



Memorandum

AGENDA ITEM 7

DATE: June 17, 2021

TO: Transportation Authority Board

FROM: Maria Lombardo - Chief Deputy Director

SUBJECT: 07/13/2021 Board Meeting: Award a 15-Month Professional Services Contract, with an Option to Extend for an Additional 6 Months, to EMC Research, Inc. in an Amount Not to Exceed \$100,000 for Voter Opinion Survey and Public Messaging Services for Transportation Sales Tax Reauthorization

RECOMMENDATION Information Action

- Award a 15-month professional services contract, with an option to extend for an additional 6 months, to EMC Research, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 for voter opinion survey and public messaging services for Transportation Sales Tax Reauthorization
- Authorize the Executive Director to negotiate contract payment terms and non-material terms and conditions

SUMMARY

We are seeking consultant support to provide voter opinion survey and public messaging services for the transportation sales tax reauthorization and New Expenditure Plan development effort. We issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the requested services on April 22, 2021. By the proposal submission deadline on May 24, we received nine proposals. A selection panel comprised of staff from the Transportation Authority evaluated the written proposals and subsequently, invited two teams to be interviewed on June 10. Based on this competitive process, the selection panel recommended award of a voter opinion survey and public messaging services contract to the highest-ranking firm, EMC Research, Inc. which has partnered with KMM Strategies for public messaging services.

- Fund Allocation
- Fund Programming
- Policy/Legislation
- Plan/Study
- Capital Project Oversight/Delivery
- Budget/Finance
- Contract/Agreement
- Other: _____



BACKGROUND

In November 2003, 75% of San Francisco voters approved Prop K, extending the existing half-cent local sales tax for transportation and approving a new 30-year Expenditure Plan identifying projects and programs to be funded by the sales tax. The Prop K Expenditure Plan prioritizes \$2.35 billion (in 2003 dollars) and leverages another \$9 billion in federal, state, and other local funds for transportation improvements over the 30-year life of the plan. The Expenditure Plan was developed as part of the first San Francisco countywide transportation plan in 2003 and provided funding to help implement the long-range transportation vision described therein.

As we approach year 20 of the Prop K program, the Board has directed staff to develop a new Expenditure Plan targeting a potential June or November 2022 ballot measure. We are considering adoption of a New Expenditure Plan now for multiple reasons: we have already delivered most of the major projects in the 2003 Expenditure Plan, we need to create a new plan to reflect new priorities that aren't currently eligible for funding, and we wish to replenish funds for programmatic categories that are running out of funds. This year we are also working on our update to the countywide plan, called the San Francisco Transportation Plan or SFTP, which will provide a funding strategy that incorporates the reauthorization of the Prop K half-cent sales tax in addition to potential new revenues measures to help close a substantial funding gap and get us closer to our long-range transportation vision. For these reasons and to position San Francisco to capture potential new infrastructure funds, we are preparing a draft expenditure plan and approval process for potential consideration and placement on the June or November 2022 ballot.

We are seeking voter opinion survey and public messaging services to focus specifically on the sales tax reauthorization and new expenditure plan development effort. We will closely coordinate with ongoing ConnectSF and SFTP efforts and with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) on public messaging around potential revenue sources for transportation in San Francisco. The schedule of tasks will be driven by the current plan to place the reauthorization measure on the June 2022 ballot, though that timeline may be revised to November 2022 depending on the Board's direction. Additional background on the half-cent sales tax reauthorization effort, can be found at <https://www.sfcta.org/ExpenditurePlan>. Our proposed schedule and process are shown in graphic form in Attachment 1.

Sales Tax Reauthorization Update. This voter opinion survey and public messaging work will complement our other on-going outreach efforts for reauthorization of the sales tax and development of a new expenditure plan. With the Board's approval of the Expenditure Plan Advisory Committee (EPAC) structure on June 8, we are working to finalize the invitation list with Chair Mandelman based on input from all Board members. The EPAC will provide an opportunity for public review and discussion among representatives of communities, advocacy organizations, business and civic interests, and other stakeholders, in order to provide feedback and advice on the make-up of the New Expenditure Plan.

We are currently conducting one-on-one interviews with community-based organizations, focusing first on Equity Priority Communities, to provide information about the sales tax and



reauthorization effort, learn about needs of the community and how we can advance racial equity in the next Expenditure Plan, and hear how best to engage community members moving forward in the process. Over the next few months, we will offer presentations to organizations throughout San Francisco, inviting input from their members/constituency while meeting people where they are. We will also host evening and weekend town halls (virtual, telephone or in-person as appropriate and safe) and partner with community-based organizations to host in-language focus groups in Spanish, Chinese, and Russian.

Throughout the process we will evaluate the effectiveness of our outreach at engaging Equity Priority Communities and adjust accordingly. We aim to reach people throughout the city, especially those that have been historically left out of public processes, including people of color, low-income households, mono-lingual communities, and people with disabilities.

We also continue to work with project sponsors to understand their funding needs for the next thirty years, including their priority projects and programs as well as what other revenue sources are available for transportation investments. This work, which is being done in tandem with ConnectSF and San Francisco Transportation Plan work, along with input from the public, will inform development of the New Expenditure Plan.

DISCUSSION

The goal of requested surveying and public messaging work to be performed by the selected consultant is to help determine the electoral feasibility of adopting a new transportation expenditure plan and extending the existing half-cent transportation sales tax to provide long-term funding for transportation improvements in San Francisco and to assist with public messaging to inform development of the New Expenditure Plan and education about the effort. The selected consultant will develop and administer multi-modal (i.e., land line, cell phone and on-line), multi-lingual survey of likely San Francisco voters. Analysis of responses should be provided for likely November 2022 San Francisco voters as well as the subset of voters likely to vote in the June 2022 election. In order to accommodate either the June or November election, we recommend that the contract be for a 15-month term, with an option to extend for an additional 6 months. The optional task, which is not part of the current budget for the contract, allows for a potential second round of survey and/or other research that would build upon the work and survey results obtained for the first round. New areas of exploration for the second round may include re-testing of local revenue measures against other measures anticipated to be on the same ballot and/or more refined testing meant to inform development and refinement of a draft Expenditure Plan(s) through telephone (and/or email and/or text) surveys and/or focus groups.

The consultant scope of services from the RFP is included in Attachment 2.

Procurement Process. We issued an RFP for consultant services to support reauthorization of San Francisco's transportation sales tax on April 22, 2021. We took steps to encourage participation from small and disadvantaged business enterprises, including advertising in six local newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Small Business



Exchange, Nichi Bei, El Reportero, and World Journal. We also distributed the RFP to certified small, disadvantaged, and local businesses; Bay Area and cultural chambers of commerce; and small business councils.

By the due date of May 24, 2021, we received nine proposals in response to the RFP. A selection panel comprised of Transportation Authority staff evaluated the proposals based on qualifications and other criteria identified in the RFP. The panel interviewed two firms on June 10, 2021. Based on the competitive process defined in the RFP and interviews, the panel recommends that the Board award the contract to the highest-ranked firm: EMC Research, Inc. The EMC Research, Inc. team distinguished itself based on its strong methodological approach to polling, its extensive experience with transportation revenue measure polling in San Francisco and the Bay Area, and its integrated team approach, with EMC Research, Inc. leading the overall work and surveying effort, and KMM Strategies providing messaging and communications support throughout the process. EMC Research, Inc. has recently completed similar work for the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, the Transportation Agency of Monterey County, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Authority, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

We established a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)/Local Business Enterprise (LBE)/Small Business Enterprise (SBE) goal of 12% for this contract. Proposals from both interviewed teams exceeded the contract goal. The EMC Research, Inc. team includes a combined 27% DBE/LBE/SBE participation from multiple subconsultants, including InterEthnica, Inc., a San Francisco-based and women-owned firm; and Customer Research International, Inc., an Asian Pacific-owned firm. EMC Research, Inc. is headquartered in Oakland, California.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The contract will be funded from Prop K sales tax funds. The first year's activity is included in the Transportation Authority's proposed Fiscal Year 2021/22 Budget. Sufficient funds will be included in future budgets to cover the remaining cost of the contract.

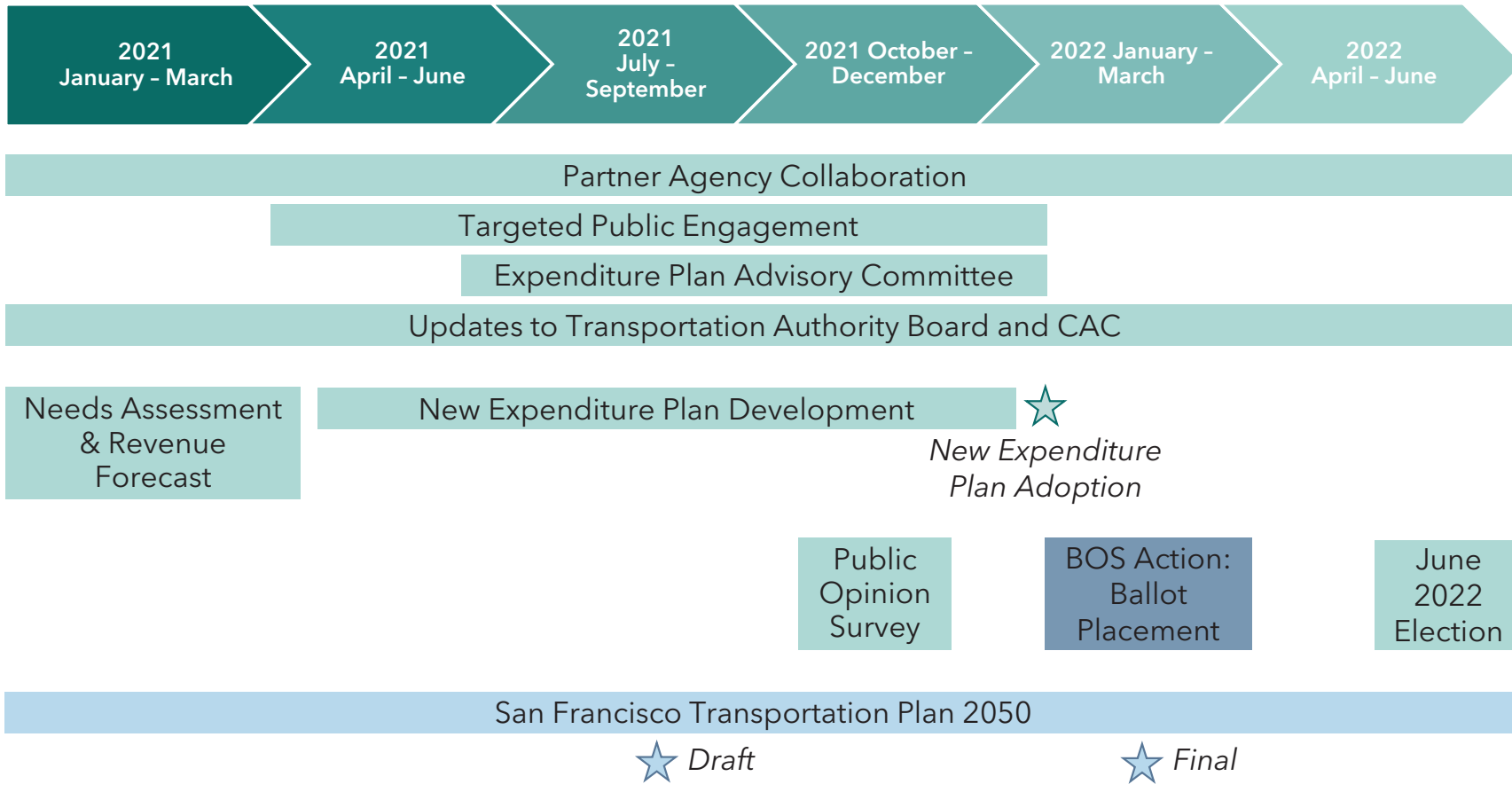
CAC POSITION

The Citizens Advisory Committee will consider this item at its June 23, 2021 meeting.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- Attachment 1 - Proposed Process and Schedule
- Attachment 2 - Scope of Services

Proposed Process and Schedule



Attachment 2

Scope of Services

The Transportation Authority seeks consultant services to support reauthorization of San Francisco's transportation sales tax. The goal of requested surveying work to be performed by the selected consultant is to help determine the electoral feasibility of adopting a New Transportation Expenditure Plan and extend the existing half-cent transportation sales tax to provide long-term funding for transportation improvements in San Francisco. The selected consultant will develop and administer a telephone and/or email and/or text survey of likely San Francisco voters. Analysis of responses should be provided for likely June 2022 San Francisco voters as well as the subset of voters likely to vote in the November 2022 election. The survey methodology should address the following:

- 1) Testing reauthorization of the existing local transportation sales tax (of 0.5%), and potentially looking at this in combination with other local transportation measures that may be targeting the same ballot, e.g. the SFMTA discussed the possibility of a General Obligation Bond and/or a Community Facilities District ballot measure(s) as potential candidates for a June 2022 ballot.
- 2) Significant preference differences among likely voters for different types of projects such as improving public transit (both local and regional), repairing local streets, reducing traffic congestion, improving pedestrian and cyclist safety, maintaining and repairing MUNI facilities, and increasing and protecting transit services (MUNI operations and paratransit).
- 3) Significant preference differences among likely voters between different geographic areas within San Francisco and for different ethnic and income groups.
- 4) Significant preference differences among likely voters between those who identify themselves primarily as drivers versus users of transit or other sustainable transportation modes.

The intent is to achieve a margin of error between 3-4% for tabulations aggregated to the citywide level, and for four to five groupings of supervisorial districts for both the likely June 2022 and November 2022 voters. Further, for comparisons of responses from drivers versus transit users, and other subcategories, it is understood that the margin of error will vary and will generally be larger than 3-4%.

Finally, the proposed schedule for this effort will assume we are targeting the June 2022 election, which will require a Board of Supervisors action to place a measure on the ballot no later than early March 2022.

The work to be performed under contract includes the following tasks: 1) Project Management, 2) Draft Voter Survey, 3) Conduct Survey and Compile Results, 4) Public Messaging, and 5) Optional Tasks. The tasks are detailed below:

TASK 1 - Project Management

Provide project management and administration to deliver the approved scope of services within the approved schedule and budget.

Deliverables:

1. *Project reporting and invoices by task*
2. *Weekly progress meetings*

TASK 2 - Draft Voter Survey

Based upon input from Transportation Authority staff, prepare the draft survey instrument for the voter opinion poll and document the sample survey methodologies and process proposed to conduct the survey and to analyze the survey results, i.e., detailed polling work plan including recommendations on polling instrument(s), sample size and margins of error, etc. Present proposal to staff and revise the instrument and polling methodologies based upon comments. If recommended by the selected consultant and subject to Transportation Authority approval, conduct a pretest of the survey instrument to determine any needed revisions to assure the maximum possible response rate and valid responses. Considering the results of the pretest and additional comments from Transportation Authority staff, revise the survey instrument and the sample survey methodology.

Deliverables:

1. *Draft survey instruments and methodologies, and discussion with Transportation Authority staff*
2. *Review of pretest results with Transportation Authority staff, if authorized*
3. *Final survey instruments and methodologies*

TASK 3 - Conduct Survey and Compile Results

Conduct the survey as described in the final draft survey instrument and methodologies. Analyze survey results and incorporate the following items in the draft survey report: a tabulation of survey results, cross tabulations as appropriate, key findings, detailed findings, conclusions, recommendations, and other relevant information. Prepare stand-alone executive summary. Discuss the draft survey report with Transportation Authority staff and prepare final survey report and the stand-alone executive summary, incorporating Transportation Authority staff comments.

Deliverables:

1. *Updates on survey progress and relevant issues*
2. *Preliminary summary of results and discussion of results with staff (draft presentation slide format is acceptable)*
3. *Draft and final survey report, including executive summary*
4. *Draft and final presentation slide deck, and presentation to Transportation Authority Board, meeting date TBD*

TASK 4 - Public Messaging

Assist the Transportation Authority in developing messaging to educate and inform residents citywide about a proposed ballot measure.

1. *Deliverable(s): Draft and final messaging*

OPTIONAL TASK 5 - Conduct Additional Round of Surveys

Subject to Transportation Authority approval, conduct a second round of surveys to further test the sales tax. The second round of survey work would be expected to build upon the work and survey results obtained for the first round. New areas of exploration for the second round may include re-

testing of local revenue measures against other state, regional or local revenue measures anticipated to be on the same ballot and/or more refined testing meant to inform development and refinement of a draft Expenditure Plan(s) through telephone (and/or email and/or text) surveys and/or focus groups. It is expected that the level of effort for the second round of surveys would be less than the first and that the selected consultant would build upon deliverables produced for the first round.

Deliverables:

1. *To be determined if and when optional tasks are authorized by the Transportation Authority.*