



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-13-88  
Meeting 13-23  
September 25, 2013

## AGENDA ITEM 9

### AGENDA ITEM

Authorization to Award a Contract to Strategy Research Institute to provide Ongoing Professional Services to Support the District's Public Outreach Program

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *SM*

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with Strategy Research Institute of Fullerton, CA, for a not-to-exceed amount of \$45,000, to provide ongoing professional services to support the District's Public Outreach Program at a monthly retainer of \$3,000 per month.

### SUMMARY

In early 2013, Strategy Research Institute (SRI) was contracted by Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) to conduct a benchmark study to assess likely voter opinion regarding the District's Vision Plan and related themes, as well as the feasibility of placing a successful funding measure on the local ballot in the near future. The collective values and expectations of the District's constituents as represented by that survey have since been used to conduct a broad public outreach effort to raise public awareness of the District and to engage the public in the Vision Plan. As the District moves ahead with the Vision Plan, it is essential that the District's broad-based outreach efforts are based on statistically correct analysis of constituent values and expectations. Dr. G. Gary Manross of SRI is uniquely suited to provide expertise in this area given his familiarity with the District's mission, range of projects, goals, and constituent base while conducting POST's benchmark study.

### DISCUSSION

#### Background

In early 2013, POST and SRI conducted a benchmark study to assess likely voter opinion regarding the District's Vision Plan and related themes, as well as the feasibility of placing a successful funding measure on the local ballot in the near future. POST shared the results of the survey with the District. In April, Dr. Manross presented to the Board (R-13-42) a summary of the survey, provided valuable input related to voter values and expectations for the Vision Plan, and provided added clarity for the District's Public Outreach Program. This outreach program was put into place to raise public awareness of the District and gather public perspectives on potential District projects and the overall vision for the next 40 years. The Board of Directors are committed to continue raising public awareness of the District so that all constituents,

regardless of their voting propensity, are aware of the services the District provides and understand how to engage with their open space district. The survey information gathered to date indicates that more work is needed in this area.

The District's Public Outreach Program has accelerated in the last six months and as the outreach program moves forward, it will be important to target key constituent groups based on statistically correct data and analysis. In support of this effort, SRI would provide great assistance by working with the Public Affairs department to ensure outreach materials (physical and electronic) address public values and expectations for the District, creating any specialized public outreach graphics, presenting at District/partner/public meetings as needed, and providing additional consulting services to assist the outreach program as necessary.

Additionally, should the District move forward with a ballot measure, SRI is uniquely suited to provide assistance with the writing of ballot language, as well as handling the data management and statistical analysis of District public surveys.

SRI would provide these services to the District at a monthly retainer of \$3,000 per month through November of 2014, totaling a not-to-exceed amount of \$45,000.

### **Consultant Selection**

Dr. Manross is intimately familiar with the District's mission, range of projects, goals, and constituency. Through his work with POST, Dr. Manross has developed an understanding of District needs and issues. To seek consulting services elsewhere would unnecessarily incur additional expense and delay outreach efforts to bring another consultant up to speed to become adequately familiar with the District and its unique mission and goals.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Public Affairs FY2013-14 outreach budget contains \$21,000 to cover the costs associated with this work in this fiscal year. An additional \$24,000 will be budgeted in FY2014-15.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW**

No Board Committee review is required for this portion of the Project as the Board has been regularly updated on the District's public outreach program.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice of this Agenda Item was provided per the Brown Act. No additional notice is required.

### **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

Retention of professional services to provide ongoing support as outlined in this report does not constitute a project under CEQA as it will not result in a direct physical change in the environment [CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2)].

**NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the General Manager would enter into a contract with SRI. The General Manager would continue to update the Legislative, Finance, and Public Affairs Committee on the District's Public Outreach Program.

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