



Staff Report

City Council

Item No. {{section.number}}.F

Meeting Date: June 26, 2024

From: John A. Corella, Director of Public Works

Title: Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement for Development Support Services between Cathedral City and Christiansen & Company

RECOMMENDATION:

For the City Council to approve Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement for Development Support Services between the Cathedral City and Christiansen & Company to provide engineering land development management support consulting services for one (1) additional year, with the option for two (2) additional one (1) year extensions, in the not to exceed amount of \$93,000 per year; and, authorize the City Manager to execute Amendment No. 1 and additional extensions provided within Amendment No. 1.

BACKGROUND:

Cathedral City continues to see a rapid expansion of development, big and small projects alike. New projects are continually being submitted to the Development Services Department to be accepted and then progress through the various stages for entitlement. After entitlement the final plans are drafted for the construction of these projects.

Even though these new development projects are submitted through the City's Development Services Department, the City's Public Works Engineering Division is significantly involved in the pre-submittal process, submittal process, entitlement process (Planning Commission); and after entitlement, the actual plan preparation, permitting and construction processes.

Evidence of these efforts are seen all around the city along our major arterial roadways (new commercial construction) and residential neighborhoods (new infill single family lots and new tracts).

To manage the growth of new development work moving through the Engineering Division, in 2022 the City Council had the foresight to approve a new Land Development Engineer position for the Engineering Division. The city has applied significant resources to recruit for the position, but a quality candidate with the right qualifications has not applied. This position is currently still open.

With the Land Development Engineer position still vacant, development still on the rise and not easing up, staff composed a team of consultants to do the job the vacant Land Development Engineer position would be doing and then some. Last year the City Council approved a one (1) year consulting agreement (Agreement) (attached) with Christiansen & Company to provide engineering development management support. Mr. Keith Christiansen (owner of Christiansen & Company) and staff subsequently developed a team of consultant plan checkers, traffic engineers and other specialists (from the city's approved on-call consultants) to organize, manage, plan check, review studies, communicate with developers and internal staff to keep the Development Services Department development queue moving.

This team of consultants have been very successful in reducing plan checking times, communicating with engineers and developers and keeping city staff informed on projects' status. Through the efforts of Mr. Christiansen and the consultant team, milestone internal projects are being accomplished that reduce the development application to construction cycle times. Some of these project accomplishments have been, and not limited to, an engineering development project status spreadsheet that is updated weekly to keep tabs on each project moving through the queue, a "check and use" conditions of approval tool has been developed and is being refined as each set of conditions of approval moves through to the Planning Commission and standard city engineering plan templates are now being developed. Standard plans for the Public Works Department are also in the works.

All these accomplishments with the team of staff members and consultants have improved the time in and out for the development community. The team is already exploring other ways to decrease the development process and plan turnaround times.

DISCUSSION:

Staff has reviewed the current Development Services queue to assess the current development workload and the development projects projected to be submitted. Since the Land Development Engineer position has not been filled there still is a need for consultant resources. Currently, with Mr. Christiansen and staff guiding consultants in processing, engineering's development support work, the gap in processing development projects is ensuring predictability in timelines. Mr. Christiansen provides the higher level of engineering development management that is needed for staff and the city.

Overall, until a full-time Land Development Engineer is hired, Mr. Christiansen's services and support are necessary and working extremely well. Mr. Christiansen will still support the management of the pre and post entitlement process off-site for approximately eight (8) hours a week. Bi weekly he attends the Development Services Committee meeting onsite. This meeting is attended by planning, building, engineering and fire personnel to discuss the development projects queue, introduce new projects, timelines and strategies.

Mr. Christiansen's current Agreement is for a not to exceed amount of \$93,000 for services will not change. This Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement to Christiansen & Company would extend the existing Agreement for one (1) additional year and an option for two (2) additional one (1) year extensions. Additionally, Amendment No. 1 (attached) updates the Agreement with two new items incorporated into current agreements, which are Section 13 Unauthorized Aliens and Section 34 Electronic Signature.

Once a full time Land Development Engineer is hired by the city, there will be a consultant/staff training/transition period that will be determined at the date of hire with a re-evaluation of all engineering development consulting services.

Funding for this Amendment No. 1 will come from the salary savings accumulated from engineering staff vacancies not filled in FY 2024-25. If a support and transition period occur during the year, funding may all come from funds available in the FY 2024-25 Engineering Professional and Technical Services budget 100-8601.

Staff is requesting that the City Council to approve Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement for Development Support Services between the Cathedral City and Christiansen & Company to provide engineering land development management support consulting services for one (1) additional year, with the option for two (2) additional one (1) year extensions, in the not to exceed amount of \$93,000 per year; and, authorize the City Manager to execute Amendment No. 1 and additional extensions provided within Amendment No. 1.

FISCAL IMPACT:

	DESCRIPTION	GENERAL LEDGER ACCOUNT CODES	PROJECT CODE	AMOUNT	ONE TIME or ONGOING
2023-2024	Engineering Salary Savings	100-8011	N/A	(\$93,000)	FY 2024-25
2023-2024	Engineering Professional and Technical Services	100-8601	N/A	\$93,000 if LDE position is filled, then Transition period	FY 2024-25
2023-2024	Total			\$93,000	

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

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.

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

GOAL C: FISCAL STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Objective: Cathedral City has economically prospered by facilitating the investment of private dollars in high quality development which benefits the community. We remain financially solvent by instituting prudent fiscal policies and transparent financial practices.

Action C-12: Implement a private development entitlement and plan review system which is predictable, streamlines internal intake and review processes, and creates applicant experiences which are facilitative vs regulatory.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 Agreement for Development Support Services

Attachment 2 Amendment No. 1. For Development Support Services