

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

Building Services

The Building and Safety Division has utilized a contract inspector for several years to augment building inspection services, enabling the Division to meet the increased demand for building inspections. The City's inspector conducts building inspections, but also conducts business license inspections and simple plan checking duties.

For multiple reasons, including the availability of the previous contract building inspector, an abrupt change was needed with the City's contract inspection services. Staff contacted several building consulting firms and they are also experiencing staffing challenges. Wildan Engineering, however, was able to secure a building inspector and a contract was executed in May 2023 to maintain continuity in the provision of essential building inspection services to the community. The contract was executed as a one-year contract, expiring in May 2024.

Pursuant to Section 3.12.160.B of the Municipal Code, the City Manager may authorize the purchase of goods and services where an emergency is deemed to exist and it is determined the public health, safety or welfare would be threatened if the normal procedure were followed. In this instance, building inspections are essential to ensure structures are constructed in accordance with building codes.

The service contract was required to be scheduled before the City Council for ratification at the next regular council meeting. This item has been delayed for a number of reasons, not the least being that staff was trying to secure additional vendors in the event that additional services were needed and there was a delay due to the transition and changes occurring within the Department.

Planning Services

Several development applications have been received by the Planning Division that, in addition to the actual development review, include specific plan amendments, general plan amendments and/or zone changes. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), these applications will require environmental initial studies, negative declarations, mitigated negative declarations or findings of consistency with previous environmental determinations.

The Planning Division has also received development inquiries on properties located on the north side of I-10 freeway, within the North City and North City Extended Specific Plans, which would require analysis of land uses, including the City's Housing Element.

These projects and inquiries are such that the Planning Division is proposing that the City Council enter into a professional services contract with Terra Nova Planning and Research (Terra Nova) to provide staff support services.

Pursuant to Section 3.12.160.C of the Municipal Code, the City Council may authorize the execution of the professional services contract without obtaining proposals. Staff

recommends entering into a contract with Terra Nova given their familiarity with the City, previous local experience preparing the City's general plan and general plan EIR, and because they are one of very few environmental consulting firms in the local area.

Moving Forward

With the implementation of EnerGov development and construction applications will be submitted electronically. All aspects of planning applications and building plan checks will be electronic.

In anticipation of EnerGov implementation, and in recognition of both the pending expiration of the Willdan Engineering contract and the continued demand for inspection services, the Development Services Department will go through a competitive bidding process to secure on-call planning and building services that are able to provide the level of service sought by the City using its electronic plan review processes. This competitive process will open up not only the contract for on-call building inspection services but also the City's contract with Scott Fazekas and Associates for contract plan check services and other existing contracts for on-call planning consulting services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The service contract for Wildan Engineering is not to exceed an annual cost of \$200,000, unless otherwise authorized. In addition, professional services were budgeted in the adopted biennial budget (Account # 100-100-150-155-8600-8601, Professional and Technical Services)

The service contract for Terra Nova is not to exceed an annual cost of \$100,000. The majority of the costs to be incurred for Terra Nova's services were budgeted as developer deposits, with expenditures included in the adopted biennial budget (Account # 100-100-150-150-8200-8209). Non-development related planning costs were included in the adopted biennial budget (Account 100-100-150-152-8600-8601), which staff expects this cost to be minimal.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action will further Goal A – Serve the Community with Pride and Dedication

Objective – Through diversity, equity and inclusion driven employee programs and employee experiences, Cathedral City is the employer of choice with a workforce that is engaged, motivated and respected public stewards.

A-1 – Study the need to reallocate staff resources including the use of contracts.