

Dear Mayor, City Council Members, and City Staff,

I was unable to attend the City Council meeting on March 31 but have watched all three presentations on YouTube (many thanks to Blair Radio!). I will also be unable to attend the City Council meeting on April 14; therefore, I am submitting my feedback and recommendations in writing and I hope you will take them into consideration.

I commend the approach of having the three firms (Confluence, JEO, and Olsson) present publicly for the public to hear and interact with. A few notes of what captured my interest:

- **A focus on public input.** All three mentioned it, but I was most impressed by Olsson's explanations of how they would conduct these, including a stated focus of engaging with the youth of the city. Confluence also impressed me and mentioned having a toolbox for engaging students.
- **Experience.** Here, Confluence and Olsson again stood out as having had focus on cities of similar sizes to Blair. I noted Confluence's current engagement with Ashland (a city that has found a tourism advantage that I think Blair could also achieve), but even more notable was Olsson's work on Ashland's 2014 Comprehensive Plan that probably contributed to the city's success.
- **Having an action-oriented plan.** What good is a Comprehensive Plan if it doesn't surface a clear execution plan? I was really drawn to Confluence's promised spreadsheet and website here. JEO also mentioned project scoring and prioritization as a part of their final plan.
- **Financially responsible land use.** I have already spoken to you all about the importance of a value per acre approach and was encouraged by the responses from JEO and Olsson on their previous work with URBAN3 and their knowledge of value per acre calculations. I found Olsson's presentation most compelling, especially their approach to zoning to "allow growth to happen more naturally," and the fact they have a land use expert on staff with value per acre experience.

I hope you will consider all of these elements as part of the firm selection, but also as critical parts of the Comprehensive Plan itself.

When it comes to the firms themselves, based on the presentations and materials provided, my recommendation for selection would be Olsson, followed closely by Confluence.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of my observations and perspective, and the time and service you have provided to the City of Blair.

Thank you

Brian Knudtson

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