

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Lewis Kuhlman, City of La Crosse  
**FROM:** Jeff Miller, HKGi  
**DATE:** December 23, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** **HKGi Responses to La Crosse Comprehensive Plan RFP Interview Questions**

---

Lewis –

As you know, the HKGi Team's interview on December 20, 2021, did not allow all of the City's questions to be presented to and responded to by the HKGi Team. Following the interview, our team offered to submit our notes for responding to these questions to you and the Evaluation Committee (Plan Commission). Thanks for providing us this opportunity. Since the City's intent was for these questions to be responded to verbally, we are simply providing our notes / bullet points for each question rather than formal written responses. We hope this additional information is helpful to the Evaluation Committee in evaluating the HKGi Team's fit for the Comprehensive Plan Writing Project.

- 1. Plans and implementation are most effective when they are informed by the communities they are designed to benefit. If selected, how will you be supporting the City planners, community engagement and integrating it into the final document?**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

- Tailor the community engagement to the specific needs and approach the City seeks
- Collaborate with City Staff and Media Consultant on the content for engagement
- Identify audiences, strategies for the process
- Choose from HKGi's toolbox of engagement techniques as determined appropriate (Pop-Up Events, Open Houses, Gameboards, Social Pinpoint, Survey Monkey, Story Map, Konveio, Mural)
- Summarize engagement input and show how it informed the planning process
- Integrate relevant community input into each element of the Comprehensive Plan
- Use of infographics to make input easier to understand and more intriguing to read

- 2. Tell us about the overall organization of this project. What steps will you take to start this plan on track and keep it on track? How do you keep the scope of a plan manageable and focused?**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

- Big project broken down into manageable tasks. We have organized the project work into 8 tasks that we have found make comprehensive plan projects more manageable and help with keeping the project on track.

- Backup for Project Staff. We have people who can step in and pick up the slack when needed. Since the HKGi team has extensive experience with comprehensive planning, we know what needs to be done and can integrate additional staff if needed to keep the project on track. Similarly, while SRF and EOR have specialty expertise that benefit this project, both firms also provide some similar services, e.g. civil engineering and infrastructure planning. This capacity is particularly valuable in light of the COVID pandemic.
- Consistent communication. Our team is committed to maintaining frequent check-in calls with the City Staff project manager(s). We will do what works best for the City Staff project manager. We suggest every other week, 30 minutes typically, and can determine that sometimes not needed. Focus on coordination and check-in on budget/deliverables and work scope deviations.
- We have a team that is experienced working together and currently works together on several projects.

**3. How do you measure the effectiveness of your strategies and recommendations?**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

- We have developed report cards (existing conditions) as part of a number of comprehensive plans that include indicators and metrics. Some examples are Red Wing, Rochester, and Johnston (IA).
- In Red Wing, we incorporated Report Card measures/indicators into each chapter.
- Priority indicators are identified by plan element: number of jobs or businesses, household income, poverty rate, cost-burdened households, % of households within a 5-10 minute walk to a park/trail, bus ridership, etc.
- Another example is a county bike and pedestrian plan in Washington County, MN, where we developed a project prioritization tool for future bike and pedestrian network improvements.
- Measures to use for future trail improvements: part of regional network, fills a trail gap, connector to schools, connector to parks, contributes to comfort level of the network's facilities, etc.
- Also identified consideration factors, e.g. for a bike/pedestrian network - operations and maintenance costs, replacement schedule, equity, community support.

**4. What expectations do you have for City staff and the steering committee? What do you need from us for this process to be successful? What does a successful plan look like for you?**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

**What does a successful plan look like for you?**

- The plan represents what we heard from the community
- The plan's preferred direction is reached after exploring different scenarios/options
- The plan provides clear policies and visual (mapping) guidance
- The plan is comprehensive and has flexibility
- The plan is easy-to-use
- The plan is a resource for decision-making
- The plan has clear and easy-to-use implementation strategies

**What do we expect from City Staff?**

- Collaborative leadership between City Staff, Media Consultant, and the Consultant Team

- Provide all relevant background plans, studies, and GIS data
- Schedule project meetings' dates/times and locations
- Coordinate the community tour
- Participate in the assessment of the current plan
- Participate in 1-2 day planning workshop/charrette to explore future development scenarios
- City Staff will be the face of the project for community engagement
- Provide any preferred stakeholders' names and contact information

**5. How many other engagements will you be taking on alongside ours? How many ways will you be splitting your time? What sets you apart from other consultants?**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

- All HKGi staff members collaborate across projects. Our firm of 21 staff is accustomed to working on and balancing multiple projects. This adaptability means we are able to flex our staff levels on projects when needed.
- Successful business means we aim to keep our plates relatively full. Project managers are managing 3-4 projects at a time...optimally.
- We would not have submitted a proposal to the City of La Crosse if we didn't have capacity.
- We are collaborators. We listen and work with the community. Unlike other firms, we have found that one size does not fit all solutions. We don't presume to know exactly what will be needed upfront so we plan for adaptability during the project. We typically propose alternative techniques/solutions during a project to give our client communities options for choosing what they think will work best for their community.

**6. How would you approach building on existing plans and setting a framework for updating the comprehensive plan based on future plans? (i.e. Climate Action Plan, School District Planning, Bike/Ped Planning)**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

- Two pronged question – using existing plans vs. planning for future plans
- Existing Plans:
  - Each provide additional detail and policy guidance that the city has been using and helps to understand current fabric
  - Use these plans to inform existing conditions and policy understanding
    - What do they include?
      - Existing data, past engagement results, existing policy, implementation direction
    - How relevant is the plan today?
      - Is the data still relevant? Was the full community engaged in the outcomes?
    - What does it tell us about the goals of each plan element?
- Future Plans:
  - Comprehensive plan should be flexible and allow for other detailed planning to occur which doesn't always necessitate updates
  - Many future plans are either regularly programmed (5-year CORP updates to comply with DNR) or will be identified as action items; for those we know will occur, the plan can be set up accordingly.

- For those we don't know will occur, we need to be flexible, and outline a process that the city can use to determine needed changes.

**7. What would your team do to ensure the plan is implementable?**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

- Strive for conciseness. Many comprehensive plans become lengthy and unwieldy due to the number of plan elements, the complexity of each element, and the need to meet State Statutes.
- HKGi will lean into the use of maps, tables, diagrams, infographics, and illustrations that make the plan easier to understand and use.
- Balance the need for a comprehensive plan to be comprehensive, general, and high level with the need for being implementable by creating an action-oriented comprehensive plan.
- We typically translate strategies and recommendations into supporting implementation actions, including a matrix for identifying timing, responsibilities, and relative investment commitment. This matrix can be used for measuring how well the plan is implemented over time.
- Format the implementation chapter into tables and other formats that enable the implementation strategies to be pulled out of the plan for specific plan topics/elements.

**8. What innovative approaches would you recommend to ensure that this comprehensive plan continues to be accessible, useful, and relevant over the next 10 years?**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

- Incorporate flexibility/options into the plan's directions/policies
- Plan format is updatable by the client
- Make the plan easy-to-use digitally and accessible on the City's website
- Conciseness – consider whether a single plan document vs. multiple is better
- Optimize technology to make the comprehensive plan document more than just the typical printed document and PDF

**9. How would you propose using technology to automate metric tracking? (i.e. social, environmental, economic and cultural impacts from policy decisions)**

***Notes for HKGi Team's Response:***

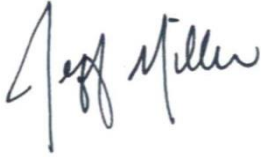
Metric tracking is an important part of the comprehensive planning process and our team has experience developing dashboards, scorecards, and other tools that allow our clients to track both external and internal indicators. A dashboard or scorecard should be a manageable set of key metrics that relate to the priority topic areas of the community. Identified metrics should be relatively easy to measure and lend themselves to creating a graphically compelling and concise dashboard. Because we have experience developing tools like these in partnership with other clients, we understand that the approach is really dependent on the specific needs of the client, the existing data infrastructure, and the resources the client has available to address metric tracking. We are committed to working with clients to outline the priority performance metrics to be used and to develop an action plan that includes necessary resources, to ensure a successful implementation.

More specifically, we have experience using the following tools to develop metric tracking:

- Excel generated dashboards
- ESRI dashboards
- Microsoft BI
- Alteryx and Tableau (familiarity but not direct development)
- ArcGIS (can show metrics spatially, e.g. Story Maps)

Whatever software you use, it should be easy to understand and to learn, so that it will be actually be used, e.g. Excel is a popular, easily accessible, manageable tool.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jeff Miller, AICP  
Associate I Project Manager  
HKGi

[jmiller@hkgi.com](mailto:jmiller@hkgi.com)

612-720-8311