



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Meridian Consultants to prepare an Environmental Impact Report and related documents for the development of a new mixed-use project located 236 North Central Avenue and 212 West California Avenue (former Sears site) and public park (201 West California Avenue)(collectively, the "Project Site").

1. Council motion authorizing the City Manager or designee to negotiate and enter into a professional services agreement (PSA) with Meridian Consultants to prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the Project Site in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and CEQA Guidelines.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Consent Item

Approved for November 5, 2024 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The professional services agreement will authorize Meridian Consultants to analyze the potential environmental impacts from the development of new 8-story, 655,418 square-foot, mixed-use development consisting of 666 multi-family residential dwellings units (15% reserved as affordable), 16 live/work units, and 930 parking space garage (one above grade and two levels subterranean) on a 3.7 acre site (236 N Central Avenue and 212 West California Avenue) and development of a public park on a 0.87-acre site at the northwest corner of North Orange Avenue and West California Avenue, which includes three parcels at 212 West California Avenue). The Project Site is entirely within the Downtown Specific Plan - Orange Central District.

Staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to receive the services of a well-qualified firm to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). A total of seven responses from qualified firms were received. Staff is recommending Meridian Consultants as the best qualified firm to provide the requested services based on their competitive cost proposal and experience

completing CEQA review for similar large-scale and complex projects in the City and southern California region.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the attached Motion awarding a contract to Meridian Consultants and authorize the City Manager or his designee to execute a Professional Service Agreement (PSA) with Meridian Consultants in the amount not to exceed \$160,285 for preparation of an EIR.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND

On December 6, 2022, the City Council approved Stage I Preliminary Design Review (Case No. PDR 2212056) with conditions for the proposed mixed-use development at the former Sears site. In April 2024, the applicant applied for Stage II Final Design Review (Case No. PDR-003195-2024) causing the need to conduct environmental review.

Pursuant to CEQA, an Initial Study Checklist was prepared as a preliminary analysis to determine the appropriate environmental document. Conclusion of the Initial Study determined that the project may have a significant effect on the environment requiring the preparation of an EIR.

In July 2024, a Request for Proposals (RFP) for services to prepare an EIR and related documents were sent to eight consulting firms with a deadline of August 30, 2024 that was later extended to September 6, 2024. The RFP requested specific analysis and evaluation of the following resources areas, supplementing the Initial Study prepared for the Project:

- **Air Quality:** Evaluate potential conflicts or obstruction with implementation of applicable air quality plan, considerable net increases of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment, and other emissions adversely affecting a substantial number of people. Evaluate construction related impacts regarding exposure to sensitive receptors of substantial pollutant concentrations.
- **Cultural Resources:** Evaluate the historical character and significance of the existing buildings and the effect of demolition; analysis to determine potential impacts to archaeological resources.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Evaluate the generation of greenhouse gas emissions from the construction and operation of the Project.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Evaluate potential impacts due to hazards and hazardous materials.

- **Land Use/Planning:** Evaluate the Project's proposed deviations from the land use standards for the site.
- **Noise:** Evaluate potential construction noise and vibration impacts, and project operation noise impacts on ambient noise levels.
- **Population and Housing:** Evaluate potential impacts on projected population, housing and employment.
- **Public Services:** Evaluate potential impacts to public services including schools, solid waste disposal, police, fire, and utilities.
- **Transportation and Traffic:** Evaluate impacts to the existing and proposed roadway system, existing and proposed bikeway network, transit systems (bus and commuter rail) and pedestrians.
- **Utilities and Service Systems:** Evaluate potential impacts on the City's current utilities and services including, but not limited to, wastewater and storm water treatment facilities as well as solid waste.

In addition, the EIR must include discussion of growth inducing and cumulative impacts as well as significant, unavoidable impacts (if any) with a reasonable range of alternatives that meet the Project's objectives including the "No Project" alternative.

ANALYSIS

Seven proposals were received as follows:

1.	Kimley Horn	\$145,100
2.	Meridian Consultants	\$160,285
3.	Impact Sciences	\$173,699
4.	Eyestone	\$198,500-\$243,500
5.	PlaceWorks	\$205,139
6.	EcoTierra	\$249,570
7.	ESA	\$375,998

All seven firms were deemed qualified. However, three firms provided cost competitive proposals (\$145,100 to \$173,699) with similar schedules of performance to separate themselves from the remaining proposals. The remaining four firms provided cost proposals ranging from \$198,500 to \$375,998. Staff does not believe these firms demonstrated exceptional expertise or unique experience to justify their selection over the firms with the more cost competitive proposals.

Based on the review of the three cost-competitive proposals, staff believes Meridian Consultants is best qualified to provide the requested services. While Kimley Horn submitted the lowest fee at \$145,100, their proposal did not include a statement that all work would be performed at a price "not to exceed" the contract price, which was a

requirement outlined in the issued RFP. A follow-up telephone discussion was conducted with Kimley Horn to seek clarifications regarding their proposal; however, this requisite statement specifying a "not to exceed" contract price was not included in Kimley Horn's revised submittal received subsequent to the follow-up telephone conversation. Impact Sciences is well-qualified and experienced but did not distinguish itself sufficiently to merit selection given their higher-priced proposal. Meridian has extensive experience specific to Glendale and has completed several CEQA reviews for projects throughout the city. As a result, Meridian is very familiar with city processes, planning and land use documents, and city standards and expectations regarding complete and thorough environmental analyses and reports.

Meridian Consultants team is well qualified to undertake the required scope and has a demonstrated track record of successfully completing environmental review for complex projects including the Americana at Brand, the San Fernando Soundstage Campus EIR, the Burbank Ikea store, and the Warner Brothers and NBC Studios Master Plan EIRs.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

An EIR scoping meeting will be conducted to receive comments from the public and agencies regarding potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, as well as mitigation measures and project alternatives. Future notices for the scoping meeting will be provided, at a minimum to property owners and residents within 500 feet of the Project, as well as identified interested parties.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Meridian Consultants to prepare the EIR and related documents. The project applicant will responsible for all costs associated with the preparation of the EIR.

Per the Glendale CEQA Guidelines the PSA will be paid by the applicant through the collection of the "EIR Preparation Fee". No City funds will be used for the contract. In addition, the applicant is required to pay the Environmental Impact Report Contract & Mitigation Monitoring Admin/Professional Service Fee which is 30% of the EIR Preparation Fee pursuant to the FY 2024-25 Citywide Fee Schedule in the amount of \$48,085.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered, award of contract to prepare an EIR does not constitute a "project" pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a) as it has no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Here, the action involves

Council authorization to enter into a PSA for CEQA services. There is no possibility that the action regarding the PSA may have a significant effect on the environment.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

The Campaign Disclosure Statement is attached as Exhibit 1.

ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives are presented for Council consideration:

Alternative 1: Council may deny authorization to approve the contract and provide direction on a preferred course of action to secure professional CEQA services for the Project.

Alternative 2: The City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted by:

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Prepared by:

Dennis Joe, Senior Planner

Reviewed by:

Erik Krause, Deputy Director of Community Development/Economic Dev.

Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit 1 – Campaign Disclosure