



City of Rialto

Legislation Text

File #: EDC-21-0199, **Version:** 1

FOR: Economic Development Committee April 28, 2021
TO: Honorable Economic Development Committee Members
APPROVAL: Alexander Hamilton, Interim Community Development Director
FROM: Sean Grayson, Acting City Manager

Request the Economic Development Committee Consider Recommending the Release of a Request for Proposals for State Government Relations and Lobbying Services.

BACKGROUND:

The City utilizes the services of a Federal Lobbyist through a contract with David Turch and Associates. The City and Utility Authority participate in various state and federal legislative advocacy groups such as the League of California Cities. The nearby cities of Fontana, Rancho Cucamonga, Chino, Victorville, Jurupa Valley, and Barstow use the services of Gonsalves & Son; the City of Chino Hills uses Townsend Public Affairs; the cities of Ontario and Riverside use ARC Strategies; and the City of San Bernardino recently transitioned to a new firm. The City of Rialto does not have a contract for services for lobbying at the State of California level. For the benefit of the City, the Economic Development Committee and staff it has been requested that the City seek cost and options for State government relations and lobbying services.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

To staff's knowledge, the City has never retained a state lobbyist on general matters. However, there are a number of advantages of hiring a state lobbyist. For instance, lobbyists

- Are professionals in their field, providing expertise in legislative strategy and technique to facilitate legislation through the process.
- Can quickly respond to issues and can assist the City in providing appropriate communication to key legislators and regulators.
- Can identify where leverage needs to be applied and can point out pitfalls, because lobbyist understand the political climate in the state.
- Can monitor the legislative process in an efficient and accurate manner.
- Understand how legislation is formulated and can analyze and draft persuasive legislative language.
- Develop good relations with legislators that may pay off well into the future by advocating for legislation, funding, or assistance that would benefit the City.
- Allow the City to devote its time where it may best be used, in providing technical advice and direction in policy.

Lobbying services can however be costly. While fees will vary depending on the service agreement, generally fees will be similar to those charged by law firms. Staff recommends proceeding with a request for proposals (RFP) for government relations and state lobbying services to most effectively evaluate services and pricing. A draft scope of work for the RFP would include:

- Work with the City Council, the City Manager, and key staff to discuss goals, objectives, opportunities and priorities for State government relations.
- Develop short-term and long-term strategies with the City pertaining to funding and other State policy and administrative issues.
- Support a positive relationship with the Governor's office, State Legislature, State Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Resources Agency, the California Department of Transportation, The Governor's Office of Emergency Services and/or other agencies.
- Assist departments on the means and methods of maximizing State funding for City programs.
- Identify and monitor legislation and state regulatory processes, including pertinent administrative, legislative and regulatory matters that may impact the City.
- Provide legislative and regulatory lobbying, as needed.
- Engage key officials (executive, legislative and local government) and stakeholders to support the City's objectives to secure permits, grants, incentives, and favorable laws and regulations.
- Pursue greater public funding for the City.
- Coordinate meetings with State Legislators and agency department leaders to provide the City the opportunity to meet face-to-face with key decision-makers on pertinent City issues.
- Assist with communications and messaging.
- Draft legislation and amendments, as necessary.
- Provide weekly written briefing reports for the City Council and City Manager on key issues and legislative committee activity during the legislative session.
- Lobby for the City's position on legislation and regulatory matters of interest.
- Notify the City of grants and other funding opportunities and, as appropriate, facilitate meetings or follow-ups with awarding State agency officials.
- Prepare and solicit letters of support for funding opportunities.

Staff has consulted with the City's federal lobbyist who has indicated their willingness to support the City through the process and given subject matter expertise in evaluation response to the RFP. Staff will conduct the RFP process and return to the Economic Development Committee to short list applicants and/or interview finalists or establish an alternate process based upon the recommendations of the Economic Development Committee. It is anticipated that a contract for services would be brought to the City Council for consideration in July 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The request to release an RFP for State Government Relations and Lobbying does not have any financial impact. Should the City select a firm, the anticipated cost to provide the identified scope of work is between \$75,000 and \$175,000 per year based upon contracts for similar services.

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the Economic Development Committee consider recommending the release of a request for proposals for State Government Relations and Lobbying Services.