



AIA
Kansas

TO: Senate Transportation Committee

FROM: Terry Humphrey, Executive Director,
American Institute of Architects in Kansas

RE: A&M Efficiency Report: Transportation
Recommendation #1

DATE: March 17, 2016

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Chairman Petersen, thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of AIA Kansas in response to recommendations contained in the "Transportation & Turnpike" section of the A&M efficiency report. **Specifically, we strongly oppose any effort to eliminate the Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) process currently used by the Kansas Department of Transportation. QBS ensures Kansas taxpayers get the best value and safest roadways for their money.**

Unwise Recommendation

Recommendation #1 of the A&M report encourages KDOT to abandon "Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) procurement practices for state funded projects that are not on the National Highway System." One of those procurement practices is Qualifications Based Selection, a straightforward selection process in which firms seeking KDOT projects are first ranked by their qualifications to do the job.

As its name suggests, QBS is based on the well-founded practice that qualifications, not price, should be the first consideration when selecting the engineering team for the design of a public road project. The greatest resultant value of QBS is the selection of the most qualified design professional. That's why QBS is relevant for the selection of all professional design services. Price negotiations, which are very important, can be held once a qualified firm has been identified. If for some reason the most qualified firm and KDOT cannot come to an agreement on fees, the second most qualified firm is contacted. This process continues until a mutually acceptable, "fair and reasonable" fee is obtained.

Questionable Savings

The A&M report asserts that the state "can save approximately 10% of total project cost by using non-federal contract evaluation methods." It is not clear how much, *if any*, of that savings they attribute to eliminating QBS specifically. What is clear, however, is

that the report fails to acknowledge that "total project cost" does not reflect the cost-savings over the lifespan of the project derived from starting with a high-quality design. In fact, studies on project costs comparing low-bid and qualifications-based procurement procedures have shown that using lowest bidder can actually wind up costing more in time and dollars. In short, any purported savings which do not take into consideration the impact of quality design and engineering over the lifetime of the project is misleading at best.

In closing, we applaud this committee's decision to look for efficiencies in state government. We believe strongly that the Qualifications Based Selection, with its focus on ensuring quality results over the lifespan of a project, offers taxpayers the best return on their investment.