



200 South Fourth Street
DeKalb, Illinois 60115
815.748.2000 • cityofdekalb.com

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TO: Honorable Mayor Jerry Smith
City Council

FROM: Anne Marie Gaura, City Manager
Patty Hoppenstedt, Assistant City Manager
Jo Ellen Charlton, Community Development Director
Jason Michnick, Economic Development Planner

SUBJECT: Annie Glidden North Revitalization Plan Proposal Discussion.

I. Summary

In 2016, the City began a process to solicit proposals for consulting services to develop a strategy for the revitalization of the Annie Glidden North (AGN) neighborhood. The AGN Revitalization Plan is intended to be a subarea plan that focuses on neighborhoods located in the northwest corner of DeKalb, along both sides of Annie Glidden Road. The total cost of this project is \$83,550, spanning two fiscal years. The cost for phases one through three in the amount of \$43,630 was included in the FY2016.5 and 2017 budgets. The final phase, Phase four, will be included in the FY2018 budget process in the amount of \$39,920. Ultimately, the goal of the plan is to develop action items for making the AGN neighborhood become more desirable, walkable, safe, and economically vibrant places to live. Revitalizing AGN is critical to the wellbeing of not only neighborhood residents but also Northern Illinois University (NIU) and DeKalb as a whole.

II. Background

In 2013 and 2015, the City worked with NIU on the City's Housing Information Project (DHIP) which developed a profile of 24 neighborhoods and collected data on a range of factors. The NIU Center for Governmental Studies (CGS), in partnership with the City, finalized the DHIP in December of 2014. The DHIP project was completed in two phases. Phase one was completed in 2013 and focused on the collection of housing data to develop a comprehensive housing database and related analytical and reporting tools. Phase two provided an analysis of the data collected during phase one with detailed descriptions. Data in the DHIP indicates the northwest corner of DeKalb as having the highest total population, youngest average age of residents, the second largest number of DeKalb Community Unit School District 428 students, and the largest

number of NIU students living off campus. In comparison to the average of other neighborhoods, the DHIP identified a higher concentration of subsidized housing, a lower land area dedicated to parks, quality of life, and accounted for more than half of the personal safety threats reported in the City. The area is also underserved by commercial uses. The AGN Revitalization Plan will include portions of three neighborhoods: 1, 2, and 3 as identified in the DHIP.

A portion of the AGN neighborhood dates back to the 1950s and 1960s when housing was built to satisfy the needs of NIU as it became a university from a Teacher's College. This area developed as student and university staff housing. A wide variety of housing types is found including apartments, townhomes, and fraternity/sorority houses, deliberately located near NIU.

With new construction west of Annie Glidden Road, the neighborhood has found itself in transition. Students have and are moving from this older part of town into the newer housing developments located across Annie Glidden Road and in other residential areas abutting campus. Parking, density, and overcrowding remain challenges near campus and rising crime causes challenges for both the City and NIU.

No one organization represents the entire neighborhood. The most tangible populations include residents of University Village, DeKalb's largest apartment complex (534 units), the DeKalb Area Rental Association (DARA), and the fraternity and sorority houses. The neighborhood has developed an unfavorable reputation with perception in the community of increased crime and diminished property values. A review of Fire and Police calls confirm higher requests for service than elsewhere in the city.

The AGN Revitalization Plan is necessary to implement the community's vision for this area and to achieve the following goals:

- stability of the neighborhood;
- economic development (of tax base, jobs and services of the residents within the neighborhood);
- meet the needs of the residents in the neighborhoods (join them to service providers and not duplicate services);
- decreased crime;
- property code issues addressed;
- turn towards a positive reputation for the neighborhood; and
- a neighborhood able to attract investment.

In addition to the goals stated, an important component of the AGN Revitalization Plan



will be to work with representatives from the Greek community. Specifically, chapter leadership, property owners, and students will be engaged to identify plans and needs to ensure that sorority/fraternity housing be sprinkled by 2019 to meet compliance with State law.

The City Council has spent a significant amount of time evaluating the DHIP and identifying the most meaningful areas for City intervention. Through that process, the Council has identified the AGN area as a critical property cluster for careful evaluation and study.

III. Comprehensive Plan Review

The City utilizes a wide array of planning documents to guide the development and redevelopment of various areas of DeKalb. The process of developing and soliciting feedback relating to those plans are critical for engaging the public and tailoring the City's future plans to current demands and resident concerns. The City's Comprehensive Plan is the master zoning plan for the entire current and planned future corporate limits of DeKalb. That document has not been updated in several years. Instead, recent planning efforts have focused on the development of "subarea plans". A subarea plan is a plan that identifies a specific geographic area based upon the presence of development commonalities (zoning, density, use, etc.), and identifies best practices for the future use, development or redevelopment of such areas.

Over the past several years, the City has identified the AGN area as having a significant impact on many aspects of its operations, and upon the current and future success of both the City and NIU. Throughout that period, the City has worked to understand the dynamics of the area, and to improve the quality of life for residents therein.

IV. Request for Proposal Review

In June of 2016, the City Council approved the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the AGN Revitalization Plan project, in furtherance of both the discussions started through the housing study, and in furtherance of the City's 2025 Strategic Goals (as more fully described below).

The RFP outlined the project scope, which includes analysis, recommendations, strategies, and the following deliverable products:

1. Neighborhood planning that includes participation and input from residents and stakeholders with a minimum of four public meetings, focus group discussions or steering committee meetings.
2. Inventory of and recommendations for any needed improvement and/or expansion of additional services in these areas:
 - transport systems (auto, bike, pedestrian, and public bus);



- parking;
 - housing stock;
 - streetscape and urban design elements; and
 - public/social services.
3. Real Estate Market Analysis to determine feasibility for economic development projects including investment in housing, retail, and commercial development projects for the neighborhood while creating jobs by:
- exploring potential (re)development of different types of housing including, but not limited to, student housing, workforce housing, mixed income housing, housing for the elderly and disabled, and rental housing for all ages and socio-economic classes;
 - developing strategies to attract, support, and retain commercial and professional businesses in the area;
 - providing solutions to combat vacancy, parking deficiencies, density, blighted and or obsolete structures, and foreclosure;
 - identifying rebranding and marketing strategies of the neighborhoods to the residents of DeKalb; and
 - locating potential funding sources to support the strategies and recommendations presented in the Plan.
4. Zoning recommendations including, but not limited to, housing, commercial development, and design standards.

The City received 17 proposals from various engineering and architectural design companies. The proposed costs for services for the AGN Revitalization Plan ranged from \$73,480 to \$198,550.

The City reviewed and evaluated each proposal using the following criteria:

- qualifications of consultant and third-party individuals/firms;
- the firm's ability and capacity to perform the work;
- related project experience;
- scope of work and alignment with project objectives; and



- proposed fee.

The responding applicant pool was narrowed based upon the proposals and further discussions during interview sessions with each respondent. Ultimately, Camiros was recommended to be selected as the most qualified firm for providing the scope of services requested. Camiros was the single agency with extensive experience working with HUD neighborhood revitalization programs such as the Choice Neighborhood Implementation grant program.

Camiros is an urban planning firm that provides a full range of services in the areas of neighborhood and community planning, land use regulation, economic development, landscape architecture, and urban design. Camiros has completed similar projects for numerous neighborhood-based community development organizations and for-profit developers.

Camiros' portfolio includes the following clients and projects:

- Bowling Green State University and the Eastside Area - Bowling Green, Ohio
- Notre Dame University and the Eddy Street Corridor - South Bend, Indiana
- Olivet Nazarene University and the Downtown Area - Bourbonnais, Illinois
- University of Illinois and the Downtown Area - Urbana, Illinois
- Indiana State University and the Downtown Area - Terre Haute, Indiana
- Bradley University and the Downtown Area - Peoria, Illinois
- Lawrence University and the Downtown Area - Appleton, Wisconsin
- University of Alabama at Birmingham and Southside Area - Birmingham, Alabama
- University of Chicago and the Hyde Park Commercial Center - Chicago, Illinois

Camiros' experience includes the creation of successful plans and strategies for similar university communities, to create stronger town-gown relationships while also improving downtown and neighborhood commercial districts. Camiros has worked with many communities around the nation to implement and develop neighborhood revitalization and transformation plans and has the expertise required to help the City successfully achieve the goals of the AGN Revitalization Plan.

Camiros' submitted a proposal (included with this memo as Attachment A) to the City for the AGN Revitalization Plan at a rate of \$83,550.



V. Project Timeline

The AGN Revitalization Plan will consist of four phases with a timeline of July 2017 to April 2018. Phases one through three include three community and Work Group meetings and information collection efforts, and will be completed July through December 2017. Phase four will include the final community and Work Group meeting and finalization of the AGN Revitalization Plan. Phase four will be completed January through April 2018. The project phases are outlined below:

Phase I: Issues and Opportunities

Camiros will build directly off of previous planning efforts including the City's Comprehensive Plan to identify assets, issues and opportunities while engaging in dialog with various stakeholder groups and organizations working and living in and around the project area. Phase one will kick-off the community engagement process, including the creation of a project Work Group, which will be made up of members of many of the groups outlined in the RFP. The Work Group will help to guide the planning process by providing vital information about planned projects, reviewing ideas and deliverables, and helping to engage the broader community. Community Meeting one will be held to discuss initial issues and opportunities while beginning to identify potential early action projects that will help to build support and momentum for greater neighborhood changes.

Phase I tasks will include:

- Task A - Project Area Field Study
- Task B - Key Person Interviews (Stakeholder/Department/Organizational)
- Task C - Zoning Review
- Task D - Community Meeting One - Issues and Opportunities
- Task E - Identification of Early Action Projects
- Task F - Work Group Meeting One
- Task G - Meeting Minutes
- Task H - Issues, Assets and Opportunities Memo

Phase II: Vision

Building off of the community intentions and goals established in the City's Comprehensive Plan, Camiros will organize, prepare, and facilitate the second community workshop meeting and second Work Group meeting. These meetings will help to identify a more detailed neighborhood-wide vision for the future, strategic initiatives,



which could support attainment of that vision, and more specific ideas for the improvement of the neighborhoods.

Phase II tasks will include:

- Task A - Community Meeting Two - Visioning
- Task B - Work Group Meeting Two
- Task C - Meeting Minutes

Phase III – Draft Plan

During phase three, Camiros will begin to organize and categorize feedback from phases one and two into draft concepts and strategies for addressing the identified issues. Specific focus areas will be identified along with potential action steps to overcome the barriers of revitalization. These strategies will be organized based on City goals for the neighborhood. The strategies will be refined and used as the basis of the AGN Revitalization Plan for community improvement. A key element of this phase will be an interactive student meeting that will provide necessary feedback and ideas from the perspective of NIU students that live in the AGN neighborhoods.

Phase III tasks will include:

- Task A - Community Meeting Three - Draft Concepts and Strategies
- Task B - Work Group Meeting Three
- Task C - Student Meeting - Visioning
- Task D - City Departments Strategy Review
- Task E - Meeting Minutes
- Task F - Community Survey
- Task G - Market Study

Phase IV: Finalize Plan

Camiros will prepare a refined set of projects and draft steps to be implemented under each plan strategy along with the organization that could lead implementation efforts. Each strategy and program will include a planning-level cost estimate, as well as the potential public/private partnerships and funding streams that may be available for implementation. In addition, Camiros will provide zoning recommendations for various focus areas in order to alleviate existing challenges while providing a framework for future growth. Camiros will prepare a draft plan for review, including illustrations and



explanations for each project as appropriate to provide necessary guidance and show how each project supports specific strategies and serves to help attain the vision. The draft plan will weave together new strategies with current initiatives to produce positive neighborhood outcomes. Following City review, as well as a presentation to the Community and Work Group, Camiros will incorporate feedback to create the Final Revitalization Plan.

Phase IV tasks will include:

- Task A - Draft Implementation Steps
- Task B - Cost Estimates and Strategies for Programs and Organizations
- Task C - Identification of Potential Public and Private Partnerships
- Task D - Identification of Zoning Recommendations
- Task E - Draft AGN Revitalization Plan Report
- Task F - City Departments Strategy Review
- Task G - Community Meeting Four - Draft AGN Revitalization Plan
- Task H - Work Group Meeting Four
- Task I - Meeting Minutes
- Task J - Final AGN Revitalization Plan Report

VI. NIU Center for Governmental Studies Partnership

As staff considered the appropriate scope of services and related cost, local expertise was leveraged to reduce the overall cost of the project and enhance the ability to accurately identify and survey local conditions. Staff engaged in discussions with Camiros and determined that the NIU CGS was a key local expert to assist with the scope of services. CGS has agreed to partner with the City and Camiros to provide professional services to support the AGN Revitalization Plan (the CGS participation memorandum is included as Attachment C). The support provided by CGS will offset the overall project cost. CGS will assist with following items:

- primary and secondary key stakeholder interviews;
- identification of early action projects;
- implementation of early action projects;
- work group meeting facilitation;



- community meeting facilitation; and
- market study and survey.

CGS will be providing professional staff and student oversight support to this project. The in-kind services provided by CGS has reduced the cost of the overall proposal from Camiros.

VII. DeKalb 2025 Strategic Plan Alignment

The AGN Revitalization Plan will be planned in accordance with the following visions, goals, and action items set forth in the 2025 Strategic Plan:

Vision of a Sense of Place

- Support place-making in DeKalb's neighborhoods, downtown, at entrance gateways, the airport, and on campus.
 - Promote initiatives that celebrate DeKalb's heritage and legacy.
 - Use art and culture to define and celebrate community.
 - Create and support existing gathering places throughout DeKalb that draw people to local merchants while strengthening placemaking.
- Bridge NIU and the City, whenever feasible, to create a mutually beneficial environment.
 - Identify opportunities to visually and programmatically link NIU and the City.
- Develop and promote cultural, social, educational, and recreational activities that appeal to a wide range of interests and age groups.

Vision of Inclusiveness

- Support and model diversity and inclusiveness in all City government activities.
 - Identify specific strategies to meaningfully engage teens, young adults, and other underrepresented populations in City planning and governance.
- Promote inclusiveness throughout the community.
 - Promote community conversations around diversity and inclusion.
- Coordinate with other providers of essential support services.



- Help connect unemployed and underemployed residents to information about education, training, employment opportunities and other support services.

Vision of Accessibility

- Expand the availability of safe, secure, affordable, accessible, and time transportation options within DeKalb.

Vision of Efficient, Quality, Responsive Services

- Develop and implement methodologies to measure community satisfaction and allocate resources to improve quality of life.
- Engage in thoughtful planning to address long-term City needs.
 - Update and expand the Comprehensive Plan to meaningfully address development and housing, transportation, environment, stormwater, and other elements of a thriving and productive community.

VIII. Legal Impact

The City has completed an RFP process pursuant to Council direction, and has the authority to undertake an agreement with Camiros pending City Council approval. This item is anticipated to be brought forth for consideration of approval by the City Council at a future meeting.

IX. Financial Impact

As proposed, the total consulting services cost for the AGN Revitalization Plan is \$83,550. The timeline for this project will span over two fiscal years through FY2017 and FY2018. If approved by Council, the total amount expended in FY2017 for the AGN project will be \$43,630. In FY2018, the estimated amount expended will be \$39,920 and will be included in the FY2018 budget planning process for Council approval.

The amount available for the AGN project from FY2016.5 is \$6,400 and budgeted for FY2017 is \$25,000 for a combined total of \$31,400 within the Community Development Department contractual services account. The amount left remaining to be absorbed within the General Fund in FY2017 is \$12,230. An amendment will be required to carry forward the budgeted dollars from FY2016.5 into FY2017.

X. Options

The AGN Revitalization Plan is being presented for consideration by the City Council. The City Council may direct staff and the consultant to clarify any information presented or to approach the Council with further information.



XI. Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council discuss the items proposed in this memorandum and Camiros proposal included herewith, and provide any preliminary feedback or comments so they may be addressed before this item returns for consideration of approval.

