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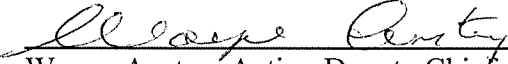
Halifax Regional Council
March 7, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer



Wayne Anstey, Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 28, 2006

SUBJECT: **RFP # 05-073: Regional Centre Urban Design Study**

ORIGIN

- On November 8, 2005 Regional Council approved cost sharing for this study between HRM, the Province of Nova Scotia, and ACOA.
- On November 18, 2005 the RFP for this study was issued.
- On February 6, 2006 the Project Steering Committee identified the successful consultant team from a field of seven submissions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Regional Council award RFP # 05-073 (Regional Centre Urban Design Study) to the highest ranking proponent, Office for Urbanism, Inc., at a cost of \$199,601.42, net HST included. Funds are available from Capital Account # CDE00105, and cost sharing with ACOA and the Province are in place, per the budget section of this report.

BACKGROUND

Definition of Urban Design:

Urban Design sets the stage for our daily lives, and when done well it seamlessly joins the physical environments of public and private development. Urban Design occurs at the intersection of architecture and planning and concerns itself with land use, density, building form, materials, open space at a range of scales, and the quality of both future and existing development. Urban Design is an integral and essential part of architecture and the process of place-making. Urban Designers use an inclusive approach to act as coordinators for a range of design, technical, cultural and recreational services, and bring these inter-related elements together in an Urban Design Plan.

Importance of Good Urban Design:

The Draft Regional Plan places great emphasis on community design approaches to manage future growth and infill in the Regional Centre, as well as in other community centres throughout HRM. By encouraging inviting streetscapes and protecting its cultural heritage and natural areas, the Draft Regional Plan underscores the critical role of good community design in promoting high quality of life. It also promotes a development pattern that is transit-oriented, compact, walkable, values public open space, is of mixed uses, and has clearly defined centres of activity.

Urban Design is a key priority of HRM's recently endorsed Economic Development Strategy. It sets as an action item the adoption of urban guidelines to protect heritage resources and encourage vibrant neighbourhoods. HRM's Draft Cultural Plan also acknowledges the importance of good Urban Design with goals to establish a high level of design quality in our neighbourhoods and downtowns. A telephone survey conducted as part of the Cultural Plan indicated that 88% of HRM residents believe architecture and urban design are either *critically important*, or *important* to them, whereas only 11% of residents are *completely satisfied* with the present condition of architecture and urban design in HRM. The Regional Centre Urban Design Study proposes to address the gap between these two numbers.

In January, 2006 Regional Council endorsed a number of Council Focus Areas to articulate to staff the areas with which they were most concerned. As it is the nature of urban design to be multi-disciplinary and broad in scope, the Regional Centre Urban Design Study reinforces several of Council's Focus Areas. In particular Urban Design can support the *Community Development* Focus Area by using an interdepartmental approach (including other levels of government, police, by-law, fire, recreation, etc.) to address issues of community pride and community economic development through good design and participatory processes.

The Regional Centre is home to many of our Region's economic drivers, including commerce, business, government, health care, post-secondary education, culture, education, military facilities, and port facilities. To ensure that this Regional resource continues to attract quality investment and a talented workforce, we must take steps to protect and enhance the urban environment of the Regional Centre. Toward that end, it is the task of the Regional Centre Urban Design Study to deliver well designed, functional open spaces; architectural design of superior quality; beautiful, vibrant streetscapes, and; healthy, compact, mixed-use communities. An attractive, spirited urban core is essential to perpetuating and growing the strength of the Regional Centre.

Capital District Urban Design Initiatives:

Greater emphasis on urban design was a key direction of the Capital District vision, adopted by Council in 2002. A major milestone towards this goal saw Regional Council in May 2004 approve the Phase I Urban Design Project, which included streetscape guidelines and plans, and a new wayfinding and identity signage system for the Capital District. While focused primarily on public space improvements, the Phase I Urban Design Project also included research and recommendations on moving forward with the next phase of work focusing on the quality of the built environment within the Capital District. That next phase, Phase II, is the *Regional Centre Urban Design Study*. As part of the current Regional Plan process, in response to mounting development pressures in the urban core, staff have identified the need to begin this work in advance of the Regional Plan's adoption.

HRM Urban Design Initiatives To-Date:

- HRM has shown leadership in carrying forward the Phase I Urban Design project for the Capital District, and many streetscape improvements recommended in the plans are now visible throughout the Capital District¹. In July, 2005 HRM hired its first Urban Designer to help strengthen and grow urban design expertise among staff and the community.
- An Urban Design Awards Program has been created to recognize and reward good design in buildings and public spaces in the Capital District. For this, their third year, the Urban Design Awards are partnering with the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and HRM's winning entries will be advanced to the National Urban Design Awards in Ottawa.

¹These include a new universal design sidewalk system on both Lower Water Street and Portland Street, a refurbished public space at the Halifax North Memorial Library, Restoration and entry improvements to the Public Gardens, improvements to the Scotia Square transit terminal. Also a new pocket park near the Oxford Theatre on Quinpool Road and the Portland Street Reconstruction project are in progress.

- In 2005 HRM entered into two joint Public Lands Plans with the Province: one for the lands in the vicinity of Spring Garden Road and Queen Street, and the other for the Grand Parade and Province House. Both Public Lands Plans will result in urban design guidelines that will enhance the beauty and vitality of the Capital District.
- As a component of HRM's urban design program, work is underway to deliver a Regional Streetscaping Program, that will expand the streetscaping efforts currently underway in the Capital District outwards to the Region's suburban and rural communities, with priorities planned for Herring Cove Road, Sackville Drive, and Main Street in Dartmouth.

With these accomplishments, a solid foundation is now in place to move to the next stage of work: the Regional Centre Urban Design Study.

DISCUSSION

Project Scope:

The Urban Design Study's study area is the Regional Centre, which is defined in the Region Plan as the entire Halifax peninsula and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway (refer to Attachment #1, Study Area Map). In keeping with the form-based direction of the draft Regional Plan, the Regional Centre Urban Design Study will articulate a design strategy to foster quality development and vibrant public spaces through the creation of new policies and tools such as design guidelines, review processes, and incentives for good design. The approach will reinforce current community plans and values related to heritage preservation, viewplane protection, open space, and neighbourhood stability.

The focus will be on the Capital District and its major corridors, and a series of case studies will address emerging infill issues in the urban core neighbourhoods, where the goal is to promote stable residential neighbourhoods.

The project will be carried out over an eighteen month period with the assistance of the selected team of urban design consultants. By the end of the study period, HRM will have developed a Regional Centre Urban Design Study consisting of the following elements:

- *Urban Design Principles:* The values and aspirations of HRM citizens as they relate to our physical surroundings, as defined through extensive community consultation.
- *Urban Design Analysis:* Identification of significant assets and elements such as public space, movement, significant views, gateways, landmarks, and historic districts and the need to interconnect them, building design and its relationship to open space, identification of a hierarchy of street types in the study area, and what makes them successful or not.

- *Design Tools:* A number of tools will be developed to ensure that the plan is not shelved, but rather is implemented and used mindfully. These will include recommended incentives to encourage good design including: design handbooks, design guidelines, and practical examples of implementation (infill case studies and opportunity sites).
- *Implementation Strategy:* An approach to implementation that outlines a phasing-in of the implementation tools that will address prioritization, budget, organizational changes such as planning and design review processes, and a capacity building strategy to build required skills and understanding of urban design. It will also recommend any necessary changes to existing policies and bylaws, and future steps.
- *Public Participation Program:* The Study process is intended to be inclusive and transparent with numerous formal and informal opportunities for public participation. The approach is to be community-based with staff and the consulting team working with citizens, interest groups, and the development community to build awareness and understanding of urban design opportunities. The importance of visual communication will be reinforced both in the Urban Design Plan itself, and in the tools for community consultation; legible drawings, compelling graphics, comprehensible maps, and generally attractive visual materials will be used. Staff will also be exploring opportunities to enable exchange of ideas with any ongoing center plans which may be started in suburban and rural communities throughout the region. A detailed public consultation plan will be developed over the summer months.

Consultant Selection Process:

A draft project terms of reference for the Regional Centre Urban Design Study was developed in partnership with Dalhousie University's Cities and Environment Unit. The draft terms of reference was reviewed by the Regional Planning Committee, the Capital District Task Force, and the Capital Commission Board. Staff sought public input on the draft terms of reference in coordination with the Draft Regional Plan public consultations in 2005, and it has also been posted on the HRM website for public comment for nearly a year. Capital District staff synthesized all of this comment into a final Request for Proposals, which was issued on November 18, 2005.

The consultant selection committee was comprised of representatives of the following HRM departments: Capital District; Planning and Development; Regional Transportation Planning, Regional Planning; RPAM, and; the Cultural Plan (RTC). Also represented on the committee in their capacity as funding partners were ACOA, and Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. With Procurement Services present, the committee reviewed and scored the 7 received submissions as follows:

COMPANY	(FEE PROPOSAL)	SCORE (max. 100)
Office for Urbanism	(\$192,984.00)	86
Brook, McIlroy, Inc.	(\$193,375.00)	81
CBCL	(\$190,000.00)	75
Ekistics	(\$191,800.00)	73
Urban Strategies	(\$173,687.00)	72
Peter J. Smith & Company	(\$200,000.00)	72
Sperry & Partners	(\$289,482.00)	67

* A complete scoring matrix, including scoring criteria and costing bids, is included as Attachment #2.

Recognizing a somewhat narrow margin between the top two scoring firms, Capital District staff undertook extensive reference checks and conducted a telephone interview with the Office for Urbanism. The results of this background work verified the scoring results, and staff is recommending the contract be awarded to Office for Urbanism at a cost of \$192,984.00.

Total project cost, net HST included: \$192,984.00 x 1.03429 = **\$199,601.42**

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Funding Partners:

Staff has obtained funding from the Federal Government through ACOA and the Province of Nova Scotia through Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, as follows:

HRM share of Project capital costs:	\$129,602.00
ACOA share (confirmed):	\$50,000.00
Province of Nova Scotia share (confirmed):	\$20,000.00

Total Project Cost:	\$199,602.00
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Funding to undertake this work is available in the 2004/05 capital budget under capital account **CDE00105 Regional Planning (Master Plans)** as follows:

Cumulative unspent budget	\$704,479.00
Less RFP / 05-073	<u>\$199,602.00</u>
Uncommitted budget:	\$504,877.00

Cost Breakdown:

ACOA share (confirmed)	\$ 50,000.00
Province of N.S. share (confirmed)	20,000.00
HRM share of project capital cost	<u>129,602.00</u>
Total project cost	199,602.00

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

The following alternative is presented for Council's consideration:

1. Defer contract award until completion of the Regional Plan. This approach leaves the community design goals of the Draft Regional Plan unrealized and is not proactive in bringing forward design solutions to respond to development pressures within the urban core, including heritage preservation pressures, and policy surrounding tall buildings. Delaying the project could also result in lost opportunities for cost sharing, and will be counter to community expectation that this project is coming on-line in Spring, 2006. This approach is not recommended by staff.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Study Area Map
2. Matrix showing scoring results and pricing bids for seven received submissions.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

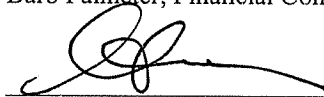
Report Prepared by: Andy Fillmore, Capital District Urban Design Project Manager, 490-6495

Financial Review by:



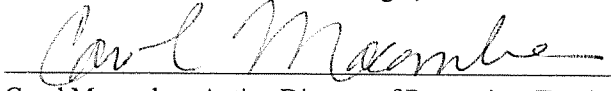
Barb Palmeto, Financial Consultant 490-7221

Financial Review by:



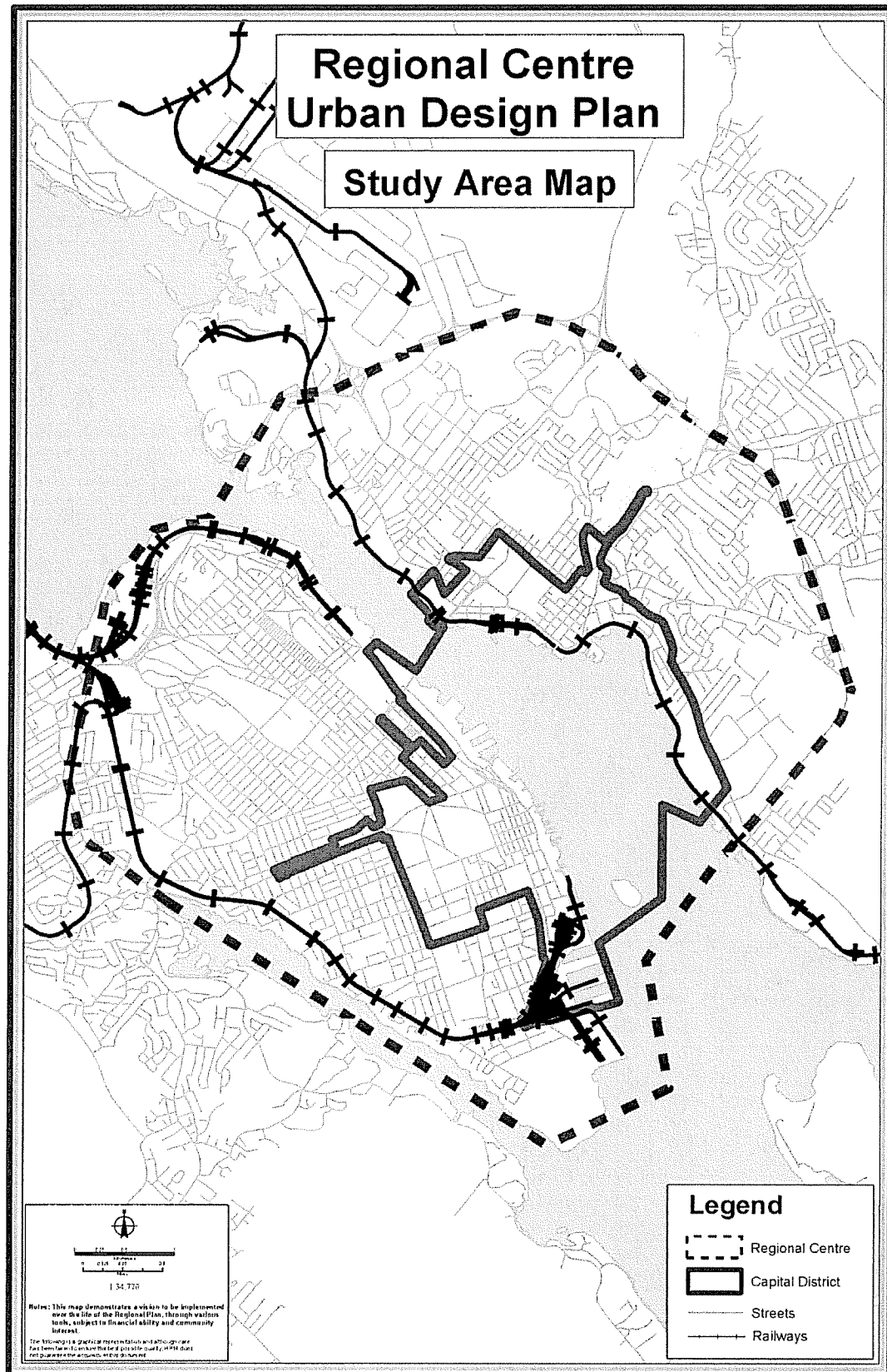
Catherine Sanderson, Senior Manager, Financial Services 490-1562

Report Approved by:



Carol Macomber, Acting Director of Recreation, Tourism & Culture 490-5908

ATTACHMENT #1 - Study Area Map



ATTACHMENT #2 - Scoring Matrix

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY Request for Proposals RFP#: 05-073 REGIONAL CENTRE URBAN DESIGN STUDY - HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY									
ITEM	MAX SCORE	SUBMISSION							
		Office for Urbanism	Ekistics	Urban Strategy	Brook McIlroy	Peter J. Smith	Sperry & Partners	CBCL	
1. Proponent's team, including but not limited to: - Team composition and representation of all necessary disciplines, including architecture, urban design, planning, landscape architecture, project management, and public outreach (20%). - Relevant experience in completing assignments of similar scope and complexity (20%).	40	33	28	28	33	29	28		31
2. Organization and personnel: - Completeness of team and experience of individual members (5%) - Organizational structure and team coordination (5%)	10	8	7	6	7	6	7		7
3. Approach to scope of required services, management of project, suitability of proposed work plan, Gantt chart of proposed schedule, and matrix showing contribution of all personnel and anticipated hours of involvement.	40	36	29	28	32	28	26		28
4. Fee Proposal and acceptance of terms and conditions	10	\$192,984.00 ₉	\$191,800.00 ₉	\$173,687.00 ₁₀	\$193,375.00 ₉	\$200,000.00 ₉	\$289,482.00 ₆		\$190,000.00 ₉
TOTAL	100	86	73	72	81	72	67		75
	RANKING	1	4	5	2	6	7		3

Note: All prices are exclusive of applicable taxes