



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** PLANNING AND BUILDING

**File #:** 23-514

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 Environmental Justice Element Project

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Burlingame to join the Multi-Jurisdictional Environmental Justice Element Project for the term of June 1, 2023 through June 1, 2025 with a total obligation not to exceed \$269,288.

**BACKGROUND:**

Government Code section 63502(h) requires that jurisdictions with disadvantaged communities (also called Environmental Justice or EJ communities) either include an environmental justice element in their general plan or incorporate environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives throughout other general plan elements. The requirement is triggered when a jurisdiction concurrently adopts or revises two or more general plan elements. The County has recently updated the Housing Element and the Climate Element and will be updating the Safety Element. A “disadvantaged community” or EJ community is an area so designated by the California Environmental Protection Agency, or a low-income area disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that may lead to negative health effects or environmental degradation within a jurisdiction’s planning area.

State law defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the development adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” At a minimum, environmental justice requires meaningful consideration of input from those most impacted by environmental harms resulting from land use decisions.

In developing environmental justice policies, jurisdictions must (1) identify the EJ communities within its planning area, (2) identify objectives and policies to reduce unique or compounded health risks in EJ communities, (3) identify objectives and policies to promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process, and (4) identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs addressing the needs of EJ communities.

The purpose of the Multi-Jurisdictional Environmental Justice Element Project is to address these requirements and to share costs for analysis, engagement and policy development, helping to leverage resources and achieve greater efficiencies through a collaborative effort with other local jurisdictions. For the County, the outcome of this work will be a new Environmental Justice Element of the San Mateo County General Plan, tailored to the County's needs but informed by the broader collaborative work effort.

## **DISCUSSION:**

In 2022, a number of jurisdictions in San Mateo County expressed interest in collaborating on developing or updating environmental justice elements through participation in 21 Elements, an ongoing collaborative effort to address housing and planning issues across all 21 jurisdictions in San Mateo County. Over the subsequent months, three jurisdictions-Burlingame, East Palo Alto, and the County of San Mateo-finalized plans for a collaborative effort and developed a joint Request for Proposals (RFP) that was released by the City of Burlingame in fall of 2022. The joint effort in determining the desired scope of work and developing a joint RFP was supported by the consultant for 21 Elements, Baird + Driskell Community Planning (now doing business as Community Planning Collaborative).

Proposals from interested consultant teams were received in December 2022 and interviews were conducted in January 2023. The evaluation and selection committee determined the proposal submitted by PlaceWorks was the most suitable based on the overall criteria of project understanding, qualifications, relevant experience, project approach and methodology, and proposed cost.

The scope of work for this project includes thoughtful approaches to community engagement and equity. PlaceWorks has partnered with Climate Resilient Communities, a local community-based organization (CBO), 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.

As an added benefit, PlaceWorks and Climate Resilient Communities are also working with jurisdictions in San Mateo County including Burlingame, East Palo Alto, and the County of San Mateo, as well as others to update each jurisdiction's Safety Element. While it is a different team within PlaceWorks leading that effort, the opportunity to further leverage these related efforts and to align community outreach and engagement, making it easier for community members to participate in both efforts, has been a key focus of discussions among the team members over the past several months, leading to the final Work Program and budget (see Exhibit A of the Memorandum of Understanding, Attachment B).

In fall 2022, the City of Burlingame agreed to serve as the fiscal agent for the joint effort. As fiscal agent, Burlingame will enter into agreements with the designated consultants and will pay consultant invoices using deposits from all participating agencies, with Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) signed between Burlingame, the City of East Palo Alto, and the County of San Mateo.

Community Planning Collaborative (formerly Baird + Driskell Community Planning) will continue to serve as overall project manager for the joint effort, managing the contract with PlaceWorks, monitoring work products for quality and consistency, and ensuring that the voice of each

participating agency is heard, and their needs addressed. To date, Community Planning Collaborative has acted as project manager through their role as lead consultant for 21 Elements. For the work effort going forward, Community Planning Collaborative will serve as overall Project Manager under a separate contract with the City of Burlingame, funded in part by the County via the proposed MOU.

The MOU between the City of Burlingame and San Mateo County (Attachment D) outlines the services to be performed by the consultants as well as the roles and responsibilities of each participating agency, including each agency’s contribution toward the costs of the consultant services. All three jurisdictions will be represented on a Steering Committee that will oversee the progress of the project and provide input on the project direction/issues as they relate to the collaborative effort in addition to having direct authority over the work product for their specific jurisdiction.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT:**

This planning process will identify and confirm EJ communities through data analysis and public engagement.

This planning effort may positively impact **EJ communities** in unincorporated San Mateo County by identifying strategies to **reduce unique or compounded health risks, promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of EJ communities.**

Staff will engage impacted groups in EJ communities through **a robust engagement effort** that will include culturally competent community workshops, one-on-one interviews, an equity focused survey, and collaboration with Climate Resilient Communities and other local CBOs.

Staff anticipates mitigating potential negative impacts that could hinder equitable outcomes for EJ communities by **using the results of community engagement to guide the creation the EJ strategies.**

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The term of the proposed MOU, and both the PlaceWorks, Inc. and Community Planning Collaborative agreements, are June 1, 2023, through June 1, 2025. The Work Program included as Exhibit A with the MOU (Attachment D) summarizes the overall project budget across the participating jurisdictions. The total budget includes a 10% project management cost and a contingency. The total cost to the County is \$269,288, as summarized in the table below.

Funds in the amount of \$269,288 are included in the FY 2022-23 Adopted Budget. Similar arrangements will be made for future years.

PROJECT COST for COUNTY OF SAN MATEO	
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT CONSUMPTION + PLACEWORKS + CLIMATE RESILIENT COMMUNITY	\$238,632
PROJECT MANAGER - COMMUNITY PLANNING @ 10%	\$23,760
General Contingency	\$6,896

<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$269,288</b>

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A - Resolution

Attachment B - MOU

Exhibit A - PlaceWorks Work Program and Cost Proposal

Exhibit B - Community Planning Collaborative Scope of Work and Cost Proposal

Exhibit C - Project Budget and Agency Costs