



CITY COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DEPARTMENT: Community Development

DATE: May 28, 2024

SUBJECT: Motion to approve a contract with Carahsoft Technology Corp through the OMNIA Partners National Coop #23-6692 for Electronic Permitting/Electronic Plan Review Solutions - **Community Development**

CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:

The City Manager Recommends Commission approval to authorize a contract with Carahsoft Technology Corp through the OMNIA Partners National Coop #23-6692 for Electronic Permitting/Electronic Plan Review Solutions.

BACKGROUND OF ITEM:

The City of Cooper City conducted the RFP process to procure an electronic permitting/plan review solution for the Community Development Department. This solution will take the department from a paper-based submittal and issuance operation to a streamlined operation with full digital capabilities with regard to building permits, business tax receipts, and planning and zoning applications and permit issuances. The results of the RFP led to the evaluation committee recommending rejecting all bids as the bid submissions did not comply with the specified Scope of Work detailed by the City in the RFP. All bidders provided a solution for permitting but were unable to provide a specific software solution for digital plan review in their proposals.

Once the RFP process closed, staff went back and vetted e-permitting/plan review solutions used by our neighboring Cities, and one name repeatedly came up as the product of choice for these cities: The solution is Accela Government Software and E-Permit Hub digital plan review software. Staff then queried their professional associations to find an applicable Coop that would be available to us. The Carahsoft Technology Corp through the OMNIA Partners National Coop #23-6692 for Electronic Permitting/Electronic Plan Review Solutions was found as a solution that was consistent with the City of Cooper City procurement code.

ANALYSIS:

Community Development Staff conducted a comprehensive vetting process of the proposed solution with the intent to potentially procure the Accela Government software and the E-Permit Hub digital plan review software. Staff met with the City of Fort Lauderdale and the City of Weston Building and IT departments to discuss their experience with the systems and to observe the applications and their

uses in real time. Staff found the systems to be user-friendly from a customer standpoint, and most importantly, transparent. This solution allows a customer, from the moment a permit application is entered through the online portal, to be kept in the loop as to the permit status throughout the entire process. Staff found that the Accela and E-Permit Hub systems integrate seamlessly and provide a clear process for users, constituents, contractors, developer's business owners and City staff.

Once approved, Accela will provide services for our:

- Building Division
- Business Tax Division
- Planning and Zoning Division
- Code Enforcement

For the **Building Division**, Accela will provide a digital platform to allow residents, contractors, business owners and developers a stress-free experience when applying for a building permit from the comfort of their own computers. The software provides our staff with a system created and based on workflows with GIS to allow for precise routing of all permits, ending all manual processes and eliminating a plethora of potential for manual entry errors.

The **Digital Plan Room** software E-Permit Hub allows our plan examiners to digitally review all permit documents, simultaneously creating efficiencies, reducing permit issuance times, and providing in-the-moment updates to permits for applicants to see. E-Permit Hub has a built-in digital signature authentication system that separates them from other vendors, as this system will review all digital signatures and verify that those signatures are registered. The digital signature authentication system provides security for architects and engineers, instilling confidence that their Cooper City projects are protected and encouraging them to seek Cooper City clientele.

Building Inspectors will benefit from Accela, as it allows them to provide live results for all their inspections with pictures, videos, or inspection comments as needed. Inspectors will also be able to review digital plans from the Accela Mobile app, completing inspections even when a contractor misplaces or loses the approved "field set" of plans.

For the **Business Tax Division**, Accela will provide a fully digital platform where our business owners and managers can initiate an online application, submit documentation, renew an existing tax receipt, and pay applicable fees online without ever coming into the office. The online application process will allow the business owner or manager to track their progress, understand their timelines, and verify that they have submitted all necessary licensure from each City, State, or Federal governing agency prior to the approval of their Local Business Tax Receipt.

For the **Planning and Zoning Division**, Accela will provide a digital database and electronic plan review process, never before available to Cooper City land developers, where they may submit land development petitions and track petition progress. This application will reduce manual processes and increase efficiencies while allowing for cross-collaboration amongst divisions.

For **Code Enforcement**, Accela will eliminate the IWORQ software for code enforcement only and connect Code Enforcement with the Building Module as the Building Division and Code Enforcement collaborate on many violations where public health, safety, and welfare are the priority in reaching compliance. This system will enable Code Enforcement to see the violations the Building Division has

discovered on a property, eliminating duplicate work. The Accela system will also provide a resident portal where residents may enter Code Enforcement complaints, and because Accela has built-in GIS capabilities, this will cut down on incomplete or incorrect addresses being submitted for complaints, as only precise Cooper City addresses may be entered into the system. The system will assist Code Enforcement with ensuring public compliance with city codes and regulations by managing complaints and violations to achieve resolution quickly and efficiently.

STRATEGIC PLAN: The City of Cooper City identified *Financially Sustaining Cooper City* as a strategic goal in its 2022-2027 strategic plan. The proposed Electronic Permitting/Electronic Plan Review Solutions project aligns with this priority, as well as the related *Performance Measures/Objectives to Explore New Efficiencies through Technological Improvements* priority.

The digital transformation to an e-permitting and e-plan solution will modernize the City by streamlining the permitting process and enhancing efficiencies for both professionals and residents. This modern approach will reduce wait times, minimize paperwork, and increase transparency, making it easier for architects, engineers, and contractors to collaborate on projects. For residents, this means faster project completions and improved service delivery, fostering a more responsive and forward-thinking community. Ultimately, the adoption of e-permitting and e-planning solutions will position the City as a leader in innovation, improving the quality of life for all residents and professionals.

PROCUREMENT: Cobb County, GA, has partnered with OMNIA Partners to create a national cooperative purchasing agreement with Carahsoft Technology Corporation. This agreement allows public entities like schools, non-profits, and government agencies across the country to benefit from negotiated contracts for various products and services, making procurement easier and often more cost-effective. The contract includes a wide range of manufacturers, services, and reseller partners. [Sec. 2-258 \(d\) Cooperative purchasing.](#)

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed contract is a 3-year contract for \$754,014.29 (see attached itemized quotes). This contract includes the Accela software licensing for up to 40 users, the E-permit Hub digital plan review software, and the implementation team through Silver Lining Solution. All three vendors are procured through Carahsoft Technology Corp through the OMNIA Partners National Coop #23-6692

This project was included in the FY 2023-2024 Cooper City Budget and will impact the building utilization fund, bringing the building department fund balance within the allowable 4-year average range.

<u>General Ledger Acct. Number</u>	<u>Budgeted Amount</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Remaining Amount</u>
102-211-564320-524	\$884,052.00	\$754,014.29	\$130,037.71

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City of Cooper City Agreement - Carahsoft Technology Corp
2. Carahsoft - Accela Inc. - Quote 43204991 & Statement of Work for SLS
3. OMNIA Complete Packet 23-6692 - Exhibit A + B
4. Vendor Compliance