



Infrastructure Improvements & Master Development Plan Frequently Asked Questions

April 23, 2024

What infrastructure improvements are happening at the River District development site?

The first phase of infrastructure improvements at the River District involves exploratory work around water, sewer, drainage, stormwater, 5G fiber+, and resilient power in anticipation of infrastructure installation.

How will neighbors be impacted during the infrastructure improvement work?

As with any major development project, temporary lane closures, utility work, or material deliveries may impact the area. RDNI will coordinate with the New Orleans Department of Public Works, Sewerage & Water Board, and other appropriate City departments to follow all standard notice procedures for this work. We encourage residents and business owners to sign up for NOLA Ready updates with the City of New Orleans at <https://ready.nola.gov/stay-connected/emergency-alerts/>. You can also sign up for updates at www.smart911.com.

Have infrastructure improvements been planned and permitted by the City of New Orleans?

Multiple phases of infrastructure improvements are planned for the River District. The first phase, for which exploratory work is currently underway, is awaiting final permitting. The second phase is in the planning phase and will include traffic management (signalization, striping, signage, wayfinding, monitoring systems, etc.) and the minimal rerouting of Tchoupitoulas Street traffic for improved access to elevated US Business 90.

We will continue to work with key stakeholders throughout all phases of the project, including neighbors, the City of New Orleans Department of Public Works, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the Regional Transit Authority, the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the Port of New Orleans, and Tulane University/Riverfront Property Management.

How will developers ensure that the new development does not contribute to area flooding?

We have developed a state-of-the-art drainage system intentionally designed to handle the stormwater levels anticipated in South Louisiana.

What are RDNI's plans for resilient power in the River District?

We are working closely with Entergy to build a smart energy infrastructure focused on a sustainable, reliable, and resilient energy system that can meet the needs of future generations while minimizing environmental impact.

What will public transit look like in the River District?

Within the current River District development plan, we have designed dedicated traffic lanes to support the Regional Transit Authority's (RTA) plan for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). This will allow

for reduced waiting times and fewer delays between stops. The plan currently provides BRT stops at the future outdoor grounds across from the Convention Center and the River District Public Park entrance. The circulation model will allow for planned stops at the larger event spaces and the front doors of the planned mixed-income housing locations. Although being considered, there are no plans at this time to extend the streetcar through the River District. However, we have been working closely with the RTA and are considering all options and proposals.

How long does infrastructure work take?

The first phase of infrastructure work is expected to take 18 months to complete. The second phase of work is still being planned and will be announced at a later date.

Are you looking for subcontractors for this work? How can I find out about business opportunities associated with the River District?

We encourage businesses interested in working on the project to register with us at www.riverdistrictnola.com/opportunities/. All opportunities for subcontractors will be posted.

What is the plan for Melpomene Street?

The City of New Orleans approved a land swap with the Convention Center for approximately 1,400 sf of right-of-way to better align Melpomene Street with Tchoupitoulas Street. This land swap is necessary to provide an optimal traffic pattern for the area. In the first phase of infrastructure improvements, we will work on rerouting Melpomene Street.

Has RDNI done a traffic study of the area?

Yes, there have been traffic studies with input from all stakeholders, including the City Department of Public Works, the Port of New Orleans, the Convention Center, Tulane University, and the State Department of Transportation.

Will anything surpass the height allowed by the zoning in place at this time? Is there anything planned that will require additional permitting?

There are no plans to build anything beyond the height restrictions set forth by the overlay district. There are no current plans for a Ferris wheel, although we are considering all development options. That said, the master development plan and overlay district are designed for flexibility. Should the RDNI team have an opportunity to look at something that is beyond the restrictions in place, they would – as any development entity would – go through the proper process with the City of New Orleans, and thus, there would be an additional Neighborhood Participation Process.

Where is your commitment to affordable and workforce housing?

The RDNI partners and the Convention Center have entered into a Master Development Agreement (MDA) contract that stipulates, among other things, that RDNI must build at least 900 residential units in the development and that at least half of these must be affordable and workforce units.

Why isn't the affordable housing planned for the River District being built at this time?

We are currently in the planning and financing stage of the first phase of residential development. It's important for the public to understand that affordable housing developments are defined by long lead times, including state applications and approvals, and they often

require city financial support. Though not the first building to be constructed, the River District's residential component has always been and remains part of the first phase of the River District master plan and requires the infrastructure work that is underway.

When will you begin construction on affordable housing?

Construction could begin as early as 2025, subject to state and city funding. Currently, the River District team is focused on applying for gap financing to fund the planned affordable and workforce units. In addition, the team is negotiating with debt and equity partners. These discussions depend on state and city commitments; projects without city and state support are deemed less feasible and viable.

Are you bringing in a grocery store?

We hope to have a grocery store and other retailers and service providers in the River District. Our development team has had conversations with multiple grocery operators, and those conversations continue.

Are there plans to create a riverfront park, and if so, who will have access to it?

We'd love the opportunity to incorporate a riverfront park and are open to discussing that with the Port and other stakeholders. Ideally, it would be open to the public.

Has a site for the Civil Rights Museum been determined, and if so, where will it be built?

The River District has allowed space for the proposed Civil Rights Museum. However, it has never been part of the River District's scope to develop the Civil Rights Museum directly. The organizers of the Civil Rights Museum are working to finance the development of a permanent facility. We hope that they are successful in their efforts.

What is happening with the Market Street Power Plant (MSPP)? Is it a part of the Master Development Plan?

A subset of RDNI partners own the MSPP. They have plans to renovate and re-purpose the property into a state-of-the-art entertainment/food and beverage facility similar to the likes of Ponce City Market in Atlanta and other historically renovated projects around the country. They are working to secure financing in order to make this happen, and it's a huge task. MSPP is part of the master development plan and overlay district in place.