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# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 7, 2017

Erie County Legislature  
92 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

**RE: Retaining a Consultant to Perform a Market Analysis and Feasibility Study  
for a New or Expanded Convention Center in Erie County**

Dear Honorable Members:

Enclosed please find a memorandum and proposed resolution requesting authorization for the County Executive to contract for services to retain a consultant to perform a market analysis and feasibility study for a new or expanded convention center in Erie County.

Should your Honorable Body require any further information, I encourage you to contact Kenneth J. Swanekamp, Director of Business Assistance at the Department of Environment and Planning. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Poloncarz", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.  
Erie County Executive

MCP/cw  
Enclosure

Cc: Thomas R. Hersey, Jr., Commissioner  
Kenneth J. Swanekamp, Director of Business Assistance

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature  
**From:** Department of Environment and Planning  
**Re:** Retaining a Consultant to Perform a Market Analysis and Feasibility Study for a New or Expanded Convention Center in Erie County  
**Date:** July 7, 2017

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### **SUMMARY**

The Department of Environment and Planning is requesting authorization for the County Executive to enter into contract with the firm of HVS Consulting in an amount not to exceed \$149,900 for the purpose of obtaining services to perform a market analysis and feasibility study for a new or expanded convention center in Erie County.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is sufficient funding in the previously approved Erie County Capital Budget, project A.14011 – 2014 Convention Center Need Analysis, for this effort.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Erie County has initiated a selection process for a convention center upgrade, expansion or replacement study based upon the funding made available and the desire of Erie County to implement a study of our convention center and its impact on tourism and economic activity.

The selection committee reviewed, scored, and ranked all proposals prior to opening pricing envelopes. When the prices were opened and assigned to the respective firms, the range was from \$119,000 to \$200,000. Between the two extremes in high and low prices, were five proposals that ranged from \$148,040 to \$150,000.

The four firms that scored the highest and were selected for interviews ranged in price from \$119,000 to \$149,975. The selection committee focused primarily upon the quality of proposal, interview, and reference checks.

Interviews with the four short listed firms took place on Thursday, June 22, 2017. The selection committee again met on Friday, June 23, 2017 to make the final selection. Through the interview process and reference checks, the selection committee sought to determine which firm had the skills for the job and the ability to understand the needs of the County to the greatest degree possible. This led to the recommendation of HVS Consulting of Chicago as the best quality and value for the project. Five of the seven firms submitted proposal prices within 2% of each other. It was not deemed necessary to negotiate pricing any further.

A spreadsheet showing the scores and shortlisted firms is attached.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Erie County Convention Center was constructed in the 1970's and as a result, is not on par with the centers in many of the cities with whom we compete for conventions and tourism. In order for Erie County to keep pace with our peer cities, it is necessary for Erie County to have a complete understanding of the convention marketplace within the region, State and nation.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

If authorization is not granted, the County will not be able to enter into a contract with the firm of HVS Consulting for the purpose of performing a market analysis and feasibility study for a new or expanded convention center in Erie County. Erie County will be unable to devise a strategy for growing this important sector of the economy.

## **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

Upon approval of the resolution, an agreement with the firm of HVS Consulting will be developed with a scope of work outlining what services are to be provided.

**COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE REVIEW**

The proposed item has been reviewed by the Comptroller's Office and is related to an authorized capital project # A.14011 for which there are sufficient appropriations for the action requested.

Signed: *[Signature]*

Date: 7/7/17

Name: Gregory C. Buch

Title: Deputy Comptroller

**ATTACHMENT**

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

RE: Retaining a Consultant to Perform a Market Analysis and Feasibility Study for a New or Expanded Convention Center in Erie County

WHEREAS, it is recognized that having a competitive convention center and support services is a valuable tool for creating economic growth and prosperity for a region; and

WHEREAS, in Erie County's Initiatives for a Smart Economy, the County has committed to the goal of studying the Buffalo Convention Center and its location in the regional and nationwide marketplace; and

WHEREAS, Erie County has solicited proposals from qualified firms for proposals to perform a market analysis and feasibility study for a new or expanded convention center in Erie County; and

WHEREAS, Erie County has conducted a review and selection process of the proposals that have been received for the Erie County convention center market feasibility study; and

WHEREAS, Erie County desires to work with HVS Consulting to perform a convention center market feasibility study; and

WHEREAS, this study will research the situation where the revitalized Buffalo and Erie County are competing with other cities and regions for tourism and convention dollars.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the County Executive is hereby authorized to enter into agreements with HVS Consulting or other entities as appropriate, in amounts not to exceed \$149,900, to perform a convention center market feasibility study; and be it further

RESOLVED, that there is sufficient funding in the previously approved capital project A.14011 – 2014 Convention Center Need Analysis for this study; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Resolution takes effect from and after its date of adoption; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the County Executive's Office; the Director of the Division of Budget and Management; the Comptroller's Office; Kenneth J. Swanekamp, Director of Business Assistance; Thomas R. Hersey, Jr., Commissioner of the Department of Environment and Planning, and the County Attorney.

Convention Center Study Ranking Results

Reviewer

Ranking	Consultant	Pricing	1	2	3	4	5	Average Score
1	HVS	\$149,900.00	85	77	90	73	92	83.40
2	Johnson Consulting	\$149,975.00	85	76	82	78	84	81.00
3	Hunden Strategic Partners	\$119,000.00	75	79	80	76	92	80.40
4	CSL	\$148,187.00	52	81	82	79	84	75.60
5	Convergence Design	\$148,040.00	57	71	60	75	88	70.20
6	Gensler	\$150,000.00	75	71	51	53	93	68.60
7	HHL Architects	\$200,000.00	32	66	61	47	65	54.20

☐ selected for interview

☐ Selected firm

  
 Approved by Deputy County Executive Maria R. Whyte

# Convention Center Study

## Consultant Selection Process

### Meeting #1 - May 31, 2017

Department of Environment and Planning Conference Room #1004

Attendees: Ken Swanekamp (DEP), Mark Rountree (DEP), Julie Barry (DEP), Paul Murphy (CVB), Daniel Fitzgibbons (DPW)

- 1) Introductions- Each committee member introduced themselves
- 2) Confidentiality of Process- Mr. Swanekamp provided an overview of the importance of confidentiality in the process. He stated that he has received all of the “conflict of interest forms” and according to the forms submitted there are no conflicts of interest with any of the proposing firms.
- 3) Schedule- Mr. Swanekamp stated that we would like to aim to select a consultant before the Legislative summer recess. There was a general discussion and it was agreed that reviewers should have their reviews completed by June 15. If necessary, interviews with the consultants would occur the following two weeks, with a final decision made following the interviews.
- 4) Scoring Criteria - There was a general discussion about the below scoring criteria. The group agreed that the scoring criteria and weighting was satisfactory and should be utilized in the reviewing process.
  - a. **Background of Firm**
    - Experience and performance of firm (15)
    - Specific experience on this type of project (15)
    - Staff assigned to project (10)
    - Accessibility of firm (10)
    - Other factors (as deemed appropriate)
  - b. **Approach to project**
    - Understanding of owner’s program and intent (15)
    - Understanding of tasks (15)
    - Schedule (10)
    - MBE/WBE approach and utilization (10)
    - Other factors (as appropriate)
- 5) Next Meeting: June 15, 2017 at 11:00 am



# Convention Center Study

## Consultant Selection Process

### Meeting #2 – June 15, 2017

Department of Environment and Planning Conference Room #1004

Attendees: Ken Swanekamp (DEP), Mark Rountree (DEP), Julie Barry (DEP), Paul Murphy (CVB), Daniel Fitzgibbons (DPW)

1) Each reviewer shared the following scores:

Ranking	Consultant	Pricing	reviewer					Average Score
			1	2	3	4	5	
1	HVS	\$149,900.00	85	77	90	73	92	83.40
2	Johnson Consulting	\$149,975.00	85	76	82	78	84	81.00
3	Hunden Strategic Partners	\$119,000.00	75	79	80	76	92	80.40
4	CSL	\$148,187.00	52	81	82	79	84	75.60
5	Convergence Design	\$148,040.00	57	71	60	75	88	70.20
6	Gensler	\$150,000.00	75	71	51	53	93	68.60
7	HHL Architects	\$200,000.00	32	66	61	47	65	54.20

selected for interview

Mr. Swanekamp stated that he would divide up references for each reviewer to contact.

It was decided that the best date for interviews would be June 22 in order to provide enough time to submit the materials to the Legislature before the Legislative summer recess.