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City's \$400,000 socioeconomic study put on hold

BY HERMAN WANG

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Chattanooga's Office of Multicultural Affairs is delaying its socioeconomic study of the city, in part because officials want to review the Community Research Council's State of the

Chattanooga Region Report.

Jacqueline Strong Moss, the office's director, said the report released earlier this month contains data that may be relevant to the city's proposed \$400,000 study, which will contain a community assessment and a dis-

parity study.

"What we need to do is make sure that some of the questions we were attempting to ask on the quantitative side have not been broached by the report,"

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ON THE WEB

The Community Research Council's State of the Chattanooga Region Report can be found online at www.researchcouncil.net.

Study

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Ms. Moss said. "We may need to reformulate our questions that will help us solve our problems."

The City Council this week granted Ms. Moss permission to reject all bids received to perform the study. Ms. Moss said the office received at least seven bids.

Council members earlier this year had questioned the need for a study and its projected cost.

Councilman Manny Rico said he and others on the council still think the study is unnecessary.

"I've had other black leaders tell me there are other studies out there and information from other sources," he said. "We know there are disparities out there, but I don't see the point of seeing something done that's already been done."

Ms. Moss said the disparity study is mandated by the U.S. Supreme Court for any race-based programs and initiatives. She cited the ongoing City Hall renovations, for which city officials received criticism aimed at a lack of minority contractors on the project.

Among the city's aims for the study is providing an accurate record of minority- and women-owned businesses able to contract with the city.

Ms. Moss said her office is partnering with the Community Research Council, Chattanooga State Technical Community College and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga to develop the parameters for the community assessment.

"The data may be out there, but the analysis may take time," she said. "We want flexibility to present the best product."

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