



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0771, **Version:** 3

To: Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County
Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator
Staff Name and Phone Number: Anna Yip (707)565-2132
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

County of Sonoma Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Recommended Action:

Authorize the County Administrator to execute a professional services agreement with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. in the amount of \$142,330 for the term from August 9, 2022, to April 30, 2023, to create a greenhouse gas inventory for County of Sonoma operations.

Executive Summary:

The County of Sonoma has set ambitious climate-related goals and objectives through its 5-Year Strategic Plan. In order to achieve these emissions-focused targets, it is imperative that the County understand what its baseline municipal greenhouse gas emissions profile currently looks like. Thus, the Climate Action and Resiliency Division within the County Administrator's Office released a request for proposals to have an internal, municipal greenhouse gas inventory completed for all County operations. After rigorous review of a competitive pool of proposals, the proposal received from Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. rose to the top. Using Strategic Plan Year 1 funds your Board approved in February 2022 for this effort, staff recommends your Board execute a professional services agreement with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. for \$142,330 to complete this scope of work (Attachment A: Cascadia Contract and Scope of Work).

Discussion:

Background

On September 17, 2019, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors formally joined cities, counties, and countries across the world in declaring a climate emergency, establishing the climate crisis as a top priority. Since then, the County of Sonoma (the County) has reiterated its dedication to climate action and resiliency through many actions, such as creating a new Climate Action and Resiliency Division within the County Administrator's Office, dedicating \$10 million to near- and mid-term climate projects, and committing one of its five main pillars of the County's 5-year Strategic Plan to Climate Action and Resiliency.

Through its 5-year Strategic Plan, which was approved by your Board of Supervisors on March 2, 2021, the County has identified specific goals and objectives to help direct its works towards climate action and resiliency through its Climate Action and Resiliency (CAR) Pillar. Within those goals and objectives lie targets around decreasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through decarbonization and sequestration, making County facilities carbon free, and ultimately achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. While the County has already begun making progress towards these overarching targets, full achievement of many of the CAR goals and

objectives hinges on acquiring a baseline understanding of the County's current municipal emissions profile.

Some carbon accounting has been done in the past for the County's internal operations, however that data is now outdated and was collected in methodologically inconsistent ways. Additionally, the existing data does not cover the full span of the County's operations, offering only a snapshot of the County's emissions profile. As such, staff has solicited proposals for the completion of a comprehensive and rigorous municipal greenhouse gas inventory accounting for emissions from all County operations. Your Board allocated \$500,000 from Year 1 Strategic Plan funds to conduct both an internal municipal GHG emissions inventory and a study evaluating the potential of carbon sequestration. This professional services agreement (PSA) is to conduct just the GHG inventory. A separate PSA will be executed for the carbon sequestration study at a later date.

Request for Proposals

Staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on August 27, 2021, for the completion of an internal municipal GHG inventory. The RFP closed on June 6, 2022, with six proposals received. Proposers were required to demonstrate their ability to complete a municipal GHG inventory as described in the RFP that is rigorous, detailed, and is editable for periodic in-house updates in the years that follow. Proposers were also asked to provide information on prior successful contract achievements with similar clients or similar deliverables. The full evaluation criteria used to rank all proposals can be found beginning on page 13 of the County of Sonoma GHG Inventory RFP. The evaluation committee included staff from the Climate Action and Resiliency Division, the Energy and Sustainability Division, Sonoma Water, and the Regional Climate Protection Authority:

The evaluation committee was looking for proposers to demonstrate their ability to develop a comprehensive and rigorous inventory of GHG emissions associated with all of the County's facilities and operations. The municipal GHG inventory produced from this solicitation will meet the following objectives:

- Identify, describe, and categorize emissions sources in a manner that facilitates action planning and implementation;
- Identify and quantify greenhouse gas and non-greenhouse gas air pollution emissions, as well as underlying activity factors on which the emissions are based (such as energy use, water use, and vehicle miles traveled);
- Incorporate the location of emissions and the extent of the County's control over specific emissions sources, and where co-emissions may have a localized impact;
- Embody sufficient specificity and detail to reflect emissions changes that result from actions taken over time;
- Organize and present emissions information in a way that can be readily displayed in a visual format and communicated to decision-makers and the public;
- Incorporate metrics and key indicators for emissions categories and functional activity groupings that can be tracked over time to represent directional progress between inventory updates;
- Employ protocols and techniques that support independent third-party verification.
- Prepare a business-as-usual forecast for 2030 to inform prioritization of future actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc.

After thorough deliberations, Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. (Cascadia) rose to the top of a competitive pool of proposals. Since its founding in 1993, Cascadia has worked with public, corporate, nonprofit, and Tribal

clients to advance projects that benefit their communities and the environment. Cascadia's expertise includes strategic planning, analysis, and management of projects focused on climate change mitigation and resilience, energy efficiency and renewable energy, recycling and materials management, and resource conservation. Their proposed team for this project includes nationally recognized leaders in climate planning with decades of collective experience in emissions inventories, GHG target setting, and mitigation strategy development. Their staff have had impressive recent experience working directly with the International Council for local Environmental Initiatives - Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) on inventory development, leading a team that pioneered a new method of calculating consumption-based emissions, and working with some of Washington's and California's most populous counties to update and improve their government operations and communitywide inventories. Cascadia's proposal provided a detailed approach to producing an inventory as described in the RFP that was both impressive and realistic, as supported by prior related successes and positive reference checks.

Under the terms of the proposed contract, Cascadia will prepare the inventory using the ***Local Government Operations Protocol for the Quantification and Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories (LGOP)***. The LGOP is based on the *Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard*, tailored to a local government context with additional, specific guidance drawn from the California Air Resources Board, California Climate Action Registry, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, International Organization for Standardization, The Climate Registry, and U.S. EPA. The inventory will use 2019 as the base year to avoid complicating factors associated with the COVID pandemic. It will also include two additional inventory years, trend analysis and a business-as-usual forecast to 2030 with a wedge analysis to support future County planning and emission reduction activities. Cascadia will develop a custom Microsoft Excel database to perform inventory calculations. Building the database in Excel allows for seamless integration with Microsoft 365 applications, including Power BI data visualization software using Key Performance Indicators and metrics. This is a robust data model that (1) can be queried easily, (2) is cost effective, (3) offers full transparency into data and calculations, and (4) can be updated and maintained by the County in the future. It embodies sufficient rigor to support future third-party verification if desired. The County will have full ownership and editing access to both the Excel database and Power BI model/dashboard.

Staff recommends your Board authorize the County Administrator to execute the professional services agreement with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. for \$142,330 with a term from August 9, 2022, to April 30, 2023, to create a greenhouse gas inventory for County of Sonoma operations. Attachment A: Cascadia Contract and Scope of Work

Strategic Plan:

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

Pillar: Climate Action and Resiliency

Goal: Goal 3: Make all County facilities carbon free, zero waste and resilient

Objective: Objective 1: Design or retrofit County facilities to be carbon neutral, zero waste and incorporate resilient construction techniques and materials.

This project aims to provide the County with critical data needed to achieve most of its climate-related goals and objectives. While some carbon accounting has been done in the past for the County of

Sonoma's internal operations, it is sporadic, methodologically inconsistently, and mostly outdated. Within the ambitious Climate Action and Resiliency Pillar, many goals and objectives hinge on acquiring this baseline knowledge. With funds secured through the Strategic Plan Fund in February 2022, this services agreement will produce this baseline knowledge that is critical to achieving any emissions-related goals and objectives, especially ones that aim for carbon neutrality. More specifically, the work done in the services agreement will directly help implement the following Goals and Objectives within the Climate Action and Resiliency Pillar:

- Goal 3, Objectives 1, 2 and 3,
- Goal 4, Objective 1, and
- Goal 5, Objectives 1 and 2

Prior Board Actions:

March 2, 2021 - Approved 5-Year Strategic Plan

February 1, 2022 - Allocated funds from the Strategic Plan Fund for this project

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Adopted	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$142,330	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$142,330	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF		\$142,330	
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources		\$142,330	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Your Board allocated \$500,000 from Year 1 Strategic Plan funding to conduct both an internal municipal GHG emissions inventory and a study evaluating the potential of carbon sequestration. This professional services agreement (PSA) is to conduct just the GHG inventory. A separate PSA will be executed for the carbon sequestration study at a later date.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment A: Cascadia Contract and Scope of Work

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None