

TRN15-01

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
Livable Centers Study
for Museum Park**

CLOSING DATE: March 3, 2015, at NOON local time

**FORMAT: Ten (10) hard copies
One (1) electronic in PDF Format on disk**

**SUBMIT TO: Amanda Thorin
Sustainable Development Program Specialist
Houston-Galveston Area Council**

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Houston, TX 77227-2777**

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***Contact information:*
Amanda Thorin
Sustainable Development Program Specialist
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Fax: (713) 993-4503
Email: amanda.thorin@h-gac.com**

or

**Meredith Dang, Land Use Transportation Coordinator
Desk: (713) 993-2443
Email: meredith.dang@h-gac.com**

Those responding to this solicitation may elect to either mail or personally deliver their proposals to H-GAC offices. Failure to submit the required number of copies as stated above may result in disqualification from the proposal process. H-GAC will not accept any proposals delivered by telephonic, electronic or facsimile means.

The deadline for the submittal of proposals is no later than NOON on March 3, 2015, local time. H-GAC shall date-stamp all proposals upon receipt. Proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted. Respondents may submit their proposal to the H-GAC office any time prior to the deadline.

Submission of a proposal will constitute acknowledgement and acceptance of all the terms and conditions contained in this RFP. Proposers, their authorized representative, and their agents are responsible for

obtaining, and will be deemed to have, full knowledge of the conditions, requirements, and specifications of this RFP at the time a proposal is submitted to H-GAC.

PRE-PROPOSAL COMMUNICATIONS

A Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 27, 2015, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. local time in the H-GAC Second-Floor Conference Room A. Those unable to attend this meeting in person may participate via conference call. **Please notify Amanda Thorin no later than Monday, January 26, 2015, by 4:00 p.m. local time if you wish to be included on the conference call.**

It will be assumed that potential Proposers attending this meeting have reviewed the RFP in detail and are prepared to raise any substantive questions which have not already been addressed by H-GAC. H-GAC requests that, as much as is practical, Proposers submit all questions in writing, via email or fax, prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference. No additional questions regarding the RFP will be accepted after 5:00 p.m. local time on January 27, 2015. Questions submitted in advance should be sent to Amanda Thorin, H-GAC Sustainable Development Program Specialist, via email at amanda.thorin@h-gac.com or via fax at 713-993-4587. All questions and answers from the Pre-Proposal meeting will be compiled and provided to participating Proposers, as well as posted on the H-GAC website.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SPECIFICATIONS

Requests for additional information and questions should be addressed to Amanda Thorin, Sustainable Development Program Specialist, Community and Environmental Planning Department, Houston-Galveston Area Council, telephone – 713.993.4587 fax - 713.993.4503, or e-mail – amanda.thorin@h-gac.com, no later than January 27, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. local time. H-GAC will provide written responses to all questions received in writing on or before January 27, 2015. Questions received from all respondents, including those raised at the Pre-Proposal Meeting, shall be answered and sent to all respondents who are listed as having obtained Requests for Proposal, as well as posted on the H-GAC website. Proposers shall be notified in writing (via email) of any changes in the specifications contained in this Request for Proposal, and any changes will also be posted on the H-GAC website.

INTERPERTING SPECIFICATIONS

The specifications and product references contained herein are intended to be descriptive rather than restrictive. H-GAC is soliciting proposals to provide a complete service package which meets its overall requirements. Specific services and collection references may be included in this RFP for guidance, but they are not intended to preclude proposers from recommending alternative solutions offering comparable or better performance or value.

Changes in the specifications, terms and conditions of this RFP may be made in writing by H-GAC. Results of informal meetings or discussions between a potential Proposer and H-GAC official or employee may not be used as a basis for deviations from the requirements contained in this RFP.

H-GAC has sole discretion and reserves the right to cancel this RFP or to reject any or all proposals received prior to the contract award.

H-GAC reserves the right to waive any formalities concerning this RFP, or to reject any or all proposals or any part thereof.

NON-RESPONDERS TO THE RFP

If unable to submit a proposal, please contact H-GAC in writing advising the reason for not submitting a proposal. Reasons for non-response to the RFP may be submitted to Amanda Thorin at amanda.thorin@h-gac.com.

OBJECTIVE

H-GAC is seeking consulting services to conduct a study and develop a plan to further the goals of the Livable Centers program in the Museum Park area of Houston. The Consultant (team) will develop a plan that addresses the application of the Livable Centers program goals in the specified study area, including identification of transportation improvements that could leverage private investment and improve the quality of life in the project area.

The consultant (team) will be required to have knowledge and expertise in the following areas:

- Creating quality, walkable, mixed-use places
- Creating multi-modal transportation choices
- Improving environmental quality
- Promoting economic development
- Estimating potential for private investment to be leveraged from public improvements
- Planning and conceptual design of street, sidewalk, signage, and lighting improvements, including developing cost and benefits estimates
- Planning and improvements for parking, including evaluating existing parking lots and placement for new parking garages

Please see the Livable Centers section of the H-GAC website for additional Livable Centers program information: www.h-gac.com/livablecenters.

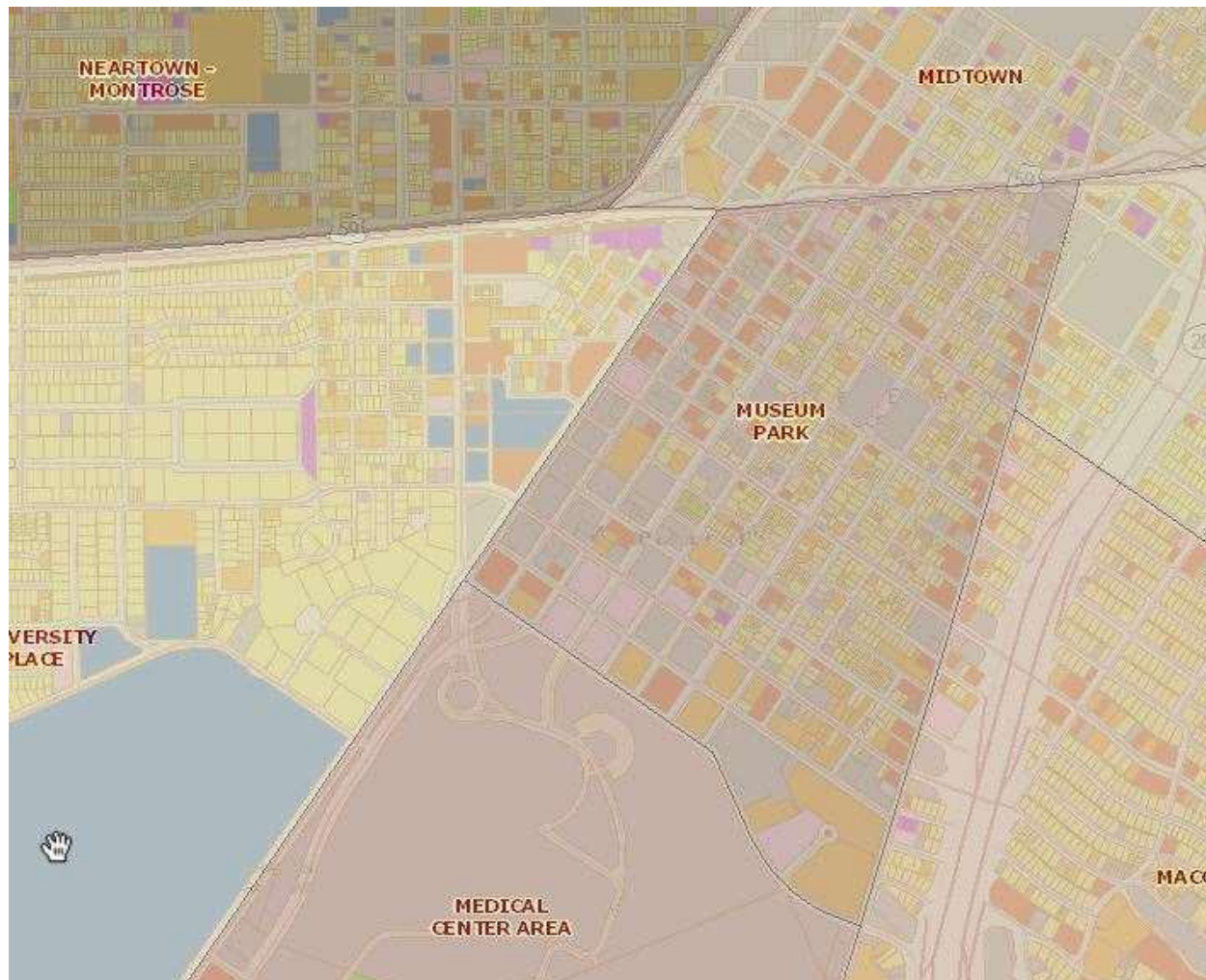
Since this project requires a range of research, public engagement, transportation, and planning expertise, a team of specialized firms is permitted. A consultant, or team of consultants with one prime contractor, is a typical type of consultant contract used by H-GAC.

BACKGROUND

H-GAC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the eight-county Houston-Galveston Transportation Management Area (TMA). This study (and resulting recommended project(s)) is one of a number of action steps adopted by H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council to address mobility challenges and quality of life in the region.

STUDY AREA: MUSEUM PARK

The focus of the Museum Park Livable Center study is the area bounded by US59 to the north, Hermann Park to the south, Almeda Road to the east, and Main Street to the west. The area is a high density area with a mix of land uses and a traditional street grid system. It contains major destinations that attract over 12 million visitors a year. The area is also an important connection to adjacent neighborhoods including Midtown, Downtown, and the Texas Medical Center. (Please see map below)



SCHEDULED TIME FRAME

The work is scheduled to begin on or about June 2015, and to be completed within nine months of the start date. H-GAC reserves the right to extend and/or expand the scope of this contract, subject to H-GAC Board of Directors approval and additional funding availability.

PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work to be performed is for the preparation of a plan to further the goals of H-GAC's Livable Centers program, including the identification of transportation infrastructure investments to support the goals of the study within the defined study area.

The overall goal of the study is to create a Livable Centers plan for the Museum Park study area that will lead to a sustainable, context-sensitive, multi-modal environment that address the needs both of residents and visitors. The Museum Park study area has a mix of uses, existing transit, and is redeveloping and densifying, however, the existing infrastructure within the study area discourages pedestrian and bicycle mobility. The study should result in practical implementation strategies, to improve the quality of the living/working/civic environment in the area. It should enhance the area as an urban destination which is

mixed-use, walkable, transit-served, characterized by diverse housing and employment choices, thriving businesses, vibrant street life, civic amenities and exciting entertainment and cultural activities.

The study should include a needs assessment which should build upon existing area plans/studies. Elements that should be evaluated as part of this study include land use, market trends/conditions, demographic makeup, economic development, infrastructure conditions, parks/open space opportunities, affordable housing options, housing choice, branding/image, wayfinding/landmarks, building typology, built form, current and future transit access, connectivity (pedestrian, bicycling, and other), parking, street grid/circulation, greening and streetscape treatments. The framework for new development will be made with the intent of creating destinations that are accessible by walking, bicycling, and transit. All recommendations should be based on strengthening the area's existing best characteristics while providing real strategies and a road map for implementing improvements over time, with a special focus on public-private partnerships and investment opportunities. Recommended strategies should include financing mechanisms and catalytic projects.

The study will examine the potential to create a sustainable, viable, mixed-use, and mixed-income environment, which are supportive of the Six Livability Principles guiding the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities (provide more transportation choices, promote equitable, affordable housing, enhance economic competitiveness, support existing communities, coordinate policies and leverage investment, and value communities and neighborhoods.)

The study should also examine existing safety and security concerns in the area, pedestrian facilities/amenities in the area that are deteriorated or lacking, barriers to multi-modal circulation, and economic development strategies that benefit stakeholders. One of the key components of the study should be a multi-modal mobility plan. The mobility plan should include circulation of various modes including, but not limited to: pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, transit, parking (including shared parking) and street network connectivity.

The Livable Centers study should create a plan for the area that analyzes the safety and quality of the public realm, identifies existing as well as potential future pedestrian generators, and provides design solutions for an enhanced, attractive, connected and safe pedestrian environment, according to the tasks (1-5) outlined below:

Task 1: Needs Assessment

The Consultant (team) will collect any data necessary to evaluate existing transportation and land use conditions and recommend Livable Centers improvements within the project study area(s).

This effort should include an inventory of existing land uses; an evaluation of the existing street network, including an identification of current mode split; and any impediments to the use of alternative modes of transportation.

There are several plans and studies that have been completed in the study area, therefore the plan should take these and any others into account:

- 2012 Rice Design Alliance Charrette
- 2013 EPA-Smart Growth America Complete Streets Workshop
- 2013 GSMD Economic Development Study
- City of Houston Administration and Regulatory Affairs Museum Park Strategies Planning Parking Study
- City of Houston Traffic Operations Texas Medical Center Traffic Study
- 2012 Urban Houston Framework (completed as part of the Our Great Region 2040 plan)

The data collection should pay particular attention to mobility of various modes of transportation and alternatives, parking, pedestrian, automobile and transit safety, market trends, built form and building types, infill development, adaptive reuse, mixed-use projects, the pedestrian realm, public spaces and the opportunities for economic development, pedestrian facilities, streetscape, and branding and wayfinding/signage.

The needs assessment should be reviewed by the project sponsor and stakeholders and refined, as necessary.

Task 2: Develop Conceptual Plan

Based on the needs assessment, the Consultant (team) will prepare a draft conceptual plan identifying strategic investments and policies in the transportation, housing, and land use realms that, if implemented, will improve the safety and feasibility of using alternative modes of transportation, increase the sense of identity, promote sustainability, support economic development and leverage private investment in the study area.

Specifically, the study shall provide an analysis of the current and potential future land use mix within the study area. This analysis should propose specific improvements to transportation infrastructure that will improve the pedestrian realm and pedestrian/bicyclist safety. The analysis should also identify possible investment strategies and policies to leverage the desired land use mix and development types, and analyze the market feasibility of the improvements.

The analysis should include:

- **Circulation and Connectivity:** Analyze and develop a multi-modal connectivity plan. Analysis should address:
 - Coordinating multi-modal transit, including examining the potential for bicycle lanes connecting to adjacent neighborhoods including Downtown, Midtown, Montrose, EaDo, the Texas Medical Center, Houston Community College, and area universities as well as the potential for an area circulator service.
 - Create a plan for improving the pedestrian realm, including wider sidewalks, signature crosswalks, shaded pedestrian realms and other amenities.
 - Strategies for parking and staging that address needs of businesses, visitors, and residents. This should include examination of bus issues and how to leverage existing parking and/or consolidate parking with coordinated signage and pricing.
- **Economic and Urban Development:** Propose catalytic development concepts and pilot projects that enhance the identity, activity, and appeal within the study area based on a market-analysis. Mixed-use infill development concepts should be analyzed. Strategies should include means to expand/create public partnerships, leverage investment, and capitalize on existing area plans. The analysis should examine means to retain and create new businesses in the area, including retail, dining, grocery stores, and lodging. Analysis should include ideas and concepts that can showcase the area's identity, history, and unique aspects created through livable center improvements. The analysis should also specifically address:
 - The impact of additional high rise development and how to best integrate potential traffic impacts into the transportation network.
 - Identify strategies to guide infrastructure replacement as opportunities arise and as redevelopment occurs.

- **Housing Choice and Affordability:** Propose concepts and strategies that encourage infill housing that includes a mix of types and price points.
- **Sustainability:** Analyze strategies that support the six livability principles of the Federal Partnership between HUD, DOT and EPA and how the Livable Centers plan can help advance and/or support the Our Great Region 2040 plan.
- **Place Making, Image, and Branding:** Analyze means to create a dynamic sense of place and identity such as landmarks, wayfinding, design, and other place-making elements. This should include:
 - Create landscaping designs to revitalize boulevards
 - Create designs to utilize underutilized spaces such as US59 underpasses and dead-end streets for green spaces or other uses

The draft plan should be presented to the project sponsor, stakeholders and the community for comment, and refined as necessary.

Task 3: Develop Designs for Specific Proposed Recommendations

The consultant (team) shall propose and provide schematic design drawings and costs of improvements that could be replicated within the study area to improve the sense of identity and establish a unifying set of characteristics for the area. Specific designs should be provided for proposed mixed use and infill areas as well as other general streetscaping and signage themes for areas in the study area. This may include streetscapes or other elements and may also include examples of design guidelines for use within the study area.

Task 4: Develop Implementation Plan for Proposed Recommendations

Working with the project sponsor, the consultant (team) shall prepare an implementation plan for the proposed recommendations, including a fiscal analysis that outlines the proposed funding source and/or identification of leveraging of public and private investment and potential partners for the recommendations. In addition, finance and implementation tools such as tax incentives should be examined and most feasible strategies recommended based on input from the appropriate agencies. The implementation plan should include proposed project scopes, cost estimates and priority level. Transportation infrastructure investments identified as suitable for consideration within H-GAC's Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (RTP/TIP) should be identified. The study should also quantify the benefits of the recommended projects, including estimating the reduction in number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and resulting emissions reductions in the study area that could be attributable to the implementation of study recommendations. Additional potential benefits of recommended projects, including potential health benefits, should be identified where possible.

Public Engagement

The Consultant (team) will design and implement a public engagement process that fosters meaningful participation of stakeholders and the community at large. Coordination with stakeholders within the study area will be necessary, including the formation of a Stakeholder's Advisory Committee (SAC), to meet at appropriate benchmark intervals (tasks 2-5) during the course of the project. The Consultant (team) must be sensitive to the needs of the community and their culture(s), and have strong communications skills and language capabilities. The public engagement process should:

- Build the capacity of local stakeholders and the community at large to participate effectively

- Use methods and techniques for participation that facilitate open dialogue
- Provide people with a variety of participation options
- Facilitate equitable participation with the goal of equitable outcomes throughout the community

Deliverables

- Final plan (addressing tasks 1-5 in scope of work and all other specific elements) (15 hard copies, 1 electronic format)
 - Documentation of Livable Centers needs assessment, stakeholder meetings and materials, as necessary, and additional needs as identified through stakeholder input, as appendices to the final report (15 hard copies, 1 electronic format)
 - Written description of projects contained in the plan, with a fiscal analysis containing supporting documentation of methodologies used in calculations, and cross listing of potential funding categories for each project and cost estimates (10 hard copies, 1 electronic format)
 - Original files in editable format, including graphics and GIS files (to include .shp, .gdb, and .mxd files) utilized to make any maps. (2 discs).

PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Proposals should, at a minimum, include the information described in Sections A-I below:

A. Cover Letter

This letter should include a brief summary of key aspects of the consultant's (team's) qualifications and approach to achieving project within the available budget and time frame. The letter should also include the primary contact name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address for each firm in the proposed team. (Maximum 2 pages)

B. Project Work Program and Schedule

The consultant (team) should detail their approach to undertaking the tasks listed in this RFP. A recommended methodology for performance of each task identified in the scope of work should be included, along with a timeline for completion. This timeline should also illustrate key milestones and anticipate necessary meetings with H-GAC staff, the stakeholder advisory committee, the local project sponsor and others. This contract will be completed within nine months of execution. (Maximum 10 pages)

C. Project Organization and Management

A project organization and management plan should be developed and include project staffing with an indication of the personnel to be involved, their respective roles, and staff-hours by task dedicated to the project. A general summary of the approach to be used in accomplishing the work should be given. The consultant (team) should describe functions and responsibilities of the firms and staff involved. Proposals should clearly delineate all individuals, by names and titles, that will be working on this study and their areas of responsibility. If substitutes or back-up personnel are planned on a contingency basis, they should be indicated in the plan. H-GAC requests the prime contract signatory be specified, with title, to facilitate the preparation of the contract. (Maximum 5 pages)

D. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Goal

For projects funded by grants from the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), H-GAC has established a goal of 20% DBE participation in its total annual third party consulting opportunities. Each respondent is encouraged to take affirmative action and make every effort possible to use DBE firms in the performance of work under this contract. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to require the utilization of any DBE firm that is either unqualified or unavailable.

E. Title VI Requirements, EEO and Conflict of Interests/Debarment

Successful respondents will be required to demonstrate compliance with all requirements imposed by Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 (49 U.S.C. Section 2000d), the Regulations of DOT issued hereunder (49 C.F.R. part 21), and the assurances by H-GAC thereto.

Equal Employment Opportunity – Successful respondents will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations.

Proposals should state whether there is a potential conflict of interest and be cognizant of the requirement for executing a debarment certification stating that they have not been barred from doing work involving federal funds. A signed Debarment Certification will be required for each of the consultant team members prior to contract execution.

F. Conflict of Interest Questionnaire

Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code requires vendors and consultants contracting or seeking to contract with H-GAC to file a conflict of interest questionnaire (CIQ) if they have an employment or other business relationship with an H-GAC officer or an officer's close family member. The required questionnaire is located at the Texas Ethics Commission website <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/forms/CIQ.pdf>. H-GAC officers include its Board of Directors and Executive Director, who are listed on this website.

The CIQ must be completed and filed with a bid/proposal response if an employment or business relationship defined in the law exists.

G. Budget

Funding for this contract, estimated at \$250,000 is dependent upon the successful execution of an interagency agreement between H-GAC, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and the Greater Southeast Management District. H-GAC reserves the right to expand and or modify the total budget and scope of the contract. Respondents are not required to submit a budget of categorical costs in their proposals, but should indicate the approximate percentage of the available funding that will be required for each task. Respondents should be prepared to provide a detailed budget in a timely fashion should they be selected. (Maximum 3 pages)

H. Responsibility and Qualifications

The project manager and other key staff members must be specified and a clear indication given as to their involvement in the project, the amount of time they will be on site and the percent of their time dedicated to this project. Brief resumes of staff members should be included. The successful respondent to this RFP must understand they are expected to provide qualified personnel to accomplish each portion of the work in this planning study. Substitutions for essential personnel

involved in the study will not be allowed without H-GAC's prior approval and resulting delays will be the responsibility of the consultant. H-GAC retains the right to request the removal of any personnel found, in H-GAC's opinion, to be unqualified to perform the work. (Maximum 10 pages)

I. References

The Consultant (team) must include a list of client references (minimum of 3). References included in the proposal should represent past performance of the Prime Consultant and/or Project Manager on work that relates to elements in the Project Scope of Work. Client references should include: name of contact, agency/organization, email address, phone number, and title of relevant project(s). As part of the proposal review, H-GAC will attempt to contact all references via email. H-GAC cannot contact references based on incomplete or incorrect contact information. (Maximum 1 page)

IN SUMMARY

While the above items provide a general description of what sections and information are expected in the proposal, they are not meant to limit or exclude other pertinent information.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A Proposal Evaluation Team will consist of H-GAC, Greater Southeast Management District, Museum Park Super Neighborhood, Texas Department of Transportation, and other stakeholders to be determined, will review the responses to the RFP received by the designated closing date (**March 3, 2015 NOON local time**), using the Evaluation Criteria described in the following section. The Proposal Evaluation Team reserves the right to contact respondents for clarification of information submitted and to contact references to obtain information regarding past performance, reliability and integrity.

Consortiums, joint ventures, or teams submitting proposals will not be considered responsive to this RFP unless they have demonstrated in a management plan that all contractual responsibility rests solely with one prime contractor or legal entity of the team. A duly authorized official of the prime respondent must sign the cover letter and other pertinent certifications. Requests for a debriefing must be made within one week of notification of non-selection. H-GAC reserves the right to not conduct debriefings if requests are made after that time.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The proposal evaluation criteria for the ranking (and possible short-listing) of the consultant will include:

Public Engagement (10%)

The Consultant's (team)'s approach to public engagement should identify the optimal methods and techniques to engage the public at each stage in the planning process and sustain the interest of the public throughout. The proposal should demonstrate various strategies that may be used to engage the community in an equitable and context-sensitive manner.

Capability in Urban Planning and Design (10%)

Consultant (team) must have demonstrated capabilities in planning quality, walkable, mixed-use places and creating a multi-modal transportation environment. Consultant (team) must be able to analyze data from a variety of sources, including databases, GIS, travel surveys, traffic counts and plan documents.

Capability in Implementation Strategies (15%)

Consultant (team) must possess knowledge of best practices for design of Livable Centers investments and an understanding of the types of projects that are eligible for federal funding. The Consultant team should also demonstrate a substantive understanding of various financing mechanisms and implementation strategies to further the recommendations of the study.

Approach (25%)

The proposal must delineate an effective approach to achieving project objectives within available time frame and budget. Consultant (team) should provide a project schedule and timeline for achieving key milestones, such as project meetings with H-GAC staff and the contract Steering Committee. An estimated budget for achieving major project tasks should also be provided.

Project Management, Organizational Structure and Key Personnel (15%)

The Consultant (team) must have a qualified Project Manager. Proposal must demonstrate an effective organizational structure. Key personnel assigned to the project must possess necessary qualifications and be available to perform the work within the project time frame.

Past Performance (15%)

The Consultant (team) must have a demonstrated track record of timely performance, quality and integrity, as evidenced by a list of client references.

Other Elements (10%)

H-GAC's Proposal Evaluation Team may also evaluate other elements in the proposal that it deems pertinent to the Consultant's (teams) capability to perform the required tasks.

CONTRACT AWARD

Evaluation team scores for each RFP respondent will be averaged using a methodology of H-GAC's choosing. The ranked respondents may be reduced to a shortlist of no less than two and no more than four by score. H-GAC reserves the right to NOT conduct interviews with the short-listed respondents.

H-GAC will provide short-listed respondents with instructions as to how the final Consultant (team) ranking will be determined. These may include, but not necessarily be limited to, questions about elements of the proposal submitted, specific scope of work questions and/or interviews. A recommendation will be presented to the Budget and Finance Committee of the H-GAC Board of Directors for approval to negotiate, and execute, a contract with the ranked Consultants (teams) in descending order. The targeted date for Board approval is **April 21, 2015**. H-GAC reserves the right to delay that date as needed and to reject any and all proposals as deemed in its interest

COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Respondent's attention is called to the fact that any contract between H-GAC and the selected respondent(s) will be subject to financial assistance contracts between the H-GAC, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and the Greater Southeast Management District. The contract to be awarded, therefore, is subject to the terms of these agreements and will not proceed without these agreements having been duly executed. The successful respondent will be required to comply with, in addition to

other provisions of the agreement, the conditions required by applicable federal regulations, including those regulations which must be documented in the proposal, as indicated in sections D, E, and F of the Proposal Contents section of this RFP.

RESOLUTION OF PROTESTED SOLICITATIONS AND AWARDS

Any Proposer who is aggrieved in connection with a purchase transaction may file a grievance. The grievance may be filed at any phase of the procurement, up to 10 working days after first action by H-GAC Board of Directors to authorized negotiation with top-ranked Proposers. Grievances filed more than 10 days after action by H-GAC Board of Directors will not be deemed timely and will not be considered. In order for a Proposer to enter the grievance process, a written complaint must be sent to the Chief Financial Officer of H-GAC by certified mail which includes the following:

1. Name, mailing address and business phone number of the complainant.
2. Appropriate identification of the procurement being questioned.
3. A precise statement of the reasons for the protest.
4. Supporting exhibits, evidence or documents to substantiate any claims.

The grievance must be based on an alleged violation of H-GAC's Procurement Procedures, a violation of State or Federal Law (if applicable), or a violation of applicable grant or contract agreements to which H-GAC is a party. Failure to receive a procurement award from H-GAC in and of itself does not constitute a valid grievance. Upon receipt of grievance, the Chief Financial Officer will initiate the informal resolution process.

The Procurement Officer or Departmental Director responsible for the solicitation shall contact the complainant and all interested parties and attempt to resolve the allegations informally within ten (10) working days from the date of complaint. If the allegations are successfully resolved by mutual agreement, documentation will be forwarded to the Office Services Manager of the resolution with specifics on each point addressed in the original complaint.

If the Procurement Officer or Departmental Director is not successful in resolving the allegations, the complaint, along with the comments, will be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer immediately. The Chief Financial Officer will review all documentation. All interested parties will be given written notice of the date, time, and place of hearing and an opportunity to present evidence. A written decision will be issued within five (5) working days after the hearing along with notice of appeal rights.

The complainant may appeal the Chief Financial Officer's decision by submitting a written appeal, within five (5) working days, to the Executive Director of H-GAC. The Executive Director, upon receipt of a written notice of appeal, shall contact the complainant and schedule a hearing within ten (10) working days. The Executive Director of H-GAC has the option of appointing a Hearing Officer to preside over the hearing. If appointed, the Hearing Officer shall conduct a hearing and forward a summary and recommended resolution to the Executive Director.

The decision reached by the Executive Director or his designee shall be final and conclusive. This decision will be forwarded to the complainant in writing within thirty (30) working days.

The Proposer may, if it elects to do so, appeal the final and conclusive decision of the Executive Director to a court of competent jurisdiction.

H-GAC RESPONSIBILITIES

H-GAC is responsible for project administration and final decisions on all contractual matters. All responses to inquiries about the RFP and attachments will be posted on the H-GAC website as often as possible. Visit <http://www.h-gac.com> to access the RFP page. No inquiries about the Scope of Work will be answered prior to the pre-proposal meeting on **January 27, 2015**. Inquiries about this RFP should be directed to:

Amanda Thorin, Sustainable Development Program Specialist
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P.O. Box 22777,
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