

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Steve Foote, AICP
Date: November 10, 2014
Subject: Comprehensive Plan Five Year Update Contract Award

ITEM DESCRIPTION

The existing 2030 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2010 and is the long-range planning document that has helped guide the City of Dunwoody over the last five years. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that assists decision-making and administrative actions in an effort to guide the City of Dunwoody towards the community’s vision for the future. To update the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with state law, City Council previously allocated \$60,000 towards the project, and an additional \$60,000 was approved in the FY 2015 Budget, bringing the total budgeted amount to \$120,000.

BACKGROUND

The City’s RFP for Comprehensive Plan Five Year Update services, issued in September, came due on October 17. The City received three bid packages from both local and national planning and land use firms. City staff reviewed and ranked the packages based on an established set of criteria including technical experience, project management, and project understanding. The group subsequently convened to compare notes and devise a final committee ranking of all firms. The top two firms, Jacobs and Houseal Lavigne Associates, were then given face-to-face interviews with committee members on October 30. A comparison of the three proposals received, including their ratings, is provided below.

	Nesnick Enterprises, Inc. (\$75,640)	Jacobs (\$120,000)	Houseal Lavigne (\$120,000)
Sub-Total	50.5/100	84.75/100	79/100
Interview	N/A	25/25	20/25
Total	50.5/100	109.75/125	99/125

In consideration of the proposals and information shared in the interviews, the group reached consensus that the Jacobs team would best meet our needs for this project. Although both firms could produce a high-quality result, the Jacobs approach presented a fuller array of options in terms of community engagement, a more in-depth approach to the economic development study which was preferred by our Economic Development Director (encompassing not just market conditions but also insights to the entrepreneurial side and financial implications), and had a greater depth and breadth of understanding in terms of the new (March 2014) state standards governing the Comprehensive Plan update process.

Regarding the state standards, the Jacobs team came to the table with a full understanding of the lengthy adoption process (including reviews by the Community Council, Planning Commission, Mayor and Council, and 60 days of review between DCA and ARC) that will all need to be completed prior to the Council's final adoption (before the state's October 2015 deadline).

The Houseal Lavigne proposal was noted for its planning-focused approach. From a technical standpoint, and based on their past efforts in Dunwoody, the Houseal Lavigne team would likely complete a high-quality result as well. In comparison to Jacobs, the Houseal Lavigne project team was more assertive and brings an "outsider" perspective that could potentially bring more excitement about the project. However, the economic development study would likely be more place-based and not encompass an experienced regional perspective or additional insights and data about the entrepreneurial side of Dunwoody. In terms of community engagement, with Houseal Lavigne proposal fell short of the Jacobs proposal. In consideration of the project's overarching goals of strategically updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, as opposed to re-creating and re-imagining, the Jacobs approach will likely be a better fit for this endeavor.

The city does have an existing contract with Jacobs to provide the city's day-to-day communications and community engagement efforts. This existing contract does not prohibit or preclude Jacobs from bidding on other city work for which they are qualified. The review team was unanimous in its recommendation that the Jacobs team was not only qualified but the recommended firm for this project. The Jacobs proposal is particularly strong in terms of community engagement - anticipating spending roughly one-third of the project budget on community engagement efforts solely for the project. Although Jacobs may have ensured the proposed project elements include a strong community engagement process because of knowledge gained serving the city, this does not create a conflict of interest for either party. Contract staff personnel were not involved in the review, ranking, or recommendation of received bids. Regardless of the firm selected, the existing staff in our marketing and public relations department will support the efforts for the project but not lead them.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the comprehensive plan update project be awarded to Jacobs.