



STAFF REPORT
3/27/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Jaime Arroyo, Grants Manager

SUBJECT: Award Professional Services Agreement to HR Green Pacific, Inc. for the Development of the Broadband Master Plan for the City of Coachella in the Amount of \$214,690

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City of Coachella considers awarding a professional services agreement to HR Green Pacific, Inc. for the development of the Broadband Master Plan for the City of Coachella in the amount of \$214,690.

BACKGROUND:

On July 7, 2023, the City of Coachella was awarded \$234,000 in funding from the Local Agency Technical Assistance (LATA) grant program through the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The award will fund the development of a Broadband Master Plan for the planning and evaluation of a fiber optic broadband network that seeks to lower broadband costs and increase network value for all stakeholders.

This broadband infrastructure project will be designed to provide fiber optic network service throughout the City of Coachella to unserved or underserved households and businesses to reliably meet or exceed symmetrical 100 Mbps symmetrical speeds. The City of Coachella has identified the importance of encouraging the development of reliable and cost-effective next generation broadband Internet services for our residents, guests and visitors in order to provide an equitable and accessible level of digital access for everyone.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

There are two main areas that the City of Coachella is seeking to evaluate and plan for. The first is broadband access and availability on City owned property and facilities where the City may or may not have existing guest Internet access or existing fiber connectivity. Examples of these City owned sites would be parks, libraries, downtown areas and other locations where having access to high-speed Internet would be desired and under the Cities direct control. The second component is for residential and business areas outside of City property such as in rural areas, neighborhoods, business centers and currently undeveloped space.

The objective for both areas is to lower the cost of access increasing affordability for all whether through state or county Affordable Connectivity Programs (ACP), other regional services or whether or not the City should become directly involved in offering service. Providing minimum speeds of landline (copper or fiber) or wireless connectivity of 100mbps bidirectional access. Increasing coverage and service availability to underserved and non-served areas. If necessary, increasing competition and access by the City entering in to cooperative, lease, public private partnership or direct to end user broadband service offerings where existing service providers decline to service, upgrade, invest, expand and offer affordable services. Lastly to work together with other regional partners such as CVAG, the County of Riverside, CVUSD and neighboring cities in order to best utilize shared resources and access areas.

As a result, it was determined that the City solicit competitive proposals from qualified individuals, firms, or team of firms that have specific and demonstrated experience in the preparation of a broadband master plan and broadband / Internet coverage and services analysis. City staff from the Information Technology Department and the Economic Development Department collaborated to develop a comprehensive scope of services for a Broadband Maser Plan RFP to solicit proposals and identify the most qualified firm to develop this plan. The scope of services included the following:

- Current and Future Needs Assessment
- Inventory and Assessment of City-Owned Broadband Assets
- Assessment of Privately and Non-City Owned Broadband Resources
- Assessment of City Policies and Business Practices
- Assessment of City Policies and Business Practices
- Gap Analysis
- Feasibility Analysis
- Draft, Review, Refine and Adopt Broadband Master Plan
- Project Management

A review panel consisting of subject matter experts from Finance, Information Technology, and Economic Development reviewed the responses in accordance with the evaluation criteria contained within the solicitation. The following firms submitted proposals:

- HR Green Pacific, Inc.
- Bonfire Fiber, LLC

The panel selected HR Green Pacific, Inc. as the most qualified firm. In addition to providing all the items outlined in their Scope of Services (Attachment 1) in a cost-effective manner, a key factor that set HR Green Pacific, Inc. apart from the other firm included developing Broadband Master Plans for the City of Palm Desert and the City of Palm Springs. Showcasing a crucial understanding of the broadband services and needs of Coachella Valley region.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Award a professional services agreement to HR Green Pacific, Inc. for the development of the Broadband Master Plan for the City of Coachella in the amount of \$214,690
2. Not award

FISCAL IMPACT:

Grant funds from the LATA grant have been budgeted to cover the cost of this contract for the duration of the project.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposal – HR Green Pacific, Inc.
2. Proposal – Bonfire Fiber, LLC