



City of Sonora

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*Notice of Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Consulting Services to
Conduct an Organizational Review and Financial Stabilization Study for the City of Sonora*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

RFQ Issue Date: October 17, 2022

Closing Date: November 30, 2022, at 3:30 pm

Regarding homelessness, which City departments interact with people experiencing homelessness? Which of these has the most substantial engagement?

Police- Sonora Police Department has a HOST (homeless outreach support team) led by a sworn officer in partnership with County Behavioral Health and Human Service staff. The Department hopes to be funded by a grant to add a non-sworn liaison position to support the day-to-day coordination with law enforcement. As the first point of contact for the majority of community issues and concerns, threats to individual health or safety, or other nuisance complaints, the Police Department has the most interaction. With few County supportive services, and even fewer services offered outside of the City limits, the Police Department is more impacted than any other department.

Public Works- Provides encampment and facility clean-up/maintenance. The impacts of debris, vandalism, and maintenance needs have increased over the past four years. The interaction of this department has been frequent, daily with major issues occurring weekly.

Fire-There is increased awareness and threat level associated with encampments in high fire severity zones. There have been several fires in the area of encampments over the past two years, though investigations as to cause are still on-going.

City Hall- The position of City Administrator spends time on policy creation and implementation, coordination with county electeds, and resource allocation. Interaction is infrequent, situation based and as needed to support each department.

Regarding homelessness, to what extent is there a group of non-profit and/or faith-based organizations that provide services to the homeless population?

There is tremendous support from faith based and non-profits in the City limits. Unsheltered populations have access to 3 meals per day 7 days a week offered by our faith-based community. ATCAA, a local non-profit, runs our shelters services and administers the Continuum of Care for Tuolumne County. This is an invaluable partnership as their understanding of the complexity of homelessness is unmatched. In addition, ATCAA has successfully run and operated our Shelter for many years without attention or complaint from the community. The Lambert House is a non-profit drop in center hosting meals, laundry, and shower services. Give Someone a Chance provides portable toilets throughout the community and in encampments. And lastly, Nancy's hope provides clothes, camping and household supplies, and other necessities.

Can you please identify the tribal community name with which Sonora interacts?

The City is currently working with the Chicken Ranch Band of Mi-Wuk Indians.

What is the desired outcome of the report?

First, the good news. On November 8th, the City successfully secured Measure Y- a 1% sales tax increase. Now more than ever, with this vote of public confidence, the City looks to have public discussions needed to educate and inform, provide transparency and accountability and maintain the public's trust with the spending plan for this new revenue. The Ballot has a sunset provision, with the community directing the need for growth over increased taxation.

Since 2008, the City has cut resources, deferred investments, and the needs Citywide are growing urgent. The City looks for a disciplined spending approach over the next 5 years, one that aims to increase operational efficiency, prioritize critical needs based upon the taxpayers service expectations, while also advancing investments in long term planning needed to implement a growth strategy.

The City would like to establish a baseline financial review including evaluation of operational efficiencies and strategies to enhance existing revenue. With that, staff hopes to guide the Council through strategic planning, prioritizing investments and strategies that lead to longer term stability. The five-year plan will then serve to guide each budget cycle.

In short, this phase will illustrate the current financial landscape, where can we do better, where we have the greatest potential to maximize current resources and how best to move forward with critical needs. From here, the focus then becomes on moving beyond the here and now and the "do more with less" philosophy to one focused on the steps to achieve growth.

The City seeks to explore growth strategies and how best to evaluate the land potential within the sphere of influence and determine which land uses provide for the greatest return on our investment, fit within the culture and quality of life expectation of the community, while affording the long-term sustainability of public services. The City needs a vision for how to get from A-Z in order to move from Community Development to economic development, from taxing the existing base to growing the tax base.

Why use the format contained in the RFQ? Is there flexibility?

Yes, there is flexibility. The City also recognizes the budgetary constraints. The City is open to considering phased approaches.

What is the desired timing of the community outreach?

Negotiable with refinement of the scope and contract award. The purpose of the public outreach is transparency, to educate and inform, to understand community needs and service expectations necessary to build the strategic investment plan, and to gain an understanding of growth expectations, quality of life and cultural elements in order to attract the development and business environment that our community values.