



Staff Report

City Council

Item No. {{section.number}}.D

Meeting Date: December 11, 2024

From: Andrew Firestine, AICP, Director of Community and Economic Development

Title: Contract Award for Zoning Code Update

RECOMMENDATION:

To approve a professional services agreement with Mintier Harnish, to update the City's zoning code and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.

BACKGROUND:

The current zoning code presents difficulty to staff and often has proved a barrier to development. Over the last forty years, the City has amended the zoning code in response to changing needs or amendments in laws. The piecemeal manner of amending the zoning code has resulted in a document that is ineffective.

This realization is reflected in the City's Strategic Plan goals (C-8) to streamline and facilitate the development review system and (F-1) update the zoning code and design guidelines. The General Plan also supports revising the zoning code to reflect the changing conditions and land use and development priorities outlined in that document.

In preparation for a request for proposal (RFP) process, City staff developed a survey and shared it with the Historic Preservation Committee, Architectural Review Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council in June 2024. In July 2024, planning staff presented concerns and comments in the current zoning code and the survey results to the Historic Preservation Committee, Architectural Review Committee, and Planning Commission. This was then shared with the City Council through a study session on August 14, 2024.

Collectively, the survey feedback and discussions with each group led to the development of a scope of work designed to address the limitations of the current zoning code through a zoning code rewrite. By modernizing the code, the city can foster economic growth, facilitate growth and development, improve housing availability, implement contemporary planning strategies, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

Based on this scope of work, the city published an RFP on September 6, 2024. The RFP stated a maximum compensation package to include all aspects of the proposed code

update. Proposers were required to prepare a detailed budget including the necessary elements that did not exceed the total compensation to be considered. An optional pre-proposal conference was held September 17 and resultant clarifications posted September 19. The RFP closed on October 14, 2024, and the City received five proposals from firms around the state of California, including:

- CASC Engineering and Consulting, Inc. – Palm Desert, CA
- Interwest Consulting Group – Ontario, CA
- Mintier Harnish – Sacramento, CA
- Precision Civil Engineering – Fresno, CA
- Psomas – Riverside, CA

A selection committee comprised of two Planning Commissioners and three staff members was formed. The RFP identified a series of three evaluation criteria and weights used to assess each response:

- 40% based on the experience and qualifications of the firm;
- 50% based on understanding of the services requested and conveyance of clear means to achieving this intent; and
- 10% based on the completeness of the proposal and the supporting documentation.

Each of these evaluation criteria was broken down further into a series of questions used by the selection committee to assess the strength of the responses in the key areas stated in the scope of work. After an internal review performed by the selection committee, Mintier Harnish was identified as the leading respondent. The selection committee scores were (out of 55 points):

Consultant	Rank	Total Score (Out of 55)
Mintier Harnish	1	45
Psomas	2	40
CASC Engineering and Consulting	3	39
Interwest Consulting Group	4	37
Precision Civil Engineering	5	30

Mintier Harnish was invited to answer a series of questions from the selection committee on their RFP response. After a successful presentation, staff contacted references and, upon receiving favorable responses, has concluded this portion of the selection process.

DISCUSSION:

The Mintier Harnish proposal is from a multi-disciplinary team, led by Mintier Harnish and complemented by sub-consultants intended to support various elements of the project, including the creation of an innovative and engaging public outreach process, the development of objective design standards, and environmental review. It proposes a project kick-off in January 2025 and an overall timeline that runs through September 2026.

The proposal is supported by a comprehensive task list that both articulates their approach to the zoning code update and provides project milestones over the course of the project.

The code update is proposed in four phases: 1) zoning district provisions; 2) site planning and use standards; 3) subdivisions; and 4) administrative provisions.

The approach maximizes the use of a technical advisory group and a steering committee, containing six meetings for each group. The technical advisory group is meant to include a cross section of staff that use the zoning code on a routine basis. The steering committee is meant to include organizational and community leaders who can help navigate policy considerations in the update. Both groups are intended to provide input over the course of the project and to serve as content reviewers. The approach also includes City Council and Planning Commission joint workshops, Planning Commission workshops, and community meetings interspersed over the project.

In staff's experience with comprehensive zoning code updates in other communities, the proposed approach by Mintier Harnish effectively manages a complex project by both taking it on in modules and providing multiple opportunities for input from a range of stakeholders, generating a code that has support throughout its development, increasing the potential for a timely adoption and aiding in its implementation.

The Mintier Harnish proposal is competitive with other proposals from a cost standpoint and fits within the budget stated in the RFP. It appropriately allocates budget to each project phase, further demonstrating their understanding of the City's needs and the development of a responsive approach.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This zoning code update has a budget of \$479,720 and will be charged to the Community and Economic Development Department (150), Planning Division (152).

	DESCRIPTION	GENERAL LEDGER ACCOUNT CODES	PROJECT CODE	AMOUNT	ONE TIME or ONGOING
2024-2025	Zoning Code Update	100-100-150-152-8600-8601	XXXXXX	\$479,720.00	One-Time through FY 2026/2027

This project is funded 75% from General Plan Maintenance Surcharge Fees (711) and 25% from the Housing Fund (561). Concurrent with the contract award, funds will be transferred from funds 711 and 561 to the General Fund in the amount of \$479,720:

	DESCRIPTION	GENERAL LEDGER ACCOUNT CODES	TRANSFER IN	TRANSFER OUT	ONE TIME or ONGOING
2024-2025	Zoning Code Update	711-900-910-911-9300-9301		\$359,790.00	One-Time
2024-2025	Zoning Code Update	100-900-910-911-7900-7901	359,790.00		One-Time
2024-2025	Zoning Code Update	561-900-910-911-9300-9301		119,930.00	One-Time

2024-2025	Zoning Code Update	100-900-910- 911-7975-7975	119,930.00		One-Time
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FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

C-8, Implement a private development entitlement system which is predictable, streamlines internal intake and review processes, and creates applicant experiences which are facilitative rather than regulatory.

F-1, Develop a comprehensive strategy to amend the zoning code and update design guidelines, including what work optimally should be contracted out, including: 1) development of objective design standards in response to new state housing laws; 2) overhaul of commercial zoning code; 3) substantial update of design guidelines; 4) streamlining of development review processes; 5) implementation of Cathedral City General Plan and Housing Element goals, policies, and programs; and 6) continued implementation of new state legislation.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Professional Services Agreement