



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: August 30, 2022

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Community Services

TITLE: **Biodiversity Strategy, Project 23-37—
Authorize Professional Services
Agreement**

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager or designee to execute a professional services agreement with San Francisco Estuary Institute to provide professional services for Citywide Biodiversity Strategy, Project 23-37, in an amount not to exceed \$568,000 and rename the project Citywide Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan.

BACKGROUND

Cities have an essential role in preserving biodiversity in order to sustain healthy, livable communities. In Mountain View, the City and community share a long-standing value in and commitment to trees and other natural resources in our diverse ecosystem. To further this commitment, the City is developing a comprehensive Biodiversity Strategy (Strategy) to preserve and enhance the diversity of plants, trees, and wildlife in parks and on other public and private lands. Development of the Strategy is included as a Sustainability and Climate Resiliency initiative in the City Council's Strategic Work Plan, adopted in June 2021. The Strategy will be guided by the principles of protection, restoration, design, and community engagement and will build upon the City's existing plans and projects that affect and influence biodiversity. The key deliverables of the Strategy include a vision and goals with measurable targets; an outline of trends and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, preservation, and growth of the urban forest within the City; and strategies related to integrating biodiversity outcomes into private development and City policy documents and projects.

Multiple departments, including Community Services, Public Works, and Community Development, are collaborating on this project as the Strategy will influence a number of City plans, policies, and projects, including the Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan, Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Heritage Tree Ordinance, Landscaping Ordinance, Lighting Ordinance, and City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and projects.

The Strategy will include a comprehensive and actionable new Urban Forest Plan, which will replace the existing Community Tree Master Plan (CTMP) and will preserve and enhance tree

canopy in Mountain View through updated standards for landscaping, tree protection, removals, and replanting. The CTMP was developed and adopted in 2015 and serves as a guide for managing, enhancing, and growing Mountain View's tree canopy. The 2015 CTMP was intended to serve the City for 10 years, with modest data analysis to be completed at the five-year mark to provide an update on the City's tree canopy status and an opportunity to make minor recommendations to relevant guidelines and practices. The five-year update was scheduled to begin in 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19-related impacts. Work on the CTMP began in 2021, with the original consultant team that created the 2015 plan, Davey Resource Group, starting on the update. Based on input and feedback received from the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the public stating the need for a more robust update to the CTMP, staff saw the opportunity to expand the scope to create a new Urban Forest Plan and to include this in the overall development of the Strategy.

Parks and Recreation Commission

On June 29, 2022, staff presented the Biodiversity Strategy scope of work draft to the PRC. Feedback received was positive, with both the PRC and community members sharing excitement for the project. The PRC expressed interest in naming the project "Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan" in order to illustrate that the urban forestry work is an essential element. Additionally, the PRC would like to receive regular updates on the project to keep both the PRC and the public up to date on the project. Another important factor for the PRC is that many opportunities for public engagement are provided throughout the process. Staff will ensure that this feedback is addressed throughout the development of the Strategy.

ANALYSIS

Consultant Selection

In preparation of the Strategy development, staff researched biodiversity-related documents from other agencies, both nationally and internationally, and determined that few local and national examples of a strategy met expectations; however, several were found internationally. To assist in developing the Strategy, City staff recommends contracting with San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), which has an established history of working with local agencies, to provide research-based environmental consulting services. SFEI provided examples of work done similar to the international best practices identified by staff. Based on SFEI's proven ability to develop the type of Strategy desired and their unique expertise regarding regional biodiversity in the San Francisco Bay Area, staff recommends sole-source contracting with SFEI for the development of the Biodiversity Strategy, inclusive of the Urban Forest Plan. Staff recommends Council approve a professional services agreement with SFEI for a not-to-exceed amount of \$568,000. The recommended fees are within the range typically charged for such services, and staff considers the fees to be fair and reasonable.

A secondary consultant group will be hired to assist with the public outreach element of the project. Staff is currently developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a public outreach consultant. Staff expects to have this key role filled in late 2022 to early 2023.

Project Scope

SFEI has provided City staff with a proposal that includes a scope of work that can be used to guide the process of developing the Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan. The scope includes a list of deliverables, meetings with staff from several departments to understand current conditions, and multiple community engagement opportunities for the public to provide input. The proposed scope of work is summarized below. Through meetings with staff and the community, SFEI will refine this high-level scope of work to meet the City's existing and future needs.

The scope of work for this project is summarized below:

- **Task 1: Project Management and Coordination**—The consultant will prepare and facilitate a kickoff meeting with City staff to refine the work plan and schedule. The consultant will also conduct monthly (and additional) project meetings with staff and the public outreach consultant, manage subconsultants, and provide regular progress reports to City staff.
- **Task 2: Background Review**—The consultant will review all relevant City background materials, plans, studies, reports, and data as well as applicable State and Federal regulations, with a focus on the intersection of existing plans with biodiversity needs and strategies. The consultant will also provide an in-depth review of the City Code and standard details to identify key policies or standards in need of updating.
- **Task 3: Existing Conditions**—The consultant will examine and summarize existing conditions related to biodiversity in Mountain View. The consultant will identify distinct habitat zones and important features in order to establish key assets, needs, and priorities for biodiversity protection and improvement. This work will include scientific and technical analysis of threats and constraints, including barriers, existing land cover, fragmentation, and climate change.
- **Task 4: Vision and Goal Setting**—The consultant will lead a participatory visioning process to develop the goals and desired outcomes of the Strategy and Urban Forest Plan. The efforts will include a visioning workshop with City staff as well as a community workshop with stakeholders and residents.
- **Task 5: Recommendations for an Implementation and Evaluation Plan**—The consultant will work with City staff to develop recommendations for an implementation and evaluation plan to include priority actions, such as parks, urban forestry, transportation, new

development, private landownership, etc. The consultant will also develop science-based targets and success metrics to allow the City to measure progress toward achieving goals set in the Strategy.

- **Task 6: Develop an Urban Forest Plan**—The consultant will analyze information and data from Tasks 1 through 5 to develop an Urban Forest Plan, which will focus on promoting biodiversity through tree planting, replacement, and protection. The consultant will review relevant landscaping and tree-related ordinances, policies, and procedures and provide recommended updates. The consultant will also review surrounding agencies' urban forest policies to identify best practices and background data and material that were part of the 2015 CTMP and 2021 CTMP work to-date. The Urban Forest Plan will include guidelines that will inform ordinances related to landscaping and tree removal and planting in the Mountain View City Code.
- **Task 7: Community Outreach and Engagement**—The consultant will work collaboratively with City staff and the community outreach and engagement consultant to develop and implement a robust public engagement process with extensive opportunities for stakeholders and residents to provide input through meetings, website, surveys, messaging, and other tools. This task will be further developed by the community outreach and engagement consultant in collaboration with SFEI and City staff.
- **Task 8: Draft and Final Biodiversity Strategy**—The consultant will prepare a report that highlights the engagement process and includes key findings and summarized deliverables. The document will use formatting and extensive graphics in order to be compelling and accessible to a broad audience.
- **Task 9: City Street Tree List and Web-Based Tree Selection Tool**—The consultant will research street tree options and develop a new City Street Tree List to align with the Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan.

The Strategy will be developed in concurrence with other City plans, including the Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan, Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, and Active Transportation Plan. As mentioned, the Strategy will influence these plans as well as City policies, such as the ordinances in the Mountain View City Code related to landscaping, trees, lighting, etc.

NEXT STEPS

With Council approval of the consultant agreement, work on the project will begin September 2022. Initial work includes review of background data and information as well as reviewing, finalizing, and issuing a request for proposals for a community outreach and engagement consultant. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be completed late 2023 or early 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT

On June 28, 2022, Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2022-23 CIP, which included Biodiversity Strategy, Project 23-37. The Project is funded with \$700,000 from CIP reserves, which is sufficient to fund the recommended agreement and scope of work, including the Urban Forest Plan elements, in the amount of \$568,000. The remaining funds will be available to hire a public outreach consultant.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not authorize the professional services agreement.
2. Modify the scope of the agreement.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting. Notices were also sent to the Parks and Recreation Commission, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Environmental Planning Commission, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, and Greenspaces MV.

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