



## City Council Staff Report

**From: City Manager**

**Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Lead Department: Transportation**

**Meeting Date: December 18, 2023**

Report #:2311-2240

### **TITLE**

Approval of Professional Services Contract Number C24188179 with Urban Field Studio for a Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$249,708 for the Development of the Car-Free Streets Implementation Plan, for a Period of 7-Months; CEQA Status - statutorily Exempt.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve and authorize the City Manager or their designee to execute Contract No. C24188179 (Attachment A) with Urban Field for the development of the Car-free Streets Implementation Plan for a term of 7-months and a total amount not-to-exceed of \$249,708, including \$227,007 for basic services and \$22,701 for contingency.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This staff report seeks approval of a consultant contract with Urban Field to assist in advancing the City Council's November 6, 2023 direction to maintain car-free zones on portions of California Avenue and Ramona Street.<sup>1</sup> The consultant will assist the City with developing wayfinding signage and branding programs; outdoor patio guidelines; circulation plans for active mobility, including a two-way bicycle lane; cleaning and maintenance strategies; community engagement; and other related tasks. In addition to advancing Council's most recent action, staff will also continue to advance demonstration projects to enhance the experience on the streets and further encourage people to visit the area. This could include activations such as additional game play areas and community spaces to gather, continuation of partnerships like Third Thursday Music and minigolf, and implementing aesthetic enhancements such as new barriers and public art.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Page 3, Item 9, Action Minutes for November 6, 2023 City Council Meeting:  
<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Public/CompiledDocument?meetingTemplateId=13051&compileOutputType=1>

## BACKGROUND

The Car-free Streets<sup>2</sup>: California Avenue and Ramona Street project is a Council-supported effort enabling outdoor dining, retail, and personal services in business districts such as California Avenue and the downtown core. The City Council originally authorized Car-free Streets in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic through a program called *Summer Streets* then incorporated the project into the City's *Uplift Local* Initiative, as an economic recovery effort and to provide community members with outdoor spaces to gather.

Most recently, at their meeting on November 6, 2023, the City Council directed staff to retain portions of California Avenue and Ramona Street as a car-free zone on a permanent basis, and as a part of that work, return to Council with an adjusted contract for consultant services with Urban Field to implement the direction. Specific to California Avenue, the Council also voted to work to direct pedestrian traffic to the sidewalks, implement a context-specific outdoor dining/parklet program based on the City's recently adopted Permanent Parklet Program, create a two-way bicycle lane in the car-free area, install gateway and wayfinding signage, initiate a branding program, conduct regularly scheduled street clean up and maintenance, and explore reorienting the stalls for the weekly Sunday Farmer's Market.<sup>3</sup> For Ramona Street, Council directed staff to initiate a branding program of the historic district, add wayfinding signage, and conduct regular clean up and maintenance.<sup>4</sup> As an immediate response to the City Council's November 6<sup>th</sup> direction, City staff and the consultant reordered the scope of work and contract to prioritize the items from Council's most recent action. A competitive solicitation was issued for these services; discussion regarding the request for proposals can be found in the November 6, 2023 staff report. For additional background information, including information on the procurement process for the Car-free Streets Implementation Plan, please see the City Manager Report from the November 6, 2023 City Council meeting.<sup>5</sup>

## ANALYSIS

The reordered scope of work and contract includes two phases. The first phase covers many of the items from the November 6, 2023 City Council meeting and prioritizes the items identified by businesses and the community. This includes rapidly developing wayfinding signage & branding programs, outdoor patio guidelines, circulation plans for active mobility, cleaning & maintenance strategies, and additional ongoing community engagement. The second phase includes items that require more time, primarily due to a higher level of evaluation and consultation. This

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/carfreestreets>

<sup>3</sup> See Page 3, Item 9, Action Minutes for November 6, 2023 City Council Meeting:  
<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Public/CompiledDocument?meetingTemplateId=13051&compileOutputType=1>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> See City Manager Report #2309-2011 for Action Item 9, Agenda Packet for November 6, 2023 City Council Meeting:  
<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Public/CompiledDocument?meetingTemplateId=13052&compileOutputType=1>

includes streetscape design and amenities and assistance with understanding legislative methods and any environmental review required to convert portions of California Avenue and Ramona Street as permanent car-free zones. The updated scope of work is to be completed in a 7-month process, beginning once the contract is executed.

Staff recommends contracting with Urban Field because of their comprehensive approach to the updated reordered project scope, clear understanding of Palo Alto and its needs, and unique methods to engage key stakeholders. Urban Field also has experience working with Bay Area communities on developing plans for public and private outdoor uses, creating wayfinding and signage programs, and activating spaces and healthy commercial and community areas, including in Mountain View, Burlingame, Fremont, and Oakland. Finally, Urban Field proposed an updated scope within budget and will provide exceptional project management experience. The proposed budget does include a 10% contingency for any modifications to the scope for additions or unexpected work.

#### **FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

The Office of Transportation FY 2024 Adopted Operating Budget appropriated \$250,000 for this initiative. The updated cost proposal for the reordered scope of work is \$249,708 (\$227,007 base with a \$22,701 contingency of 10%).

#### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Urban Field's updated scope of work responds to previous community feedback to set up regular and ongoing meetings to keep everyone updated on progress and developments. For this project, this includes a structured yet efficient community engagement approach with three areas of focus: 1) Monthly meetings with Subcommittees (one for Cal Ave. business owners and stakeholders, and one for Ramona Street business owners and stakeholders); 2) Community at-large outreach events; and, 3) City Council Meetings. The consultant will publish a public "What We Heard" memo summarizing the engagement efforts and serve as a record and reference summary.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The approval of the contract with Urban Field is statutorily exempt under Section 15262 (Feasibility & Planning Studies) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations. The second phase in the updated scope of work includes a task, Environmental Clearance Review and Recommendations, where the consultant will review the final concepts and Implementation Plan, develop an environmental clearance strategy, and file any required exemption documentation (if appropriate) under CEQA on behalf of the City, following direction to do so from the City.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Contract C24188179 with Urban Field Studio

**APPROVED BY:** Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official