

**Columbus Consolidated Government  
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Councilors
<b>AGENDA SUBJECT:</b>	Redevelopment Opportunity for Farmers Market – RFP No. 21-0005
<b>INITIATED BY:</b>	Finance Department

It is requested that Council approve the negotiation of a long-term lease agreement with UGROW, Inc. (Columbus, GA), with development partner WC Bradley Real Estate Company (Columbus, GA) and in partnership with the Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc. (Columbus, GA), for the redevelopment of the former Georgia State Farmers Market, consistent with applicable deed restrictions.

The former Georgia State Farmers Market is located at 318 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and consists of 14.67 acres. The site was developed as the Georgia State Farmers Market in the mid-1950s and the market served the Columbus Metropolitan area. The market served as a distribution center for fresh food that was sold wholesale by farmers directly to consumers. The market also had a restaurant and a public truck sale. The eastern portion of the site was used by Columbus Towing and Recovery from 2010 until 2016 as a contract impound lot. In recent years, the market use of the property declined, and the site was leased to an antiques dealer and the warehouses were subleased for storage. The former Georgia State Farmers Market is bordered by three historic cemeteries: the Porterdale, East Porterdale, and Riverdale Cemeteries.

The State of Georgia closed the site in 2017 and approached the Columbus Consolidated Government about the possibility of redeveloping the site. The City acquired ownership of the subject property through quit claim from the State of Georgia – Department of Agriculture on January 22, 2019.

Currently the property sits vacant; in the past the on-site buildings consisted of a restaurant, offices, warehouses, covered loading areas, and a vehicle maintenance building. Redevelopment of this site will assist current efforts being undertaken on the area and in some ways can even be seen as a catalyst for redevelopment.

The City has been awarded a \$500,000 EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant for the former Georgia State Farmers Market. This grant funding is intended to assist in the redevelopment of the property and can only be used for the mitigation and cleanup of recognized environmental conditions (REC) that have been identified on the property. The proposal submitted by UGROW, Inc. will allow the City to coordinate and utilize this grant funding in a manner that is most conducive to the redevelopment plan.

UGROW, Inc. and WC Bradley Real Estate proposes to redevelop a portion of the former Georgia State Farmer’s Market into an innovative local food hub and urban farm

incubation/demonstration park. The Riverdale- Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc. (the Cemetery Foundation), which supports the three surrounding historic cemeteries, will develop a garden-like columbarium and will partnership with UGROW, Inc. and the City to expand the burial options available to the public and improve access to and among the cemeteries. The project plan will be fine-tuned during negotiations with the City.

**RFP Advertisement and Receipt of Proposals:**

RFP specifications were posted on the web page of the Purchasing Division and on the Georgia Procurement Registry on September 1, 2020. This RFP has been advertised, opened, and evaluated. Two proposals were received on November 6, 2020 from the following:

**UGROW, Inc. (Columbus, GA)**  
 Jones Lang Lasalle (JLL) Adaptive Reuse (Atlanta, GA)

The following events took place after receipt of the proposals.

<b>RFP MEETINGS/EVENTS</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda/Action</b>
Pre-Evaluation Meeting	12/07/20	The Purchasing Manager advised evaluation committee members of the RFP rules and process, and the co-managers of the project provided an overview. Proposals were distributed to each committee member to review.
1 <sup>st</sup> Evaluation Meeting	12/28/20	The Evaluation Committee discussed each proposal and determined clarifications were required of both organizations.
Clarification Requested	01/04/21	Clarification was requested from both organizations.
Clarification Received & Forwarded to Committee	01/12/21	Clarification responses were forwarded to the Evaluation Committee; additional information was not required.
Evaluation Forms Sent	01/14/21	Evaluation forms were forwarded to the voting committee members.
Evaluation Forms Returned	01/26/21	Evaluation forms were completed and returned to Purchasing for compilation of results.
Evaluation Results	01/28/21	Evaluation results were forwarded to the committee.
Recommendation of Committee	01/29/21	The voting committee members unanimously recommended award to the highest-ranking firm, UGROW, Inc., with development partner WC Bradley Real Estate Company, and in partnership with the Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc.

**Evaluation Committee:**

The proposals were reviewed by members of the Evaluation Committee, which consisted of two (2) representatives from the Community Reinvestment Department and one (1) representative of the Planning Department. Two (2) additional Planning Department representatives served as alternate voters. One (1) representative from the City Attorney’s Office and one (1) representative from the Finance Department served as non-voting advisors.

**Award Recommendation:**

The evaluation committee, as reflected by their comments provided below, recommends award to UGROW, Inc., with development partner WC Bradley Real Estate Company, and in partnership with the Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc., for the following reasons:

- The applicant understands the scope of the project. They have partnered together to present a plan that serves two completely different interests.
- The proposed team has considerable experience within their own wheelhouses and excels at fundraising and vision.
- The vendor proposes to utilize the space for public use and the team has experience with similar projects.

**Vendor Qualifications/Experience:**

UGROW, Inc. and its partners specialize in the redevelopment, construction and maintenance of garden, farms and landscapes. Their team has extensive experience in successfully completing many landscape, hardscapes, garden, urban farm, residential, and commercial projects across the state of Georgia. Some of their and their partner's projects include:

1. Elijah's Farm
2. Mercy Med Farms
3. The Columbus Botanical Gardens Terrace Gardens
4. The Farmer's Market at Creature Comforts in Athens, Georgia
5. The Standard at Auburn
6. The Standard at Atlanta
7. Law School/Caldwell Hall Corridor Restoration UGA
8. VetMed Memorial Garden UGA
9. Beer Garden and Outdoor Eatery at Last Resort in Athens, Georgia

The Cemetery Foundation has raised over \$300,000 for improvements to Riverdale, Porterdale and East Porterdale cemeteries. Major projects have included:

1. 2010-2011–Worked in tandem with the City to renovate the historic Riverdale Building, including closing in the archway to create a meeting space for funeral planning, meetings and gatherings; installing a courtyard; and adding/replacing landscaping. The Foundation currently pays the cost for lawn maintenance for the Riverdale Building.  
Cost of Renovation: Approximately \$100,000; plus \$1,000 annually for lawn care.
2. 2012 – Secured funds for, and managed the addition of, a memorial fountain for the Riverdale Building Courtyard, donated by the Buck Family.  
Cost: Approximately \$30,000
3. 2016 – Secured funds for, and managed the addition of, brick and iron entry gates for all three cemeteries, as well as iron fencing for Porterdale (along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and Riverdale (along Victory Drive).  
Cost: Approximately \$75,000

4. 2018-2019 – Updated the Pavilion at the Riverdale Cemetery including updates to the structure; adding benches for seating; adding slate flooring; and adding a gutter system.  
Cost: Approximately \$25,000

The RFP process is governed by the City's Procurement Ordinance Article 3-110, Competitive Sealed Proposals for the procurement of Equipment, Supplies and Professional Services. During the process of an RFP there is no formal opening, due to the possibility of negotiated components of the proposal. In the event Council does not approve the recommended offeror, no proposal responses or any negotiated components are made public until after the award of the contract. Therefore, the evaluation results and cost information has been submitted to the City Manager in a separate memo for informational purposes.

UGROW, Inc. and the Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc. will engage in fundraising activities and seek grant opportunities in order to pay for the redevelopment of the project. The City will use a \$500,000 EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant for mitigation and cleanup of recognized environmental conditions (REC) that have been identified on the property.

**A RESOLUTION**

**NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE NEGOTIATION OF A LONG-TERM LEASE AGREEMENT WITH UGROW, INC. (COLUMBUS, GA), WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNER WC BRADLEY REAL ESTATE COMPANY (COLUMBUS, GA) AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE RIVERDALE-PORTERDALE CEMETERY FOUNDATION, INC. (COLUMBUS, GA), FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER GEORGIA STATE FARMERS MARKET, CONSISTENT WITH APPLICABLE DEED RESTRICTIONS.**

**WHEREAS**, an RFP was administered (RFP No. 21-0001) and two (2) proposals were received; and,

**WHEREAS**, the proposal submitted by UGROW, Inc., with development partner WC Bradley Real Estate Company and in partnership with the Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc., met all proposal requirements and was evaluated most responsive to the RFP.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

That the City Manager is hereby authorized to negotiate a long-term lease agreement with UGROW, Inc. (Columbus, GA), with development partner WC Bradley Real Estate Company (Columbus, GA) and in partnership with the Riverdale-Porterdale Cemetery Foundation, Inc. (Columbus, GA), for the redevelopment of the former Georgia State Farmers Market, consistent with applicable deed restrictions.

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Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Barnes voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Crabb voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Davis voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Garrett voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor House voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Huff voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Thomas voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Tucker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Woodson voting \_\_\_\_\_.

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Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

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B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor