



## **CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

---

**DATE:** JUNE 22, 2021

**DEPARTMENT:** COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**FROM:** MEGAN HUNTER, DIRECTOR

**BY:** TERESA KISTLER, REVENUE OFFICER  
ANGELINE SICKLER, SENIOR PLAN CHECK ENGINEER

**TITLE:** SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR ELECTRONIC PERMIT  
APPLICATION AND PLAN REVIEW SOFTWARE

### RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a Resolution authorizing: 1) the City Manager or designee to make final revisions to the Professional Services Agreement consistent with the intent of the resolution and, 2) the Mayor or her designee to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Avolve Software, Inc. through Fiscal Year 2021-22.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended the City Council approve the attached Resolution authorizing: 1) the City Manager or designee to make final revisions to the Professional Services Agreement consistent with the intent of the resolution and, 2) the Mayor or her designee to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Avolve Software, Inc. through Fiscal Year 2021-22 for the purchase and maintenance of Online Applicant Service (OAS) and ProjectDox software.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Community Development Department (CDD) is seeking approval to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Avolve Software, Inc. in the amount not to exceed \$204,909 for Fiscal Year 2021-22. The OAS and ProjectDox software will be utilized to provide residents, design professionals and developers the ability to submit their projects for review and approval electronically. Electronic plan review offers customers a fast, easy and cost-effective way to participate in the City's permitting process. This provides greater efficiency and cost savings for applicants by accepting plans electronically, streamlining processes and creating a digital one-stop review for projects. The authorization is limited to \$204,909 from the Capital Improvement Program 9093, Permit Systems and Technology Upgrade, which is funded by a 5% technology fee when applying for and obtaining a permit.

## BACKGROUND:

Due to COVID-19, the Permit Center transitioned from accepting most projects on paper plans to all electronic plans. This allowed customers to proceed through the plan review process without the safety concerns and scheduling difficulties associated with traveling to the Permit Center and handling/quarantining paper plans. This process is also environmentally friendly. The electronic permit application process was created without the benefit of software. This has led to inefficiencies in the process, such as additional staff time performing simple actions, which could be automated and delays in the process to obtain a building permit.

## DISCUSSION:

Avolve Software Inc. is the developer of OAS and ProjectDox software. The programs use a cloud-based Software as a Service (SaaS) platform. Avolve's OAS system enables design professionals and architects to upload electronic plans for review. Once uploaded, city staff can track, review and process plan check reviews electronically via ProjectDox, which helps manage the building permit application and review process. In addition to reviewing plans, ProjectDox also serves as a digital repository for approved plans to be maintained and used by city staff in the future.

The ability to apply online will allow applicants to submit an application anytime it is convenient for them, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The software will perform automated tasks and give the applicant immediate feedback about missing information on forms, address validation, contractor license validation, the ability to pay fees and more. The intelligent application forms can be modified by city staff at any point to adapt to current construction demands and trends. This will greatly reduce traffic at the counter, simplify file sharing to a single easy method and cut down staff time for data entry. The software complements the Permit Center's one-stop-shop concept to create a virtual multi-departmental permitting center.

The Avolve software is proven to function seamlessly with our current permitting software, Trakit. The software will guide the applicant through each step of their participation in the review process with videos, in addition to written instruction. ProjectDox allows for better tracking across review cycles, reviewer mark-up tools, prioritizing task assignments, automated solutions for versioning complexities and process insight analytics. Digital signatures can be maintained in the system during virtual meetings where plans are redlined for approval.

The Finance Department has determined the purchase does not require competitive bidding, as Avolve Software is the only vendor the service is available from and there are no local vendors. OAS and ProjectDox are proprietary software. Avolve offered viable pricing and provides similar systems and services to other municipalities such as City of San Jose (CA), City of Santa Monica (CA), City of Santa Clarita (CA), City of Portland (OR), and City of Frisco (TX). Avolve has 15 years of implementation experience and over 150 cities and counties in the US and Canada use ProjectDox.

The first year of the service is \$204,909 and includes creation of the production environment, a test environment, intelligent application forms and training for staff and community users. A future

option exists to extend the contract two additional years, in one-year increments, at a locked-in rate of \$101,160 for each year.

The Professional Services Agreement was reviewed by the Legal Department and edits were recommended to Avolve Software, Inc. The consultant's Legal Department accepted some edits with additional changes proposed. The City's Legal Department will finalize the agreement with Avolve Software, Inc. during the staff report coordination process.

#### 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).

#### OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES:

The use of OAS and ProjectDox for the Permit Center's electronic plan review software supports the City Council's goal of Operational Efficiencies, which will enhance permit center operations and facilitate community development in the City.

#### DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Services Agreement with Avolve Software, Inc. is a collaborative effort among the CDD (Permit Services, Code Enforcement and Current Planning), the Fire Prevention Bureau, Public Works Development Engineering Division, Information Technology Division, City Attorney's Office, and Finance Department.

#### FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The cost incurred for this contract is covered through the Capital Improvement Program 9093, Permit Systems & Technology Upgrade, which is funded by a 5% technology fee when applying for and obtaining a permit. No funds are taken from the General Fund or any other accounts.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution  
Avolve Services Agreement  
Consultant Quote and Statement of Work (May 25, 2021)