



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Brian Pedrotti, Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of a Consultant Services Agreement for Building Division Staff, Plan Review, and Inspection Services

**DATE:** September 26, 2023

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### **SUMMARY OF ACTION:**

Approval of a consultant Professional Services Agreement for Building Division staff, plan review, and inspection services.

### **IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:**

No costs are associated with contract awards. Costs will be incurred for specific projects and services in compliance with the approved budget. Fiscal Year 2023-24 and Fiscal Year 2024-25 budgets each contain \$375,000 for the Building Division Contractual Services account. Funds for additional/extension years will be allocated for in future budgets.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1) Approve and authorize the Mayor to execute the Professional Services Agreement for Consultant Services for Building Division staff, plan review, and inspection services; 2) Make findings that the approval of a Professional Services Agreement for the contemplated services 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.)

### **BACKGROUND:**

The use of consultants has proven to be an effective tool in the timely evaluation and delivery of City projects and services. In this case, the Community Development Department began utilizing the services of on-call contract building inspectors in 2006 when budget constraints eliminated the full-time building inspector position. Contract building plan review services have been used on an as-needed basis for many years during concentrated/peak permit submittal time frames, and for larger, more complex projects. In 2021, the utilization of a full contract building plan review and inspection services consultant began and again proved to improve customer service to City building

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permit applicants and decrease wait times for plan reviews and inspections. The most recent building plan review and inspection services consultant agreement was approved with BPR in September 2021 including the Chief Building Official (CBO), plan review and inspection services. In August 2022, the City hired an in-house Building Permit Technician to provide permit administrative services and act as a City Hall front counter presence for the Building Division. The existing building services contract with BPR expired on September 14, 2023. In anticipation of the expiration of the City's contract with BPR, staff made the decision to explore other service provider opportunities through the Request for Proposals (RFP) process, while utilizing a short-term interim Professional Services Agreement with CSG to ensure no gaps in service before Council could consider a longer-term solution and move through the more formal RFP process. That interim Professional Services Agreement was approved with a not-too-exceed that was within the City Manager's existing contract authority. Staff's recommendation for CSG was based on a full review of all submitted proposals in accordance with the City's RFP process.

#### Qualifications Received and Evaluation Process

On August 31, 2023, the City issued a RFP for Building Division Staff and Plan Review Services. Prior to the close of the RFP deadline on September 13, 2023, the City received RFPs from six (6) separate companies. Each of the proposals were ranked by City staff based on the following publicly advertised criteria:

1. Responsiveness to RFP;
2. Quantity, quality and relevance of the firm's experience and resources; and
3. References

Based on staff's review, the City conducted interviews with the three top companies. CSG Consultants was identified as the top firm because of their ability to provide a greater degree of local inspectors, excellent qualifications and customer service, and competitive costs of service fees. Staff entered into contract negotiation with CSG Consultants, which has agreed to a draft contract, based on the City's template Professional Services Agreement (Attachment 1).

#### **ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:**

The current proposal for consideration by the City Council is for Building Division services that will provide the following:

- Building Plan Review Services - remote and/or on-site Plan Review staff;
- All levels of on-site Building Inspection, as well as remote/virtual inspections;
- As-needed Certified Building Official position services; and
- Excellent and timely customer service, work well with residents, business owners, contractors, building industry professionals, and City staff.

Staff has developed a budget-conscious and applicant-centric Building Division services model that has worked through refinement over the past couple of years. Significant

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improvements have been made in permit processing time, predictability of inspections, and Building Code and life and safety compliance communications. The City has received positive feedback from staff, residential applicants, and industry professionals (contractors, Architects, and Engineers) while staff and the City's contract service providers continuously review processes for improvement.

The customized set of services in the proposed agreement includes:

- A **Part Time CBO** will conduct inspections, address issues out in the field and over the phone, and provide appropriate options if possible, to code compliance difficulties. The CBO also manages the plan review and inspection staff and reports to the Community Development Director and City Management staff.
- **Part Time Building Inspector** will conduct both standard residential and more complicated commercial inspections.
- **Full Building Plan Review** services (remote). All Building Plans are submitted electronically and reviewed by the contracted service.

The intention of having a City-employed Building Permit Technician is to ensure and maintain a high level customer service by having a dedicated, on-site, and internal staff person. The Building Permit Technician is intended to be the "hub" and coordinator of the Building Permit System. This allows all applicants to have the capability to directly contact City staff with permit status, processing, and submittal questions, thereby saving time and money. The Building Permit Technician position has recently become vacant, and a recruitment for this position is underway.

The term length of the proposed agreement with CSG Consultants is two (2) years, with an option to extend the agreement for an additional two (2) years.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

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

1. Approve staff's recommendations;
2. Do not approve staff's recommendations - This option will require on-call interim service to continue but will not provide the predictability and certainty to applicants, contractors, and developers with the availability of continuous service delivery; or
3. Provide other direction to staff.

#### **ADVANTAGES:**

Approving the agreement with CSG Consultants will continue to allow the City to provide high quality plan review and inspection within a reasonable time-period, particularly through a consultant that can provide more local inspections.

Over time, the consulting firm will develop a better understanding of the City's procedures, practices, and expectations, continuing to enhance efficiency and product delivery. This

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will in turn help the customer experience as they develop a relationship with applicants, contractors, and developers.

Establishment of this service agreement does not preclude the City from obtaining consultant services through the formal Request for Proposals (RFP) process for more specific project needs, specialty work, or grant requirements.

**DISADVANTAGES:**

None known at this time.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

The contract agreement is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") because the approval of a Professional Services Agreement for the contemplated services 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.)

**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.

Attachments:

1. Proposed Consultant Services Agreement