UPDATE: City Seeks Efficiency Ideas, Not Privatization Proposals

Update – February 20, 2015 – Columbia's City Council adopted **Resolution R-2015-015** at the City Council Meeting on February 17, 2015, amending the Efficiency Opportunities Related to the Operation and Maintenance of the Water & Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Systems Public Private Partnership Request for Expression of Interest currently available through the City's Bid Online portal.

This resolution allows the City to proceed with the RFEI but restricts the types of proposals that will be considered. Proposals for "sale, lease, service concession arrangement or certain public-private financing or refinancing of the system or any related capital improvement projects" will not be considered. Firms recommending all other ideas still have until 5:00 PM on February 23, 2015 to submit their proposals.

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Resolution R-2015-015 can be found online in the Council Meeting Revised Agenda for Tuesday, February 17, 2015, available at www.columbiasc.net/city-council/agendas. The ***Request for Expression of Interest: Efficiency Opportunities Related to the Operation and Maintenance of Water and Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Systems, Public Private Partnership*** *can be found online at www.columbiasc.net/depts/purchasing/engrfi002b-14-15_efficiency_opportunities.pdf. For more information about the City's water and sewer systems, visit www.columbiasc.net/utilities-engineering. For more information on City procurement opportunities and Bid Online, visit www.columbiasc.net/purchasing/opportunities.*

City Extends Deadline To Submit Water/ Sewer Public Private Partnership Ideas

Columbia, SC – February 3, 2015 – The City of Columbia has recently extended the deadline for proposals in its **Request for Expression of Interest: Efficiency Opportunities Related to the Operation and Maintenance of Water and Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Systems, Public Private Partnership**. Firms interested in the RFEI, which was issued on January 8, 2015, will have until 5:00 PM on February 23, 2015 to submit their proposals.

This RFEI was issued to solicit input and feedback from companies with significant expertise in the water and sewer industries on how the City's water and sewer system might be operated and maintained more efficiently. The City expects a wide variety of proposals, including those for system and equipment efficiencies and improvements, new opportunities based on advancing techniques or technology, process and training-related efficiencies and improvements, and offers to purchase or manage the City's water and/or wastewater utilities.

In recent years, the City has been moving forward with significant investments in its water and sewer infrastructure with particular emphasis on improving its wastewater system and reducing the number of sanitary sewer overflows the system experiences during wet weather. As a result, the City has received multiple inquiries and unsolicited proposals from firms claiming to be able to undertake these needed investments at a reduced cost to the City and its rate payers. To more systematically evaluate these claims, and to make this process as public as possible, the City has chosen to issue the RFEI.

Any effort to sell or privatize management of the City's water or sewer systems would carry significant federal and state requirements and would have to be initiated by the City's policy makers. No such action has occurred. It would also have to make sense for the City, its residents, its businesses, its customers, and its stakeholders. Public input and transparency would be critical if such a proposal were to move forward.

Although the City anticipates receiving some RFEI proposals reflective of selling or privatizing operations, not every proposal is likely to be so complex. Simpler recommendations might include new training, equipment or techniques the City had not previously considered. These could result in future City projects through the City's traditional bidding processes.

The RFEI does not obligate the City to honor any proposal submitted nor does it limit the City to work with firms that have submitted any particular type of proposal. Firms do not need to submit an RFEI response in order to be considered for any future projects that come out of this process. The City can also reject proposals that are deemed not in the City's best interest. To find the full RFEI, current as of January 8, 2015, visit the City's Procurement Opportunities Page. Firms interested in submitting proposals should register with the City's Bid Online portal. There they can receive updates to the RFEI, addenda, and instructions for submittal.

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*The **Request for Expression of Interest: Efficiency Opportunities Related to the Operation and Maintenance of Water and Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Systems, Public Private Partnership** can be found online at www.columbiasc.net/depts/purchasing/engrfi002b-14-15_efficiency_opportunities.pdf. For more information about the City's water and sewer systems, visit www.columbiasc.net/utilities-engineering. For more information on City procurement opportunities and Bid Online, visit www.columbiasc.net/purchasing/opportunities.*