



**PORT COLBORNE**

**Subject: Architectural and Engineering Design Services for the Waterfront Centre**

**To: Council**

**From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer**

Report Number: 2022-63

Meeting Date: April 26, 2022

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### **Recommendation:**

That Office of the Chief Administrative Officer Report 2022-63 be received; and

That Council approve and award an architectural and engineering design services contract for the waterfront centre to J.P. Thomson Architects Ltd.

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### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the results of a process to procure architectural and engineering design services for the waterfront centre and to approve a recommendation to award a contract for these services to J.P. Thomson Architects. As part of an open competition to procure services greater than the \$100,000 threshold, the Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer and Chief Administrative Officer have the authority to sign this contract.

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### **Background:**

A City project team was formed in early 2021 to focus on redevelopment of the canal-fronting area at the south end of West Street. The City has used and maintained parts of this area for more than 50 years under lease agreements with the St. Lawrence Seaway and Transport Canada. A significant portion was occupied by the Public Works Department up until the new engineering and operations centre opened in 2017. Taking into consideration the adjacent wharf as a prospective berthing dock for cruise ships, as well as the priorities and vision for Port Colborne that can be found in the City's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, 2018-2028 Economic Development Strategy, and Cruise

Destination Business Case, the project team recommended the construction of a multi-purpose facility as a viable redevelopment project.

This recommendation was brought forward in report 2021-200 at the July 12, 2021 Council meeting, where staff requested approval to submit an application to the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF). On October 25, 2021, Council approved entering into an agreement with the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) for the federal government’s \$750,000 contribution towards the project. Since then, and over the following eight weeks, staff in various departments worked together to develop an RFP for architectural and engineering design services. The RFP was issued on Biddingo.com and the City’s website on December 22, 2021, and it closed on February 4, 2022.

### Discussion:

In compliance with the principles in the City’s procurement policy, the contents of the RFP outlined a fair and open intake and evaluation process. A total of 10 firms (“proponents”) submitted proposals by the deadline in two (i.e., technical and financial components) separate files. All 10 proposals were collected by the Deputy Clerk, and on February 10<sup>th</sup>, distributed to members of the City’s evaluation committee by the Manager of Strategic Initiatives. This committee was comprised of seven staff, one from Corporate Services, one from Development & Legislative Services, two from Public Works & Engineering, and three from Economic Development & Tourism Services. A multi-disciplinary committee structure was used to reflect and balance differing perspectives and areas of expertise.

Using a form that contained the evaluation criteria listed in the RFP, committee members independently reviewed the 10 proposals. The evaluation criteria, as indicated in the RFP, were grouped under two categories: technical and financial.

Technical Criteria		Financial Criterion	
Description of firm	15 points	Pricing	30 points*
Project manager	10 points		
Project team	10 points		
Contribution matrix	5 points		
Project experience	30 points		

\*Formula:  $\text{Lowest Bid Price} \div \text{Proposal's Price} \times 30 = \text{Pricing Points}$

**100 total points**

Before looking at and evaluating proposals on the basis of price, committee members focused solely on technical criteria. A brief meeting among committee members was held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> as a checkpoint to determine progress in completing the evaluations. It was at this meeting that the committee decided to request the City’s

engineering consultants (CIMA+) to have a subject matter expert evaluate all 10 proposals. This decision was made on the grounds of believing an outside expert opinion would serve as a benchmark or point of reference to compare the committee's scores.

The committee met again on March 8<sup>th</sup> when all members had completed the evaluations. Using the form provided earlier in the process, committee members awarded and deducted points according to the proposal's ability to completely and comprehensively address the requirements of each criterion. Committee members also recorded written comments to support and communicate the reasoning behind the scores. Every committee member's technical criteria scores for each proposal were entered into a scoring matrix. This matrix was used to calculate an average score for each proposal across all seven committee members. Average scores were then readjusted to account for the points earned through a formula that assesses price.

Once the committee's final scores were tallied, they were compared to the scores submitted by the subject matter expert from CIMA+. This expert's scores did not get included with the committee's scores and served only to indicate any potential discrepancies that would have signaled a serious inconsistency. The committee's final scores, as well as those of the subject matter expert, revealed J.P. Thomson Architects Ltd. as the top-ranked proponent. From there, the committee recommended that CIMA+ conduct an assessment of the two highest-scoring proponents and their bid prices for conformity with the scope of work (outlined in the RFP and the proponent's proposal) and alignment with industry best practices in pricing. A letter from CIMA+ is attached in the appendix of this report to attest to the results of this assessment.

The committee agreed that performing a reference check and interviewing J.P. Thomson Architects were necessary to corroborate the information in their proposal and validate the firm's suitability for the City's waterfront centre project. Interviews with three references and the firm itself upheld the evaluation committee's ranking of J.P. Thomson Architects as among the best suited for providing architectural and engineering design services. Thus, with the evaluation process now complete, the committee requests that Council approve the recommendation to award a contract to J.P. Thomson Architects.

The RFP describes that the architect and their sub-consultants will complete work in two stages: site plan development and detailed design. An update report will be brought to Council later in Q2 and provide more detail on the steps involved in both stages. For the time being, it suffices to say that the goal of the site plan development stage is to complete any necessary investigations (e.g., environmental, topographical, and Geotechnical), review the results of these investigations and their potential impact on the cost and time estimates for the project, and conduct a concurrent review of the City's Official Plan, zoning by-law, and any other pertinent municipal by-laws.

Contractors with an interest in submitting a bid to construct the waterfront centre will, as a condition of pre-qualification, be required to attend an on-site meeting when the Geotechnical investigation is being performed and a debrief meeting after the investigation's results are received. This condition will be written into the construction RFP and also require the bidding contractors to sign an acknowledgment of having read and understood the Geotechnical report. Leading up to the second stage, which entails completing the waterfront centre's schematic design (i.e., encompassing functionality, layout configuration, sustainable design, etc.), will be consultative engagements between the architect and City staff, key stakeholders, authorities having jurisdiction, and the local community to ensure their needs and vision are adequately addressed.

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### **Internal Consultations:**

The process of evaluating the 10 submitted proposals was conducted by a committee of staff from Corporate Services, Development & Legislative Services, Public Works & Engineering, and Economic Development & Tourism Services. This committee met on two separate occasions (February 23<sup>rd</sup> and March 8<sup>th</sup>) to confer about the evaluation process and consolidate scores in order to identify the top-ranked proponent.

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### **Financial Implications:**

Apart from the evaluation committee's review and scoring of J.P. Thomson Architects' bid price, a subject matter expert from the City's engineering consultants at CIMA+ was asked to assess this price in relation to the firm's understanding of the scope of work and the anticipated capital expenditures (CAPEX) or costs of the project. The expert's assessment is included with this report and specifies that the bid price of \$228,000 (excluding HST) falls within the 6-10% of CAPEX range.

The price for the firm's architectural and engineering design services will be paid using the City's CCRF funds.

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### **Public Engagement:**

The public was engaged by way of an open competition RFP that had been issued on the City's website and Biddingo.com from December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 to February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

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### **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillars of the strategic plan:

- Attracting Business Investment and Tourists to Port Colborne
  - City-Wide Investments in Infrastructure and Recreational/Cultural Spaces
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## **Conclusion:**

For transparency purposes, this report details the process that City staff followed in procuring architectural and engineering design services for the waterfront centre. After receiving and evaluating 10 proposals, the proponent that ranked first in this open competition was J.P. Thomson Architects. With Council's approval, the Windsor-based firm will move on to entering into a contract that is to be signed by the Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer and Chief Administrative Officer. Details on the next steps involved in the architect's work, including site plan development, community engagement and a detailed design for the waterfront centre, will be provided in a new report later in Q2.

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## **Appendices:**

- a. Waterfront Centre Award Recommendation - CIMA Canada Inc.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Higginbotham  
Tourism Coordinator  
905-835-2900 x505  
[Greg.Higginbotham@portcolborne.ca](mailto:Greg.Higginbotham@portcolborne.ca)

Gary Long  
Manager of Strategic Initiatives  
905-835-2900 x502  
[Gary.Long@portcolborne.ca](mailto:Gary.Long@portcolborne.ca)

## **Report Approval:**

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.