

## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING 9/13/23

### Board of Supervisors Agenda Carry-over Item 8 (15657)

The Coastal Property Owners Association of Santa Cruz County had supported the Coastal Commission Grant of \$780,000 in Local Coastal Program (LCP) Local Assistance grant funds (Grant Number LCP-23-05) to the County of Santa Cruz, and the County's release of a Request for Proposal (RFP #23P3-011) to the various Coastal Consultants to conduct a coastal Vulnerability Assessment and Recommend changes to the Local Coastal Plan, due to the County's limited time and resources. **However, CPOA-SC is opposed to the County's recommended contract award to Integral Consulting.** In our opinion, the County's RFP process was flawed, did not reach some of the major Coastal Consulting firms, did not provide for any public input, and resulted in a recommendation to approve a contract to the one and only applicant, Integral Consulting. **We therefore urge the County Board of Supervisors to direct staff to re-issue Request for Proposal (RFP) #23P3-011 *Santa Cruz County Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment and Local Coastal Program Amendment*, and ensure that the RFP reaches the appropriate contact people at each of the major Coastal Consulting firms and extend the deadline to respond to the RFP by 30 days.**

#### **CPOA's major concerns are as follows:**

- The RFP process did not allow for public input, even though the grant and potential outcome could affect billions of dollars of coastal real estate in Santa Cruz County.
- CPOA had repeatedly asked the County for a list of respondents to the RFP and the request was declined by County staff.
- The County only received one proposal from Integral Consulting, due to distribution problems and lack of identified contacts among the major Coastal Consulting firms. The contract bid of \$692,608 is very close to the County's budget \$700,000.
- Once the County staff had recommended Integral Consulting, a firm with potential ties to the California Coastal Commission, had asked the County for a list of Consultants and Sub-contractors so that we could vet the qualifications and potential biases of the consulting team. Again the County staff declined our request.
- The Integral Consulting proposal does not include licensed Coastal Engineers.
- CPOA has contacted one of major Consulting firms, DuDek Consulting who is working on the Coastal Studies in Santa Barbara, Oxnard, Ventura, and Encinitas with similar coastal topography to Santa Cruz County, and Dudek has indicated that they are very interested in submitting a proposal in response to the County's RFP.
- Some of the major consulting firms including Dudek Consulting, Woods Consulting, Ascent Consulting, and Rincon Consulting have all indicated they never received the County's RFP.
- The County needs to do a better job of identifying the appropriate contacts in each of the 8 major Coastal Consulting firms and to follow-up to ensure they received the County's RFP.

- The County's selection process for the recommended Contractor needs to provide for public input given the potential impact on our coastline and resources.

### **Background:**

On September 6, 2023 the Coastal Commission awarded \$780,000 in Local Coastal Program (LCP) Local Assistance grant funds to the County of Santa Cruz to complete a series of technical studies on sea level rise (SLR) hazards, economic impacts, and adaptation pathways that will culminate in an LCP amendment on SLR. The project would build adaptation approaches at both the countywide and neighborhood scale, including phased, trigger-based adaptation pathways, as described in the County's grant application. The County of Santa Cruz intends to use the grant funds to complete a sea level rise vulnerability assessment for the County coastline and revise the LCP General Plan and County Code Amendments related to coastal hazards. On October 17, 2023 the Board authorized CDI to release the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a sea level rise vulnerability assessment and associated activities. The Board also directed CDI to return with a contract for consideration and approval. On the same day, the General Services Department released RFP #23P3-011.

At the County Board of Supervisor's Meeting on January 30, 2024, the County staff had recommended **Integral Consulting** be awarded a grant in the amount of \$692,608 to complete a vulnerability assessment of the Santa Cruz County Coastline and to recommend changes to the Local Coastal Plan (Land Use & Implementation Plan) to address coastal erosion and loss of public beaches due to sea level rise for the next 50 – 100 years. Only one firm, Integrated Consulting responded to the County's Request for Proposal (RFP), issued on October 17, 2023 which was funded by a grant from the California Coastal Commission. CPOA has concerns that Integral Consulting, and in our opinion, may have close ties to the CCC and would not be able to complete the project, study, and recommended LCP changes without undue influence of the CCC.

On February 13th, the Board of Supervisors will consider sending the RFP out again and extending the deadline, in hopes of getting other proposals.

**CPOA urges the County Board of Supervisors to direct staff to re-issue Request for Proposal (RFP) #23P3-011 *Santa Cruz County Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment and Local Coastal Program Amendment*, and ensure that the RFP reaches the appropriate contact people at each of the major Coastal Consulting firms and extend the deadline to respond to the RFP by 30 days.**

Sincerely,



Steve Forer

President, CPOA-SC