



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: JANUARY 23, 2024

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FROM: LISA BRINTON, DIRECTOR

THROUGH: GRANT LEONARD, PLANNING MANAGER

BY: MONICA GURMILAN, SENIOR PLANNER

TITLE: AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WITH
PLACEWORKS, INC FOR THE PREPERATION OF THE EAST
AREA SPECIFIC PLAN

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a resolution authorizing the Interim City Manager to enter into an Agreement for Professional Services (Agreement) between the City of Salinas and Placeworks, Inc to prepare the East Area Specific Plan for an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Approval of the Agreement with Placeworks will allow the City to prepare and process a specific plan to streamline and guide development in the East Area of the North of Boronda Future Growth Area. The East Area Specific Plan (EASP) land use will include residential and commercial, parks and community facilities, and other public uses. The not to exceed contract amount is \$1,000,000 and the schedule anticipates completion of the East Area Specific Plan for City Council consideration by September of 2025. The term of the Agreement is through December 31, 2025.

BACKGROUND:

The Future Growth Area (FGA) is located generally north of Boronda Road, west of Williams Road, east of San Juan Grade Road and south of Rogge Road (Attachment 6). Policy LU-4 of the Salinas General Plan requires the preparation of a specific plan(s) prior to the development of the North of Boronda FGA. The FGA is divided into four specific plan areas:

- The Gateway Specific Plan (2011)
- The West Area Specific Plan (2019)
- The Central Area Specific Plan (2020)
- The East Area Specific Plan

An East Area Specific Plan (EASP) was initiated in the early to mid-2000s but did not move forward due to the economic downturn in 2008.

Specific Plan Benefits

A specific plan establishes the overall land use concept and development framework for an identified planning area (Plan Area). The specific plan development process involves planning, environmental, financial, and engineering analysis; public comment and contribution; developing a document (Specific Plan) that will guide the future development of the Specific Plan Area; and subsequent implementation measures recommended by the Specific Plan. The contents of the Specific Plan reflect the physical characteristics of the Plan Area, as well as the City's goals for land use change in general and for the Plan Area in particular. The Specific Plan is a blueprint that provides a bridge between the Salinas General Plan and applications for individual development permits within the Specific Plan Area. Topics covered in the Specific Plan include:

- Land use and zoning designations,
- Development regulations and design standards and policies,
- Mobility and circulation,
- Public services and utilities,
- Resource conservation,
- Infrastructure and financing requirements; and
- Implementation and administrative processes.

Connection to Visión Salinas 2040

The City is nearing completion of the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan Update, with a draft anticipated to be released in the Spring of 2024. The East Area Specific Plan will be developed to be consistent with the vision, goals, and policies included in the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan Update. Initiating the East Area Specific Plan now will allow the City to leverage work already being completed for the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan Update, such as:

- Background and existing conditions reports
- California Environmental Quality Act analysis
- Community engagement activities

Consultant Selection Process

Staff prepared a Request for Proposals for planning and entitlement services for the East Area Specific Plan in the summer of 2023. The Request for Proposals was released to the City's on-call list for Advanced Planning and Current Planning services on September 8, 2023. Two (2) consultant firms submitted proposals by the deadline of October 20, 2023:

- EMC Planning Group
- Placeworks

Both firms have completed projects for the City previously, and both firms are currently working on different City planning efforts. EMC Planning Group is currently supporting the Ferrasci

Business Park Specific Plan, while Placeworks is currently supporting the Visión Salinas 2040 General Plan Update and the City's Climate Action Plan. Both firms are highly qualified with detailed knowledge of the City and its planning needs.

The selection process included an evaluation of written proposals, virtual panel interviews and reference checks. Each proposal was scored out of 100 possible points with the average score determining the top ranking. Written evaluation criteria focused on project understanding, firm qualifications, team qualifications, track record, client references and completeness and quality of proposal. The evaluation panel for the written proposal and the virtual interviews consisted of City staff from the Community Development Department and the Public Works Department. Virtual interviews were held on November 9, 2023. Firms were asked to prepare a short presentation based on their proposal and responded to curated questions from the panel. Interview scoring criteria focused on presentation quality, experience with projects of a similar scale, understanding of City needs, sustainability, infrastructure concerns, potential challenges, and implementation. Based on the rating and ranking process, Placeworks, was selected as the recommended consultant.

Next Step

Following execution of the Agreement for Professional Services (Attachment 2), staff will initiate the planning and community outreach process, as outlined in Placeworks' proposal (Attachment 5). It is anticipated that the East Area Specific Plan will be completed by September 2025.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

Not a Project. The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Because the proposed action and this matter have no potential to cause any effect on the environment, or because it falls within a category of activities excluded as projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378, this matter is not a project. Because the matter does not cause a direct or foreseeable indirect physical change on or in the environment, this matter is not a project. Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Professional services are needed to develop the East Area Specific Plan. Development of land uses identified in the EASP (residential, commercial and community serving public) and implementation of the infrastructure plan will further the City Councils 2022-2025 Goals and Strategies of Economic Development, Housing/Affordable Housing, Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

This EASP preparation include an active participation and collaboration from Community Development, and Public Works with supporting efforts from Library and Community Services, Fire and Police.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Funding for the first year of the Agreement with Placeworks is available and appropriated in 2513.30.3328-63.5900. This is a multi-year contract, with work and expenditures occurring over three fiscal years. On March 7, 2023, City Council authorized CIP Budget transfer to the Operating Budget and established the East Area Specific Plan Fund 3328. In FY 23-24, \$350,000 was appropriated for the East Area Specific Plan. Additional budget for this project will be recommended for appropriation in the preparation of future budgets. Potential funding sources include planning grants, developer fees, and the General Plan/Zoning maintenance fee (General Plan Fund 3701). No General Funds are anticipated for this contract.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution authorizing execution of an Agreement for Professional Services with Placeworks
2. Agreement for Professional Services with Placeworks
3. Exhibit B to PSA – Scope Budget Schedule
4. EASP Request for Proposals
5. Placeworks Proposal
6. Future Growth Area – North of Boronda map