

## STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** State Lobbyist

**MEETING DATE:** February 18, 2010

**AGENDA ITEM:** 6E

**STAFF CONTACT:** Jim Kemp, Gregg Hart

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Authorize release of Request for Proposals for State Legislative Advocacy services.

**SUMMARY**

In December, the SBCAG Board directed staff to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for State Legislative Advocacy Services for the 2010/11 fiscal year. Contracting with a legislative advocacy firm in Sacramento is particularly important given the need for large amounts of state matching funds to deliver the 101 High Occupancy Vehicle Lane project and the other named projects in the Measure A Investment Plan. The RFP for these services is included as Attachment A in the staff report.

**DISCUSSION:**

Many regional agencies in the State of California of similar size to SBCAG utilize state lobbyists to advocate on behalf of the agencies' interests in Sacramento. Given the need to leverage \$500 million in state or federal funding to deliver Measure A projects and programs, it is particularly important for SBCAG to be well represented in Sacramento.

SBCAG began contracting with a federal lobbyist last year to help represent SBCAG's interests in Washington, D.C., keep SBCAG informed on federal legislation and to assist in obtaining discretionary federal funding for high priority projects. The board adopted a 2010 federal legislative platform last month.

As directed by the board, staff has prepared a Request for Proposals for State Advocacy/Lobbying Services to initiate contracting with a state government advocacy firm for FY 2010/11. The scope of services described in the RFP are as follows:

1. Advise SBCAG of the political and financial feasibility of the SBCAG 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.

Member Agencies

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

4. Advise SBCAG of state funding opportunities to help deliver SBCAG's high priority transportation projects and assist SBCAG securing these funds.
5. Monitor and provide analysis of pending legislation and state budget proposals pertaining to legislative agenda and keep SBCAG apprised of legislation.
6. Represent SBCAG in Sacramento in terms of communicating SBCAG's legislative platform to the appropriate elected representatives, key Committee members, California Transportation Commission and other state agencies as needed.
7. Participate in the crafting of itineraries and facilitating meetings with Sacramento legislators, commissioners and staff for SBCAG Board members as needed.
8. Travel to Santa Barbara County as needed, with a minimum of one visit a year to report to the SBCAG board. Participation via teleconference with SBCAG staff at least quarterly.
9. Assist SBCAG in obtaining maximum funding through the transportation infrastructure bonds and other like programs, particularly for the US 101 HOV Lane project (Phases 1 thru 4), and the other named regional projects contained in the Measure A Investment Plan.
10. Work with Caltrans, the California Transportation Commission, the Legislature, the Governor's Office, and other appropriate groups to advance revenues to the US 101 HOV project.
11. Obtain support in Sacramento for receiving a "fair share" of STIP interregional funds, or CMIA cost savings, as a match to \$275 M in Measure A (our half cent sales tax, renewed in 2008) and regional STIP funds we have allocated for the 10 mile, Highway 101 HOV Lane project in the south part of our county, leading to/from Ventura County.
12. Obtain support from Sacramento for improving passenger rail service between Santa Barbara\Goleta and Ventura to serve as an alternative to driving in the 101 corridor. SBCAG is seeking a fair share of funding for capital and operations improvements from the Interregional Rail program, and support for stimulus funding, to match our planned Measure A funded investments on rail.
13. Assist in obtaining STIP interregional funds or cost savings from SHOPP stimulus projects to construct the Highway 101 Santa Maria River Bridge Widening project, in north Santa Barbara County. The project is ready for construction and was the last project dropped off the recommendation list for Prop 1B CMIA funding in early 2007.

Staff believes that it is especially important to select a lobbyist who has expertise and a demonstrated track record in the area of state transportation funding since SBCAG will need to have an aggressive and sustained effort to obtain discretionary funding from the state to deliver the projects that were promised to the voters in the Measure A Investment Plan.

Following is the recommended timetable to complete the RFP process and select a qualified contractor:

Feb 18 <sup>th</sup>	SBCAG Board of Directors Authorizes Release of RFP
Feb 25 <sup>th</sup>	Release of RFP
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Last Day for Proposers to Submit Questions on RFP to SBCAG
March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	All Addenda to RFP Posted on SBCAG Website by 5 p.m.
April 1st	Deadline of 4 p.m. for Firms to Submit Proposals to SBCAG
April 8 <sup>th</sup>	Interviews of Shortlisted Firms
April 15 <sup>th</sup>	SBCAG Board Action on Consultant Recommendation
May 31st	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 and candidate firms interviewed on April 8, 2010 by the SBCAG Executive Committee (members Alvarez, Armendariz, Carbajal, Farr and Schneider).

Staff will evaluate the proposals submitted and identify a short list of the most qualified firms to be interviewed. The committee will interview the shortlisted firms, 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 state lobbyist is unknown at this time, staff estimates that the contract is likely to cost approximately \$50,000 annually for the scope of services outlined above. This is approximately the same cost as SBCAG's federal lobbyist contract. The draft 2010/11 budget will include appropriations from Measure A and SBCAG's general fund to pay for the contract services.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - RFP for State Advocacy and Lobbying Services



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR STATE ADVOCACY/LOBBYING SERVICES**

DATE ISSUED: March 1, 2010

PROPOSALS DUE: Thursday, April 1, 2010 at 4PM PST

CONTACT PERSON: Gregg Hart, Public Information Coordinator

PHONE: (805) 961-8905

E-MAIL: [ghart@sbcag.org](mailto: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 California state level to assist SBCAG in pursuing state funding for transportation projects in Santa Barbara County and representing SBCAG's interests in state public policy and legislative matters. The SBCAG Board seeks outside expertise in developing appropriate strategies and advocating for SBCAG priorities in Sacramento. 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 state lobbying trips by Board members.

The initial contract with the selected firm will be for a period of one year, July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011, 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 state 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 SBCAG 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. Advise SBCAG of state funding opportunities to help deliver SBCAG's high priority transportation projects and assist SBCAG securing these funds.
5. Monitor and provide analysis of pending legislation and state budget proposals pertaining to legislative agenda and keep SBCAG apprised of legislation.
6. Represent SBCAG in Sacramento in terms of communicating SBCAG's legislative platform to the appropriate elected representatives, key Committee members, California Transportation Commission and other state agencies as needed.
7. Participate in the crafting of itineraries and facilitating meetings with Sacramento legislators, commissioners and staff for SBCAG Board members as needed.
8. Travel to Santa Barbara County as needed, with a minimum of one visit a year to report to the SBCAG board. Participation via teleconference with SBCAG staff at least quarterly.
9. Assist SBCAG in obtaining maximum funding through the transportation infrastructure bonds and other like programs, particularly for the US 101 HOV Lane project (Phases 1 thru 4), and the other named regional projects contained in the Measure A Investment Plan.

10. Work with Caltrans, the California Transportation Commission, the Legislature, the Governor's Office, and other appropriate groups to advance revenues to the US 101 HOV project.
11. Obtain support in Sacramento for receiving a "fair share" of STIP interregional funds, or CMIA cost savings, as a match to \$275 M in Measure A (our half cent sales tax, renewed in 2008) and regional STIP funds we have allocated for the 10 mile, Highway 101 HOV Lane project in the south part of our county, leading to\from Ventura County.
12. Obtain support from Sacramento for improving passenger rail service between Santa Barbara\Goleta and Ventura to serve as an alternative to driving in the 101 corridor. SBCAG is seeking a fair share of funding for capital and operations improvements from the Interregional Rail program, and support for stimulus funding, to match our planned Measure A funded investments on rail.
13. Assist in obtaining STIP interregional funds or cost savings from SHOPP stimulus projects to construct the Highway 101 Santa Maria River Bridge Widening project, in north Santa Barbara County. The project is ready for construction and was the last project dropped off the recommendation list for Prop 1B CMIA funding in early 2007. Advise SBCAG of the political and financial feasibility of the SBCAG legislative agenda and develop appropriate strategies in consultation with SBCAG staff.

#### **4.0 PROJECT BUDGET**

SBCAG has not established a budget for the contract but anticipates an annual cost for the services provided of approximately \$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, 2010 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 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 state transportation funding opportunities and related issue

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 state 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 April 1, 2010 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 March 15, 2010, at 5 p.m. either by e-mail at [ghart@sbcag.org](mailto: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 March 19, 2010 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 March 23, 2010 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:

Feb 18th	SBCAG Board of Directors Authorizes Release of RFP
Feb 25th	Release of RFP
March 15th	Last Day for Proposers to Submit Questions on RFP to SBCAG
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May 31st	Contract Signed with Consultant
July 1st	Contract Start Date

## **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.