

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Rebecca Keefer, AICP—City Planner and Director of Sustainability

**Date:** May 12, 2014

**Subject:** **Discussion of Contract Award for RFP 2014-04: Perimeter Center Zoning District**

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### **ITEM DESCRIPTION**

Staff recommends partnering with Duncan Associations for the creation of the Perimeter Center Zoning District. The proposed contract fee of \$98,200 is within the adopted project budget of \$100,000.

### **BACKGROUND**

In January 2012, to implement and ensure consistency with the city's adopted Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Comprehensive Transportation Plan and area Master Plans, the city initiated a comprehensive rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Ordinance. Working with Duncan Associates, after an 18 month process with over 50 community meetings, the City Council held two special called meetings to focus on reviewing the topics and issues identified by our community and the members of the Community Council and Planning Commission. The new ordinances were adopted as part of the October 2013 Council Meeting.

During the Zoning and Land Development Code Rewrite process, the Council determined the Perimeter Center area required additional attention through an independent process. The unique characteristics and needs of this area require a separate zoning district to ensure high quality development as the area continues its transition from a suburban commercial district into a more contemporary, urban center. The Council prioritized the Perimeter Center Zoning District project as part of the FY 2014 Budget and allocated \$100,000 towards this endeavor.

In March 2014, staff released a Request for Proposals and received one response from Duncan Associates. While the receipt of multiple proposals is ideal for the competitive nature of this process, staff is confident that the integrity of the process has remained intact, whereby the firm best suited to fulfill the scope and objectives of the upcoming project has been recommended—Duncan Associates. To provide City Council with the same level of comfort to move forward with the staff recommendation, a summary of the RFP process is provided.

The RFP was posted on the state's procurement website, on the City's website, and on the American Planning Association (APA) website for a four weeks. In an abundance of caution, the selection committee contacted local and national professionals that responded to the

original rewrite solicitation in 2011 to determine whether there were any errors or omissions in the RFP release. Firms indicated their awareness of the project but cited different factors in their decisions not to propose, including current workload, the scale of the project, the risk-to-reward balance on a follow-up project. All firms indicated they seek solicitations through the American Planning Association (APA) webpage. Staff pursued the remainder of the process with the Duncan Associates proposal (reviewing, scoring, and interviewing the top firm), confident in those considerations. As with any other RFP, the review team scored the proposal and calculated an average of 90.8 out of 100.

The selection committee is certain about the abilities of the team assembled by Duncan Associates—marrying the skillset of Kirk Bishop from the City’s Zoning and Land Development Code Rewrite effort, with those of Leslie Oberholtzer, a highly regarded form-based code practitioner, proficient in sustainable development practices, who can consider the juxtaposition of a regional employment center with the suburban nature of the residential character areas.

## **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

The dynamics of this project warrant considerable outreach based on the extent of stakeholder interests: PCIDs and their respective board/property owners, neighboring cities of Sandy Springs and Brookhaven, and the resident community at large—all with vested interests in the outcome of this district. Based on their experience working with the City of Dunwoody, Duncan Associates has proposed an extensive public outreach process with substantial staff coordination, a sounding board, project-related content for the City website, and numerous public meetings. Should the Council agree with staff’s recommendation to move forward, at a future meeting staff will return to a future meeting to discuss the full civic engagement strategy and for appointment of members to the Sounding Board.

## **TIMELINE**

Duncan Associates has proposed a timeline of up to 13 months for this project, inclusive of the adoption process. This is not a rigid schedule, however, and can be adjusted to fit the variable needs identified throughout the input process.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The staff review team recommends Duncan Associates for the contract award of RFP 2014-04: Perimeter Center Zoning District with a fee of \$98,200.