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CHICAGO RIVERWALK DEVELOPMENT MOVES FORWARD

Pre-Bid Conference Held as City Seeks Qualified Riverwalk Managers/Operators

The Department of Procurement Services (DPS) and the Department of Fleet and Facility Management (2FM) today held a pre-bid conference for organizations or partnerships interested in responding to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that will be used to help select qualified entities to provide operation and management services to the Riverwalk. The RFQ process is still open; interested parties have until April 7 to respond to the RFQ.

“The Chicago River and surrounding land have the potential to be a top entertainment and recreation destination for residents and tourists alike,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “We look forward to seeing proposals that will optimize the Chicago River area and, ideally, showcase Chicago businesses.”

Through the Riverwalk, the City seeks to create an entertainment and recreation destination that will provide a variety of programming options in order to develop and activate the sites along the main branch of the Chicago River. Additional amenities along the Riverwalk may include accommodation for tour, charter or dinner cruise boats; facilities for human-powered boating; bike rentals; cafes and restaurants; retail – particularly of a cultural or environmental nature; educational facilities; or other types of family-friendly concessions. Other ideas that would enhance the use and enjoyment of the Chicago River are also requested.

The City is requesting submissions from managers/operators of recreational, cultural, entertainment, restaurant and retail operations to assist with the planning, development, ongoing operations and management of the Chicago Riverwalk. The selected operator/manager will assist the City with the key aspects of the Riverwalk, including program development, program management, retail management and property operations and management.

DPS is using a two-tiered process to identify an organization or partnership to develop and activate the sites along the main branch of the Chicago River. Interested parties must first respond to the RFQ by April 7 to qualify to respond to a future Request for Proposal (RFP). Only organizations or partnerships deemed qualified by an evaluation committee will be invited to respond to the future

RFP to manage and operate the Chicago Riverwalk. Although timelines could be extended, the RFP is currently scheduled to be issued on May 2, with responses slated to be due by June 3, 2014.

The City has been working on the development plan for the Chicago Riverwalk since the 1990s. During the reconstruction of East-West Wacker Drive, the roadway was reconfigured to allow greater public access to the river. The City received Congressional approval to redefine the navigational channel allowing the build-out of the path 20 feet under each bridge and 25 feet between each bridge and 50 feet between Franklin and Lake Street in order to extend the Riverwalk all the way to Lake Street.

The City has obtained \$98 million for design engineering and construction from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act. This will fund the remaining portion of the Riverwalk along the south bank of the river from Lake Street to State Street.

State Street to LaSalle Street construction is currently underway and LaSalle Street to Lake Street construction is expected later this year. Construction of the Riverwalk and accompanying amenities is expected to be substantially completed in 2016. The new build-out will permit a riverside pedestrian path from Lake Street all the way to the lakefront.

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