

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: July 11, 2024

PREPARED BY: Nick Melloni, AICP, Principal Planner

REQUEST: APPROVE CONTRACT WITH FEHR & PEERS FOR THE PREPARATION OF A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT TO THE MOBILITY ELEMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$139,076 AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve contract to with Fehr & Peers of Walnut Creek, California, to prepare a General Plan Amendment to the Mobility Element in an amount not to exceed \$139,076.
2. Appropriate \$139,076 from unassigned General Fund Reserves to Account No. 1104470-4305000.
3. Authorize the City Attorney to make any necessary non-monetary changes to the contract.
4. Authorize the City Manager to execute said contract.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

California state law requires all cities and counties to adopt a general plan, a long-range planning document “for the physical development of the county, or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (Gov. Code §65300). The Mobility Element, also known as a Circulation Element, is a mandatory element of a general plan. The Mobility Element identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities.

The City of Palm Desert adopted its current general plan, including the mobility element on November 10, 2016, by Resolution No. 2016-87. Since this adoption, several state policies and regulations have been implemented addressing roadway safety (Senate Bill or “SB” 932), vehicle miles traveled or “VMT” (SB 743), and other requirements pertaining to housing (SB 330 / SB 35). Additionally, the element requires content updates to ensure it is clear, objective, internally consistent, and consistent with area plans and recommendations found in the City’s Active Transportation Plan.

These changes require the City to update the Mobility Element to implement state law and establish policy to implement the City’s active transportation plan, transit plan, and capital improvement updates. On May 9, 2024, Planning Staff presented a City Council Study Session Item (Attachment 3) outlining a proposed action plan to amend the element, which Council found appropriate provided efforts are taken to coordinate future transit plans with Sunline Transit Agency (STA).

Staff reached out to a qualified transportation engineering firm, Fehr & Peers (“traffic consultant”), from the pre-approved qualified vendor to assist in the preparation of the Mobility Element update and any necessary environmental analysis. Staff feels entering into a contract

with this consultant is in the best of the City due to their familiarity and experience with the City, County of Riverside, and CVAG. Fehr & Peers prepared the original traffic analysis for the 2016 General Plan mobility element and are familiar with the City's circulation. Additionally, Fehr & Peers developed the Riverside County Model, RIVCOM which the City relies upon for VMT. Fehr & Peers works closely with CVAG and is able to obtain most recent traffic data and counts for the preparation of this amendment. As a result, and in accordance with Palm Desert Municipal Code § 3.30.160.I, it was determined that it would be in the best interest of the City to enter into a contract with Fehr & Peers to complete the General Plan Mobility Element Update.

Fehr & Peers has prepared a preliminary scope of work (Attachment 1) to update the element by developing transportation policies to incorporate into the element including, but not limited to:

- Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) transportation impacts
- Level of Service (LOS)
- Maximum allowable roadway cross section
- Consistency with State Law (SB 330, SB 35)
- Coachella Valley Passenger Rail Service
- Transit System and collaboration with Sunline Transit Agency for location of transit amenities and impacts.
- Collaboration with other agencies, such as the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), Sunline Transit Agency (STA), among others.
- Safety and Vision Zero Strategies.

Fehr and Peers fee proposal to complete the scope of work in an amount not to exceed \$139,076 (Attachment 2).

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funding for this contract was not included in the FY 2024-25 proposed budget as the timing of the study session for this item is after the deadline for budget requests. Approval of this contract will require an appropriation in the amount of \$139,076 from Unassigned General Fund Reserves to Account 1104470-4305000 for FY 2024-25.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Professional Services Agreement
 - a. Fehr & Peers Proposed Scope
 - b. Fehr & Peers Fee Proposal
2. Update to General Plan Mobility Element Study Session Presentation