



Board of County Commissioners

Item Title: Approve and authorize the Chairman to sign Contract No. CM3913, with Inspire Placemaking Collective, Inc., for Professional Services for Evaluation and Appraisal (EAR) Amendments and Comprehensive Plan Updates in the amount of \$1,198,128.00.

Date: May 21, 2025

Department: Planning

Background:

The County has been engaged in the visioning process since directed by the BOCC in May of 2022 with the final draft anticipated to be heard by the BOCC on June 23, 2025. The visioning phase of the Comprehensive Plan update has included extensive civic engagement over an 18-month period. The data collected will be the foundation of the subsequent amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan, and ultimately, land development regulations.

The Comprehensive Plan, which is required by state law, includes principles, guidelines, standards, and strategies for the orderly and balanced future economic, social, physical, environmental, and fiscal development of the community. The goals, objectives, and policies of the Plan reflect the County's commitment to implement the Plan and its elements. The County's Comprehensive Plan helps to guide future decisions and describes how the County's programs, activities, and land development regulations will be initiated, modified, or continued to be implemented as outlined within the Comprehensive Plan consistently.

An amendment to Section 163.3191 FS, (Evaluation and appraisal of comprehensive plan) was approved by the Governor in May of 2023. The amendment requires the local Comprehensive Plan to have a minimum 10-year 'planning horizon'. That language was later interpreted by Department of Commerce staff to mean that an existing, compliant local comprehensive plan without a planning horizon of at least 10 years remaining would be deemed noncompliant and be required to be updated.

In May of 2022, prior to the 2023 amendment of Sec. 163.3191 FS, the BOCC adopted a Strategic Plan directing County staff to execute the creation of a 2050 Comprehensive Plan. The first step in the creation of any proper comprehensive plan is a county-wide visioning exercise. In late 2022, staff began work to execute the assignment. A Request for Proposals for the first phase of the comprehensive plan update, the Vision 2050 plan, was issued on March 24, 2023, and the contract with the selected consultant was executed on September 25, 2023. A letter from the State Department of Commerce was received on August 8, 2024, notifying the County of the need to comply with the minimum planning period of at least 10 years or to reflect changes in state requirements, or changes to local conditions since the last update. The Planning Department responded to the letter from the State with a response letter dated September 30, 2024, informing them of the ongoing visioning process and ultimate plan to update the County's Comprehensive Plan.

County planning staff reached out to the State for clarification regarding the potential implications of missing the October 1, 2025, deadline for compliance and learned that Nassau County initiated comprehensive plan amendments would not be permitted should the deadline be missed. County staff spoke with the State Department of Commerce last on March 14, 2025, for further clarification on the implications of noncompliance. The State indicated that compliance would only be ensured if an update meeting the new criteria were to be transmitted to the State prior to the October 1, 2025, deadline.

To address the change in State law and the subsequent Department of Commerce interpretation of the legislation, the County is proposing a phased approach to updating the Comprehensive Plan to both meet the impending deadline - a result of an unfunded mandate from the State and to secondly, complete the full update to the Comprehensive Plan as initially directed to staff by the Board of County Commissioners through the Strategic Plan adoption in May of 2022.

Inspire Placemaking Collective, Inc. (Inspire) was founded in 2022 as a formal spin-off of S&ME, Inc.'s planning and landscape architecture divisions which operated for more than 20 years. With a team of 24 planners bringing more than 300 years of collective experience, Inspire specializes in Comprehensive Planning, having completed 68 projects, including 6 Plan Updates over the past 3 years. Our previous work for Lake, and other fast-growing Counties such as St. Johns, Flagler, Polk, Osceola, Sumter, and Pasco, has given us unique insight into best practices for long-range planning and growth management.

Comprehensive Planning Experience for Florida Counties

- Flagler County, FL
- St. Johns County, FL
- Pasco County, FL
- Polk County, FL
- Manatee County, FL
- Sumter County, FL
- Hillsborough County, FL

- Indian River County, FL
- Okaloosa County, FL
- Osceola County, FL

Request:

Approve and authorize the Chairman to sign Contract No. CM3913, with Inspire Placemaking Collective, Inc., for Professional Services for Evaluation and Appraisal (EAR) Amendments and Comprehensive Plan Updates in the amount of \$1,198,128.

Financial/Economic Impact to Future Years Budgeting Process or Effect on Citizens:

Nassau County is required to update its comprehensive plan on a regular basis. The County is planning to update its comprehensive plan based on significant outreach and engagement completed during the 2023-2025 timeframe as part of the visioning process. Additionally, recent state legislative changes require certain updates to the plan be completed prior to October 1, 2025, or the County will be found in noncompliance. The comprehensive plan is the foundational document for managing growth in the County. This document also includes provisions for managing key priorities including, but not limited to transportation, recreation and open space, economic development, and coastal management. The approval of this contract will enable the County to update a portion of the comprehensive plan to remain compliant with the State and during the second phase, to fully update the comprehensive plan to reflect recent engagement outcomes during the visioning process. This contract will enable the completion of the two-phase process of updating the Comprehensive Plan to remain compliant with state legislation and to fully update the Comprehensive Plan considering visioning process outcomes and best planning practices.

As part of the prior year budgets, the BOCC has previously approved a budget of \$1.75 million for the BIVCP - Bicentennial/Vision/Comp Plan project. To complete the Bicentennial and Vision, the County encumbered \$930,000, leaving a current budget remaining of \$820,000. The Comprehensive Plan Update proposed cost is \$729,493, which provides an estimated savings of \$90,500. The additional work due to the unfunded mandate for the Evaluation and Appraisal (EAR) Amendments proposed cost is \$468,635. To fund this additional costs, we will utilize the Comprehensive Plan savings and other projects savings of approximately \$378,000, primarily as a result of grant funds received, to complete the EAR Amendments.

Action Requested and Recommendation:

Approve and authorize the Chairman to sign Contract No. CM3913, with Inspire Placemaking Collective, Inc., for Professional Services for Evaluation and Appraisal (EAR) Amendments and Comprehensive Plan Updates in the amount of \$1,198,128.

Is this action consistent with the Nassau County Comprehensive Land Use Plan?

Florida Statutes Ch. 163 requires local government to adopt and maintain a Comprehensive Plan.

Funding Source:

04247515-531025 BIVCP

Additional Information Needed for Contracts/Agreements (If Applicable)

Contract Number assigned by Contracts Management:

CM3913

For non-governmental agencies, has the document been sent to the vendor for signature?

Yes

Does the document need to be recorded? If so, who will pay the recordation fee?

No

Are there any special mailing instructions? (Include contact name, address, deadline for submittal, how to mail such as express mail, FedEx, etc.):

Please forward a copy of the completed documents to the following:

Elizabeth Backe ebacke@nassaucountyfl.com

Susan Gilbert sgilbert@nassaucountyfl.com

How many originals are needed?

One