



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. 570.05

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 22, 2008

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Administrative Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Professional Services Contract With Science Applications International Corporation For Biological And Archaeological Services

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council authorize the Parks and Recreation Director to execute a professional services agreement with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) in the amount of \$41,335 to provide biological and archaeological services.

DISCUSSION:

Project Description

The Parks Division of the Parks and Recreation Department requires biological services in the implementation of the Sediment Management Plan and Bird Refuge management. The Parks Division also requires services for defensible space and vegetative fuels abatement. Biological services include monitoring and surveys implemented to satisfy federal, state and city permit requirements, Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) requirements, and the City's Vegetative Fuels Management Plan. Sediment Management Plan permit conditions require the services of a qualified biologist to monitor western snowy plover, and nesting bird surveys are required for compliance with the federal MBTA. Sediment Management Plan permit conditions also require the services of a qualified biologist to monitor other special-status wildlife species, such as steelhead and tidewater goby, and to monitor biological resources, such as wetland habitats. Permit conditions of the Sediment Management Plan also require the services of an archaeologist. Similar professional services are required prior to work within parks for the protection of special-status species or resources.

Sediment Management Plan: Parks Division maintenance activities involve year-round beach grooming and maintenance and may also include the removal of debris delivered to the beach during storm events or emergencies. The installation of lifeguard towers at Leadbetter, West, and East Beach are also included under this program. Federally protected western snowy plover, steelhead and tidewater goby, and state protected grunion are among the species that may require surveys or monitoring. Support is also required for environmentally sensitive habitats and cultural resources.

Defensible Space and Vegetative Fuels Abatement. Parks and adjacent roads within high fire hazard zones are subject to Wildland Fire Plan, Defensible Space requirements. Additionally, locations outside of defensible space may require vegetative fuels abatement for fire protection. Abatement work involves reducing the amount of flammable vegetation by removing, thinning, pruning, and limbing of vegetation. Thirteen parks are a part of this work that is generally completed during the bird nesting season.

Andree Clark Bird Refuge Management Plan. Parks Division management and maintenance activities at the Andree Clark Bird Refuge include the removal of aquatic, emergent or terrestrial vegetation, clearing of drains and ditches, maintenance of the parking lot, and water quality issues. It is anticipated that as many as 25 special status bird species, including the federally endangered brown pelican and state protected double crested cormorant, may forage, roost, and/or breed within the bird refuge. The last official bird survey in the refuge was completed over 20 years ago. Therefore, a baseline survey is required for management purposes to determine the existing bird population and to understand population trends over time.

Consultant Selection

The Parks Division recommends sole-source selection of SAIC to perform biological and archaeological resource support. SAIC is an international consulting firm with a local office in Carpinteria. The local office has staff with expertise in aquatic and terrestrial biology, and that holds the federal and state permits necessary for monitoring and handling special-status species, including those species found along the Santa Barbara coast and inland. The Carpinteria office also includes a staff archaeologist.

The Parks Division believes that local multi-disciplinary expertise and the capacity to mobilize quickly is essential to complete routine and emergency biological and archaeological services. The SAIC local office allows them to respond to emergencies within 24 hours. Local staff includes biologists with an expertise in birds, a PhD fisheries biologist, and an on-staff archaeologist.

The Parks and Recreation Department and the Waterfront Department have worked well with SAIC over a number of years related to the implementation of the Sediment Management Plan. In that work, SAIC provided the most current field and research information in assistance with federal and state permit requirements. The Parks Division recently called upon SAIC to assist with western snowy plover, steelhead, and tidewater goby surveys for a boat removal from Sycamore Creek, which required mobilization within 24 hours. SAIC's past support of the Sediment Management Plan will provide continuity with management of biological resources and response to permit agencies.

Timeline

Work will begin with contract approval for a period of 1 year, through 2008-2009. Sediment Management Plan and Andree Clark Bird Refuge maintenance work will commence immediately and occurs year-round. Bird refuge baseline surveys will be performed immediately to capture the bird nesting season and again, in winter 2008 for migrant birds. The Parks Division defensible space and vegetative fuels abatement will occur in spring 2008, early summer 2008, and winter 2009.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The combined cost of the Sediment Management Plan, defensible space/vegetative fuels abatement, and Andree Clark Bird Refuge biological and archaeological resources support contract is \$41,335. Funds are budgeted in the Fiscal Year 2008 Parks and Recreation Department operating budget.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Monitoring and surveys of special-status species, sensitive habitats and cultural/historical remains is critical for the protection of natural and archaeological resources along the Santa Barbara coast and inland.

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APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office