



TOWNSHIP OF EDWARDSBURGH CARDINAL
ACTION ITEM

Committee: Committee of the Whole – Administration and Operations

Date: January 13, 2025

Department: Community Development

Topic: Community Improvement Plan Proposals

Purpose: To ensure thorough evaluation of references for NPG Planning Solutions were verified and found to be positive. Additionally, the proposal is to be compared against the submission from Wilson & Wilbur, which offered the lowest price.

Background: We are working towards an update to our Community Improvement Plan (CIP), originally established in 2012, to address current economic and social realities, set future development goals, and include a focus on attainable/affordable housing.

At the December 9 Council meeting, staff identified NPG Planning Solutions as the preferred proponent. However, due to the constrained timeline, reference checks could not be completed prior to the meeting. To ensure due diligence, a comprehensive reference check was conducted subsequently to validate the capabilities of NPG Planning Solutions. Additionally, a detailed rationale was provided to explain the decision not to select Wilson and Wilbur.

Five proposals were received. Total points average and cost is provided below for the two lowest priced proposals:

Proponent Name	Total Points Average /100	Total Cost (excluding HST)
NPG Planning Solutions	83	\$27 980
Wilson & Wilbur	68	\$23 000

Based on cost-effectiveness, relevant expertise, and practical, tailored approach that balances with affordability and quality, it is recommended that the Community Improvement Plan RFP be awarded to NPG Planning Solutions. With \$30,000 budgeted for this project in 2024, this decision ensures the Township receives a CIP that addresses its priorities without exceeding its budget constraints.

NPG was chosen over the highest-scoring proponent because their proposal was significantly more cost-effective while still meeting project requirements, as the higher-priced option did not provide sufficient additional value to justify the increased cost.

Summary Report of NPG Planning Solutions' References:

1. Project Management and Delivery:

Town of Penetanguishene: NPG successfully delivered the 2024 Affordable and Sustainable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) on time and within budget.

City of Welland: NPG, alongside TWC, effectively managed the Affordable Rental Housing CIP (2023) project, meeting all deadlines. Previous collaborations included an Environmental Scan and Housing Needs Assessment.

2. Communication and Collaboration:

Penetanguishene: Communication was strong, with NPG providing content for resident engagement initiatives such as surveys and public open houses.

Welland: NPG maintained good communication, actively involving the Affordable Housing Committee at all project stages and participating in public open houses and council presentations.

3. Expertise and Problem-Solving:

Penetanguishene: NPG demonstrated extensive experience, but there was uncertainty about fully leveraging their consultants' expertise.

Welland: NPG displayed excellent industry knowledge and a thorough understanding of project scope and needs.

4. Results and Outcomes:

Penetanguishene: The project was smooth and successful.

Welland: The CIP was well-received, with tangible benefits for residents, including active usage of the plan.

Overall, NPG Planning Solutions has demonstrated strong project management, effective communication, industry expertise, and positive project outcomes across both municipalities.

In addition to references from Penetanguishene and Welland, input was also gathered from the City of Brockville regarding NPG's work on the 10-year update to their Official Plan. According to A. McGinnis, Supervisor of Planning/Chief Planning Officer, NPG demonstrated strong expertise and adaptability:

"They are very good at providing advice and examples of what has worked in some municipalities and what has not. They stay up-to-date with current policy and excel at presenting to Council, offering a clear understanding of changes and their implications for the municipality and taxpayers."

This feedback underscores NPG's ability to combine technical knowledge with practical insights to effectively support municipal planning objectives.

Summary of Comparing Two Lowest Priced Proposals:

Wilson & Wilbur's financial proposal offers services at \$21,000 (excluding HST), while NPG Planning Solutions' proposal is higher, at \$27,980 (excluding HST).

Are proposals the same in services?

While both proposals aim to deliver a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) aligned with Edwardsburgh Cardinal's strategic goals, there are distinctions:

1. Wilson & Wilbur emphasizes a research-intensive, evidence-based approach, focusing on sustainable practices and data evaluation. The community engagement component is notably weak and generalized, lacking specificity and tailored strategies to effectively involve and address the needs of the community.
2. NPG Planning Solutions, partnering with Tim Welch Consulting (TWC), brings specialized expertise in housing-focused CIPs, offering a broader range of deliverables like tailored engagement strategies, detailed financial modeling, and policy design. While speaking to references, they all spoke highly of TWC and the added value this expertise provided the project and final plan.
3. NPG also places more emphasis on affordable housing and adaptive reuse of existing structures, while Wilson & Wilbur generalizes their approach to community improvement.

Why did Wilson & Wilbur score lowest?

1. Specialization: NPG demonstrates significant recent experience with affordable housing Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) in projects comparable to ours,

showcasing a strong understanding of contexts and tailored solutions. Wilson & Wilbur bring experience in similar projects; however, their portfolio includes examples primarily from the United States, reflecting a broader, more general approach that lacks specific exposure to Canadian policies and municipal frameworks.

2. **Engagement Strategy:** NPG outlines a robust engagement plan with specific workshops, surveys, and stakeholder matrices. Wilson & Wilbur's engagement plan is less detailed in comparison.

3. **Breadth of Services:** NPG's proposal includes additional elements such as innovative engagement tools (which we asked for).

While Wilson & Wilbur offers a cost advantage, NPG appears stronger in depth of services, stakeholder engagement, and project-specific experience.

Policy Implications: Requests for Proposals awards must be authorized by Council.

Strategic Plan Implications: Under the Liveable Community pillar of the Strategic Plan, objective 1.3 focuses on increasing affordable housing within the community. This objective includes an action to review and update the community improvement plan to define affordable housing and introduce incentive programs for residents and developers to create housing units that meet affordability criteria.

Financial Considerations: With \$30,000 approved in 2024 to be carried over into 2025, combined with the \$3,000 grant funding from CF Grenville, this project is well within the allocated budget, ensuring its feasibility and financial sustainability.

Recommendation: That Committee recommend that Council approves the award of the Community Improvement Plan Project to NPG Planning Solutions in the amount of \$27 980 + non rebatable HST.



Community Engagement Coordinator