



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0850, **Version:** 1

Planning and Building Department, Economic Development Division, recommending the Board consider the following:

- 1) In accordance with Chapter 3.13, Section 3.13.030(C) of County Ordinance Code, Contracting Out, find that due to the limited timeframes, temporary or occasional nature, or schedule for the project or scope of work, the ongoing aggregate of work to be performed is not sufficient to warrant addition of permanent staff;
- 2) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign competitively bid Agreement 8774 with NEO Fiber, Inc. doing business as NEO Connect, for the provision of as-needed broadband design and engineering services to provide final design and engineering services in Garden Valley (District 4) and Indian Creek (District 4), with an amount of \$500,000, and a term of one (1) year effective upon execution; and
- 3) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute any further documents determined necessary related to Agreement 8774, including amendments which do not increase the amount or term of the Agreement, contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management.

FUNDING: Local Agency Technical Assistance Grant.

DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

In July 2022, the Planning and Building Department, Economic Development Division (Department), was notified of a grant opportunity under the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) LATA grant program, which provides grant funding for tribes and local agencies related to the development of broadband network deployment projects that benefit unserved or underserved Californians. Subsequently, the Department began working to evaluate the grant program, identify potential project areas, and complete and submit the grant application.

On October 6, 2022, the Department was officially notified that the County's LATA grant application was approved, and on October 25, 2022 (Legistar File 22-1895), the Board accepted the grant from the CPUC in the amount of \$500,000.

Due to the limited timeframe for expense of the grant funds and the schedule for the project and scope of work, the Department has the need to utilize consulting services with technical expertise in providing as-needed broadband design and engineering services as the ongoing aggregate of work to be performed is not sufficient to warrant addition of permanent staff.

In September 2023, the Chief Administrative Office, Procurement and Contracts Division, on behalf of the Department, issued Request for Qualifications (RFQ) 24-925-007 for as-needed broadband design and engineering services. In December 2023, RFQ 24-925-007 was awarded to AECOM Technical Services, Inc., Magellan Advisors, Manager & Associates, Inc., NEO Fiber, Inc., doing business as NEO Connect (NEO Connect), and Vantage Point Solutions. Subsequently, the Department began the contracting process.

Under proposed Agreement 8774, NEO Connect will provide final design and engineering services

for Fiber to the Premise (FTTP) Gigabit Passive Optical network (GPON) capable of 1000/1000 megabits per second (Mbps) to all homes and businesses within the areas of Garden Valley and Indian Creek (Project Areas). The Department has identified these Project Areas as unserved or underserved, currently lacking consistent broadband capacity of 100/20 Mbps. Upon completion of the services, the identified Project Areas will be ready to move on to the construction phase (separate project and funding source). On August 22, 2023, Legistar File 23-1486, the Board approved the project areas.

NEO Connect will bring their knowledge and expertise and provide the Department with as-needed design and engineering services to develop Sixty Percent (60%) Design and Engineering Plans for the identified Project Areas. The 60% Design meets the criteria of the grant requirements. As part of this deliverable, NEO Connect will:

- ☐ Confirm backbone design
- ☐ Finalize trench cross section(s)
- ☐ Verify no additional right-of-way is required
- ☐ Identify connections to facilities
- ☐ Confirm network redundancy in current design
- ☐ Determine fiber counts and conduit sizes and counts
- ☐ Identify splice locations
- ☐ Identify handhole and/or manhole locations
- ☐ Develop Sixty Percent (60%) Design and Engineering Plans to include:
 - Fiber route drawings
 - Trench cross sections(s)
 - County right-of-way restoration requirements (in paved and unpaved areas)
 - Network core sites
 - Network hub sites
 - Other primary network sites at County facilities or other anchor institutions
 - Material and equipment specifications
 - Space requirements
 - Equipment huts
 - Environmental requirements
 - Installation drawings and diagrams

The County's Strategic Plan prioritizes identifying funding opportunities and securing funding to begin the design and construction of enhanced broadband technology to improve connectivity, efficiency, and resilience. Approval of Agreement 8774 directly aligns with this focus area of the Strategic Plan as it will bring broadband connectivity to the identified Project Areas.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board may choose not to approve the proposed Agreement. This would result in the County forfeiting LATA grant funds in the amount of \$500,000 as the Department must complete the project within a 24-month timeline. Additionally, the Department would need to locate other sources of funding to provide FTTP design and engineering services to the areas of Garden Valley and Indian Creek.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

On October 25, 2022 (Legistar File 22-1895), the Board accepted the grant from the CPUC in the amount of \$500,000.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

County Counsel and Risk Management have approved the proposed Agreement.

CAO RECOMMENDATION

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no change to Net County Cost associated with this item. Costs associated with the Project are grant funded with no local match commitment. Funding for the Project has been included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 and 2024-25 Budgets

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

- 1) The Clerk of the Board will obtain the Chair's signature on two (2) original copies of Agreement 8774; and
- 2) The Clerk of the Board will forward one (1) fully-executed original Agreement 8774 to the Chief Administrative Office, Procurement and Contracts Division, for further processing;

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Public Infrastructure: Secure funding to begin the design and construction of enhanced broadband technology to improve connectivity, efficiency, and resilience.

CONTACT

Kyle Zimbelman, Deputy Director of Economic Development and Administration
Planning and Building Department