THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

City Council Meeting Date: February 28, 2023

Subject: Missing Middle Housing study contract

Staff Resources: Ben Woody, Interim Planning & Urban Design Director
Stephanie Monson Dahl, Urban Design and Place Strategies Manager
Vaidila Satvika, Urban Planner III

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract with Opticos Design, Inc. in the amount of $115,000 for a missing middle housing study and displacement risk assessment.

Background:

- As part of the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) budget, $85,000 was allocated to complete a missing middle housing study that proposes to identify regulatory and policy barriers to building missing middle housing (e.g., townhomes, accessory dwelling units, multiplexes, etc) and to provide a strategy to prioritize options to remove those barriers.
- An additional $30,000 has been identified to support expanding the scope of work to incorporate a Displacement Risk Assessment that will analyze displacement vulnerability, market pressure, and opportunities to put together anti-displacement strategies focused on minimizing or mitigating harm of proposed housing policies.
- The project will include an advisory working group of the Planning & Zoning Commission that will be made up of 14 individuals to provide broad-based review and feedback to staff during the project.
- Staff and the consultant team in partnership with the working group will develop an outreach strategy to ensure engagement with the diverse Asheville community.
- Tentative timeline: March project kickoff with estimated completion by the end of 2023.

Vendor Outreach Efforts:

- Staff performed outreach to minority and women owned businesses through solicitation and posting on the North Carolina Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB)
- Six firms responded to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) including one minority business enterprise (MBE)
- The selected firm, Opticos Design, Inc, is a certified B Corporation, focusing on equitable operations internally as well as externally. The sub-consultant is Cascadia Partners, a certified Emerging Small Business (ESB). Neither firm is minority owned.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency:

- Goal #1: Encourage Responsible Growth
- Goal #13: Increase and Diversify the Housing Supply

Council Goal:

- Equitable & Affordable Housing & Stability

Committee(s):

- On January 13, 2023 staff provided a presentation to the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC).
- On February 2, 2023, staff provided an update to the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC).
- On February 20, 2023, staff provided an update to the Planning & Economic Development Committee (PED).

Pros:

- Project will provide guidance to help the City prioritize efforts for regulatory changes aimed at improving housing supply, choice, and diversity in a manner that is consistent with equity goals

Cons:

- None

Fiscal Impact:

- Funding for this contract ($115,000 in total) is available in the Planning & Urban Design ($85,000) and Community and Economic Development Department ($30,000) operating budgets.
- CED is funding the displacement analysis using a budget initially planned for an Affordable Housing Plan, and will seek grant funding to supplement the remaining budget for that plan.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract with Opticos Design, Inc. in the amount of $115,000 for a missing middle housing study and displacement risk assessment.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 23-_____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH OPTICOS DESIGN, INC. TO CONDUCT A MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING STUDY AND DISPLACEMENT RISK ASSESSMENT

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville has authority pursuant to Article 2 of Chapter 160A of the North Carolina General Statutes to enter into contracts for services with other entities; and

WHEREAS, the *Living Asheville* Comprehensive Plan goal #1 seeks to *Encourage Responsible Growth* and goal #13 seeks to *Increase and Diversify the Housing Supply*, which are goals that are understood to be in the best long-term interests of the City of Asheville, and

WHEREAS, City Council 2022-2023 Strategic Priorities include a goal that seeks Equitable & Affordable Housing & Stability, and

WHEREAS, on October 3, 2022, the City issued RFQ # for a missing a missing middle housing study to identify regulatory and policy barriers to building missing middle housing (e.g., townhomes, accessory dwelling units, multiplexes, etc), to provide a strategy to prioritize options to remove those barriers, and to conduct a Displacement Risk Assessment; and

WHEREAS, six firms responded to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) including one minority business enterprise (MBE) and Opticos Design, Inc. was selected as the most qualified firm. Opticos Design, Inc, is a certified B Corporation, focusing on equitable operations internally as well as externally; and

WHEREAS, the City Council allocated $85,000 in the FY 22-23 budget for the Department of Planning & Urban Design to complete a missing middle housing study and the Community and Economic Development has contributed $30,000 in Affordable Housing Division resources to expand the scope of the study to include a Displacement Risk Assessment ;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to execute a contract with Opticos Design, Inc. in an amount not to exceed $115,000 for a missing middle housing study and displacement risk assessment.

Read, approved and adopted this 28th day of February, 2023.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney