

Jacksonville City Council
Special Committee on the Future of Downtown

October 27, 2025



Private sector investment of more than \$2.5 million

Vision: Jacksonville's Downtown Riverfront is envisioned as a world-class destination: a vibrant, interconnected network of parks that unite neighborhoods, celebrate the river, and offer welcoming spaces to gather, enjoy nature, and build community. More than green space, these public spaces are a catalyst for economic growth, cultural vitality, healthy living, and resilience; supporting a thriving, dynamic city now and for generations to come.

Mission: The Jax Riverfront Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to stewarding a bold vision for Downtown Jacksonville's Riverfront through the implementation, activation, and enhancement of a world-class system of parks and public spaces.

Scope: The Jax Riverfront Alliance will assume responsibility for maintaining, operating and activating the entire set of parks and public spaces along the Downtown riverfront, across the Northbank and Southbank, including both existing and future spaces, all operated to a high standard of care that meets national benchmarks and local expectations.



Guiding Principles: In support of the City's efforts to create a world-class riverfront, the Jax Riverfront Alliance will prioritize the following principles as a foundation for lasting success:

A Riverfront for All: Create and sustain a riverfront that serves as a vibrant, fun, iconic destination: open, accessible, and inviting to all residents and visitors through both its design and a variety of ongoing programming and experiences.

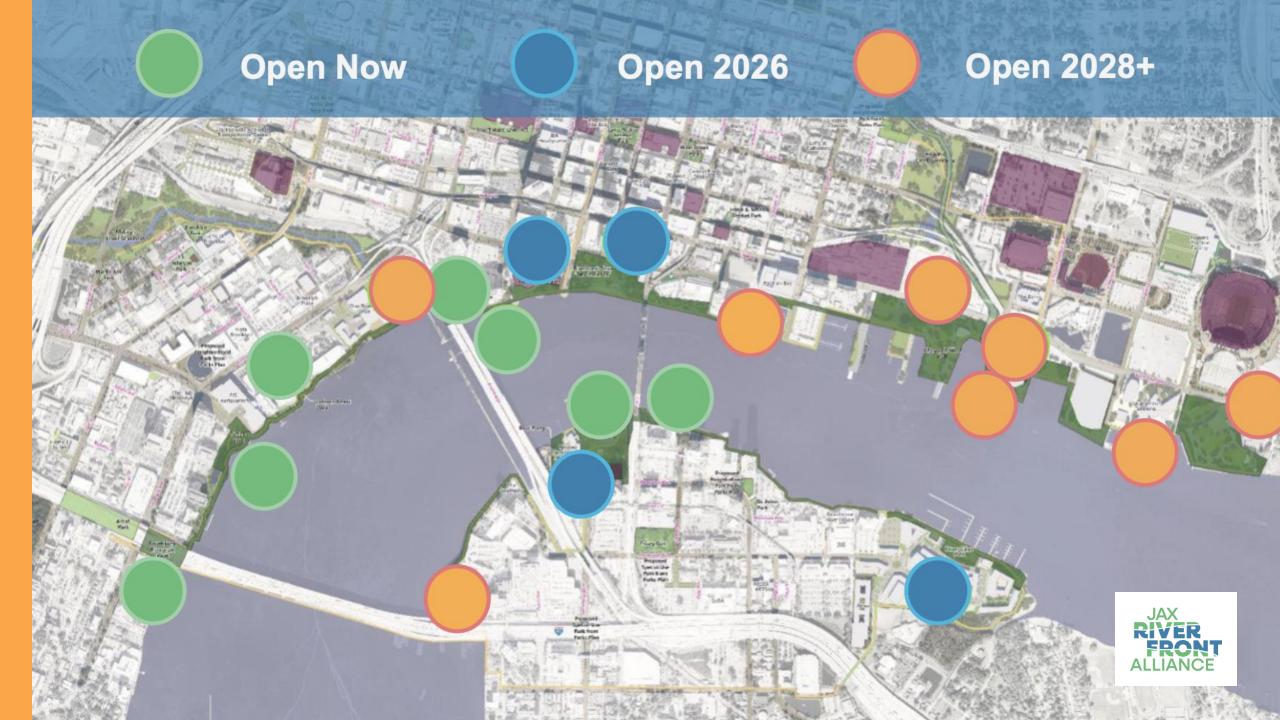
Raise the Bar: Provide riverfront parks that consistently exceed expectations for vibrancy, cleanliness, maintenance, landscape care and programming, setting a new standard for public spaces in Jacksonville.

Connectivity: Shape a pedestrian and bike-friendly, accessible riverwalk that links the parks, public spaces and The Emerald Trail to the adjacent Downtown districts and urban core neighborhoods while encouraging alternative transportation and healthy lifestyles.

Community Engagement: Engage residents early and often to ensure riverfront spaces reflect shared community priorities, and continue seeking feedback after implementation to guide improvements, programming, and long-term success.

Art, Culture, and Identity: Celebrate Jacksonville's culture through thoughtfully integrated public art, performance spaces, and design elements that reflect the city's history and community.

Long-term Thinking: Design with the long view in mind, prioritizing flexibility, financial sustainability, shade, resilience, and quality materials.



To fulfill the vision of a world class Downtown Riverfront, the Jax Riverfront Alliance is a public-private partnership model tailored to Jacksonville's unique context, informed by successful efforts in Houston (Discovery Green), Miami (The Underline), Sarasota (The Bay), and Memphis (Tom Lee Park). In each of these cities, long-term agreements between the municipality and a place-based nonprofit have transformed underutilized public spaces into iconic civic destinations.













The Underline













City of Jacksonville + Jax Riverfront Alliance Partnership Responsibilities

At the center of the public-private partnership is a formal, long-term partnership agreement between the City of Jacksonville and the Jax Riverfront Alliance.

- Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the stewardship of Downtown riverfront parks and public spaces between the City and the Alliance.
- Establish the City's and the Alliance's funding commitments.
- Authorize the Alliance to manage the City's riverfront public spaces in adherence with established quality standards to create a cohesive sense of place.



City of Jacksonville + Jax Riverfront Alliance Partnership Responsibilities

Operations & Maintenance: Hardscapes, landscaping, amenities, and utilities

Safety & Security: Enhanced presence and support services

Programming & Activations: Engaging community and recreational activations

Fundraising & Sponsorships: Grants, donations, earned income, and partnerships

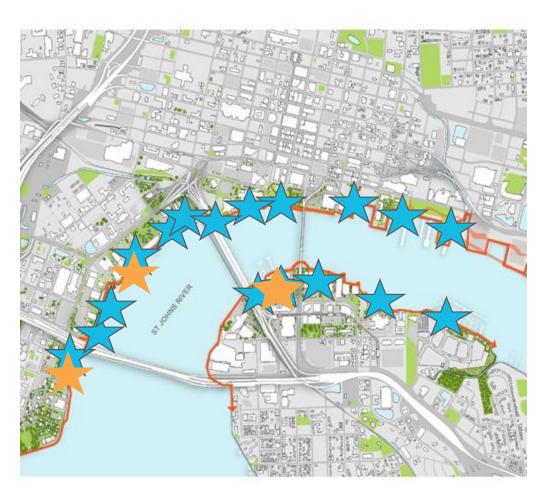
Marketing & Branding: Identity, signage, wayfinding, and outreach

Data & Analytics: Tracking usage, outcomes, and guest satisfaction

Community Engagement: Ensuring the riverfront reflects local values and voices



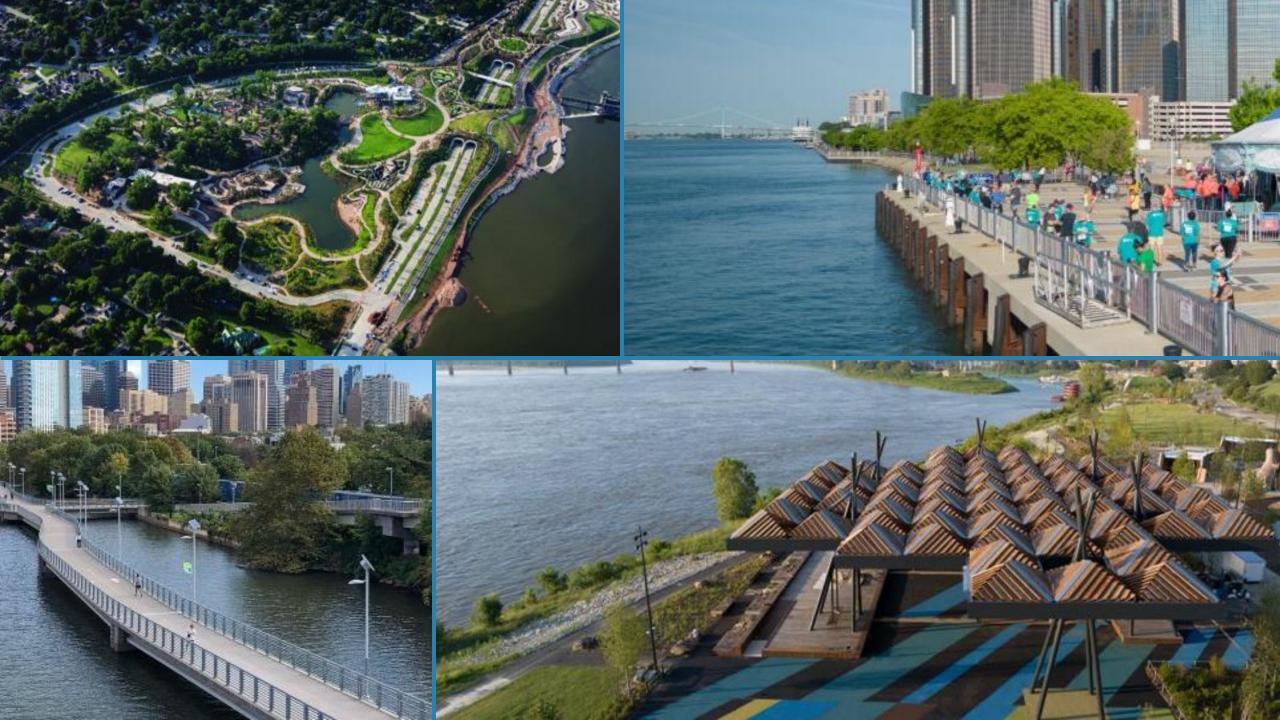
With the partnership there will be 1000s of activations and events every year on Jacksonville's Downtown Riverfront.



Example activations may include...

- Family & Youth Activities
- Fitness & Wellness Programming
- Markets & Vendor Activations
- Arts, Music & Performance
- Community & Civic Engagement
- Environmental & Educational Programming
- Cultural & Heritage
- Signature
- Festivals & Mid-Scale
 *does not include large-scale,
 special events like RiverJams





October 2025 Updates

The organization has officially transformed from the Riverfront Parks Conservancy into the Jax Riverfront Alliance. This includes updating bylaws, electing a new Board and officers, and updating records with the State of Florida and the IRS.

We have secured the executive recruiter Kittleman & Associates to support a nationwide search for a CEO with demonstrated experience running this type of organization.

We have hired an Interim Director to support day-to-day scale-up activities and operations, enable stakeholder engagement, and ensure a CEO can hit the ground running.

The Board has several active committees, including Launch, Partnerships, and Finance, that are leveraging the diverse skillsets and experience of Board members and working diligently so that the organization is ready to begin operations in April 2026.

We are working closely with COJ Parks Director Daryl Joseph to co-create the partnership agreement with the City of Jacksonville. This complex legal effort is being supported pro-bono by the firm Driver, McAfee, Hawthorne & Diebenow.







THANK YOU

