



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-23-118
Meeting 23-29
October 11, 2023

REVISED AGENDA ITEM 11

AGENDA ITEM

Award of Contract for Services to Further Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Goals, including Preparation of a Baseline Assessment, Action Plan, Staff Training, and External Reporting

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with ReadySet of Oakland, CA for a base amount of \$156,125.
2. Authorize an allowance of \$75,000 specifically for DEI training services, for a total contract of \$231,125.
3. Authorize a 15% contingency of \$34,669 to cover unforeseen tasks beyond the current scope for a total not to exceed contract amount of \$265,794.

SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) sought out a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) consultant to assist in completing an internal organizational assessment to analyze the District's cultural norms, policies, practices and procedures through a DEI lens, as well as to provide a corresponding action plan to establish an internal roadmap for informed progression towards furthering the agency's DEI goals and objectives. The DEI consultant will produce a report that will be presented to the Board of Directors (Board) summarizing the results of an internal assessment with a specified action plan for addressing gaps and furthering the District's DEI work. In addition, the recommended contract includes a separate allowance for DEI training for staff, the Board, and volunteers. After completing a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, the General Manager recommends awarding the contract to ReadySet for a base contract amount of \$156,125. In addition, the General Manager recommends an allowance of \$75,000 for DEI training services and a 15% contingency in the amount of \$34,669 to cover unanticipated and additional services beyond the current scope that may be deemed beneficial, including further in-depth assessment work, expanded staff and/or community engagement, or further comparative analysis of partner agency work, as needed, for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$265,794. The FY24 adopted budget includes \$50,000 to initiate this work. If the contract is approved, staff will prepare a budget adjustment during a future quarterly review to shift unspent funds to address the funding gap. The scope of work is expected to span multiple fiscal years. Funding for future fiscal year budgets would be requested as part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

DISCUSSION

Background

Diversity goals and initiatives were adopted by the Board as part of the Strategic Plan in 2011, embedding these goals within the policy framework for guiding implementation of the mission and future decision making. The Strategic Plan has since included goals focused on building and strengthening diverse partnerships, increasing public outreach, and engaging the whole agency to accomplish these goals. In March 2016, the Board adopted policy 6.08 “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion”, reflecting the commitment “to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion of all facets of society, the principles of which include fairness of treatment, recognition of rights, acceptance of responsibilities, commitment to equality, and dedication to expanding opportunities for all.”

In June 2016, the Board formed a Diversity Outreach Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) to enhance Board member involvement in increasing outreach to and participation of diverse communities. In 2020, the General Manager formed two staff DEI teams, one focused on community, outreach, and partnerships, and the second focused on hiring, recruitment, and staff development, to further the District’s DEI work consistent with our mission, Board policy, and Board-adopted Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives. Each team proposed six strategies/ implementation actions, which were presented to the Board during a December 2021 Board retreat (https://www.openspace.org/sites/default/files/20201209_DEI_R-21-166.pdf).

In 2022, a new DEI Committee consisting of District staff was formed by the General Manager to (amongst other responsibilities) assist in the implementation of the DEI strategies that the two prior staff teams developed from 2020 to 2021, beginning with rolling out two to four DEI initiatives during FY23. The Staff Committee identified contracting with a DEI consultant to provide an objective and independent external perspective and guidance as one of the most crucial and foundational implementation strategies, in addition to hiring a DEI Specialist. In May of 2023, a DEI Specialist was hired as a District employee to organize and expand this work. Preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP) packet to kick-off the second action item began in late 2022.

RFP Process

The RFP was posted on April 12, 2023 through Periscope and direct contact to known consultants. Responses to consultant questions on the RFP were posted on Periscope on May 8, 2023, and proposals were due on May 12, 2023.

The RFP scope includes two key task areas: Internal Organizational Assessment Report and DEI Action Plan, and an optional third task: External Assessment Report. Evaluation criteria to select the top proposal included: alignment with project objectives, a comprehensive understanding of the project's scope, overall presentation, implementation strategies, organization of the project team, technical capabilities, and the capacity to provide DEI training. It was emphasized that the selection process prioritized identifying the best overall proposal to effectively realize project goals, rather than being solely based on cost considerations.

The District received and reviewed 21 proposals in response to the RFP. The DEI Consultant RFP Subcommittee, comprised of members from the DEI Staff Committee and the Assistant General Manager for Project Planning and Delivery, completed the evaluation process. An

extensive rubric was used to evaluate each proposal, with 7-9 staff members evaluating each of the submissions.

The following top six firms were selected to give a presentation and interview with the RFP Subcommittee.

Table 1- Top Six Consultant Proposals

Firm	Task 1 Cost	Task 2 Cost	Task 3 Cost	Additional Costs	Total Cost
CORE Perspectives	\$45,550.00	\$7,250.00		\$14,240.00	\$67,040.00
CPS HR Consulting	\$34,500.00	\$10,500.00			\$45,000.00
ECONorthwest	\$48,640.00	\$30,000.00		\$8,110.00	\$86,750.00
MGT Consulting	\$59,152.00	\$43,360.00	\$40,217.00	\$46, 646 557 .00	\$189,375.00 \$149,158.00
Promise54	\$43,000.00	\$37,000.00 \$3,700.00	\$10,000.00		\$90,000.00
ReadySet Consulting	\$80,625.00	\$54,000.00	\$21,500.00		\$156,125.00

Following the presentation and interview process, references were contacted for the top three firms.

Consultant Selection

In accordance with Board policy 3.03, *Public Contract Bidding, Vendor and Professional Consultant Selection, and Purchasing Policy*, ReadySet was selected as the most qualified candidate to deliver an organizational assessment and report, a DEI action plan, and an external assessment report. In addition, staff negotiated with ReadySet to also include a line item for DEI training at a fair and reasonable price. ReadySet is local to the Bay Area, a Black woman-owned firm and has experience with governmental agencies and non-profit organizations such as the Towns of Tiburon, Mill Valley and Los Gatos, as well as the Environmental Defense Fund. ReadySet is equipped to gather in-depth quantitative and qualitative data using a variety of methods, including surveys, focus groups, and 1:1 interviews, develop DEI scorecards for measuring progress, and can provide the District with access to the assessment software, allowing the opportunity for future follow-up assessments to be conducted independently of a consultant.

Additionally, ReadySet has a holistic, intersectional focused approach to DEI work, provides substantial implementation support, including templates, handouts, and communication plans, offers in-person, remote, and e-learning training options, and takes a collaborative approach to the development of the action plan. ReadySet also has experience running large scale community assessment and engagement efforts, achieving a 95% participation rate overall. The references provided by ReadySet shared outstanding feedback on their data analysis and reporting capabilities, as well as their training experience, and both organizations had or are intending to extend their contracts with ReadySet due to achieving excellent results. ReadySet has

demonstrated its team to be the most qualified at a fair and reasonable cost given the District's robust requirements.

Results and recommendations from ReadySet's assessment report and action plan will be considered by the DEI Specialist, DEI Staff Committee, District management team, and General Manager's Office, and inform the General Manager's recommendations that will be presented in the future to the Board of Directors.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY24 adopted budget includes \$50,000 to initiate this work. There is insufficient funding in the FY24 adopted budget to cover the cost of the recommended actions and expenditures. If approved, staff will prepare a budget adjustment during a quarterly review to shift unspent funds to address the funding gap. Funding for future fiscal year budgets will be requested as part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

March 23, 2016 Board Meeting: Board Policy Titled "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion," ([R-16-24](#), [meeting minutes](#))

November 8, 2017 Board Meeting: Informational Memorandum "Diversity Outreach Ad Hoc Committee Accomplishments" ([Informational Memorandum](#), [meeting minutes](#))

April 14th, 2021 Board Meeting: Resolution "Resolution of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Upholding its Long-standing Values of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Condemning Discrimination, Hate and Bigotry in all Forms" ([R-21-50](#), [meeting minutes](#))

December 9, 2021 Special Meeting: Recommendations to further Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Goals ([R-21-166](#), [meeting minutes](#))

May 24, 2023 Board Meeting: Recognizing the month of June as 'Pride Month' ([R-23-58](#), [meeting minutes](#))

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

NEXT STEPS

Following Board approval, the General Manager will execute a contract with ReadySet.

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