



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: May 14, 2024

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Community Services

TITLE: **Biodiversity Strategy, Project 23-37—
Various Actions**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Transfer and appropriate \$300,000 from the Capital Improvement Program Reserve to Biodiversity Strategy, Project 23-37, increasing the project budget from \$700,000 to \$1 million. (Five votes required)
2. Authorize the City Manager or designee to execute an amendment to the professional services agreement with San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) for consultant services for the Biodiversity Strategy to increase maximum compensation by \$250,000 for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$818,000.

BACKGROUND

Development of a Citywide Biodiversity Strategy was included as a Sustainability and Climate Resiliency initiative in the City Council's adopted Fiscal Years 2021-23 Strategic Work Plan. On June 28, 2022, Council adopted funding for Fiscal Year 2022-23 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects which included a project to create the Citywide Biodiversity Strategy to inform and influence City plans, projects, and ordinances regarding vegetation, wildlife and species that will increase local habitats, withstand climate change, and create a more resilient environment. The Strategy will include an Urban Forest component which will replace the existing 2015 Community Tree Master Plan and provide an updated blueprint and reporting process for preserving and enhancing tree canopy. Multiple departments, including Community Services, Public Works, and Community Development, are collaborating on this project as the Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan will influence a number of City plans, policies, and projects.

On August 30, 2022, the City Council authorized a professional services agreement with San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) to develop the Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan (Plan). SFEI has an established history of working with agencies to provide science-based research and environmental consulting services. SFEI has demonstrated unique expertise with biodiversity locally, nationally, and globally.

The City also hired a secondary consultant to facilitate the outreach and engagement process to seek community input on the Plan. The outreach consultant introduced the project to the public with an interactive booth at the City's Earth Day event in April 2023 and presented a draft engagement plan to the Parks and Recreation Commission in June 2023. Since that time, the outreach consultant experienced significant staffing challenges that impacted their performance in delivering the contracted scope of services. Consequently, the City terminated the contract resulting in a savings of \$42,000 in unexpended contract funds which will be retained for future unanticipated project costs.

A robust engagement effort is essential to the development of a successful Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan. As staff was exploring options for continuing outreach and engagement for the Plan, SFEI informed staff that they had hired new staff to the organization that could provide outreach and engagement support to the project. During this exploration, it was also determined that a more comprehensive engagement plan was needed than had been originally scoped with the prior consultant.

ANALYSIS

SFEI's initial scope of work focused on the technical development of the Plan, including:

- Reviewing relevant background plans, studies, and data;
- Examining and summarizing existing conditions related to biodiversity in Mountain View;
- Developing the goals and desired outcomes of the Plan;
- Developing implementation recommendations;
- Replacing the 2015 Community Tree Master Plan with updated urban forestry goals and recommendations; and
- Drafting the final Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan.

CSD worked with SFEI to amend their original scope to include a more robust role in the outreach for the Plan, including:

- Facilitating and leading up to five community meetings and workshops;
- Developing and staffing engaging, interactive content for pop-up community events;

- Presenting to and receiving feedback from the Parks and Recreation Commission, Environmental Planning Commission, and City Council; and
- Collecting and synthesizing survey and other input data to be incorporated into the Plan.

The new scope leverages SFEI’s role as subject matter experts in order to provide meaningful engagement opportunities for the community.

Based on initial feedback from the Parks and Recreation Commission, and input received on other City projects and plans, staff explored potential project management options and adjusted timelines to realistically reflect the project cadence and milestones. Public outreach for the Plan is expected to begin in late June 2024 and conclude at the end of the 2024 calendar year. Development and review of a draft Plan will follow, with adoption of a final Plan anticipated by the end of 2025.

Staff recommends that Council approve amending the SFEI agreement to add \$250,000 and increase the overall project budget. The additional cost includes the added outreach and engagement tasks outlined above and also accounts for project timeline delays and associated consultant staffing cost increases for the project as a whole. Staff has reviewed the fees and finds them to be fair and reasonable based on the need for a robust outreach and engagement plan and the unique expertise and proficiency required for this project.

FISCAL IMPACT

Biodiversity Strategy, Project 23-37, is currently funded with \$700,000 from the CIP Reserve. The additional proposed \$300,000 from the CIP Reserve is broken down as follows:

Additional Consultant Services	\$250,000
Project Contingency	35,000
<u>City Administration</u>	<u>15,000</u>
Total Additional Cost	<u>\$300,000</u>

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not authorize the City Manager or designee to enter into the amended agreement with San Francisco Estuary Institute, direct staff to issue an RFP to hire a secondary consultant, and do not approve the transfer and appropriation of funds.
2. Provide other direction to staff.

PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting.

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