

Elmhurst staff select CDM Smith for engineering work on Metra station project

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ELMHURST – CDM Smith has been welcomed aboard for contract negotiations and discussions with the city of Elmhurst regarding the reconstruction of the downtown Metra station, city staff announced at the Sept. 24 Public Works and Buildings Committee meeting.

Staff followed a qualification-based selection procedure in order to select a professional team to provide architectural design and phase II engineering services with an option of providing phase III design and construction engineering services for the reconstruction and associated site improvements, according to a memo included with the committee agenda.

The city wants to modernize and accommodate increased ridership for the station, which was last updated in the 1980s, according to the request for qualifications issued July 6. The proposal includes a larger inbound structure, a new outbound structure, two warming shelters, better configuration for parking cars and bicycles, and a new ADA-compliant pedestrian underpass west of York Street, the RFQ stated.

The CDM Smith team would be asked to gather information from stakeholders for the design of the project, analyze the configuration of nearby traffic flows and prepare studies of impacts on the environment, among other tasks, according to the RFQ.

Assistant Director of Public Works Cori Tiberi said the city plans to present concepts and design elements of phase I to commuters, residents and downtown businesses within the next three to six months and ask for more input from the groups to narrow down a specific design.

"They are highly qualified, very experienced. They have a wealth of knowledge," Tiberi said about the CDM Smith team. "They have a lot of depth within their design team to be able to cover all of the different aspects of the project, so I am very comfortable with them. I think they're going to be able to do a great job for the city."

The team has worked with 160 Metra architectural and engineering projects, according to a document it included with its presentation.

"They submitted a very robust statement of qualifications, and they did the same thing during their interview," Tiberi said. "They came in super prepared, able to answer all of the questions, address all the major points of the project from staging to tunnel design."

She said the next step is starting negotiations for phase II, which will happen within roughly the next month. City staff would then return to the committee with the proposed contract, which the committee could approve and send to the Elmhurst City Council.

If contract terms cannot be reached, the firm ranked second, TranSystems, would be invited in for contract negotiations, according to correspondence the city sent to the four firms it interviewed Sept. 6 regarding the project.

Funding for the project has been secured through several grants, including a \$10 million Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant, a \$2.4 million Transportation Congestion Mitigation grant, a \$2 million Illinois Commerce Commission grant and \$2 million from Metra, according to the RFQ.

The city also has applied for a grant from the Regional Transportation Authority, and it plans to apply again for a shared fund grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Tiberi said.

She said the city should find out by the end of the year whether it received RTA funding.

The design should be completed by the end of 2019, with construction beginning in spring 2020 and the project completed by winter 2021, the RFQ stated.

"It's just a great project," Tiberi said. "It's going to be such a unique opportunity for the downtown and for Elmhurst because it's such a key location for everyone, from commuters that travel to and from work, for people passing through, for the businesses that have that new structure there and potentially more commuters coming in to use the station."