

# CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

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MEETING DATE: November 16, 2023

PREPARED BY: Richard D. Cannone, AICP, Development Services Director

REQUEST: AWARD A CONTRACT TO INTERWEST CONSULTING GROUP, INC., FROM ONTARIO, CALIFORNIA, TO PREPARE AN UPDATE TO THE UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD SPECIFIC PLAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$264,880

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Award contract to Interwest Consulting Group, Inc., from Ontario, California, to prepare an update to the University Neighborhood Specific Plan in an amount not to exceed \$264,880.
2. Authorize the City Attorney to make non-substantive changes and the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

The University Neighborhood Specific Plan (UNSP) was adopted in 2016 and establishes comprehensive planning and zoning for approximately 400 acres intended for development of a new, mixed-use, walkable community adjacent to planned campuses for California State University San Bernardino and the University of California Riverside.

Approximately 170 acres (of the 400 acres) remain with no entitlements and are under the control of the City of Palm Desert/Successor Agency to the Palm Desert Redevelopment Agency (SARDA). Within this area, the City's intention is to develop a 30 to 40-acre regional park, 220 affordable housing units (Site I and J of the 6th Cycle Housing Element) and create a community facilities and a gathering place much like a traditional town square. To facilitate the planning and development of the remaining 170 acres and to implement the City's goals, an amendment of the UNSP is necessary. This amendment would consider:

- Updates to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as needed, for the project scope.
- Ensuring internal consistency between the specific plan and General Plan land use element and circulation elements.
- Redistribute of open space to include the 30-to-40-acre park and necessary connections.
- Establish the site areas and density to support two five-acre sites for affordable housing as required by the adopted 6th Cycle Housing Element.
- Evaluate redistribution of commercial and residential uses for the 170 acres.
- Establish a circulation network within the plan that prioritizes connectivity, walkability, and design.

Development Services staff developed a detailed Scope of Services (Exhibit A of the draft contract) for RFP No. 2023-RFP-203 to solicit proposals and identify the most qualified firm to develop the Specific Plan Update. Notices announcing the availability of the RFP were

distributed via the City’s online bid system, OpenGov Procurement, on June 30, 2023. A total of 1,542 firms were notified, 603 firms viewed the RFP, and 44 firms downloaded the RFP.

A mandatory pre-proposal meeting was held on July 17, 2023, at City Hall, at which one firm, Albert A. Webb Associates, was in attendance. Due to the low attendance, and addendum to the RFP was issued to extend the RFP submittal date and hold a second mandatory pre-proposal meeting was scheduled, and held on August 1, 2023, and multiple firms attended that meeting, including the two firms that submitted proposals:

- Albert A. Webb Associates
- Interwest Consulting Group, Inc

A review panel consisting of the Development Services Director, Economic Development Director, Community Services Manager, Principal Planner, and the Senior Planner reviewed the responses in accordance with the following evaluation criteria:

1. Experience and background of the firm, with emphasis on successful completion of local government projects that are similar in scope and nature.
2. Responsiveness to the objectives of the requested services.
3. Creative approach in recommending additions and refinements to the scope of work that achieves the goals of the project.
4. Demonstrated ability to meet schedules, deadlines, and complete projects within the budget representative of the defined scope of work.
5. Overall quality, completeness, and clarity in the proposal.
6. Proposal pricing and value to the City.

The panel determined that both firms should be interviewed. Of the two firms interviewed on August 31, 2023, the panel selected Interwest Consulting Group as the most qualified firm.

The panel’s final ranking was as follows:

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Score (100)</b>	<b>Fee</b>
<b>Interwest Consulting Group</b>	Ontario, CA	1	81.6	\$264,880
<b>Albert A. Webb Associates</b>	Riverside, CA	2	75.4	\$1,097,900

While both firms are highly qualified, key items that set the two firms apart included:

- The ability to meet the established deadline of adoption within a 12-month time frame.
- The ability to provide cost value to the city. As part of the RFP, a budget of \$150,000 was established, both firms exceeded this initial budget, however the selected firm has established a more cost-effective work plan while satisfying the requirements of the proposal.

Attached is the draft professional services agreement with Interwest Consulting Group in the amount not to exceed \$264,880 to prepare the update to the University Neighborhood Specific Plan.

**Legal Review:**

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Funds have been budgeted in Account No. 1104470-4305000 to cover the cost of this contract.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Draft Contract and Exhibits
2. Interwest Consulting Group, Inc Proposal