

Struggling \$1B Crystal Lagoon Entertainment Project In Rowlett Is Getting Back On Track, Looking For New Developer

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The city of Rowlett is a step closer to building a \$1B mixed-use entertainment complex featuring a Crystal Lagoon after reaching a deal to terminate its relationship with developer Bayside District Partners and move forward with another yet-to-be-named developer.



City of Rowlett

Rendering of Bayside project with Crystal Lagoon

The deal temporarily halts tense discussions between the city and Bayside, which initially had a partnership with Rowlett to develop property south of Interstate 30.

The city and Bayside Land Partners LLC — as well as developer Bayside District Partners — launched the public-private initiative four years ago to develop Bayside, a \$1B mixed-use development featuring an 8-acre **Crystal Lagoon**, a 1-acre show fountain, 1.75M SF of commercial space for mixed-use entertainment, restaurants, retail and an open-bench trolley. The project also includes 45 acres of programmed parks, miles of bike trails and a 500-room resort and conference center.

The city of Rowlett filed a lawsuit against Bayside District Partners in a **Dallas County** State District Court last year, alleging that Bayside defaulted on its development agreements with the city by attempting to eliminate the lagoon, show fountain and a trolley from the development plan. Bayside also attempted to cut back on planned entertainment, restaurant and retail developments, while increasing land designated for residential development.

Because these changes fell short of Rowlett's vision, the City Council rejected the developer's proposed revisions in September and now intends to move forward with a new development partner.

As part of the agreement reached this past week, Rowlett agreed that a 119-acre tract south of I-30 will be acquired along with the Crystal Lagoon license and all rights to the 1,000 marina strips. Through this agreement, the city hopes it can move forward with a new development partner.

"We have been steadfast in upholding our community's vision," Rowlett Mayor Tammy Dana-Bashian said. "This is a one-of-a-kind property and we are excited to be moving forward in our commitment to develop the unique destination that our citizens deserve."

"Our goal, first and foremost, has been to facilitate development of the land in a manner that optimizes its value to the citizens of Rowlett," the mayor added. "This agreement gets us back on track toward this goal."

While the tentative deal gives the city a dose of optimism, it will take several months to close on the land and any new agreements.

"We want the public to know that the City of Rowlett will not and does not intend to own nor develop the south tract or the marina," Dana-Bashian said in a statement. "During this 120-day process the City will negotiate agreements with a new development partner who shares the City's vision of an entertainment district with world-class amenities."

A town hall meeting will be held March 18 at the Rowlett Community Centre to provide information to the public regarding the new agreement and the city's next steps.

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