



City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR

Lead Department: Community Services

Meeting Date: February 24, 2025

Report #:2501-4039

TITLE

Approval of two Professional Services Contracts 1) Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz and Associates (C25193598) in an Amount Not to Exceed \$126,225 for Cubberley Project Public Opinion Research Services for a Period of 20 Months, 2) The Lew Edwards Group(C25193673) in an Amount Not to Exceed \$138,375 for Public Communication Consulting Services related to the November 2026 General Obligation Bond Ballot Measure for a Period of 20 Months, and Approval of Budget Amendments in the General Fund and the Cubberley Property Infrastructure Fund; CEQA Status - Not a Project

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager or designee to execute Contract No. C25193598 (Attachment A) with Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz and Associates, Inc. for Cubberley Project and November 2026 ballot measure public opinion research services for a term of 20 months and a total not-to-exceed \$126,225, including \$114,750 for basic services and \$11,475 for additional services;
2. Authorize the City Manager or designee to execute Contract No. C25193673 (Attachment B) with The Lew Edwards Group for strategy and communication consultant services for a term of 20 months and a total not-to-exceed \$138,375; and
3. Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Appropriation for:
 - a. General Fund (requires majority approval) by:
 - i. Increasing the transfer to the Cubberley Property Infrastructure Fund by \$165,712; and
 - ii. Decreasing the Real Property Investment Reserve by \$165,712;
 - b. Cubberley Property Infrastructure Fund (requires 2/3 approval) by:
 - i. Increasing the transfer from the General Fund by \$165,712; and
 - ii. Increasing the Cubberley Community Center Redevelopment Capital Improvement Project (CB-26000) by \$165,712.

BACKGROUND

The Cubberley Project Workplan, adopted by the City Council on December 2, 2024¹ outlines several key milestones that must be accomplished to meet the goal of placing a measure on the November 2026 ballot. The timeframe to place a bond measure on the November 2026 ballot is short and will require a focused effort to be successful. Major elements of work to be completed include:

- Master planning of the site with Concordia
- Advanced evaluation of infrastructure systems to support construction
- Defining the ballot measure
- Coordination and support for Friends of the Palo Alto Recreation Wellness Center
- Naming of a new community recreation and resource center
- Development of an operating plan for a new community recreation and resource center
- Development of a financial plan for a community recreation and resource center
- Stakeholder engagement throughout the project

ANALYSIS

Engagement with the community and key stakeholders is arguably the most important element of this effort as resident support of the project will be needed for a successful ballot measure. Council support and involvement in the stakeholder engagement process will be crucial for the success of the ballot measure. In defining the ballot measure, the project must be carefully and strategically crafted for the ballot measure (the “what”, “why”, and “how”), requiring a comprehensive approach and the City Council’s support. Opinion research, stakeholder engagement, and ballot measure development efforts are recommended to be facilitated by consultants whose expertise and familiarity with the community, economic, and political landscape of the City is necessary.

Procurement Process

Staff contacted public opinion research and strategy firms for interviews and to discuss this potential engagement. After reviewing the firms and their experience, qualifications, pricing, and proposed role, staff recommends engaging with Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) for public opinion research services and with The Lew Edwards Group for strategy, communication, and engagement services. FM3 has most recently worked with the City on the 2022 business tax measure (Measure K) and measure to affirm the natural gas transfer (Measure L). Lew Edwards Group has previously worked with the City on the 2008 Library Bond Measure (Measure N) in 2007 and 2008 and, alongside FM3, the 2022 business tax measure and the measure to affirm the natural gas transfer.

¹ City Council, December 2, 2024, Item #18:

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=112713&repo=r-704298fc&searchid=ae5b84a3-97aa-40a4-add4-3498327cbb23>

Professional services contracts exceeding \$85,000 shall be solicited by formal request for proposals in accordance with Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) 2.30.400, they may also be exempted from competitive solicitation requirements under PAMC 2.30.360. In order to move forward with stakeholder outreach efforts within the timeframe outlined in the workplan for consideration of a ballot measure, an exemption to the competitive solicitation process was approved by the City Manager under PAMC 2.030.360(b)(2) that the time necessary to complete a competitive solicitation process would result in interference with the Council's directed workplan.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

The FY 2025 Adopted Budget included a reserve of \$1.0 million to support real property acquisition activities. Subsequent to the Council approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Palo Alto and the Palo Alto Unified School District for the potential acquisition of an additional seven acres of land at the former Cubberly Site, the Council has authorized \$834,288 of this reserve leaving \$165,712 remaining. Funding has been allocated for the Cubberley Master Plan and the CEQA environmental review in alignment with the original intention of the reserve.

The award of these two contracts, in total \$264,600, will be partially funded by the remaining funding in the Real Property Acquisition Reserve in FY 2025, bringing the reserve to zero, and the remainder, to be spent in FY 2026 will be supported by the FY 2026 allocation of this reserve, subject to the Council annual appropriation of funds through the budget process. Additional costs expected to support this initiative include, but are not limited to, a municipal financial advisor and outside counsel.

To ease tracking and enhance visibility, the Cubberley Property Infrastructure Fund Cubberley Community Center Redevelopment Capital Improvement Project (CIP CB-26000) was established and is where expenses related to this effort will continue to be consolidated.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement is integrated through master plan development, constituent polling, and stakeholder outreach. Staff, throughout the process and from previous conversations, has solicited input from the City Council and stakeholders for Cubberley. Staff recommends that the City Council authorize staff to engage with FM3 and The Lew Edwards Group to facilitate these goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The services in this report are not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA regulation 15061(b)(3).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates Contract C25193598

Attachment B: The Lew Edwards Group Contract C25193673

APPROVED BY:

Kristen O'Kane, Community Services Director