

## STAFF REPORT

For the meeting of September 14, 2023

**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Brad Gross, Executive Director  
**Subject:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) San Francisco Water Quality Improvement Fund Grant Project Manager Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Results and Award

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

After Board discussion and public comment, staff recommends this Board accept and approve the Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Coastal Policy Solutions (CPS).

Motion: Award the project and approve Resolution 23-12 and authorize Executive Director to execute a PSA with Coastal Policy Solutions in an amount of \$1,129,000, with a potential increase of \$266,900, with a notification to this Board, but not to exceed \$1,395,900.

### SUMMARY:

On April 13, 2023, this Board was advised of the EPA Grant award of \$2,782,056.00 for multi-year Eelgrass Restoration and Adaptive Management Plan (RAMP) and associated eelgrass habitat protection and restoration activities through the conclusion of the grant, and the need to select a Project Manager (PM) and subconsultants via a competitive bidding process. Working with contracted county staff, a RFQ was developed with the Agency's standard PSA and the following scope of work:

1. **Preparation of an Eelgrass Restoration and Adaptive Management Plan (RAMP)**  
 Timeline: December 31, 2023. For adoption by the Agency Board of Directors  
The plan shall include, at the minimum:
  - a. An adaptive management plan for eelgrass restoration over a ten-year period, with provisions for monitoring success and adapting restoration efforts based on results and changed conditions.
  - b. A Phase I plan for restoration of at least 15 acres of eelgrass, within the jurisdiction of the Agency, by no later than June 30, 2027.
  - c. Consistency with the Richardson Bay Special Area Plan and the Bay Conservation & Development Commission's San Francisco Bay Plan.
  - d. The best available science on eelgrass habitat restoration and the California Eelgrass Management Plan (CEMP) and its periodic updates, as well as technical expertise of the SF State Estuary and Audubon California.
  - e. Prioritization criteria and best practices for removal of non-vessel marine debris from the bay floor.

- f. Potential for reuse of dredged materials in restoration efforts.
- g. Detailed timelines for plant cultivation and in-water restoration activities.
- h. Stakeholder workshops, alongside an ongoing outreach and education plan with emphasis on historically disadvantaged communities in partnership with Audubon California and others.
- i. Provisions for collaborative partnership with San Francisco State University, Estuary and Ocean Science Center (“SF State EOS”), who will have a lead role on researched restoration methods, location, planting/seeding, and monitoring and studying results, as well as its job training for two early career BIPOC/first generation college graduates in restoration ecology.
- j. Provisions for collaborative partnership with Audubon California on its lead role on community engagement, including its Community Conservation Fellow Program, as well as partnership on eelgrass bed mapping and its waterbird monitoring.
- k. Remote sensing as part of a monitoring program.
- l. Provisions for eelgrass management adaptations due to outcomes from restoration efforts, new information and changed conditions.

The consultant will be responsible for ensuring the RAMP approval and implementation complies with any CEQA/Environmental Review requirements. The Agency is anticipating the RAMP and its implementation will be Categorically Exempt.

2. **Adaptive management and implementation of the RAMP and associated eelgrass habitat protection and restoration activities through the conclusion of the EPA grant**

Timeline: Estimated conclusion date of June 30, 2027

Management and implementation shall include, at the minimum:

- a. Completion of Phase I restoration of 15 acres by June 30, 2027.
- b. Remote sensing and monitoring.
- c. Eelgrass management adaptations as a result of outcomes from restoration efforts, new information, and changed conditions.
- d. Removal of marine debris from bay floor, as provided for in the RAMP, which qualifies for reimbursement from grant funds acquired by the Agency for removal and disposal.
- e. Partnership support to the SF State EOS on having a lead role in determining and implementing researched restoration methods, location, planting/seeding, and monitoring and studying results, as well as its job training for two early career BIPOC/first generation college graduates in restoration ecology.
- f. Outreach and education, including through partnership with Audubon California on having a lead role in community engagement, with emphasis on underserved members of the community, and partnership support of Audubon California’s Community Conservation Fellow Program.
- g. Meetings and other communication with the Agency and key stakeholders
- h. Technical advice to Agency on eelgrass habitat issues.
- i. Quarterly and annual reports, and final report, on project activities and outcomes.

This RFQ was completed and released to the public on July 10, 2023, via direct email to 6 potential bidders, was posted on the Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) official website, at [www.rbra.ca.gov](http://www.rbra.ca.gov), posted on RBRA Facebook and Twitter accounts and press notices were submitted to RBRA interested agencies.

Proposals were due via email by 4:00pm August 11, 2023. There was one response submitted by CPS in partnership with Merkel & Associates (MA) and subsequently deemed complete. The proposal identified CPS as the prime consultant, with MA as a subconsultant for the project.

CPS and MA met the compliance requirements of the RFQ. After the initial staff review, the CPS response was forwarded to an independent three-person review committee. All committee members rated CPS's response 1 on a scale of 1-10 with 1 the highest rating.

A fee schedule was submitted by CPS on time in accordance with the schedule provided in the RFQ. The proposed fees are consistent with those identified in the approved grant application.

The last phase of the RFQ process, an in-person interview, was completed on August 31, 2023, by a final independent reviewer. The recap of the interview, among other statements, reported about the principal from CPS, "She spoke intelligently, and it is clear she knows this subject well."

In summary, the CPS response proves they are qualified to perform the work described.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The project management and subconsultants for this project is estimated at an amount of \$1,129,000, with a potential increase of \$266,900, with a notification to this Board, but not to exceed \$1,395,900. The potential increase would be a reallocation of funds from the San Francisco State University Estuary and Ocean Science Center Project funding to the Consultant Services budget for eelgrass restoration work.

There will be no fiscal impacts to RBRA from this PSA. All portions of the project will be fully reimbursed by the EPA to RBRA as part of project management activities conducted by the PM. RBRA budget processes for this project are managed by County of Marin Budget Office in fund 40RBRAEPA.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Coastal Policy Solutions RFQ response and fee schedule
- Attachment 2: Professional Services Agreement between RBRA and CPS
- Attachment 3: Review committee score sheets and Interview Recap email
- Attachment 4: DRAFT Resolution 23-12