



REPORT to the MAYOR and MEMBERS of the CITY COUNCIL
From the CITY MANAGER

DATE: February 13, 2024

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION AWARDING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT TO RICK ENGINEERING COMPANY FOR PHASE 1 OF THE DOWNTOWN VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUMMARY:

Issues:

Should the City Council adopt a resolution awarding a Professional Services Contract to Rick Engineering Company for Phase 1 of the Downtown Village Specific Plan Update.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution awarding a Professional Services Contract to Rick Engineering Company for Phase 1 of the Downtown Village Specific Plan Update.

Fiscal Impact:

\$300,000 was budgeted in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023/24 Community Development Professional and Specialized Services account.

City's Strategic Goals:

- Promote a high quality of life that current and future generations can afford to call home.
- Invest in infrastructure to serve the needs of the community.

BACKGROUND:

The current Downtown Village Specific Plan (DVSP) was adopted in 1990 and is now 34 years old. The infrastructure in the Downtown Village has recently underwent comprehensive improvements along Allison Avenue, University Avenue, Palm Avenue and La Mesa Boulevard leading to a significant revitalization in the Downtown Village. The Civic Center has also had major improvements constructed including new fire station 12, new library and post office, new police station, and the currently under construction affordable housing project at 8181 Allison Avenue. It is now necessary to update the DVSP Plan to properly plan for the continued development of the Downtown Village area.

The City of La Mesa's Downtown Village Specific Plan area consists of approximately 161 acres of land plus street right-of-way. This area extends from Interstate 8 south along Spring Street to Pasadena and Date Avenues. The Specific Plan area is roughly bounded on the east by the University Avenue – La Mesa Boulevard intersection and on the west by the University Avenue – La Mesa Boulevard intersection. The Project area encompasses Downtown Village commercial land uses, the Civic Center, surrounding residential neighborhoods including the Date Avenue Historical District, and a few larger commercial parcels north of University Avenue.

Land uses within the Specific Plan Area have remained mostly stable over the years and the City has made key infrastructure investments in the Project Area in an effort to support existing uses and encourage growth. Consistent with regional growth projections, the City expects a modest level of growth and development in this area and therefore, recognizes a need for a Specific Plan update.

The City conducts Requests for Proposals (RFP) to identify qualified professional service providers to ensure that the City retains the most qualified providers at a reasonable cost. Staff initiated the process for RFP 24-06 (**Attachment C**) in June 2023 to obtain consultant services related to land use and development regulations, urban design, infrastructure, public services, public outreach, and environmental review to prepare and adopt an update to the La Mesa Downtown Specific Plan. The City received proposals from two qualified firms, each exceeding the proposed \$300,000 project budget. After review of the submittal packages and interviews with the proposal respondents, Rick Engineering Company was selected as the preferred firm to provide services as part of a phased project approach for the Downtown Village Specific Plan update. In light of the project budget, the project scope was revised to divide tasks into two phases. This contract proposal is for Phase 1.

DISCUSSION:

Rick Engineering Company (RICK) was established in 1955. With over 65 years of experience, they support a wide variety of jurisdictions with a high level of service, expertise, and resources. Rick Engineering has prepared similar plans for several cities in San Diego County, including the City of Lemon Grove and City of Escondido.

Rick Engineering recognizes the fundamental goals of the Specific Plan, which are to facilitate commercial revitalization, retain and enhance residential uses, promote mixed use development, and improve the usability of the Specific Plan. RICK will facilitate conversations with City staff, stakeholders, developers, and the community to address the opportunity for carefully designed development within the context of the need for economic development and housing and the impact those changes will have on the community. Rick Engineering provided a comprehensive cost estimate of all the required tasks and experience sought in the RFP.

Phase 1

To stay within the budgeted amount of \$300,000, staff worked with the contractor to develop a project approach with 2 phases. Phase 1 project tasks (Attachment C) will assist in providing a better understanding of the project area and what will be needed to update the DVSP to properly plan for the continued development of the Downtown Village area in light of recent improvements, revitalization that has occurred to date in the Downtown Village, and new state laws which in certain cases may allow for streamlined development and less environmental review. The proposed Phase 1 tasks include the following:

1. Opportunities and Constraints Analysis, which will provide an overview of conditions and characteristics within the Specific Plan area, document potential opportunities and constraints to inform the land use, design, and implementation recommendations of the Specific Plan, and will be a key component of community engagement.
2. Land Use and Design Analysis, which will include review of state law and objective design standards, a circulation analysis, financial feasibility analysis, and a parking analysis that will include site options to be evaluated for a future public parking structure to serve the Civic Center and Downtown Village areas as well as evaluating the financial feasibility of a public parking structure and the review of existing parking in-lieu fee program for future development.
3. Community Engagement, which will include a Community Engagement Plan. Community Engagement will include a variety of touchpoints, including in-person, mixed with virtual activities including: in-person workshops stakeholder interviews, design charettes, pop-up events/presentations (churches, La Mesa Farmers' Market, baseball fields, etc.), interactive website activities, and digital and hard copy surveys.

4. Administrative draft Specific Plan document, which would be utilized to identify and apply for additional grant funding such as SANDAG's Smart Growth Incentive Program, which funds comprehensive public infrastructure projects and planning activities that facilitate compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented development and increase housing and transportation choices.

Rick Engineering has developed an expeditious project schedule for Phase 1, which is anticipated to be completed in late fall/early winter of 2024.

Phase 2

Phase 2 funding would not be a part of this contract. Phase 2 would cover additional community engagement, finalization of the document and technical studies for public review, and all tasks related to environmental review.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution (**Attachment A**) authorizing awarding a Professional Services Contract to Rick Engineering Company for the Downtown Village Specific Plan Update.

Reviewed by:



Greg Humora
City Manager

Respectfully submitted by:

Lynnette Santos

Lynnette Santos
Director of Community Development



Kristen Flores
Management Analyst

Attachments:

- A. Resolution
- B. RFP 24-06 Downtown Village Specific Plan Update, Environmental Assessment and Related Technical Studies
- C. Proposed Scope for Phase 1 from Rick Engineering Company in response to RFP 24-06