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**OIG FINDS INAPPROPRIATE COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION
BETWEEN A CITY EMPLOYEE AND A SENIOR EXECUTIVE OF A CITY VENDOR**

ATLANTA, GA – The City of Atlanta Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has issued a report regarding procurement-related communications between a City of Atlanta (City) employee and a senior executive of a City vendor. OIG initiated the investigation after discovering email communications between former Senior Public Works Manager Carla Lipscomb (currently a Department of Aviation employee) and former Senior Vice President for Oasis Construction Services (Oasis) J. R. “Robbie” Blanton, containing confidential information regarding City solicitations and contracts. OIG also found an email communication where Lipscomb forwarded a City anti-corruption/anti-bribery policy to Blanton, suggestive of a potential financial relationship. OIG’s investigation found no financial relationship between Lipscomb and Blanton but their conduct raised concerns about the integrity of the solicitation underlying one currently active City contract (RFP-S-1210026(A)) and the inflation of task order costs associated with another contract.

On multiple occasions, in connection with task orders for a Citywide agreement, FC-7383A, Lipscomb shared project budget information with Blanton. Oasis, in consultation with its prime contractor, Arcadis Joint Venture (Arcadis), would initially provide proposed costs for task order services. Once Lipscomb provided budget details, Oasis and Arcadis increased proposed costs to meet the budget allocations. On the identified task orders, quotes increased at least \$850,000 following the disclosure of budget information.

Solicitation RFP-S-1210026, valued at \$25,000,000, was awarded to multiple vendors, including Design Renovation Engineering Architectural Management (DREAM) ATL, Joint Venture (DREAM ATL), which identified Oasis as one of its subcontractors. Blanton had previously drafted the scope of work that would form the basis for the solid waste post-closure care services portion of RFP-S-1210026. Lipscomb and Blanton used their personal email accounts to relay this draft scope of work. Lipscomb served as an evaluator on the project. While RFP-S-1210026 was pending, Lipscomb provided information to Blanton regarding the solicitation. Taken together, the use of the scope of work, the disclosure of solicitation information, and the potential for Lipscomb to have exerted influence during the evaluation of the proposal tainted the solicitation process.

“Fairness and integrity are core values of our procurement process,” said Inspector General Shannon K. Manigault. “Divulging confidential information to benefit a specific vendor

compromises those values, and in the process violates the public trust, discourages the vendor community, and undermines the City's interests.”

OIG's investigation found:

- Lipscomb provided Blanton with confidential City information, including project budget information.
- Task order quotes increased by a minimum of \$850,000 (based on identified email communications) after Lipscomb provided project budget information.
- Blanton crafted a scope of work for Lipscomb that was used for City projects, including a project on which Oasis participated.
- Lipscomb served as an evaluator on that project and communicated with Blanton while the solicitation was active (i.e. during the blackout period).
- Under the terms of the solicitation, this blackout period communication should have disqualified the joint venture for which Blanton's company, Oasis, served as a subcontractor.

OIG has referred this matter to the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Department of Procurement so that these departments may take any remedial actions deemed appropriate. OIG also issued a policy and procedure recommendation, suggesting that:

- DOP suspend Oasis from further work on RFP-S-1210026(A).

OIG thanks DPW for its assistance with this investigation.

This investigation was conducted by Assistant Inspector General Jason A. Speights of the OIG Compliance Division, under the supervision of Deputy Inspector General Shelby J. Williams.

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The City of Atlanta Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is an independent entity charged with fostering and promoting accountability and integrity in city government. Through its Independent Procurement Review and Compliance Divisions, OIG seeks to build public trust in the City of Atlanta government by engaging in prevention, investigation and review, and enforcement to eliminate fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption.