

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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TO: Board of Supervisors

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SUBJECT: EIR Consulting Firms List and Contracts

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Supervisors:

Authorize the Chair to execute general services contracts with the following consulting firms to prepare environmental impact reports for private development projects under review by the Planning and Development Department:

AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc.	Morro Group, Inc.
Aspen Environmental Group	Padre Associates, Inc.
Denise Duffy & Associates	Rincon Consultants, Inc.
Dudek & Associates	Science Applications International
EDAW, Inc.	Tetra Tech, Inc.
Firma Consultants, Inc.	West Coast Environmental
LSA Associates	URS Corporation
Marine Research Specialists	

ALIGNMENT WITH BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN:

The above recommendation is primarily aligned with Goal No. 1, "*Efficient Government: An Efficient Government Able to Anticipate and Respond Effectively to the Needs of the Community*" and Goal No. 3, "*Organizational Effectiveness: A Strong, Professionally Managed County Organization.*"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION:

The Planning and Development Department maintains general services contracts with several consulting firms that prepare environmental impact reports (EIRs) for private development projects. The contracts are essential for compliance with time limits imposed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The department periodically updates the list of consulting firms and modifies the contract terms as circumstances warrant.

The time has come to update and renew the contracts. Fifteen consulting firms on the County's existing list submitted new Statements of Qualifications. Staff reviewed the SOQ's and prepared draft contracts. The consulting firms agreed to the terms and signed-off. The contracts were approved as to form and content by the offices of County Counsel, Risk Management and Auditor-Controller.

The contracts would not obligate the department to direct any amount of work to the consulting firms. The contracts expire on June 30, 2006.

Staff recently received a few inquiries from other consulting firms about being added to the County's list. We have asked those firms to submit their SOQ's and meet with us. It is our intention to consider adding these firms to the list during the next scheduled update in 2006.

Why Do This?

By law, a public agency has 45-days to contract with a consulting firm for the preparation of an EIR. The clock begins upon the determination and announcement that an EIR is required for a project and solicitation of comments on the scope and content of such (Notice of Preparation). In reality, however, the process can take more than 45-days to request and review consultant qualifications and negotiate contract terms.

In 1994, the department began to pre-qualify and execute general services contracts with several EIR consulting firms. Statements of Qualification were requested and contracts were negotiated with those firms deemed to be most qualified. The pre-qualifying process was repeated in 1996. Over the last few years, the contracts were simply extended from one year to the next. A separate "specialists" list and contracts for specialty work are also maintained by the Department.

How the Process Works

The consulting firms agree to be available throughout the term to perform services at predetermined rates and standards. As the need for EIR preparation arises, one or more of the consulting firms are invited to submit a focused proposal. The most qualified and competitive of the pre-qualified firms is then selected and a Notice To Proceed is issued. This procedure significantly shortens the time it takes to begin EIR preparation and allows the County to meet the 45-day state mandate.

Contracts Entered Into In Previous Years

The following table outlines the department's recent use of pre-qualified EIR consulting firms.

Consulting Firm	Project
2003	
Morro Group	Chevron Las Flores
SAIC	Granite Construction Mining
URS Corporation	Ocean Meadows
Envicom Corporation	Preserve at San Marcos
SAIC	St. Athanasius Church
Rincon Consultants	Westmont College Master Plan
2002	
SAIC	Rice Ranch
Morro Group	Orcutt Plaza Shopping Center
Firma	Claeysens
2001	
SAIC	Sandpiper
2000	
SAIC	The Bluffs at Mesa Oaks
SAIC	Cabrillo Business Park
SAIC	Monarch Point
Rincon	Providence Landing
Rincon	The North County Jail

MANDATES AND SERVICE LEVELS:

The use of general services contracts for EIR preparation satisfies a CEQA mandated time-line. The recommended action conforms to a long-standing, efficient practice. Service levels would not be affected.

FISCAL AND FACILITIES IMPACTS:

Expenses incurred in negotiating these general services contracts and preparing this report are forecast and budgeted for this fiscal year. No additional costs to the County would be associated with the proposed general services contracts, once signed. Project applicants fund all of the costs for EIR preparation by the pre-qualified consulting firms.

CONCURRENCE:

County Counsel, Risk Management, and Auditor-Controller

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1 – Contracts with Consulting Firms
- 2 - Updated Statements of Qualification