



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** PLANNING AND BUILDING

**File #:** 23-515

Board Meeting Date: 6/13/2023

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**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director  
**Subject:** Multi-Jurisdictional Safety Element Project

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution authorizing:

- A) An agreement with PlaceWorks, Inc. for the Multi-Jurisdictional Safety Element Project for the term of June 15, 2023 through June 15, 2026, for a total amount not to exceed \$1,224,016; and
- B) Memorandums of Understanding with the municipalities of Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Half Moon Bay, San Bruno, Brisbane, and Pacifica as agency participants in the Multi-Jurisdictional Safety Element Project.

**BACKGROUND:**

A safety element is a required component of a county or city's general plan, and recent changes to State law require local jurisdictions to update their safety elements. Specifically, the main components of a safety element update include:

1. Updated background information and mapping on hazardous conditions and evacuation concerns.
2. A vulnerability assessment that considers how climate change may affect natural hazards in the community, and the effects on populations and assets.
3. Amendments to goals, policies, objectives, and implementation measures, especially as they relate to climate change resiliency; and
4. Alignment of programs from other local planning documents and State resources.

In recent years, the complexity of safety elements has increased along with increasing State requirements, more sophisticated mapping, and expanded community outreach based on higher

levels of public interest in climate change and hazard planning. Assembly Bill (AB) 162 (2007) required updates to flood hazard information and policies and Senate Bill (SB) 1241 (2012) required updates to fire hazard information and policies. The largest change for safety elements was SB 379 (amending Government Code Section 65302(g)) which requires cities and counties to include climate adaptation and resiliency information, policies, and implementation strategies in their safety elements. SB 379 passed in 2015 but provided cities and counties time to incorporate its requirements. Specifically, SB 379 required cities and counties to comply upon the next revision of a local hazard mitigation plan (LHMP) on or after January 1, 2017, or, if the local jurisdiction had not adopted a LHMP, beginning on or before January 1, 2022. Detailed guidance from the Governor's Office of Planning & Research and Office of Emergency Services to local governments on how to prepare vulnerability assessments was not available until July 2020. Most recently, SB 99 (2019) was passed, imposing requirements related to evacuations and wildfires, including a requirement to identify areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes.

In late 2021, a number of agencies in San Mateo County expressed interest in working together on an update of their respective safety elements and formed the Safety Element Collaborative. The cities, towns, and County in San Mateo have a strong history of collaboration and resource sharing on housing related initiatives through the 21 Elements Project. In addition, all 21 jurisdictions in the county collaborated on a Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJLHMP), which was completed in December 2021, providing baseline information for the safety element updates.

The purpose of this project is to address the safety element legal requirements and to share analysis and resources for greater efficiency for the jurisdictions participating in this collaborative effort. This project will update the safety elements of the County of San Mateo and six participating San Mateo County municipalities (Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Half Moon Bay, and San Bruno) to comply with latest requirements for safety elements, as described above and codified at Government Code 65302. The cities of Brisbane and Pacifica are also participating in a few technical tasks, like the vulnerability analysis, but are not requesting a complete safety element update.

## **DISCUSSION:**

On September 6, 2022, the Planning and Building Department released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Multi-Jurisdictional Safety Element Project. The Department received two proposals in response to the RFP. The evaluation and selection committee determined the proposal submitted by PlaceWorks to be the most suitable based on the overall criteria of project understanding, qualifications of the consulting team, relative project experience, project approach and methodology, and proposed cost. PlaceWorks has extensive experience with creating General Plans, Safety Elements, and local hazard mitigation plans throughout California. Recently, PlaceWorks completed safety elements, vulnerability assessments, and/or climate adaptation plans for Santa Barbara County (2022) and the following other Bay Area communities: City of San Mateo, Contra Costa County, Solano County, Orinda, Lafayette, Benicia, Dixon, Rio Vista, Suisun City, Vacaville, Vallejo, Santa Rosa, and Windsor. PlaceWorks also has experience supporting a multi-jurisdictional safety element process in Solano County.

The scope of work for this project includes thoughtful approaches to community engagement and equity. PlaceWorks has partnered with Climate Resilient Communities, a local nonprofit, to help lead engagement and outreach to community groups and hard to reach community members, and to provide equity reviews of work products. Climate Resilient Communities is a community-based organization dedicated to serving the underrepresented through empowering community voices to implement climate solutions that bring about unity and resilience.

Community Planning Collaborative (formerly Baird + Driskell Community Planning) has acted as the project manager for the Safety Element Collaborative Project through the Collaborative's initial formation and the RFP process, ensuring that the voice of each participating agency is heard, and their needs addressed. To date, Community Planning Collaborative acted as project manager through their role as lead consultant for the 21 Elements Project. 21 Elements was originally created to assist San Mateo County jurisdictions (20 cities and the county) with required Housing Element updates and has now expanded to assist with other General Plan element updates. Pursuant to Administrative Memorandum B-1, the Community Development Director executed an agreement with Community Planning Collaborative to continue to serve as Project Manager for the length of the Safety Element Collaborative Project, for a term of June 1, 2023 through June 1, 2026 and in an amount not to exceed \$92,400. Each participating agency is responsible for funding their portion of the agreement with Community Planning Collaborative. The County's portion of Community Planning Collaborative agreement is \$11,935.

Each participating agency will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with San Mateo County to participate in the Safety Element Collaborative. The MOUs outline the services to be performed by the consultants and set forth the participating agency's contribution toward the costs of the consultant services. All participating jurisdictions will have a staff member representing their agency on a Collaborative Steering Committee. This committee will oversee the progress of the project and will provide input on the project direction/issues.

The San Mateo County Planning and Building Department will serve as the fiscal agent for the Safety Element Collaborative. As fiscal agent, San Mateo County will enter into agreements with the designated consultants and will pay consultant invoices using deposits from all participating agencies.

Additional partners in the Safety Element Collaborative Project include the San Mateo County Office of Sustainability and San Mateo County Department of Emergency Management. A key stakeholder for this collaborative is OneShoreline, the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District. OneShoreline will be a valuable resource for collaboration/clarification/input on several aspects of this project.

The resolution, agreement, and Memorandums of Understanding have been reviewed and approved by the County Attorney's Office as to form.

#### **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT:**

This planning process will identify vulnerable populations through data analysis and public engagement that are likely to be disproportionately affected by climate change and natural hazards.

This planning effort may positively impact **vulnerable populations, as well as the wider population**, in unincorporated San Mateo County by developing a **framework to ensure future development and activities are safer and more resilient**.

This planning effort will identify and engage impacted groups through **a robust and inclusive engagement effort** that will include mapping such groups, developing an equity approach, culturally competent community workshops, community group meetings, and collaboration with local CBOs.

Staff anticipates mitigating potential negative impacts that could hinder equitable outcomes for vulnerable populations by **using the results of community engagement to guide the**

**development of goals, objectives, policies and implementation measures.**

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The term of the PlaceWorks, Inc. agreement is June 15, 2023, through June 15, 2026. The amount of the agreement is not to exceed \$1,224,016 for the three-year term. Each participating agency is responsible for funding their portion of the project cost.

San Mateo County's portion of the PlaceWorks, Inc. agreement is \$356,263.

The term of the Community Planning Collaborative agreement is June 1, 2023 through June 1, 2026 and in an amount not to exceed \$92,400. Each participating agency is responsible for funding their portion of the agreement with Community Planning Collaborative. The San Mateo County's portion of Community Planning Collaborative agreement is \$11,935. Pursuant to Administrative Memorandum B-1, the Community Development Director executed an agreement with Community Planning Collaborative to continue to serve as Project Manager for the Safety Element Collaborative Project.

Funds in the amount of \$166,000 are included in the FY 2022-23 Adopted Budget. Funds in the amount of \$202,198 are included in the FY 2023-24 Recommended Budget. Similar arrangements will be made for future years.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

A. Memorandums of Understanding