



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-19-112
Meeting 19-20
August 14, 2019

AGENDA ITEM 4

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Contract Award to Community Tree Service, Inc., for Tree Mitigation Planting at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with Community Tree Service, Inc., of Watsonville, California to plant mitigation trees for a base contract amount of \$91,000.
2. Authorize an allowance of \$9,000 for the planting of additional trees, to be awarded only if acorn production is sufficient this fall, to further enhance native plant restoration efforts.

SUMMARY

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) is required to mitigate tree removal associated with public access improvements to open the western area of Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (BCR) to public use. The District distributed a Request for Bids (RFB) to plant mitigation trees to six vegetation management firms and posted the RFB on the District's webpage and posted BidSync. Staff received three proposals. After a review of the proposals, the General Manager recommends awarding the contract to Community Tree Service, Inc., of Watsonville, CA, as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. The cost for these services will not exceed a base amount of \$91,000. In addition, the General Manager recommends an allowance in the amount of \$9,000 to plant additional non-mitigation trees to enhance the natural environment if acorn production is sufficient this fall, for a total contract amount not-to-exceed \$100,000. There are sufficient funds in the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 budget to fund this scope of services.

DISCUSSION

Background

Capital and operational projects that affect the physical environment have the potential to impact native species and/or the jurisdictional areas regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and/or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) mitigation measures and/or regulatory permits often require biological surveys, documentation, and mitigation of potential impacts to natural resources. The culvert replacement at Mud Lake, line of sight improvements for the new parking lot and crosswalk, and the replacement of the Webb Creek Bridge at BCR required the removal of trees. Engineering and Construction Department staff worked closely with Natural Resources Department staff to remove the minimum number of trees needed to satisfy the project objectives. County and regulatory agencies require mitigation for the removal of 41 trees within their jurisdictions with

mitigation ratios between 1:1 and 6:1, requiring the District to plant 73 mitigation trees. The average size of the trees removed was 10 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH - measurement taken at a height of 4.5 feet) with the majority under 12 inches DBH. The District was able to plant seven mitigation trees near the parking lot that do not affect the cultural landscape. To engage the public, District volunteers will plant six of the remaining required mitigation trees. The remainder would be planted through the recommended contract with Community Tree Service. See details in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Trees removed for public access improvements

Site	Species	Quantity	Required Mitigation Ratio
Crosswalk	Redwood	15	2:1
Mud Lake culvert	California Bay Laurel	1	3:1
	Douglas Fir	1	6:1
	Redwood	1	6:1
Parking Lot - Line of Sight	California Bay Laurel	5	1:1
	Camphor tree	3	1:1
	Interior live oak	2	1:1
	Juniper tree	2	1:1
	Monterey Pine	1	1:1
	Pacific Madrone	4	1:1
	Redwood	5	1:1
Webb Creek Bridge Replacement	Redwood	1	6:1
Total Trees Removed		41	
Mitigation Trees Required		73	
Alma College (already planted)		(7)	
District Volunteers		(6)	
Community Tree Service*		(60)	

* If the Board authorizes this contract

Mitigation at the site of impact is preferred, however, in order to protect the historic cultural landscape of the Alma College site (where the new parking lot is located), staff has identified a defunct Christmas tree farm located approximately two miles south to install the mitigation trees. The BCR preserve plan identified this general area as a potential additional parking area (R-17-15). Working with the Planning and the Engineering and Construction Departments, Natural Resource staff designed the project to avoid the potential future parking area.

The old tree farm lacks biodiversity because remnant and overgrown Christmas trees have crowded out other native species. Restoring the site to more natural conditions, such as a coast live oak woodland or a California black oak forest (depending on acorn production this fall), both considered a Sensitive Natural Community by CDFW, will increase the biodiversity and ecological stability of the area. To make room for the mitigation trees, the removal of approximately one acre of overgrown Christmas trees is required.

The District collaborates with the University of California at Berkeley to host the Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Bio Blitz, a yearly Community Science event. As a direct result of this project, the District now understands that BCR is one of the District's most heavily infested preserves with

the SOD pathogen; 65% of all samples from the SOD Blitz at BCR returned positive results for the pathogen. Therefore, staff expects lower plant establishment, around 40% to 50% survival rather than the typical 80% survival rate. A minimum of four years of maintenance and up to eight years of monitoring during the plant establishment period is required to confirm success and meet permit requirements.

If there is sufficient acorn production, staff will collect a greater number of acorns and install up to 60 additional non-mitigation tree basins. The additional trees will increase the overall ecological benefits of these mitigation efforts, including increasing both the native biodiversity of the area and long-term carbon sequestration. As a Best Management Practice, the District collects no more than 5% of available acorns. This allows for natural germination and leaves acorns for wildlife to eat. Germination rates for native trees are between 31% to 38%, therefore planting requires three acorns per basin to maximize the probability of getting one tree to grow per basin. If multiple seeds germinate, only the strongest seedling is retained. Acorn production varies widely from year to year. Acorns are only collected near the area of the restoration to maintain genetic integrity and the possibility of SOD resistance found in the trees that are healthy within a SOD infested area. If there are insufficient acorns, the allowance for additional plantings will not be used.

Contractor Selection

The District issued a RFB on April 29, 2019 and advertised in local newspapers, on the District website, and on BidSync. Staff notified six firms known to have experience managing vegetation in natural environments. Six firms attended the mandatory pre-bid tour on May 22, 2019. Addendums were issued on May 15, May 22, May 31, June 4, and June 8 of 2019 to extend the question and answer deadline and bid deadline by one week, as well as to clarify questions on the RFB during and after the pre-bid tour. Bids were due on June 13, 2019. The results are as follows:

Bidder		Location	Total Base Bid	Percent of Cost Estimate of \$90,000
1	Community Tree Service, Inc.	Watsonville, CA	\$84,000	93%
2	Professional Tree Care, Inc.	Berkeley, CA	\$94,955.50	105%
3	Ecological Concerns, Inc.	Santa Cruz, CA	\$95,600	106%

Community Tree Service, Inc., is the lowest responsible and responsive bidder for the project. After the bid opening, Staff identified additional work, including removing additional cultivar trees that are encroaching into well-established habitat and planting additional native species to increase the biodiversity of the site. Staff negotiated the expanded scope with Community Tree Service for an additional \$7,000. All work performed under this scope of work would be completed in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 for a total base bid of \$91,000.

The General Manager also recommends awarding an allowance of up to \$9,000. This allowance is reserved specifically for the installation of additional non-mitigation trees if acorn production is sufficient.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY2019-20 adopted budget includes \$101,893 for the Bear Creek Redwoods Tree Restoration project (MAA21-012). There are sufficient funds in the project to cover the recommended action and expenditures.

Bear Creek Redwoods Tree Restoration MAA21-012	Prior Year Actuals	FY2019-20 Adopted	FY2020-21 Projected	FY2021-22 Projected	TOTAL
MAA21-012 Budget:	\$0	\$101,893	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$121,893
Spent-to-Date (as of 07/23/2019):	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Encumbrances:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Community Tree Services Contract:	\$0	(\$91,000)	\$0	\$0	(\$91,000)
Additional Allowance:	\$0	(\$9,000)	\$0	\$0	(\$9,000)
Budget Remaining (Proposed):	\$0	\$1,893	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$21,893

The following table outlines the Measure AA Portfolio #21 budget, costs-to-date, and the fiscal impact related to the Bear Creek Redwoods Tree Restoration project (MAA21-012).

MAA21 Portfolio Allocation:	\$17,478,000
Grants awarded to date:	\$3,924,500
Life-to-Date Spent (as of 07/23/2019):	(\$7,836,911)
FY 2019-20 Encumbrances:	(\$1,098,216)
Community Tree Services Contract including Additional Allowance:	(\$100,000)
Portfolio Balance Remaining (Proposed):	\$12,367,373

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

This item was not previously reviewed by a Board Committee.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. Public notice was sent to interested parties by postal or electronic mail.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the District's IPM Program, which the Board approved on December 10, 2014 (R-14-148), analyzed the vegetation management activities in the recommended contract. On February 27, 2019, the Board approved an addendum to the Final EIR for the IPM Program (R-19-11). District staff have incorporated the associated mitigation measures and BMPs from the environmental review documents into the project and the contract documents.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval by the Board, the General Manager will enter into a contract with Community Tree Service, Inc., of Watsonville, CA. Staff will issue a separate RFB in early fall of 2019 to assist the District with meeting the required four years of tree planting maintenance. Once the mitigation trees are established, District staff will seed or plant native nursery stock to increase the biodiversity of the area and meet the conditions of a Sensitive Natural Community, as defined by CDFW.

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