



City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR

Lead Department: Transportation

Meeting Date: September 9, 2024

Report #:2408-3339

TITLE

Approval of Professional Services Contract Number C25191297 with Kittelson & Associates for a Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$499,491 for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Railroad Crossing Alternatives Analysis in Southern Palo Alto for a Term of Two-Years; CEQA Status – categorically exempt.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council approve and authorize the City Manager or their designee to execute Contract No. C25191297 (Attachment A), with Kittelson & Associates, to provide an alternatives analysis for the southern Palo Alto bicycle and pedestrian railroad crossing for a term of two (2) years and a total amount Not-to-Exceed \$499,491.

BACKGROUND

The Caltrain corridor runs north-south parallel to Alma Street through the City of Palo Alto, resulting in a barrier for east-west travel by all modes. Currently, there are seven streets where people and vehicles can cross the railroad tracks in Palo Alto. Three of the seven crossings (University Avenue, Embarcadero Road, and Oregon Expressway) are grade separated while the other four crossings (Palo Alto Avenue, Churchill Avenue, Meadow Drive, and Charleston Road) are at-grade. The City is planning to separate the train tracks from vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians at three of the at-grade crossings (Churchill Avenue, Meadow Drive, and Charleston Road). Several citywide planning studies have found that existing and possible future crossing opportunities along the Caltrain corridor are more abundant in the northern areas (i.e., north of Oregon Expressway), particularly in the vicinity of downtown, compared to the southern areas (i.e., south of Oregon Expressway). This geographic imbalance in opportunities for connections is a disadvantage for the southern neighborhoods in the City of Palo Alto. Further, the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPTP), Rail Corridor Study, and Midtown Connection Feasibility Study have identified potential locations along this corridor as opportunities to provide grade-separated crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The purpose of the Southern Palo Alto Bicycle and Pedestrian Railroad Crossing Alternatives Analysis (“Alternatives Analysis”) is to develop community-supported locations and design concepts for two (2) new grade-separated bicycle and pedestrian crossings of the Caltrain corridor (and Alma Street, if needed) in Southern Palo Alto (i.e., south of Oregon Expressway). The Alternatives Analysis will also identify context-sensitive bicycle and pedestrian enhancements that link the proposed grade-separated crossing sites to the existing/proposed bicycle and pedestrian networks within the neighborhoods adjacent to the railroad tracks.

ANALYSIS

The City published the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Southern Palo Alto Bicycle and Pedestrian Railroad Crossing Alternatives Analysis on the City’s eProcurement platform, on May 9, 2024, and 3,177 firms were notified. The solicitation period was posted for 31 working days and closed on June 20, 2024. The City received one responsive proposal from Kittelson & Associates, a transportation planning, engineering, and research services firm. Kittelson & Associates has teamed with three firms: (1) Circlepoint, leaders in equitable and inclusive engagement and environmental analysis, (2) BKF, experts in engineering and design, and (3) Biggs Cardosa Associates, experts in structural engineering, to provide the City with the range of expertise needed to successfully complete the Alternatives Analysis.

Table 1: Summary of Request for Proposals	
<i>RFP Name/Description</i>	RFP 191297 Southern Palo Alto Bicycle and Pedestrian Railroad Crossing Study
<i>Request for Proposals Issued</i>	May 9, 2024
<i>Proposed Length of Project</i>	2 Years
<i>Total Days to Respond to RFP</i>	31 Working Days
<i>Number of Firms Notified</i>	3,177
<i>Proposals Due</i>	June 20, 2024
<i>Number of RFP Downloads</i>	40
<i>Number of Proposals Received</i>	1
<i>Proposal Price Range</i>	\$499,491
<i>Public Link to Solicitation</i>	Bid Information (opengov.com)

A four-staff evaluation committee comprised of three Office of Transportation City Staff and one Public Works City Staff carefully reviewed each firm’s qualifications and submittals in response to the criteria identified in the RFP:

1. Quality and completeness of proposal

2. Quality, performance and effectiveness of the solution, goods and/or services to be provided by the Proposer
3. The firm's experience, including the experience of staff to be assigned to the project, with engagements of similar scope and complexity
4. Proposed cost to the city
5. The firm's financial condition and stability
6. The firm's ability to perform the work within the time specified
7. The firm's prior record of performance with City or other local, county, or state agency, if applicable
8. The firm's compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies (including city policies), guidelines and orders governing prior or existing contracts performed by the contractor.

The evaluation committee identified that the preferred service provider who responded to the RFP is sufficiently qualified to conduct the work. Kittelson & Associates provided a comprehensive approach to the scope of work, demonstrated a clear understanding of Palo Alto and its needs, proposed an innovative approach to engage the community, has extensive experience working in Palo Alto (including the on-going Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update) and with other Bay Area communities on developing context-sensitive and performance-based transportation planning studies, is under budget, and provides exceptional project management.

The City received one response to this RFP so staff contacted several other firms who received the RFP to understand why they did not submit a proposal. Firms stated they were unable to submit a proposal due to other proposal/project commitments, limited expertise on local railroad crossing studies, and/or inability to join a team as a subcontractor. Based on thorough proposal from Kittelson & Associates and the follow-up feedback from those who did not respond, staff recommends approval of a contract with Kittelson & Associates.

The scope of work of Kittelson & Associates includes the following tasks, to be completed within an 18-month process, beginning once the contract is executed, anticipated for September 2024:

1. Project Management and Coordination
2. Community Outreach and Engagement
3. Data Collection and Analysis of Existing Conditions
4. Goals and Evaluation Criteria
5. Alternatives Development and Selection of Preferred Alternatives
6. Southern Palo Alto Bicycle and Pedestrian Railroad Crossing Alternatives Analysis Report
7. Grant Application Support

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

The cost proposal submitted by Kittelson & Associates for the Alternatives Analysis is in the amount of \$499,491, including a 10 percent contingency. Sufficient funding for anticipated

expenses is available in the FY 2025 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Implementation project (PL- 04010) in the Capital Improvement Fund.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The City provided the public procurement process through its eProcurement platform and notified 3,177 firms to encourage participation. In addition, thirty firms were contacted directly by procurement staff to announce availability of the Request for Proposals. Of those notified, thirty-eight downloaded the proposal documents.

At the onset of the Alternatives Analysis, Kittelson & Associates will develop a community engagement plan that will explain how the project team will share information and gather meaningful input regarding the needs and issues of the public, stakeholders, and interested parties. The engagement activities will be tailored towards the unique character of the community and are anticipated to include, but not limited to, the following:

- Project Webpage and Social Media Content
- Community Workshops
- Interactive Online Surveys
- Engagement with Disadvantaged Communities
- Engagement with Local Businesses
- Interviews with Select Community Members
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PABAC) Meetings
- Rail Committee Meetings
- City/School Transportation Safety Meetings
- Planning and Transportation Commission Meetings
- City Council Meetings
- Supporting Informational Materials (e.g., Mailers, Door Hangers, Flyers, Fact Sheets)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Alternatives Analysis supports key transportation goals in the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, including creating a sustainable transportation system, reducing congestion, and providing a safe environment for all road users. Specific policies and programs include:

- Policy T-1.1 Take a comprehensive approach to reducing single-occupant vehicle trips by involving those who live, work and shop in Palo Alto in developing strategies that make it easier and more convenient not to drive.
- Policy T-1.3 Reduce GHG and pollutant emissions associated with transportation by reducing VMT and per-mile emissions through increasing transit options, supporting biking and walking, and the use of zero-emission vehicle technologies to meet City and State goals for GHG reductions by 2030.

- Policy T-1.16 Promote personal transportation vehicles an alternative to cars (e.g. bicycles, skateboards, roller blades) to get to work, school, shopping, recreational facilities and transit stops.
- Policy T-1.19 Provide facilities that encourage and support bicycling and walking.
- Program T1.19.2 Prioritize investments for enhanced pedestrian access and bicycle use within Palo Alto and to/from surrounding communities, including by incorporating improvements from related City plans, for example the 2012 Palo Alto Bicycle + Pedestrian Transportation Plan and the Parks, Trails & Open Space Master Plan, as amended, into the Capital Improvements Program.
- Program T1.19.3 Increase the number of east-west pedestrian and bicycle crossings across Alma Street and the Caltrain corridor, particularly south of Oregon Expressway.
- Policy T-3.15 Pursue grade separation of rail crossings along the rail corridor as a City priority.
- Program T3.15.1 Undertake studies and outreach necessary to advance grade separation of Caltrain to become a “shovel ready” project and strongly advocate for adequate State, regional and federal funding for design and construction of railroad grade separations.
- Program T3.15.2 Conduct a study to evaluate the implications of grade separation on bicycle and pedestrian circulation.
- Policy T-6.1 Continue to make safety the first priority of citywide transportation planning. Prioritize pedestrian, bicycle and automobile safety over motor vehicle level of service at intersections and motor vehicle parking.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Council action on this item is categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) section 15262 because this contract for planning and preliminary design does not commit the City to any specific project.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Kittelson & Associates Contract, C25191297

APPROVED BY:

Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official