



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jason Simpson, City Manager

Prepared by: Todd Parton, Assistant City Manager

Date: March 26, 2024

Subject: Agreement with Ascent Environmental, Inc. to Prepare a New Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)

Recommendation

Approve and authorize the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Ascent Environmental, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$330,000 for the preparation of a new Climate Action and Adaptation Plan in such final form as approved by the City Attorney and authorize the City Manager to execute change orders not to exceed a 10% contingency of \$33,000 for unanticipated costs.

Background

In October 2023, the City of Lake Elsinore was awarded a grant from the California Governor's Office through the Regional Climate Collaboratives Program. Grant funds in the amount of \$401,000 were awarded to develop a new climate adaptation and action plan (CAAP). The City is partnering with the Social Work Action Group (SWAG) to develop an understanding of the impacts of climate change, its impact on residents, prioritize suggestions from vulnerable communities, and create priorities to meet identified needs.

SWAG and the City will work collaboratively to implement a community engagement program. The objective of these engagement efforts will be to understand the effects of climate change as experienced by the residents, especially on vulnerable communities.

Solicitations for request for proposals (RFPs) were initiated in December 2023. A total of six (6) qualified bids were received from the following firms:

- Raimi + Associates,
- ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL, INC. (Ascent),
- Environmental Science Associates (ESA),
- Blue Strike Environmental,
- Community Inclusive Wealth, and
- KERAMIDA, Inc.

Each RFP was reviewed by a City panel who selected three proposers for interviews: ESA, Blue Strike Environmental, and Ascent. After the interviews, the panel identified Ascent as the preferred proposer. This was based on the firm's approach to the project, its understanding of the project, its experience in developing and implementing comparable projects, and its project team which includes Fehr & Peers as a subconsultant on circulation related topics.

Ascent estimates a timeline of approximately 18 months to complete the project.

Discussion

Lake Elsinore is currently operating under a Climate Action Plan (2011 CAP) that was adopted by the City Council on December 13, 2011. Many of the objectives of this plan have been addressed and updates are necessary to meet the objectives of the City's 2021 to 2029 Housing Element and current state requirements.

The CAAP aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from community activities and municipal operations and to prepare the community for the impacts of climate change. It is to be a practical plan with well-defined, achievable implementation strategies/mitigation measures. Lake Elsinore will be provided the tools for implementation and the means to monitor and report its progress. It is anticipated that the CAAP will meet CEQA qualification requirements, specifically meeting State CEQA guidelines.

Work on the CAAP will occur through 10 identified tasks:

- Task 1 – Project initiation, data gathering, and management;
- Task 2 – Equitable Community outreach;
- Tasks 3 and 4 – Climate adaptation technical tasks;
- Tasks 5 through 8 – Essential tasks needed for greenhouse gas reduction components and evaluation of the approach required by CEQA;
- Tasks 9 and 10 – Optional tasks to enhance usability of the CAAP and provide the City with implementation and monitoring support.

SWAG is a partner with this project. Their primary focus is to help the City engage with the vulnerable populations that they serve. This input is critical to ensuring that the plan identifies the impacts and includes strategies by those who are impacted most significantly by the impacts of climate. Ultimately, the CAAP will strive to embed equity into planning and program implementation in order to create more just outcomes for all citizens.

Lake Elsinore and SWAG will develop a CAAP that specifically addresses the impacts of wildfire exposure, extreme heat, severe weather, and the lack of access to services.

Fiscal Impact

Grant funds already awarded to the City in the amount of \$401,000 are adequate to cover contract costs, contingencies of approximately ten percent (10%), and project related incidental expenses of up to \$38,000 of SWAG and Lake Elsinore.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Request for Proposals
Attachment 2 - Agreement
Attachment 3 - Proposal
Attachment 4 - Price Proposal