



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PROCUREMENT AGENDA ITEM

R-25-38
Meeting 25-10
March 26, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 5

AGENDA ITEM

Partnership agreement with UC Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Authorize a partnership agreement with the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden for botanical services with a term of four (4) years and a not-to-exceed contract amount of \$200,000.

DISCUSSION

On January 22, 2025, the Board of Directors approved awarding contracts for on-call botanical services to the University of California Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden (UCSC) and four firms, each with a four-year term and a not-to-exceed contract amount of \$320,000 ([R-25-15, Minutes](#)). UCSC submitted their Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) and ranked fourth overall. However, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) staff were unable to reach an agreement on contractual terms during negotiations with UCSC due to issues with the University of California system's enabling legislation which does not allow "work for hire". As an alternative, the General Manager recommends entering into a partnership agreement with UCSC. A partnership agreement with UCSC provides mutual benefits to both the District and the University. The District gets access to the University's vast research resources and the latest scientific literature regarding land management, while providing students the opportunities to learn in a living laboratory and contribute to the stewardship to the Santa Cruz Mountains region. Given the high value benefit that UCSC can provide for the District's work, and the value of expanded partnerships with local academic institutions, the General Manager recommends authorizing a partnership agreement in the amount of \$200,000 over four years for UCSC to perform monitoring and research work of the natural resources located on District lands.

BUDGET / FISCAL IMPACT

The current fiscal year budget contains:

- sufficient funds.
- insufficient funds; the next quarterly budget update will include a reallocation of unspent funds from other project budgets to cover for this expenditure.
- insufficient funds; approval of this item requires a fiscal year budget augmentation.
- future fiscal year budgets will include additional funds to complete the contracted work.

Measure AA

- No, this contract is not part of a Measure AA project.
- Yes, this contract is part of a Measure AA project.

PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND SELECTION

The District issued an RFQ for botanical services on November 12, 2024. By the December 12, 2024, deadline, the District received sixteen responses. UCSC's submission was highly competitive due to its staff expertise, institutional knowledge, and ability to involve students in real-world ecological projects. Due to challenges with the UC system's enabling legislation, entering into a partnership agreement is the best approach for working collaboratively with UCSC on this type of work.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION SUPPORTING THE PROJECT

On January 22, 2025, the Board authorized the award contracts for on-call botanical services to UCSC and four firms, each contract with a term of four (4) years and a not-to-exceed contract amount of \$320,000 ([R-25-15, Minutes](#)).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

A research grant execution is not a project subject to CEQA. Additionally, the proposed field surveys to be conducted by the selected consultants are categorically exempt from CEQA under Article 19, Section 15306:

Section 15306 exempts basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

NEXT STEPS

If the Board approves, the General Manager will sign a partnership agreement with UCSC. As needed, the District will issue task orders to inventory and monitor botanical resources for projects approved in the Capital Improvement and Action Plan.

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