

SONOMA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

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Item 5.1

Staff Report

Meeting Date: July 6, 2022

Agenda No. Item 5.1

Agenda Item Title: Authorization to Conduct Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Study for Russian River County Sanitation District and Selection of Consultant

Environmental Determination: Not a project under CEQA

Staff Contacts: Mark Bramfitt

Analysis

The Community Development Corporation of the County of Sonoma has recently purchased a property at 18100 River Road, south of unincorporated Guerneville, with intentions to develop the property as a homeless services center with living quarters.

In order to develop the site at the planned densities, the project cannot rely on a septic system, and will therefore require sanitary sewer service. The site is some distance away from the Russian River County Sanitation District, and is outside of the sphere of influence (SOI) of the District, making it currently ineligible for annexation.

(The District is governed by the County Board of Supervisors, and managed by Sonoma Water.)

Further, while the District could seek an Outside Service Area Authorization (OSAA) from LAFCO, because the site has been uninhabited for many years, and the proposal is for a new and significantly expanded use, an OSAA would not be applicable according to the Cortese Knox Hertzberg Act (CKH). (There is no current threat to public health and safety, and the proposal would not be for existing use and development.)

The County has secured funding for the proposed development from the State's "Homekey" program, which is generally used by cities and counties to purchase hotel properties and other facilities that can be quickly repurposed for homeless services. The County is required to show significant progress on the project, such as securing access to municipal services, in order to preserve their grant.

Although staff has worked with the County to describe the process for amending Russian River Sanitation District's sphere, followed by an annexation application, for over three years, staff received a letter from the District requesting a sphere amendment on April 11, 2022 (attached). (It might be pertinent to note that the District did not request a particular timeframe for completing a sphere amendment.)

In order to amend the District's sphere of influence, LAFCO must conduct a Municipal Services Review/Sphere of Influence study (MSR/SOI) that comports with the standards outlined in CKH.

Staff notes that the results of the MSR/SOI study may not conclude that a sphere amendment is warranted, for any number of potential reasons.

For example, the site is outside of the Urban Services Boundary in the County's current General Plan, indicating that the County's land use plans do not anticipate municipal services to be provided in this area. Staff has indicated that amending this boundary is likely to be a condition of a sphere amendment, and that the Community Development

Corporation should work with Permit Sonoma on this issue concurrently with the LAFCO process.

Additionally, any number of operational, regulatory, governance, or other issues that the MSR/SOI study may identify could preclude approval of a sphere amendment for the District.

Consulting Services to Prepare an MSR

Staff has taken the audacious step (absent Commission direction) of issuing a Request For Proposals (RFP) to consultants seeking bids for conducting a Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Study (MSR/SOI) for the District, with a very short submittal window, and featuring a very short timeframe for conducting the project.

The deadline for submitting proposals under the RFP was Friday, May 20th, and staff received only one proposal, which was from E. Milberg & Associates. (This firm recently prepared MSRs for the Town of Windsor and the City of Sonoma under contract to the Commission.

The proposal was sufficient in terms of addressing the RFP criteria, and in particular included a project schedule that met the very tight timeframes laid out in the RFP. The fee schedule indicates 125 hours of work, with a total cost of \$12,500.

Staff is seeking direction from the Commission regarding addressing Russian River Sanitation's request to amend its sphere of influence.

Recommendation

Staff is seeking Commission direction regarding the MSR/SOI project for the Russian River County Sanitation District. Direction might address:

- whether the commission supports conducting an MSR/SOI study using consulting services
- whether the schedule for project delivery is reasonable or should be extended
- whether the RFP should be reissued in an effort to obtain more proposals
- whether the applicant (the District) should pay for the project or whether LAFCO should absorb the cost

Attachments

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1. Letter Requesting MSR/SOI Study from Sonoma Water, dated April 11, 2022
 2. Consultant Proposal: E. Mulberg & Associates