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To: Heather Obara
Chief Financial Officer
Jacksonville Transportation Authority

From: Matthew Lascell
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General

Subject: Review of Evaluation Procedure for Request for Proposals P-21-031 Transit Oriented Development Services for JTA Greenline Commuter Rail

In October 2025, this office received an anonymous allegation regarding potential inappropriate preference given to a contractor related to a contract awarded by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA). The allegation centered on the fact that the contractor who was selected, WSP USA Incorporated, was given preferential treatment because they employ the wife of JTA, Chief Executive Officer, Nathaniel P. Ford.

Based on this, we conducted a narrow-scope review of the evaluation of the contractor's bid for this contract. This review was conducted under the OIG's Contract Oversight responsibility, with a scope limited to the evaluation process only.

As referenced above, the review involved Request for Proposals (RFP) P-21-031 Transit Oriented Development Services for JTA Greenline Commuter Rail. This RFP had two options titled Comprehensive Planning for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Implementation and First Coast Commuter Rail Project and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Services for JTA First Coast Flyer Greenline – Pilot. Companies that responded to the RFP were asked to address the Scope of Work for each of these options. One of the three respondents only submitted a proposal for one of the options.

The solicitation for bids was publicly advertised, and there were three responsive bidders. An evaluation panel was convened, and the prospective contractors were evaluated on five key factors with specific criteria contained within those factors. The first key factor was Qualifications, Competence, and Availability of Key Staff, and the sub criteria under this factor were essentially the qualification of key staff and their adequacy to meet the project scope. The second key factor was Technical Knowledge, which was broken out into technical approach, understanding of scope, and prior experience with similar projects. The third key factor was Innovation, which had five sub-criteria. They were to document

their ability to provide innovative solutions, the approach to integration/ compatibility with transit and other mobility options, and project experience. The fourth key factor was pricing which did not have any sub-criteria. The fifth and final key factor was Quality Assurance/Quality Control which also did not have any sub-criteria.

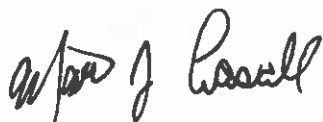
The evaluation panel consisted of JTA employees, including the Director of Economic Development, the Program Manager Sustainability & Resiliency, the Director- Capital Projects Office, and the Director Audit & Compliance. There was also a separate, non-voting technical advisor to assist with the evaluation.

We reviewed the evaluation panels' scoring matrix and did not find any anomalies with the scores. In the WSP USA Inc. proposal package, a disclosure of potential conflict was included. In this disclosure, WSP reported that they had recently hired Jannet Walker-Ford, the spouse of JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford. They stated on this Conflict of Interest form that "Jannet Walker Ford has not been involved in any capacity with this project, nor will she be involved moving forward."

Ultimately, the evaluation panel recommended that WSP USA Inc. be awarded Option 2 of the contract and recommended that another company receive the award for Option 1. We examined the Evaluation Panels Recommendation Memo and identified that Mr. Ford was the approving official who concurred with their recommendation. Aside from this approval signature, we did not find any evidence that Mr. Ford was involved with the evaluation panel deliberations.

Based on the information obtained to date, we have chosen to close this review. We did not identify a need to interview the members of the evaluation panel or make any other effort to gather information related to this contract award. It was clear that the contract was competed adequately, and we agreed with the evaluation panel's analysis. We suggest that in the future, when a conflict is disclosed, JTA should have another party without conflict sign the approval memorandum. As a result of this narrow-scope review, we found no obvious evidence of inappropriate preference being given to any contractor.

No response is required, and we appreciate the JTA's cooperation with this review.



Matthew J. Lascell
Inspector General

