



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 8g

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting May 14, 2024

DATE: April 22, 2024

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Kathy Roeder, Executive Chief of Staff
Pearse Edwards, Senior Director External Relations

SUBJECT: Competitive Exemption for Studio Matthews to Provide Port-Owned Waterfront Signage

Amount of this request: \$96,640

Total estimated project cost: \$96,640

ACTION REQUESTED

A request that (1) the Commission determines a competitive process is not appropriate or cost-effective and exempts a contract from a competitive process consistent with RCW 53.19.020(5); and (2) executes an agreement with Studio Matthews for development of Port-owned waterfront signage, in the amount of \$96,640. The cost includes interpretation content development, design, documentation, and project administration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We have a unique opportunity this year to update existing Port-owned signs, which are badly out of date and in some places no longer accurate, in alignment with the once-in-a generation remaking of the visitor experience currently underway at the waterfront.

The City of Seattle is installing more than 90 new wayfinding and interpretive signs all along the waterfront as part of the massive new promenade, Elliott Way, and Overlook Walk projects. The Elliott Bay Connections project is simultaneously installing new wayfinding and interpretive signs all along the eastern part of Alaskan Way and through Centennial Park and Myrtle Edwards Park. The Seattle Aquarium and Washington State Ferries are also initiating their own programs adding a dozen new interpretive signs outside of their own facilities.

All of these entities are working with a local firm, Studio Matthews, to maintain consistency in the interpretive content and design choices.

The proposed scope of this agreement includes updating three multi-panel, existing signs that are out of date and no longer accurate. The project installation of four new signs at key locations

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on Lenora Street overpass, at Bell Harbor, at Pier 66 and at Pier 69 will be competitively procured separately; or utilize in-house crews. These signs will market Port facilities and highlight the working waterfront in Seattle’s history and future. Working with Studio Matthews will allow the Port to integrate into the complete waterfront visitor experience.

JUSTIFICATION

We request a competitive exemption, in accordance with RCW 53.19.020(5), because competing these services would not be appropriate or cost-effective.

- **Not cost effective:** It would not be cost effective to compete this project. A new firm would start from scratch with a discovery and research phase; work already done by Studio Matthews on behalf of at least four other clients working in the same area. Studio Matthews has already researched the Port and even prepared content about the Port for some of the city’s planned signs. The firm knows where the story they have already written for the City, Aquarium, and other waterfront neighbors stops and where to extend the narrative to cover the Port’s unique history, environmental and workforce development interests. Working with Studio Matthews would be cost-effective by relying on their previously completed discovery, research, standards, and design.
- **Not appropriate:** The purpose of this project is to extend the look, feel, tone, concepts, graphical treatment, and fabrication standards of the new 90+ waterfront signage to locations around port facilities. The most appropriate way to do this is to use the same creative team that is developing the interpretive vision, concepts, and standards that will appear from Colman Dock to Centennial Park. Studio Matthews is already several years into this project and has invaluable institutional knowledge of the project conditions, stakeholders, and history. Some of their designs are already installed at Pier 62 and are proving to work in the unique waterfront landscape and environment. Finally, competing the work could create a scenario where we ask a firm to copy a non-Port project’s creative concepts and design. Design is the core of a graphic design firm’s work product. To have another firm attempt to copy creative concepts and design, without credit or compensation to the creators, would not be appropriate.

Diversity in Contracting

Studio Matthews is a Seattle-based, woman-owned small business.

DETAILS

A summary of the scope of work follows. The full Scope of Work is available in the document set.

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Scope of Work

1. Concept Design
2. Design and Content development
3. Design Documentation
4. Project Administration

Schedule

This schedule allows time to compete the fabrication of the signs or to develop in house if possible. The project is designed to be ready and in-use for the FIFA World Cup and Elliott Bay Connections opening in 2026.

Activity

Commission authorization	2024 Q2
Design start	2024 Q3
Construction start	2025 Q4
In-use date	2026 Q1

Cost Breakdown

	This Request	Total Project
Concept Design	\$18,440	\$18,440
Design Development	\$29,440	\$29,440
Design Documentation	\$28,004	\$28,005
Project Administration	\$20,755	\$20,744
Total	\$96,640	\$96,640

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

This project considered moving forward with this work as a Category 2 competitively bid project. However, given the high importance on operating within the City’s planned waterfront signage system, and the time frame for completing the work, the project team did not fully explore alternatives.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The scope for this agreement does not include fabrication and installation. Fabrication and installation of the signs may be completed in-house, or through a competitively bid contract. If bid competitively, that work would be budgeted as a capital expense and would likely fall within the Delegation of Authority.

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Cost Estimate/Authorization Summary

Capital

Expense

Total

COST ESTIMATE			
Original estimate	\$0	\$96,640	\$96,640
AUTHORIZATION			
Previous authorizations	0	0	0
Current request for authorization	0	\$96,640	\$96,640
Total authorizations, including this request	0	\$96,640	\$96,640
Remaining amount to be authorized	\$0	\$0	\$0

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

- (1) Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

None