



County of Fresno

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Legislation Text

File #: 19-0183, **Version:** 1

DATE: March 12, 2019

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: On-Call Engineering Consultant Staff Augmentation Services

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning, subject to the review and approval of County Counsel as to legal form and the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector as to accounting form, to execute eight On-Call Engineering Consultant Agreements for staff augmentation services upon approval from the California Department of Transportation (\$2,800,000) (4/5 vote) .

Approval of the recommended action would authorize the Director of the Department of Public Works and Planning to execute on-call agreements with eight engineering consultant firms to provide staff augmentation services to assist with design of road, bridge, water, and wastewater projects. The term of each agreement will be three years with two optional one-year renewals with a maximum amount of \$350,000 for each agreement. The Director's authorization will allow the Department to utilize engineering consultant firm staff as soon as all required documentation is received from the firms. In accordance with Section 13 of the County Charter, the recommended action requires a 4/5 vote by your Board as consultant staff will perform work that was previously accomplished by experienced engineers who have separated from county service. It is important to note that the Department does not intend to reduce staffing as part of the recommended augmentation. Rather, the recommended action is intended to address the recent departure of experienced staff and will continue to work with the Human Resources Department to address long-term staffing needs. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If your Board does not approve the recommended action, the Department will not utilize consultant staff augmentation to complete projects and will need to look at other ways to recruit and retain experienced engineering staff. Without the augmentation, project delivery deadlines may not be met and the Department will be at risk of losing Federal funding.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The maximum for each agreement will be \$350,000; \$2,800,000 total for the eight agreements. The consultants will be compensated at agreed hourly rates for services performed. As each consultant firm's staff will not be retained until its contract has been fully executed and requests for proposal are issued for each staff assignment; no costs will be incurred until near the end of the fiscal year. As a result, approval of the recommended action will not constitute a significant change in the amounts already budgeted for professional and specialized services. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Department's Road Org 4510 and Development Services Org 4360 FY 2018-19 Adopted Budgets.

DISCUSSION:

The Need for Experienced Engineering Staff Augmentation is Critical

The objective of the recommended action is to authorize the Director to execute agreements for on-call engineering consultants to provide staff augmentation services to assist with the design of road, bridge, water and wastewater projects in the Department's critically understaffed Design Division. In addition, the Department may also use these agreements to hire licensed surveyors to review maps in the Development Services Division, and engineering technicians to perform traffic surveys, encroachment permit inspections, or pavement condition field reviews in the Road Maintenance and Operations Division.

The consultants will be required to provide experienced staff to work with current Design Division staff to design various projects. The requested authorization will allow the Director to contract with the engineering consultant firms for cost effective and dependable project delivery, by allowing the Department to utilize staff with relevant and particular expertise on a project-specific level. If projects are not completed within the time allotted, the County could be required to complete the projects with local funding and/or return any Federal funds received if the projects are cancelled.

Delegating Authority to Execute Agreements Will Avoid Delay and Minimize Risks to Funding

Due to the urgent need for the augmentation services, the recommended action will allow the Director to execute the agreements upon receipt of the required documentation from each firm, and the review and approval from County Counsel and the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) provides oversight for the process of selecting consultants receiving contracts for projects that receive Federal funds and must approve the agreements prior to contract execution. The process of obtaining the required documents from each firm can take several weeks, and getting final approval from Caltrans can be a lengthy process as well. Allowing the Director to execute each agreement individually will allow the Department to utilize staff from engineering consultant firms as soon as all requirements are met. Waiting for each consultant to provide the necessary documentation would delay bringing the agreements before your Board, which in turn would affect the Department's ability to deliver projects within the requisite time frames and risk the loss of Federal funding.

Addressing the Decline in the Number of Experienced Engineers on Design Division Staff

Permanent departmental positions will not be eliminated as part of the augmentation; however, consultant staff will perform work that was previously accomplished by experienced engineers who separated from county service. For example, between August 2017 and December 2018, the Department's Design Division experienced an almost complete turnover among engineering staff, losing 10 Engineer I/II/III's, two senior engineers, and its only Licensed Surveyor. Of the Department's current Design Division staff and first line supervisors, only one Engineer II and one Senior Engineer have been with the Department longer than 18 months. The Department will continue to work with the Human Resources Department to fill engineer vacancies.

Consultant Selection Process

In accordance with County Ordinance Code, Chapter 4.10 and Chapter 10: Consultant Selection of the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual (LAPM) governing selection and compensation of architectural and engineering firms, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for On-Call Engineering Consultant Staff Augmentation Services was issued by the Department on November 16, 2018. The Department received responses from eight engineering consultant firms by December 21, 2018.

A selection committee comprised of representatives from the Department's Design and Road Maintenance & Operations Divisions reviewed and evaluated the submittals using the selection criteria listed in the RFQ. The committee chose to interview the eight firms and based upon qualifications and specific experience, all were recommended for contracting with the County. The firms are detailed in Attachment A.

Four-Fifths Vote Requirement

Consultant staff augmentation is a short-term solution and the Department will continue to work with the Human Resources Department to address long-term staffing needs. County Charter, section 13 requires a 4/5 vote of your Board to employ an independent consultant contractor to perform services normally performed by County employees. The Human Resources Department has reviewed and concurs with the recommended action.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

Caltrans provides oversight for the process of selecting consultants receiving contracts for projects that receive Federal funds.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Attachment A

CAO ANALYST:

Sonia M. De La Rosa