



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Brian Pedrotti, Community Development Director

BY: Andrew Perez, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Consideration of Approval of an Agreement for Consultant Services with Mintier Harnish for the Comprehensive General Plan Update

DATE: March 28, 2023

SUMMARY OF ACTION:

Approval of an agreement with Mintier Harnish in substantially final form to assist with the Comprehensive General Plan Update. The update is anticipated to be completed over a three-year period, with an estimated completion date of March 2026.

IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:

The cost proposal from Mintier Harnish for the three-year scope of work, including updates to the Climate Action Plan, a comprehensive development code update, and economic development tasks is \$1,254,545. The proposed funding sources are shown in the following table:

Funding Sources	Amounts
Remaining unallocated SB 1090 Funds	869,248
Local Early Action Planning (LEAP)	65,000
Regional Early Action Planning (REAP)	104,000
SB2 Funds	52,000
General Fund Budgeted FY 2022-23	150,000
General Fund Budgeted FY 2023-24	14,297
Total	1,254,545

Staff will incorporate the \$14,297 into the General Fund Budget for FY 2023-24. This will be a multi-year effort which will require significant staff time.

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RECOMMENDATION:

1) Approve and authorize the Mayor to execute an Agreement for Consultant Services with Mintier Harnish to assist the City with the Comprehensive General Plan Update in substantially final form (subject to minor revisions to effectuate City Council's intent). 2) Determine that approving the Agreement is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") because it has no potential to result in either a direct, or reasonably foreseeable indirect, physical change in the environment. (State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (b)(2)-(3), 15378), and environmental review is contemplated as part of the Comprehensive General Plan Update for which the Consultant will be employed.

BACKGROUND:

Over the last 20 years, various elements of the City's General Plan have been updated on an as-needed basis, such as the Housing Element and Circulation Element. However, the City has not completed a comprehensive update since 2001. The State of California Office of Planning & Research as well as State statute require that the general plan be updated "periodically." While there is no strict requirement for how often to update the general plan, the planning period is typically 15-20 years. Some cities and counties update their general plans as often as every 5 years, while others update in portions over time.

The existing General Plan includes the following elements and their adoption date in parentheses. Some elements are required by state law, while others are optional.

Existing City of Arroyo Grande General Plan Elements Required by State Law

- Land Use Element (2001)
- Circulation Element (2021)
- Noise Element (2001)
- Safety Element (2001)
- Housing Element (2020)
- Agriculture, Conservation Element and Open Space Element (2007) (Note: the City has combined Conservation and Open Space Elements into one element)

Existing City of Arroyo Grande Optional General Plan Elements that have been adopted by the City

- Parks and Recreation Element (2001)
- Economic Element (2012)

In addition to these adopted elements, the City has also adopted a Climate Action Plan (2013). The Climate Action Plan includes a number of policies and actions to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While not a required component of the General Plan, the Climate Action Plan is directly related to the Land Use and Circulation Elements (i.e., building of the 2001 General Plan), as these are the basis for many of the modeling

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assumptions with regard to land use patterns and vehicle miles traveled, both of which generate greenhouse gas emissions.

On February 23, 2021, the City Council directed staff to initiate a comprehensive update to the City's General Plan. During that meeting, staff was directed to return to the City Council with a discussion on the scope of work related to the comprehensive General Plan update.

On July 26, 2022, the City Council clarified the scope of work and directed staff to initiate a comprehensive update to the General Plan, including an update to all existing elements except for the Housing Element, a consistency review of the Housing Element, creation of an Environmental Justice Element, an update to the Climate Action Plan, the creation of objective design standards, an overlay district providing specific development standards for the East Grand Avenue corridor, zoning ordinance updates, and the inclusion of Healthy Communities strategies throughout. The identified budget was \$500,000, and the City Council requested that consultants provide both a two-year schedule and a three-year schedule.

In November 2022, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the General Plan Update with the City Council's requested scope of work and budget. The project description included the following core components:

1. Development and implementation of a well-defined, inclusive, and robust public outreach strategy. The strategy shall adhere to policies that promote inclusive outreach to diverse communities contained in the City's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Policy;
2. Comprehensive update of existing General Plan Elements (except Housing Element);
3. Creation of an Environmental Justice Element;
4. An update to the Climate Action Plan;
5. Development of objective design standards and an overlay district for the East Grand Avenue corridor; and
6. Development Code update.

Staff received one consultant proposal prior to the RFP deadline of December 21, 2022, from Mintier Harnish, a Sacramento-based land use firm (Exhibit D of Attachment 1).

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

At the February 14, 2023 City Council meeting, staff updated Council on the response to the RFP and presented the options for a two-year schedule and a three-year schedule, including tasks that were identified as optional in the proposal for services (see February 14, 2023 staff report, Attachment 2) Council directed staff to return with a consultant services agreement with Mintier Harnish for the three-year scope of work that includes an update to the Climate Action Plan, an Alternatives Report, Land Use Tasks that include

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a development standards evaluation, an East Grand Avenue Corridor Overlay District, objective design standards, a comprehensive update to the Development Code, and Economic Development tasks such as the Retail Market Analysis and Market Demand Studies. Council also directed staff to solicit proposals for a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) expert to implement the City's DEIJ policy with respect to the General Plan Update. Staff is anticipating the release the DEIJ consultant RFP during the first week of April and anticipates returning to Council with an Agreement for DEIJ services in May.

Based on Mintier Harnish's experience, proposed work plan, and availability, and familiarity with State laws, policies and issues, staff recommends that the Council approve the proposed Agreement, which includes the scope of work and timeline for this project.

ALTERNATIVES:

The following alternatives are provided for the Council's consideration:

1. Approve the Agreement for Consultant Services with Mintier Harnish in substantially final form;
2. Modify as appropriate and approve the Agreement;
3. Do not approve the Agreement; or
4. Provide other direction to staff.

ADVANTAGES:

The last comprehensive update of the City's General Plan was completed in 2001. Approval of an Agreement with Mintier Harnish, a land use consulting firm with valuable local experience in the preparation of general plans and development codes, will allow the project to commence. The comprehensive update will create a vision and establish goals, policies, and programs to guide the community's growth over the next generation in accordance with its priorities and values.

DISADVANTAGES:

No disadvantages identified with the approval of the Agreement.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

No environmental review is required for the approval of the Agreement. An Environmental Impact Report may be necessary, however, the City and consultant will evaluate potential impacts of the comprehensive General Plan update in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and prepare any appropriate environmental document at that time, if required.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

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Attachments:

1. Proposed Consultant Services Agreement
2. Staff Report for February 14, 2023 City Council meeting