

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Federal Advocacy

MEETING DATE: May 21, 2009

AGENDA ITEM: 6C

STAFF CONTACT: Jim Kemp, Gregg Hart

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize staff to release a Request for Proposals for federal advocacy services.

SUMMARY

In April, the SBCAG Board authorized the Executive Director to sign a short term contract with a federal lobbyist to assist in preparing advocacy materials and setting meetings for SBCAG Board members traveling to Washington DC in support of SBCAG's federal transportation earmark requests. The Board also directed staff to prepare a Request For Proposals (RFP) for Federal Advocacy Services for the 2009/10 fiscal year. The RFP for these services is included as Attachment A in the staff report.

DISCUSSION:

Many of the local agencies in Santa Barbara County, including the County of Santa Barbara, the City of Santa Maria and the City of Santa Barbara employ federal lobbyists to assist in advocating with our congressional representatives and Executive Branch officials on behalf of local projects. Around the State of California, many Regional Planning Agencies of similar size to SBCAG including the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, the Tulare County Association of Governments, the Fresno County Association of Governments and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County also utilize federal lobbyists to advocate on behalf of the agencies' interests in Washington.

Given the significant federal transportation legislation and funding opportunities under consideration by Congress this year including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU which will expire September 30, 2009, and the need to leverage \$500 million in state or federal funding to deliver Measure A projects and programs, it is a particularly important year for SBCAG to be well represented in Washington, DC.

Last month the board discussed the need to engage our congressional representatives immediately to take advantage of opportunities to leverage funding through the earmarking process as well as the ARRA discretionary programs. The executive director was given authorization to secure the services of a federal lobbyist to assist in this effort. A short-term contract was executed with Walters and Associates to assist in developing a legislative strategy for securing earmark funding and ARRA stimulus funding for high priority SBCAG transportation projects. Walters and Associates arranged meetings on May 13-15 in Washington DC with

members of Congress and/or their staff, committee staff and USDOT staff members. The meetings were attended by Chair Alvarez, board member Hicks and executive director Kemp (Vice-chair Carbajal was forced to cancel the trip to DC due to the Jesusita Fire). The SBCAG delegation met with Congressmember Capps, staff for Senators Feinstein and Boxer and Congressmember Gallegly, USDOT staff from the Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Railroad Administration. A summary of the meetings is being prepared and will be distributed at the board meeting.

The board also expressed interest in retaining the services of a lobbyist on a longer term basis to represent SBCAG. As directed by the board, staff has prepared a Request for Proposals for Federal Advocacy/Lobbying Services to initiate contracting with a federal government advocacy firm for FY 2009/10. The scope of services described in the RFP are as follows:

1. Advise SBCAG of the political and financial feasibility of the legislative agenda and develop appropriate strategies in consultation with SBCAG staff.
2. Advise on presentation (organization, formatting, etc.) of legislative materials and funding grant applications.
3. Assist in drafting materials and correspondence to support advocacy for legislative agenda.
4. Research funding requests and provide SBCAG with appropriations bill, department, and account information for the legislative agenda.
5. Monitor pending legislation pertaining to legislative agenda and keep SBCAG staff apprised of legislation.
6. Represent SBCAG in Washington, DC in terms of communicating SBCAG's legislative platform to the appropriate elected representatives, key Committee members, federal agencies and other actors as needed.
7. Participate in the crafting of itineraries and facilitating meetings with Washington, DC delegation for SBCAG Board members and other staff as needed. It is anticipated that least two Board members will travel to Washington, DC in FY 2009/10.
8. Travel to Santa Barbara County as needed, with a minimum of one visit a year. Participation via teleconference with SBCAG staff at least quarterly.

In order to have a lobbying firm in place to effectively advocate on behalf of SBCAG's interests as soon as possible during the SAFETEA LU reauthorization process, it is necessary to move quickly. Staff is recommending a very aggressive timetable to complete the RFP process and select a qualified contractor as described in the following:

May 21st	SBCAG Board of Directors Authorizes Release of RFP
May 28 th	Last Day for Proposers to Submit Questions on RFP to SBCAG
June 1 st	All Addenda to RFP Posted on SBCAG Website by 5 p.m.
June 10 th	Deadline of 4 p.m. for Firms to Submit Proposals to SBCAG
June 15th	Interview Shortlisted Firms
June 18 th	SBCAG Board Action on Consultant Recommendation
June 25th	Contract Signed with Consultant
July 1st	Contract Start Date

Staff believes that it would be helpful to have board member involvement in the consultant selection process and is recommending that the consultant proposals be evaluated by an ad hoc selection committee consisting of SBCAG board members Alvarez and Hicks. These members would make a recommendation to the full board following a review of all proposals and interviews with the most promising firms. Alternatively, the SBCAG Executive Committee (members Alvarez, Carbajal, Lavagnino and Armendariz), could serve as the selection committee, however, this is a standing committee and is subject to the Brown Act requirements for noticing of meetings, etc.

The committee will rank the firms and recommend to the SBCAG Board of Directors that contract negotiations be initiated with the highest-ranking firm. If negotiations with the highest-ranking firm are unsuccessful, negotiations will be conducted with the next highest-ranking firm. This process will be repeated until an acceptable contract is negotiated.

While the contract amount for the federal lobbyist is unknown at this time, staff estimates that the contract is likely to cost \$30,000-\$50,000 annually. The draft 2009/10 budget proposes an appropriation of \$30,000.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - RFP for Federal Advocacy and Lobbying Services



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR FEDERAL ADVOCACY/LOBBYING SERVICES

DATE ISSUED: May 28, 2009

PROPOSALS DUE: Wednesday, June 10, 2009 at 4PM PST

CONTACT PERSON: Gregg Hart, Public Information Coordinator

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E-MAIL: ghart@sbcag.org

REGULAR MAIL \ EXPRESS MAIL \ HAND DELIVERY Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
260 N. San Antonio Road, Suite B
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) is seeking proposals from firms with experience in advocacy/lobbying at the federal level to assist SBCAG in pursuing federal funding for transportation projects in Santa Barbara County and representing SBCAG's interests in federal public policy and legislative matters. The SBCAG Board seeks outside expertise in developing appropriate strategies and advocating for SBCAG priorities in Washington, DC. Primarily, SBCAG seeks assistance in identifying appropriate funding for several key projects as well as ensuring the continued funding for programs related to transportation. It also requests assistance in monitoring legislation that would impact SBCAG, especially as it pertains to its critical issues. The selected firm will work with the SBCAG Board and the Executive Director. The firm selected will also help craft itinerary for future lobbying trips by Board members.

The initial contract with the selected firm will be for a period of one year, July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010, with the possibility of additional one year extensions, subject to Board approval.

2.0 SBCAG BACKGROUND

SBCAG is the regional planning agency for Santa Barbara County's eight incorporated cities and the county government. While regional transportation planning is its primary role, SBCAG is also responsible for airport land use planning, intercity and interregional transit operations, census data, and regional housing needs. SBCAG's board of directors adopts plans, allocates transportation funds, establishes policies, and develops programs to address these regional issues, which are used by the agency, Caltrans, local governments and transit operators in Santa Barbara County. Citizens, special interest groups, and other agencies are involved in the planning and approval process by participating in SBCAG's committees as well as attending workshops and public meetings.

SBCAG is governed by a thirteen-member board of directors consisting of the five county supervisors and one council member or mayor from the eight cities in the county: Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Goleta, Buellton, Solvang, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Santa Maria. In addition to the voting members, the board includes the Caltrans District 5 Director as an ex-officio representative.

The agency has 20 full time staff including an Executive Director, a public information officer, a Deputy Director of Planning with a staff of four, a Deputy Director of Programming and Project Delivery with a staff of three, a Transportation Demand Management manager with a staff of three, a Business Manager with a staff of one, and three administrative assistants.

3.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES

The scope of work is a general guide to the work SBCAG expects to be performed by the federal lobbyist, and is not a complete listing of all services that may be required or desired. (Specific performance measures will be developed once contract is negotiated). Proposers may add to or revise the proposed scope of services.

1. Advise SBCAG of the political and financial feasibility of the legislative agenda and develop appropriate strategies in consultation with SBCAG staff.
2. Advise on presentation (organization, formatting, etc.) of legislative materials.
3. Assist in drafting materials and correspondence to support advocacy for legislative agenda.
4. Research funding requests and provide SBCAG with appropriations bill, department, and account information for the legislative agenda.
5. Monitor pending legislation pertaining to legislative agenda and keep SBCAG staff apprised of legislation.
6. Represent the County in Washington, DC in terms of communicating SBCAG's legislative platform to the appropriate elected representatives, key Committee members, federal agencies and other actors as needed.
7. Participate in the crafting of itineraries and facilitating meetings with Washington, DC delegation for SBCAG Board members and other staff as needed. It is anticipated that least two Board members will travel to Washington, DC in FY 2009/10.
8. Travel to Santa Barbara County as needed, with a minimum of one visit a year. Participation via teleconference with SBCAG staff at least quarterly.

4.0 PROJECT BUDGET

SBCAG has not established a budget for the contract but anticipates an annual cost for the services provided of \$30,000 to \$50,000. Proposers are expected to clearly define the cost of their proposed services and may propose additional optional services.

5.0 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Responses to this RFP should be concise, well organized and demonstrate the proposer's qualifications and experience applicable to the services requested. The proposal is limited to 10 one-sided pages, inclusive of resumes, graphics, forms, pictures, photographs, dividers, front and back covers and cover letters.. Type size and margins for text pages should be in keeping with accepted standards and formats for desktop publishing and processing, and should result in no more than five hundred (500) words per page.

5.1 Contents

Proposals submitted in response to the RFP must be in the following order and must include, as a minimum:

5.1.1. Cover Letter

Include a letter describing the proposer's interest in providing the scope of services. The person authorized to negotiate a contract with SBCAG shall sign the cover letter. Include the name, phone number, fax number and e-mail address of a contact person for the proposal process.

5.1.2 Executive Summary

Include a brief overview of the entire proposal describing the most important elements of the proposal. Include the firm's primary areas(s) of expertise; and, firms' success rate or return on investment for clients and/or general accomplishments, the firm's ability to enter into a contract with SBCAG and commence work by July 1, 2009 and the proposed fee for service: Provide fee for one year of contract. Indicate monthly retainer and estimated travel expenses. If fee is "all inclusive", please indicate if the fee includes travel to Santa Barbara and for how many visits.

5.1.3 Proposing Firm Background

Provide the legal name and address of the company as well as the address of the office where the project manager will reside and where a majority of the work will be performed. Include the number of years the proposer's company has been in business, the legal form of the company and any other relevant information concerning whether the proposer may or may not be financially capable of completing this project.

5.1.4 Experience

Describe the proposer's experience in representing governmental entities, California-based entities and/or coastal communities as well as representing clients that have other similarities to the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments.

Describe the firm's experience and success/major accomplishments in advocating/lobbying on behalf of local agencies for federal transportation funding opportunities and related issues

Describe the qualifications of the lead person(s) that will serve as the primary contact for SBCAG. Qualifications should illustrate general expertise in advocacy/lobbying as well as specific experience in working with clients and issues similar to those of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments.

List three (3) successfully completed projects of a similar nature. For each completed project, provide the name of the company or agency and project manager the proposer performed work for, including telephone numbers, types of work performed, and dollar value of the contracts.

5.1.5 Proposed Method to Accomplish the Work

A. Describe the proposer's management approach to the scope of services in Section 3.0 and how the proposer will plan for and accommodate each into the project effort. Provide a proposed project schedule, an outline of tasks, and list the deliverables per task. Discuss how and what lines of communication will be implemented to maintain the project schedule. Identify the role of each member of the consultant's team. Discuss how input from SBCAG staff, SBCAG board, committees and local agencies will be incorporated into the proposer's work plan. Identify non-consultant resources, such as local agency or SBCAG staff, needed to complete the assignment.

B. Proposers may include a critique of the scope of work outlined in Section 3.0 and recommend changes that would improve SBCAG's federal government lobbying efforts.

5.1.6 Knowledge and Understanding of Local Environment

Describe the proposer's experience with the local environment and proposed method for interfacing with SBCAG staff. The environment includes, but is not limited to: cities, the county, transit operators, Caltrans, Vandenberg Air Force Base, and Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.

5.1.7 Knowledge and Understanding of the State and Federal Environment

Describe proposer's experience with and knowledge of relevant State and Federal laws and funding programs.

5.1.8 Consultant Team Organization and Key Personnel

Describe the proposed organization of the consultant team, including identification and responsibilities of key personnel. Provide an organization chart showing the relationship among team members involved in the project. Provide resumes of key personnel proposed for the project and three (3) references for each from work on similar projects, including the client's name and phone number. Indicate the workload of the project manager and key team members and their capacity to complete the scope of services. Provide estimates of the time available for the project manager and each key team member to devote to this project.

5.1.9 Addenda to this Request for Proposal

The proposer shall confirm in its proposal the receipt of all addenda issued by SBCAG to this RFP.

5.1.10 Statement of Impartiality

The nature of this project requires an impartial unbiased approach on the part of the selected consultant team. Proposals shall include a statement declaring that the consultants are not currently, and will not during the performance of these services, participate in any other similar work involving a third party with interests in conflict or likely to be in conflict with SBCAG's interests.

5.1.11 Cost Estimate

A. Provide the estimate of the total direct and indirect costs to provide all services and complete all tasks and deliverables identified in the proposer's scope of work per Section 3.0 of this RFP. Provide a detailed cost breakdown identifying: 1) the number of staff hours and hourly rates for each professional and administrative staff person who will be committed to this project, including fringe and overhead costs; 2) an estimate of all other direct costs, such as travel costs, and materials and reproduction costs; and 3) an estimate of subconsultant services if needed.

B. Provide an estimate of how any modifications to the scope of work or schedule recommended by proposer in response to Section 3.0 of the RFP would affect the cost estimate.

6.0 SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposers must submit their written proposal to Gregg Hart, Public Information Coordinator. Written proposals submitted via e-mail or in hardcopy (paper) format or on CD are acceptable. Proposers choosing to submit a proposal in hardcopy format or on CD must submit five (5) hardcopies or CDs to SBCAG at the address on the cover of this RFP.

Submittals must be received by June 10, 2009 at 4 p.m. This is a firm deadline and no proposals will be accepted after this time.

Failure to comply with the requirements of the RFP may result in disqualification. SBCAG is not responsible for finding, correcting or seeking clarification regarding ambiguities or errors in proposals. SBCAG is not responsible for proposals submitted via e-mail that are late or undelivered due to file size constraints at SBCAG or sender's server.

If a proposal is found to contain ambiguities or errors, it may receive a lower score during the evaluation process. Errors and ambiguities in proposals, including proposal cost estimates, will be interpreted in favor of SBCAG.

7.0 SUBMITTAL QUESTIONS & ADDENDA

All questions on the RFP should be received no later than May 28, at 5 p.m. either by e-mail at ghart@sbcag.org or by phone at 805-961-8905.

Responses that require that an addendum be issued to the RFP will be posted on the SBCAG website no later than June 1, 2009 at 5 p.m. It is the responsibility of proposers to check the SBCAG website to determine if addenda have been issued. Any addenda to the RFP will become part of the RFP.

SBCAG reserves the right to revise the RFP prior to the date that proposals are due. Revisions to the RFP will be in the form of an addendum and will be posted on the SBCAG website no later than June 2, 2009 at 5 p.m.

8.0 PROPOSED EVALUATION CRITERIA

Written proposals will be evaluated based upon the criteria and point system below. SBCAG reserves the right to add the proposer's interview scores into the evaluation criteria or to select proposers based solely upon their written proposal or oral interview.

A. Qualifications and Experience (40 points)

Points will be awarded on the experience of the proposers in performing similar work with public, government, private, not-for-profit and other agencies. Consultant team staff qualifications includes a combination of experience, education, background and references in transportation related federal government advocacy and lobby services.

B. Proposed Methodology (30 Points)

Proposals will be evaluated based on the proposers' technical and management approach to the project. While proposers are required to address the scope of services as described in this RFP, proposers may receive higher scores in this category if they demonstrate innovative, advanced and/or well thought out methodologies that SBCAG may not have specifically identified in this RFP.

C. Best Value (15 Points)

Proposals that provide the best value and make the most efficient and effective use of the project budget will receive the highest score in this category.

D. Understanding of SBCAG (15 Points)

Proposers must demonstrate an understanding of SBCAG, and the key groups and agencies that could assist the agency in developing a successful federal lobbying and advocacy strategy.

9.0 EVALUATION AND CONTRACTING PROCESS

Consultant proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee consisting of SBCAG board members. The most promising proposers will be invited to interview with the committee to explain their relevant experience, project understanding, and their approach and methodology to completing the project.

The committee will rank the firms and recommend to the SBCAG Board of Directors that contract negotiations be initiated with the highest-ranking firm. If

negotiations with the highest-ranking firm are unsuccessful, negotiations will be conducted with the next highest-ranking firm. This process will be repeated until an acceptable contract is negotiated.

10.0 CONSULTANT SELECTION SCHEDULE

The consultant selection process will be conducted on the following schedule:

May 21st	SBCAG Board of Directors Authorizes Release of RFP
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11.0 SOLICITATION DISCLAIMER

All proposals become the property of SBCAG upon submission. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal and participating in an interview is at the sole expense of the proposer. SBCAG has the right to reject any or all of the proposals received as a result of this solicitation. Solicitation of proposals in no way obligates SBCAG to contract with any firm or individual. The decision to award a contract is at the discretion of the SBCAG Board of Directors.