



OFFICE OF MAYOR LENNY CURRY

ST. JAMES BUILDING
117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 400
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

PH: (904) 630-1776
FAX: (904) 630-2391
www.coj.net

November 14, 2018

Chairman Jim Bailey
Downtown Investment Authority
City Hall at St. James Building
117 West Duval Street, Suite 310
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

Chairman Bailey

As always, thanks to you for your work as chairman and to all members of the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) team. Your service to the city continues to produce important results for Jacksonville. Thanks as well for the effort of studying and gathering information on an important strategic decision; a future Convention Center investment for Jacksonville.

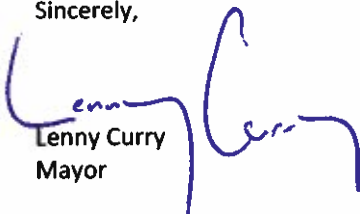
The feasibility study did an excellent job of presenting the questions we must face. It went to convention industry experts to assess their sense of potential strengths and weaknesses we would need to consider. Most important, by analyzing our market and comparable cities in the Southeast, the study developed important questions for us about cost, size, location and timing. While the study was comprehensive, it did not entirely address these questions. As a result, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued by DIA to solicit this information from market leading development experts.

As we discussed in our recent meeting, the proposals were thorough, impressive, and based on your grading process they were ranked. Another thing the process revealed, though, was that these developments are daunting. The timelines for development and the substantial investment of public dollars would represent a dramatic shift in our capacity to participate in other pending public/private partnerships.

With the weight of that move in mind, I went back to the most striking statement in the feasibility study, found in the conclusion of the meeting planner interviews. It says, "As stated above, over 60% of the planners interviewed or surveyed were not interested in Jacksonville and/or a new Convention Center without destination development." That, combined with the financial data from the RFP, tells us in the simplest terms that if we divert such considerable resources away from other development for a Convention Center, we will still be lacking the additional lifestyle and entertainment that ultimately would ensure its success.

With all these things in mind, I would ask the DIA board to contemplate the issues I've addressed, revisit the decision regarding a Convention Center for some point in the future, and continue to focus on near term opportunities.

Sincerely,


Lenny Curry
Mayor