



STAFF REPORT

July 19, 2023

File Number 0600-10; A-3466

SUBJECT

CONSULTING AGREEMENT WITH FEHR & PEERS TO PREPARE A MOBILITY ELEMENT UPDATE INCLUDING A COMPREHENSIVE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY AND VOUCHER AGREEMENT WITH CALSTART FOR FUNDING A COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

DEPARTMENT

Development Services/Engineering

RECOMMENDATION

Request the City Council take the following actions:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2023-91 authorizing the Mayor to execute, on behalf of the City, a Consulting Agreement with Fehr & Peers to prepare the Mobility Element Update including a Comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy and Community Transportation Needs Assessment in an amount not to exceed \$525,340; and
2. Adopt Resolution No. 2023-69 authorizing the Mayor to execute, on behalf of the City, a Voucher Agreement with CALSTART, to receive \$100,000 through Clean Mobility Options, to fund the preparation of a Community Transportation Needs Assessment by Fehr & Associates.

Staff Recommendation: Approval (Andrew Firestine, Development Services Director and Julie Procopio, City Engineer)

Presenter: Engineering Services, Edd Alberto

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Funding for the Mobility Element Update and Comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy is included in the Capital Improvement Program budget. A voucher agreement with Clean Mobility Options¹ is attached to allow the City to receive \$100,000 in funding to prepare a Community Transportation Needs Assessment, including conducting meaningful public outreach and developing a pilot project to provide

¹ Clean Mobility Options (CMO) is a statewide public program that empowers under-resourced communities across California to better understand and overcome mobility obstacles with vouchers that fund community needs assessments and clean, shared, zero-emission transportation projects. <https://cleanmobilityoptions.org/about/>



CITY of ESCONDIDO

STAFF REPORT

mobility options to transportation-challenged sectors of the City's residents. Mobility options could include a community shuttle program.

BACKGROUND

Comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy (CATS)

A Comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy (CATS) evaluates current infrastructure and user demand to develop a well-connected active transportation network. The CATS will evaluate sidewalk, bike lane and trail connectivity, as well as barriers to travel, such as freeways, busy streets and waterways, to improve opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to move around the City. These evaluations will include connections to transit, community centers, schools, parks, employment and commercial centers. In addition, the CATS will evaluate opportunities to create mobility 'hubs,' where multiple modes of travel intersect, that can be enhanced with services and also serve as points of community connection. Based on the needs assessment and the results of public outreach, a prioritized list of projects will be developed to ensure that limited resources are used to improve the highest priority facilities. The CATS will also provide important support for future grant applications.

The May 2012 General Plan includes a number of policies supporting the preparation of a CATS:

- Complete Streets Policy 2.1: *Ensure that the existing and future transportation system is interconnected and serves multiple modes of travel, such as walking, biking, transit, and driving for safe and convenient travel.*
- Pedestrian Network Policy 3.1: *Prepare and regularly update a Pedestrian Master Plan that identifies and defines the following: level of service standards for pedestrian facilities; type and location of pedestrian-oriented streets and pathways; a way-finding program, standards for sidewalk width, improvements, amenities, and street crossings; an outline and timeframe of needed public improvements; and developer responsibilities.*
- Bicycle Network Policy 4.1: *Maintain and implement a Bicycle Master Plan that enhances existing bicycle routes and facilities; defines gaps and needed improvements; prescribes an appropriate Level of Service; outlines standards for their design and safety; describes funding resources; and involves the community.*
- Transit System Policy 5.7: *Provide connections to transit stations by identifying roadway, bikeway, and pedestrian way improvements to be constructed within ½ mile of every major transit station.*

In addition, the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP), adopted in March 2021, includes a number of specific measures aimed at encouraging biking, walking and transit use that support preparing a CATS including:

- a Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan,
- an update to the City's Trail Master Plan
- a Safe Routes to School Plan,



CITY of ESCONDIDO

STAFF REPORT

- a Safe Routes to Transit Plan, and
- an update to the City's Bicycle Master Plan.

In October 2012, the City adopted its first Bike Master Plan. The Master Plan included many proposed improvements, including, for example, the Missing Link Project. In addition, closing gaps in the Escondido Creek Trail and making street crossings safer were identified in the plan. Since development of the Bike Master Plan, the Missing Link has been completed, the Creek Trail has been extended to East Valley Parkway with a pedestrian signal at El Norte, trail crossings between Juniper and Citrus have been improved, and pedestrian signals at Quince and at Tulip crossings are under construction. Caltrans recommends that Bike Master Plans be updated every five years, so the CATS will include an update of the Bicycle Master Plan.

Clean Mobility Options Community Transportation Needs Assessment

Clean Mobility Options (CMO) program is a statewide initiative that provides funding for zero-emission shared mobility options to under-resourced communities, as well as eligible low-income, tribal and affordable-housing communities, to increase access to safe, reliable, convenient and affordable transportation options. The program supports the goals of Senate Bill 1275 and Assembly Bill 398 for prioritizing low- and zero-carbon transportation alternatives, and Senate Bill 350 for overcoming clean transportation barriers for low-income consumers and under-resourced communities to access clean transportation and mobility options.

CMO administers two voucher programs the 'Needs Assessment' and the 'Mobility Project.' The Needs Assessment Voucher provides up to \$100,000 to conduct meaningful public outreach to understand how people from disadvantaged communities travel to and from destinations within their community, and what transportation challenges they face when doing so. The outcome of the outreach is then documented in a Community Transportation Needs Assessment that makes recommendations for zero emissions transportation solutions. The follow-up program, the Mobility Project Voucher, provides up to \$1.5M to develop and launch zero-emission mobility projects. The completion of the Needs Assessment qualifies the City of Escondido for eligibility to apply for the \$1.5M Mobility Project Voucher to implement a pilot project developed from the Community Transportation Needs Assessment.

SANDAG has identified the urban core of the City of Escondido as one of six priority areas in the Flexible Fleets Implementation Strategic Plan (2022) for pilot implementation. The priority areas were selected as communities with high propensity for Flexible Fleet service use based on the data-driven Regional Scan process along with validation from key stakeholders. Escondido scored high in the Regional Scan analysis that features the following:

- High density population and employment centers that generate a large number of short trips by all trip purposes;
- Located in areas with disadvantaged and underserved communities;



CITY *of* ESCONDIDO

STAFF REPORT

- Located in areas with either high frequency transit or gaps in existing fixed-route service (“transit deserts”).

The Escondido Creek Bike Path is an east-west connection across the city, providing access to the major downtown activity centers. Bus routes and the transit centers allow for movement in denser areas and for trips outside of the city. There are however pockets of neighborhoods that remain with limited access. Escondido is an excellent candidate for deployment of micro-transit Flexible Fleet services which could include a community shuttle.

The completion of the Community Transportation Needs Assessment provides the framework for the pilot mobility project. The Cities of Richmond, National City, and Chula Vista and the Imperial County Transportation Commission are past recipients of CMO Pilot Mobility Voucher funding that was used to establish zero emission shuttle service for their underserved communities.

Mobility Element Update

The planned update to the Mobility Element will combine the results from the Comprehensive Active Transportation Strategy, Clean Mobility Options Needs Assessment and updated vehicular trip and congestion data to develop an updated transportation network that is interconnected and serves multiple modes of travel. Updates to roadway classifications will be proposed to meet the General Plan goal of increasing safety, efficiency and accessibility and meeting the needs of users of all ages including seniors, children, disabled persons, and adults.

Analysis

In February 2023, the City solicited proposals from qualified consultants to provide professional planning and engineering services to develop the CATS and Mobility Element Update. The City received proposals from four consulting firms. The following firms submitted proposals:

- Fehr & Peers, in partnership with Alta Planning + Design, Ascent Environmental, Education COMPACT, and Vista Community Clinic
- Kittelson Associates, in partnership with Kimley Horn and Ascent Environmental
- Chen Ryan Associates, in partnership with Harris & Associates
- Michael Baker, in partnership with KTUA

Following a comprehensive evaluation of the proposals, Fehr & Peers was selected as best firm for the project, in terms of qualifications and experience, knowledge of the city, and proposed scope of work.

In February, 2023, City staff were notified that the City was selected to receive a \$100,000 grant to complete a clean transportation needs assessment. Given the substantial overlap in the community



CITY *of* ESCONDIDO

STAFF REPORT

outreach efforts and the planned work programs, staff determined that the outreach for CATS and Transportation Needs Assessment should be completed as one project. Staff negotiated with Fehr & Peers to add the scope of work for the Transportation Needs Assessment to their original proposal which resulted in an overall contract price of \$525,340, including the optional tasks of 1) preparing Complete Streets Interim Design Guidelines, and 2) direct costs for communication and reproduction.

Public outreach will be an important component of this effort to gain an understanding of how people currently move around the city, their destinations, and how they would like to be able to move around. Outreach is envisioned as a combination of:

- in-person discussions – such as stakeholder working group involvement, community conversations, roundtable meetings, workshops, and community event participation
- social-media outreach – by leveraging the city's Communications Department to post information and surveys on social-media platforms and monitoring comments, and
- branding, as well as web-based information sharing and gathering.

The Community Mobility Options and Needs Assessment portion of the project has a timeline of approximately 12 months, while the overall project has an anticipated (concurrent) timeline of 18 months. All work is expected to be completed in early 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

- a. Attachment 1 - Clean Mobility Options Needs Assessment Voucher Agreement

RESOLUTIONS

- a. Resolution 2023-69 Executing CMO Voucher Agreement
- b. Resolution No. 2023-69 Exhibit "A"
- c. Resolution 2023-91 Awarding CMO, CATS, Mobility Element Update to Fehr & Peers
- d. Resolution No. 2023-91 – Exhibit "A"