



STAFF REPORT

April 17, 2024

File Number 0600-10; A-3499

SUBJECT

CONSULTING AGREEMENT FOR THE EL CABALLO PARK ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

DEPARTMENT

Development Services

RECOMMENDATION

Request the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2024-47 awarding a consulting agreement to Michael Baker International, Inc. in the amount of \$238,935 to provide environmental consulting services for the El Caballo Park Master Plan Project ("Project"). The contract includes a cost of \$190,545 with the option to include four optional tasks, totaling \$48,390 for an aggregate of \$238,935.

Staff Recommendation: Approval (Development Services Department, Chris McKinney, Deputy City Manager)

Presenter: Oscar Romero, Principal Planner

ESSENTIAL SERVICE – Land Use/Development, and Maintenance of Parks facilities/Open Space

COUNCIL PRIORITY – Increase Retention and Attraction of People and Businesses to Escondido

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided the City of Escondido ("City") one-time funding to cover expenses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to make up for lost revenue and ease the overall economic impact from the pandemic. Funds may only be used for project costs initiated on or after March 3, 2021 and must qualify within one of the eligible expenditure categories by December 31, 2024, and must be fully spent by December 31, 2026.

The City allocated \$200,000 of ARPA funding for the environmental review of the El Caballo Park Master Plan. In the event the identified optional tasks are needed for Project completion, all funds exceeding the ARPA amount would be offset by the Development Services Department's Professional Services budget. There are funds available in the budget to fund this Project, which would provide programmatic environmental review of the El Caballo Park Master Plan endorsed by the Escondido City Council in 2014.

PREVIOUS ACTION



CITY *of* ESCONDIDO

STAFF REPORT

On October 3, 2012, City Council approved \$50,000 from the Park Development Fund to develop the El Caballo Park Master Plan (“Master Plan”). The Community Services Commission, and subsequently the Planning Commission, reviewed the Master Plan on January 23, 2014 and February 11, 2014, respectively and was unanimously endorsed at both meetings.

On March 11, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“ARPA”), which contains \$1.9 trillion in overall national spending to support COVID-19 relief and economic recovery efforts. ARPA provides a \$350 billion allocation of Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (“CSLFRF”) to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments. The City was categorized as a Metropolitan City within the CSLFRF recipient types and was allocated \$38,808,509 based on a methodology that was largely consistent with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula employed by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (i.e., HUD). On May 10, 2021, the U.S. Treasury announced the launch of the program and released “Interim Final Rules” and preliminary guidance on how these funds can be used. In recognition of the disproportionate negative impact on certain communities and populations, the Treasury guidance allows for programs and services designed to build stronger neighborhoods and communities and to address health disparities and the social determinants of health.

BACKGROUND

The City of Escondido owns the El Caballo Park property and began leasing a portion of the site to the Asociacion de Charros de El Caballo Park in the 1980s. On March 26, 2014, the Escondido City Council endorsed the draft El Caballo Park Master Plan to create opportunities for Escondido residents and visitors to explore nature, learn about history, and appreciate Mexican culture. The multi-phased strategic Master Plan seeks to improve the existing area by incorporating picnic and grass play areas, building riding arenas and a community hall building, increasing connections to Escondido Creek Trail, generating modifications to the Escondido concrete channel and more.

The Project scope entails determining and drafting the appropriate environmental review and documentation for the draft El Caballo Park Master Plan in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and Public Resources Code 2100-21189. To date, a formal environmental determination has not been made for the purposes of CEQA. However, as part of the drafting process of the El Caballo Park Master Plan document, a preliminary environmental assessment suggested a Mitigated Negative Declaration may be possible.

On November 29, 2023, City staff released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for environmental consulting services, with the solicitation closing December 29, 2023. The RFP requested the selected Consultant provide their recommendation on the appropriate level of environmental review based on the Master Plan’s buildout.



CITY *of* ESCONDIDO

STAFF REPORT

City staff received four proposals to perform the environmental services for the El Caballo Park Master Plan Project. A proposal evaluation committee evaluated all four proposals and selected the two most qualified consultants based on their technical expertise, past experience on projects of similar scope, and proposed Project team members. The evaluation committee then interviewed the two short-listed consultants. The City determined Michael Baker International, Inc. is the most qualified consultant that provided the best value to the City based on the proposed scope and fee to perform the required environmental services for the Project.

Staff request the City Council approve the selection of Michael Baker Inc. as the environmental consultant, and award the bid contract fee of \$190,545 with the option to include four additional tasks, totaling \$48,390 for an aggregate of \$238,935. The approved budget for the Request for Proposal (RFP) was \$200,000, and staff is presenting the item before City Council as required per Chapter 10, Division Article 5, Division 1, Section 10-96(a) to approve the consultant agreement for any additional fees beyond \$200,000, and not to exceed the contract fee of \$238,935. The awarded consultant for the Project will provide the City with environmental review services including an environmental determination with optional tasks dependent on the findings within the environmental studies. The document determined to be appropriate will be prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the CEQA Guidelines.

RESOLUTIONS

- a. Resolution No. 2024-47
- b. Resolution No. 2024-47 Exhibit "A" - Consulting Agreement