of streets and blocks. Harriman also developed form-based zoning for the urban renewal district in Manchester, Conn., designed to convert underutilized properties into an attractive and valuable mixed-use commercial and residential district, and the preparation of architecture and landscape designs for many waterfront parks and spaces, including restoration of the historic waterfront carousel in Hull, Mass. Harriman is currently wrapping up LawrenceTBD, the urban renewal plan for the city of Lawrence, Mass.

Other members of the redevelopment team include Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. for support on plan elements related to transportation and infrastructure; FXM Associates for market analysis of existing and potential market trends; and Bonz and Company, Inc. to undertake any necessary appraisals. Language Link Consortium will provide translation services to meet community needs.

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