



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 10b

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting May 9, 2023

DATE: May 9, 2023

TO: Executive Director Stephen P. Metruck

FROM: Bookda Gheisar, Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

SUBJECT: Competitive Exemption for the Consultant Community Attributes Incorporated (CAI) to Perform Services Related to the Port's Equity Index

Total contract request: \$750,000

ACTION REQUESTED

(1) Commission determination that a competitive process is not appropriate or cost-effective and exemption of the contract from a competitive process consistent with RCW 53.19.020; and (2) authorization for the Executive Director to execute a new project-specific 5-year period contract with Community Attributes Incorporated (CAI) to perform the services of hosting, maintaining, updating, and other services related to the Equity Index in an amount not-to-exceed \$750,000, as part of the Port's Century Agenda goals to be resource as a national port industry leader on equity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019, the Port of Seattle established the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI). OEDI's mission is to build capacity across the organization to address institutional oppression, to transform Port policies, practices, and processes, and to position the Port of Seattle as a leader on equity within the port industry. The Equity Index has been instrumental to the launch and success of the South King County Community Impact Fund by helping us target Port investments in communities with disparate quality of life conditions or outcomes. The Equity Index aggregates publicly available data through methodology developed by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity; the map then displays a ranking on the level of equity communities across King County. In addition to helping users understand equity via data, the Equity Index has been used by Port departments to inform programs and strategies related to Port operations and initiatives, such as the Sound Insulation program.

JUSTIFICATION

Throughout 2022 and into early 2023, OEDI has been working to identify a likely successor that we may solicit bids from to continue services required for the Equity Index. Through engagement with peers via GARE as well as industry experts, we have learned the pool of potential vendors is incredibly small due to the technical knowledge, experience in providing specialized GIS services to government entities, and an understanding of local communities. For this reason, OEDI would

Meeting Date: May 9, 2023

like to pursue continued services to host, maintain, and update the Equity Index with CAI due to their expertise and knowledge to deliver the technical services and their understanding of the local communities included on the existing map.

Competing this contract at this time is neither cost effective nor appropriate as we do not anticipate the RFP process to generate enough bids from qualified and experienced firms; the work to stand up a competitive process would consume significant staff time and unlikely to provide meaningful options to consider for Equity Index service needs in 2024 and beyond.

BACKGROUND

In 2020, the Port of Seattle entered a contract with the consulting firm Community Attributes Inc for \$76,125 for Equity Mapping Platform Development in accordance with RCW 53.19.020 (4). This initial competitive contract included development of the Equity Index GIS map, hosting of the map by CAI, and technical assistance related to the Equity Index map. In December 2021, this contract was amended to add \$96,185 to increase the scope of work via Equity Map enhancements, adding South King County Fund features, data and indicator updates, and Maritime added 2022 Economic Analysis for Port Cruise Business. We are now asking to execute a new contract and to work with this firm again from 2024-2029 for CAI to continue hosting the Equity Index map and conduct relevant updates and maintenance of the map.

It is notable that since the creation of the Equity Index, the Port has received local and national recognition for this groundbreaking, cutting-edge tool. In October 2022, the Port received the American Association of Port Authorities' (AAPA) Lighthouse Award in Information Technology for the creation and use of the Port's Equity Index. The index has been an integral part of Port projects and community effort, including for programs like the South King County Fund and Sound Insulation Program.

Scope of Work Details

- (1) Help develop a framework for the use of index in Environmental Justice work.
- (2) With support of Port staff and community stakeholders identify additional indicators and Update to populate the online mapping application.
- (3) Develop Equity index Map Enhancements features which makes the map more user friendly and easier to apply for the Port staff and community stakeholders.
- (4) Conduct User and Administrator Training with Port staff and OEDI team.
- (5) Annual Updates, Hosting, and Maintenance of the index.

Meeting Date: May 9, 2023

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1 – Compete this work through a new solicitation process.

Pros:

- (1) Provide firms with the opportunity to compete for and do business with the Port of Seattle.

Cons:

- (1) Community Attributes is the only firm we are aware of doing this work, and as a result, the RFP may not generate enough bids from qualified and experienced firms; the work to stand up a competitive process would consume significant staff time and unlikely to provide meaningful options.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 2 – Increase the current contract value.

Pros:

- (1) Increase the contract by \$27K via commission notification, allowing the platform to be supported for 3 additional years.

Cons:

- (1) Does not allow for needed updates to the platform. Does not solve for a long-term strategy.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 3 - Do a competitive exemption and execute a new contract.

Pros: Community Attributes has the expertise and knowledge to deliver the technical services and their understanding of the local communities included on the existing map, should continue hosting, maintaining, and updating the Equity Index.

Cons:

This is the recommended alternative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Annual Budget Status and Source of Funds

The source of funds is the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion expense budget. The budget for the last two years has been about \$100,000 per year. Our annual spending on this contract will vary based on the approval of the budget each year.

Meeting Date: May 9, 2023

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

(1) Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

September 14, 2021- The Commission was briefed on the Equity Index, which was created with the initial intent to equitably guide funding decisions for the South King County Fund, serving as a component of the criteria for applications. Beyond the South King County Fund, the Index will be used to visualize variations in exposure to pollution, access to economic opportunity, and health outcomes to direct resources towards the areas of greatest need.