

ITEM: Consider selecting DSU/Bonestroo for preparing an Alternative Urban Area wide Review (AUAR) for the Village and directing the project director to develop a scope of services and project budget

SUBMITTED BY: Susan Hoyt, Project Director

REVIEWED BY: Council members Johnson and Smith
Tom Bouthilet, Interim Administrator
Technical team of city staff, consultants and independent reviewers

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: The city council is being asked to approve the firm of DSU/Bonestroo for preparing an Alternative Urban Area wide Review for the Village. The city council is also being asked to direct the project director to work with DSU/Bonestroo to develop a scope of services and a project budget to return to the city council. DSU/Bonestroo was selected from three firms, SRF and HKGi. The firm was selected because it provided a conservation development approach, a public participation process, the technical expertise and comparable experience that fits best with the city of Lake Elmo. The AUAR is estimated to take from 7 to 16 months to complete.

The AUAR is an extensive detailed environmental review of the Village that is anticipated to cost between \$175,000 and \$225,000 depending upon the scope of services. The staff recommends that the cost be covered through a future environmental fee charged to developers in the Village because it saves them time and money from doing their own environmental studies that accompany development and it reduces the risk of delays in developing their property. This is consistent with how other cities charge for AUARs and environmental reviews.

RELATED INFORMATION

The city of Lake Elmo has made a practice of protecting and enhancing its environment. It is lauded for its conservation developments. Undertaking a thorough environmental review of the Village master plan allows the city to understand the potential environmental issues and to adopt mitigation plans for any future developments that assure the city and its citizens that it is being environmentally sensitive as it undertakes the Village development.

The DSU/Bonestroo proposed a process for completing the AUAR as follows: (see attachment 1).

- a conservation development approach
- an advisory committee throughout the process to assure good information, communication and input is included
- meetings with environmental review agencies to assure that the city's evaluation is meeting the required components and the city does not have to undertake additional costs at the end of the process
- flexibility to adapt to the city's needs/direction and to work with city staff and consultants
- technical expertise within the firm to cover the range of issues with the addition of the 106 group for cultural / historical evaluation and a SBP Associates for air impacts
- a mitigation plan that addresses potential future development that makes it clear to developers what Lake Elmo expects of them and that addresses future development scenarios that may not currently be anticipated so the city is not required to continually pay for changes to the AUAR

Susan – did you want this sentence deleted?

The AUAR process follows the acceptance of the city's master plan vision, which will be completed by early or mid – April so it is timely to get the project started.

The AUAR timeframe of 7 to 16 months (June, 2008) is based upon the complexity of the analysis. Development cannot occur until after the trunk sewer reaches 20th Street which is estimated at May 2008.

The AUAR study precedes any amendments to the city's comprehensive plan because the AUAR analysis may result in some changes to the master plan as it is visioned without the detailed technical information. Following the comprehensive plan amendments, the zoning code for the Village will be adopted.

The AUAR cost can be legitimately charged to future developers of the Village because it replaces the need for a developer to do an environmental assessment worksheet (EAW), which, if not mandatory, is typically required by cities and can cost between \$20,000 and \$60,000 for a development. It also avoids the much more costly EIS that some developers must complete.

The other proposes, SRF and HKGi, are well qualified. Their proposals are available from the project director. Because the scope and approach vary depending upon the city's needs, the estimated costs cover a wide range. The firms' costs ranged from a minimum of \$100,000 to \$215,000.

The technical team panel asked a series of questions to the firms (attachment 2). The council members interviewed the firms independent of the technical team so this policy perfective would be communicated to the staff. All those involved recommended the firm of DSU/Bonestroo.

RECOMMENDATION:

The interim administrator and project director recommend the hiring of DSU/Bonestroo for the AUAR.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Proposed motion for consideration the city council moves to:

Approve DSU/Bonestroo as the firm for preparing the Village AUAR and directs the project director to negotiate a scope of services and a project budget to return to the city council. The scope of the project shall include: 1) a conservation development approach, 2) an advisory panel, 3) interim reviews with environmental agencies and 4) a mitigation plan that can be translated into development requirements for the Village.

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS

Introduction	Project Director
Presentation	DSU/Bonestroo
Questions from council members	Mayor and Councilmembers
Discussion	Mayor and Council members
Consider motion	City Council

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1 Response to RFQ
- 2 Questions