



DATE: February 16, 2021

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

VIA: Peter Pirnejad, City Manager

FROM: Paul Nagengast, Project Advisor, Regional Government Services

SUBJECT: LEVEE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (CIP 327-657) – PROACTIVE COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT CONTRACT AMENDMENT NO. ONE (1)

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute Contract Amendment No. One (1) with Tripepi Smith and Associates, Inc. (Tripepi Smith) in the amount of \$61,000 to increase the total contract amount for proactive communications support for the Levee Protection Planning and Improvements Project (CIP 327-657) (“Levee Improvements Project”) from \$49,000 to \$110,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City has a team of communication professionals that are aiding City staff with outreach work on the Levee Improvements Project. The team includes Data Instincts as a subcontractor with Tanner Pacific, Tripepi Smith, Paul Nagengast with Regional Government Services as the Project Manager on the Levee Improvements Project, and the City’s Communications Division staff. As the team is settling into their respective roles, staff is now looking to make adjustments to organizational execution of the Communication Plan.

The proposed contract amendment will provide additional capacity for Tripepi Smith to remain engaged on the project for a longer timeline and allow them to expand their scope of work to meet the needs of the team adjustments. The increased contract amount should prove sufficient to cover all costs for Tripepi Smith’s work through July

2021.

BACKGROUND

The City has assembled a Communications Team to inform the community and address concerns raised by the public related to the largest public works project in the City's history. At the City Council Special Meeting of December 17, 2020, direction was given to staff to clarify and update the Levee Improvements Project Communications Plan.

Tripepi Smith was soon after engaged under the signing authority of the City Manager to immediately aid the overall communication efforts related to the Levee Improvements Project. Tripepi Smith has been working on levee communications for just over a month and has climbed a steep ramp curve while also being a key partner in the Levee Improvements Project team to aid communications.

Additionally, Data Instincts has a need to transition a member of its team off the Foster City engagement and has mutually agreed with Tripepi Smith that Tripepi Smith should take over the duties that are performed by that resource for the sake of contract efficiency. Tripepi Smith and Data Instincts have also mutually agreed that their cooperation is critical to the success of the project communications and both parties are actively collaborating on the needs of the City.

City staff is seeking Tripepi Smith to take the lead role on Levee Improvements Project communications. To take on this role, City staff recommends that Tripepi Smith's total contract value be expanded to provide at least a total seven-month horizon for their engagement efforts with the City. Additionally, changes in work allocation between communications consultants is going to shift more costs to Tripepi Smith while reducing costs for Data Instincts.

The overall Levee Improvements Project communication efforts have ramped up significantly since the December 17, 2020 City Council Special Meeting.

The Levee Subcommittee, consisting of Vice Mayor Richa Awasthi and Councilmember Jon Froomin, and City Council have had a chance to receive and file a Tripepi Smith authored Levee Improvements Project Communications Plan and provide additional feedback to the Communications Team.

The City held a successful Levee Improvements Project Community Update on Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 5:30 PM where a panel of project experts answered 20 questions verbally over the course of 1.5 hours. During the meeting, over 80 questions and comments were submitted, many of which were repetitive or similar in nature. Questions received as part of the update were answered via the project website's

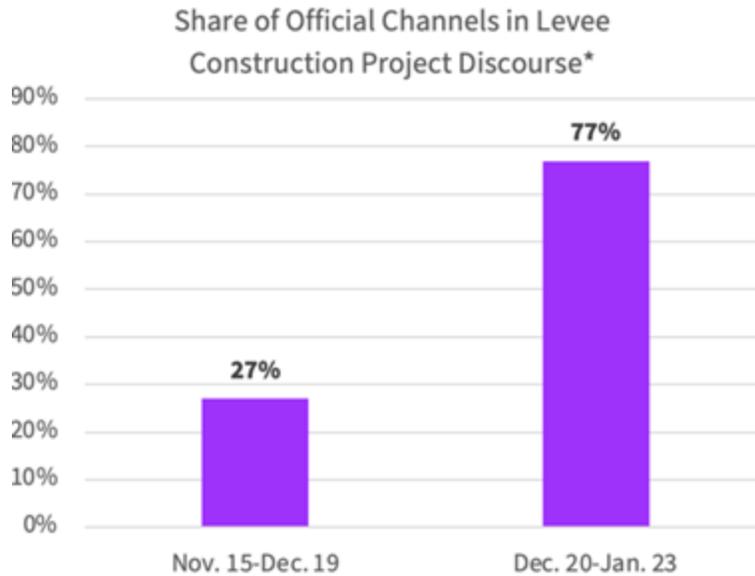
FAQs, email, or were addressed as part of the second update. The meeting was streamed live and a recording of the meeting is available online. At peak attendance, about 100 members of the public participated in the Zoom meeting.

A second Levee Improvements Project Community Update was held Saturday, February 6, 2021 at 10:00 AM for 1.5 hours. This time slot was selected to provide an alternative time from the prior meeting to ensure options are available for the community. At peak attendance, about 70 members of the public participated in the Zoom meeting, and the panel was able to address 25 questions verbally and 20 questions in writing from the community. Some questions that were addressed were carried over from the previous meeting. As with the first, any new questions and answers that arose from this meeting were incorporated into the project website's FAQs.

The City has sustained a once-a-week pace of emailed project updates to the community with occasional special editions to address more timely matters since October 2020. The assembly of this consolidated information has proved immensely helpful in getting factual information out into the community and has provided the basis for significant other content.

Earlier this month the City launched a new dedicated website to cover only the Levee Improvements Project. The site, located at www.fostercitylevee.org, has all the prior developed content migrated over to the site from the City's website pages and is continually being built out and updated as new information becomes available or the Communications Team completes development of new communication assets.

Outreach efforts have expanded, including boosted posts on social media that have significantly ramped up engagement. The City is already on contract with Zencity, a platform that aids public agencies in monitoring public social media feeds and gathering sentiment analysis about what is taking place in the community. As seen in the following graphic, significant progress within the social media world has been made since the December 17, 2020 City Council Special Meeting.



To quote from the Zencity Data Insight Report (Attachment 4):

In summary, the city's proactive steps — such as holding community forums and enacting safety measures — appear to have been successful thus far in addressing resident concerns expressed in last month's petition and shaping the overall discourse as construction begins.

Based on the progress that has been made to date, the lessons learned in the past month, and the changing staffing arrangements, City staff recommends expanding the role and duration of Tripepi Smith's engagement with the City on this project.

ANALYSIS

The City has a strong team in place and has been making progress to address significant community concerns and questions. As the City adjusts to the pace of the project and related communications, the team is also evolving and optimizing its team structure and arrangements to meet the anticipated needs.

Data Instincts has done an excellent job in the first part of this project, and the proposed arrangement will sustain their partnership in the engagement. Tripepi Smith intends to assign Data Instincts to address certain well-defined engagement points where its expertise or project history could be most helpful. Both firms are collaborating well with each other.

It is clear that there are community concerns and questions about the project, and there will be a lot of work required to address many of these questions. Staff anticipates that

in the next few months, as the project moves forward, the pace of questions will dissipate – though staff will remain vigilant in responding to community questions quickly.

The investments the City is now making in communications are a critical component of the overall project, and the evidence indicates the efforts are achieving results. The goal is to be in a proactive mode with all levee-related communications and not simply reacting to the latest social media post or email feedback.

FISCAL IMPACT

Data Instincts (acting as a subcontractor through Tanner Pacific) is operating with time and materials rates. Tripepi Smith, on contract with the Foster City directly, is also on a time and materials basis and it is expected that as Tripepi Smith takes the lead and over some of the work previously done by Data Instincts, that the costs will remain neutral to the City for that work. However, expanding Tripepi Smith's leadership role and making plans for Tripepi Smith to remain engaged for at least the next 7 months will require additional funds to its existing contract.

Due to the volatility of required work in the coming several months, remaining engaged on a time and materials basis makes sense for both Tripepi Smith and the City. It is envisioned that by month seven of the engagement, Tripepi Smith will shift to a flat monthly fee arrangement with a well-defined scope for sustained communications work for the duration of the project, if appropriate. If that is the case, City staff will bring a new contract before City Council for consideration.

The requested contract amendment for the Tripepi Smith contract is in the amount of \$61,000 and adequate funding is available in the budget for the Levee Improvements Project (CIP 327-657) for the implementation of the revised Communication Plan.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Resolution
- Attachment 2 – Tripepi Smith and Associates, Inc. Contract Amendment No. One (1)
- Attachment 3 – Tripepi Smith and Associates, Inc. Contract Amendment No. One (1) Proposal (submitted February 2021)
- Attachment 4 – Zencity Data Insight Report (dated December 20, 2020-January 23, 2021)