



Legislation Text

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Professional Services Agreement with Dover, Kohl and Partners for Designing Proposed Changes to the West University Avenue Corridor between 6th and 13th Streets, Developing a Proposed Special Area Plan for University Heights, and Developing Proposed Amendments to the College Park Special Area Plan

On March 23, 1998, the City Commission approved Dover, Kohl and Partners, along with the planning firm of Jackson Gladding, as the top-ranked consultant team for recommending changes to the West University Avenue corridor between 6th and 13th Streets, in order to improve the economic vitality of the corridor by making it more attractive for businesses and more conducive to pedestrian activity. This section of University Avenue is the primary connector between downtown and the University. Its infrastructure and streetscape need to be updated and made more attractive in order to increase the vitality of the corridor.

This portion of University Avenue has the potential to become an economic development magnet by serving as one of the City's most vital and appealing retail, commercial and residential corridors with a pedestrian scale. It has a built-in market of University and Community College students nearby. An investment on the City's part is needed in order to upgrade sidewalks, streetscape, pedestrian lighting and other features that will provide the incentive for pedestrians and others to be attracted to this key location along University Avenue, and for the private sector to know that investments it may make along the corridor are justified by the City's own improvements to the public realm.

This work will involve traffic modeling to explore alternative configurations for the Avenue while continuing to handle automobile traffic adequately, possibly by sharing traffic with other corridors. These changes will offer a major opportunity to increase the quality of an important segment of the most important corridor in Gainesville's urban area, and to heighten the attractiveness of the downtown area as a magnet for economic development.

The City Commission also approved the Dover Kohl consultant team as the top-ranked consultant team for undertaking a proposed Special Area Plan for the University Heights neighborhood, and for amending the College Park Special Area Plan to make it more functional and to better accomplish its purposes. The City Commission authorized staff to negotiate with Dover Kohl for undertaking both the corridor improvements and the special area plans.

Staff has negotiated extensively with Dover Kohl and has arrived at a draft scope of services which will include various pre-meetings, a five-day charrette to address the corridor and the special area plans, preparation of the designs for proposed improvements to University Avenue, and drafting of the proposed special area plan and special area plan amendments. The scope of services also includes two additional trips to Gainesville for final presentations to various entities that would be participating in or approving the changes.

Staff and the consultants anticipate a highly participatory process, to include business owners along University Avenue, residents of surrounding neighborhoods, advisory boards to the City Commission and the Community Redevelopment Agency, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization, the Florida Department of Transportation, and all other interested organizations, groups and citizens. The timeline for the work would be July 1998 through January 1999 with the five-day charrette tentatively taking place during the week of September 18-24, 1998. Completion dates for the project could be adjusted as the work unfolds.

The contract price under the scope of services agreement is \$98,000. Funds are available in 98-001-790-7926-5150-4110 (professional services, from prior year's personnel savings in Community Development) and in 98-001-790-7920-5150-4120 (contractual services).

The City Commission authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement for professional services with Dover, Kohl and Partners, subject to review and approval by legal staff as to form and legality.