



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 2/11/2025

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Permit Sonoma

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Tennis Wick (707) 565-1925, Nathan Quarles (707) 565-1146

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Building Plan Review Services Contract Amendment

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize the Director of Permit Sonoma to execute an amendment to the agreement with Interwest Consulting Group, Inc., for building plan review services, increasing the contract by \$175,000 for a new not to exceed amount of \$875,000 with no change to the term ending March 5, 2026.

**Executive Summary:**

On March 5, 2024, Permit Sonoma requested and received Board authority to execute building plan review services contracts with two vendors: Coastland Civil Engineering LLP and Interwest Consulting Group. Each contract was for an amount of \$175,000 per year for a two-year term, and with an option to extend the term for two additional years. These contracts support one of the initiatives recommended in Permit Sonoma's Management Review which is to establish contracts with third-party plan reviewers to provide supplemental plan review assistance to reduce plan review processing times to 30 business days or less. This initiative is included in the management review implementation schedule which was accepted by the Board on March 7, 2023.

Since the execution of the contracts, Permit Sonoma staff have found that Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. has been more responsive and efficient in delivering building plan check service needs and thus reached annual contract maximum at the end of September 2024. Permit Sonoma is therefore seeking the ability to increase contract capacity to continue to direct building plan reviews to Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. and is requesting Board authority to amend the contract to increase the contract amount by \$175,000 for a new not to exceed amount of \$525,000 for the duration of the contract term ending March 5, 2026.

During the FY 2023-24 budget hearings the Board allocated a total of \$1,250,000 over two years for grading, septic and building plan review services contracts. The building plan check consulting services are funded through a combination of fees for services and \$350,000 in general fund from the Board's \$1.25 million allocation.

**Discussion:**

In January 2023, a formal management review of Permit Sonoma was completed by Berry Dunn McNeil &

Parker LLC. The objective of the analysis was to review Permit Sonoma's organizational structure, performing comparison and benchmarking research, and analyzing permit data. The report findings and recommendations were presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 31, 2023, and included 15 initiatives for consideration by the Board and the department. The Board directed Permit Sonoma to develop a high-level implementation schedule to address the recommendations from the management review.

On March 7, 2023, Permit Sonoma presented the implementation schedule of the recommended 15 initiatives to the Board of Supervisors. Initiative 6 prescribed the establishment of contracts with third-party plan reviewers to assist with completing technical reviews of applications, assist with clearing backlog efforts, and provide as-needed supplement plan review services. During FY 2023-24 budget hearings the Board of Supervisors allocated a total of \$1,250,000 over two years to fund grading, septic and building plan review services contracts.

Permit Sonoma staff initiated the process to execute the Board's direction and issued a Request for Proposals for building plan check services on December 21, 2023. Five vendors submitted proposals and were evaluated based on the following criteria: 1) the demonstrated ability to perform the services describe in the scope of work; 2) experience, qualifications and expertise relative to the scope of work; 3) quality of work as verified by references; 4) costs relative to the scope of services; 5) a demonstrated history of providing similar services to comparable entities; 6) a willingness to accept the County's contract terms; 7) a preference for local firms and 8) a preference for firms providing a living wage. Based on the evaluation, Coastland Civil Engineering LLP and Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. were selected as the two vendors.

Each vendor is tasked with performing architectural, structural, plumbing, mechanical and electrical plan review for buildings and structures for compliance with applicable Federal and State laws, building and safety codes, county ordinances, and acceptable engineering practices. Permit Sonoma elected to hire two vendors for redundancy and as approved by the Board on March 5, 2024, entered into contracts with Coastland Civil Engineering LLP and Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. for two-year terms.

Since entering into contracts with the two vendors, Permit Sonoma has found that Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. is more responsive, has more staff available to address service requests, consulting staff have a broader range of expertise, and have demonstrated a faster processing time, further allowing the department to meet review time of 30 days or less, as requested/recommended by the management review. As a result, the department has utilized Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. services considerably more than the other vendor and thus reached the \$175,000 annual contract maximum in late September 2024. By comparison, the contract with Coastland incurred \$70,000 in expenses in the same time frame.

Staff recommends amending the Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. contract at the one-year anniversary to increase the annual maximum from \$175,000 to \$350,000 for the remaining year of the term.

Despite the advantages of Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. services, Permit Sonoma is still interested in having two vendors available should the need arise to assist with peak workloads, high demand or unforeseen events and will maintain the current contract with Coastland Civil Engineering LLP for the duration of the term. The department will manage and closely monitor usage of both contracts to ensure that expenditures stay within the allocated funding amounts.

**Strategic Plan:**

This item directly supports the County’s Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

**Pillar:** Organizational Excellence

**Goal:** Goal 1: Strengthen operational effectiveness, fiscal reliability, and accountability.

**Objective:** Objective 4: Streamline routine administrative procedures and workflows and delegate more signature authority to department heads in order to re-direct work force resources to more strategic priorities.

**Racial Equity:**

**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

March 5, 2024 - [Board authorization to execute Building Plan Review Services contracts <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6556901&GUID=B02AA92C-B70F-4ACF-B39B-B79B075BA260>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6556901&GUID=B02AA92C-B70F-4ACF-B39B-B79B075BA260)

June 13, 2023 - Permit Sonoma’s FY 2023-24 Budget Hearing Action

March 7, 2023 - Permit Sonoma Management Review Implementation Schedule

January 31, 2023 - Permit Sonoma Management Review

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY24-25 Adopted</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>	<b>FY26-27</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$116,667	\$233,333	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$116,667</b>	<b>\$233,333</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF	\$58,33	\$166,666	
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$58,333	\$166,666	
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$116,667</b>	<b>\$233,333</b>	

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

There are sufficient budget appropriations in the current year budget to cover contract costs through the end of the fiscal year. Appropriations for FY 2025-26 will be requested through the annual budget process. The contract will be financed through a combination of the General Fund allocated by the Board during FY 2023-24 budget hearings for this purpose and permit fees.

Options to extend each contract for two additional one-year periods will be evaluated based on contract funding remaining on the original contract term.

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**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Amended Contract with Interwest Consulting Group, Inc.

Attachment 2: 2024 Executed Contract with Interwest Consulting Group, Inc.

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**