



**December 5, 2022**

**To:** Regional Planning and Highways Committee

**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Johnson", is positioned to the right of the "From:" line.

**Subject:** Consultant Selection for Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails

### **Overview**

On July 25, 2022, the Orange County Transportation Authority Board of Directors approved the release of a request for proposals to provide preliminary engineering and environmental services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails. Board of Directors' approval is requested to select a firm to perform the required work.

### **Recommendations**

- A. Approve the selection of Alta Planning + Design, Inc., as the firm to provide preliminary engineering and environmental services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails.
- B. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute Agreement No. C-2-2595 between the Orange County Transportation Authority and Alta Planning + Design, Inc., to provide preliminary engineering and environmental services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails.

### **Discussion**

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) purchased the Pacific Electric Right-of-Way (PEROW) to develop future transit options along the former railroad. In 2013, OCTA completed the West/Central Orange County Regional Bikeways Strategy (Strategy) in partnership with local jurisdictions. The Strategy identified a regional bikeway as a compatible facility along the length of the PEROW. The proposed facility includes the segment on the PEROW between Raitt Street in the City of Santa Ana and Euclid Avenue in the

City of Garden Grove and a spur along the Wintersburg Channel connecting to the Hazard Avenue bicycle track (Attachment A).

A safe, well-connected, active transportation route on the PEROW would provide a valuable connection between the surrounding communities and key destinations. These destinations include active transportation connections to schools, bus stops, residences, employment centers, and civic locations in the area between the cities of Garden Grove and Santa Ana.

In support of local plans and the Strategy listed above, OCTA applied for and received a \$3 million California Transportation Commission (CTC) Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 5 grant to complete the project approval and environmental document (PA/ED) phase for this segment (Project). If implemented, the Project will enhance active transportation connectivity between the cities of Garden Grove and Santa Ana, as well as the communities surrounding the PEROW corridor.

The Project will complete the environmental documentation and preliminary designs for a facility closing the gap between the Santa Ana Boulevard Class IV (on-street barrier separated) bikeway in Downtown Santa Ana and the City of Garden Grove, creating a seamless four miles of Class I bikeway (eight-to-ten-foot path, away from the roadway). This would connect the cities of Garden Grove and Santa Ana directly to the Santa Ana River Trail. The connection to the Santa Ana River Trail will link the countywide 66-mile Class I OC Loop Bikeway, which serves about 650,000 residents. The goal is to explore low-stress, safe, and convenient mobility options for all ages, incomes, and ability levels. While OCTA owns the PEROW, future design, implementation, and operation of any future bikeway projects are anticipated to be managed by the responsible local jurisdiction.

### ***Procurement Approach***

This procurement was managed in accordance with OCTA's Board of Directors (Board)-approved procedures for architectural and engineering (A&E) services that conform to both state and federal laws. Proposals are evaluated and ranked in accordance with the qualifications of the firm, staffing and project organization, and work plan approach. As this is an A&E procurement, price is not an evaluation criterion pursuant to state and federal law. Evaluation of the proposals was conducted based on overall qualifications to develop a competitive range of offerors. The highest-ranked firm is requested to submit a cost proposal, and the final agreement is negotiated. Should negotiations fail with the highest-ranked firm, a cost proposal will be solicited from the second-ranked firm in accordance with the Board-approved procurement policies.

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On July 25, 2022, the Board authorized the release of Request for Proposals (RFP) 2-2595, which was issued electronically on CAMM NET. The Project was advertised on July 25 and August 1, 2022, in a newspaper of general circulation. A pre-proposal conference was held on August 4, 2022, with 22 attendees representing 13 firms. Three addenda were issued to make available the pre-proposal conference registration sheets, provide responses to questions received, and handle administrative issues related to the RFP.

On August 22, 2022, six proposals were received. An evaluation committee consisting of members from OCTA's Contracts Administration and Materials Management, Strategic Planning, and Public Outreach departments, as well as external representatives from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the City of Garden Grove, met to review all submitted proposals. The proposals were evaluated utilizing the following Board-approved evaluation criteria and weightings:

- Qualifications of the Firm 20 percent
- Staffing and Project Organization 40 percent
- Work Plan 40 percent

In developing the criteria and weightings, several factors were considered. The qualifications of the firm evaluated the firm's experience in performing relevant work of similar scope, size, and complexity and was assigned a weighting of 20 percent. Staffing and project organization of the firm was assigned a weighting of 40 percent as the qualifications of the project manager and other key personnel are important to the successful and timely delivery of the Project. Similarly, equal importance was given to the work plan criterion to emphasize the importance of the team's understanding of the Project and its challenges, and its approach to implementing the various elements of the scope of work. The technical approach to the Project is critical to a firm's successful performance.

The evaluation committee reviewed all proposals based on the evaluation criteria and found two firms most qualified to perform the required services. The most qualified firms are listed below in alphabetical order:

Firm and Location

Alta Planning + Design, Inc. (Alta)  
Los Angeles, California

Mark Thomas and Company, Inc. (Mark Thomas)  
Irvine, California

On September 27, 2022, the evaluation committee interviewed the two short-listed firms. The interviews consisted of a presentation allowing each team to present its qualifications, highlight its proposal, and respond to the evaluation committee questions. Each firm also discussed its staffing plan, work plan, and perceived Project challenges. Each firm was asked general questions related to qualifications, relevant experience, proposed project organization, and approach to the work plan. All firms were asked questions specific to their proposals regarding their teams' approach to the requirements of the scope of work, management of the Project, coordination with the various agencies, experience with similar projects, and the proposed solutions toward achieving the Project goals.

After considering responses to the questions asked during the interviews, the evaluation committee adjusted the preliminary scores of both firms and the overall ranking changed. Alta became the top-ranked firm with the higher cumulative score.

Based on the evaluation of the written proposals and the information obtained during the interviews, staff recommends Alta as the top-ranked firm to provide preliminary engineering and environmental services for the Project. Alta received the higher ranking due to the team's recent and relevant experience managing projects of similar size and scope, the firm's comprehensive understanding of the Project objectives and constraints, and presentation of relevant technical solutions and overall approach in developing evaluation criteria to rank potential alignment options. Alta presented a comprehensive work plan addressing key issues that are critical to the success of the Project. The following is a summary of the proposal evaluation results.

#### Qualifications of the Firm

Both short-listed firms are well established with recent and relevant experience and are qualified to perform the services.

Alta, founded in 1996, specializes in the design and implementation of rails to trails and innovative active transportation corridor projects, to include rail to trail design, bicycle and pedestrian transit integration, and transportation engineering. Alta has successfully delivered design services, preliminary engineering, environmental documentation, and public outreach services for clients including the Caltrans District 12, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), City of Garden Grove, City of Los Angeles, City of Santa Ana, Orange County Flood Control District (OCFD), and the California Public Utilities Commission. The firm has 21 offices nationwide with a total of 176 employees.

Alta's relevant firm experience includes the preliminary engineering, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation, USACE 404 and 408 permitting, historic bridge evaluation and public outreach for the Los Angeles River Path project and the OCFD coordination for the Coachella Valley Link project in Coachella Valley. Alta is leading the PA/ED phase of the Placentia Atwood Multipurpose Trail project and the preliminary engineering and environmental clearance for the Dumbarton to Quarry Lakes Trail projects for the City of Fremont. Alta is also the lead firm to deliver the River to Rail Corridor project in the City of Los Angeles, which includes rail trails, roadway crossing design, and outreach for the alternatives analysis for the corridor. The firm proposed to utilize seven subconsultants in a wide range of disciplines to provide required services, all of which have experience working with Alta on past projects. Positive references were received for the firm.

Mark Thomas, founded in 1927, provides multimodal planning, civil and structures engineering, surveying, construction management, and urban design services to include rail trail design, bicycle and pedestrian transit integration, traffic and transportation engineering, bicycle and pedestrian planning, landscape architecture, and urban design services to public agencies throughout California. Mark Thomas has successfully delivered design services, preliminary engineering, environmental documentation, and public outreach for key stakeholders, to include the County of Orange, and the cities of Roseville, Sacramento, and Westminster. The firm has 11 offices statewide, three of which are in Southern California with a total of over 320 employees.

Mark Thomas' relevant firm experience includes providing plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E) for the Carbon Canyon Channel Bikeway and the initial and final design plans for the OC Loop segments O, P, and Q, for the County of Orange, the PA/ED and PS&E for the Santa Cruz County Highway 1 auxiliary lanes and Rail Trail Segment 12 project for the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission in the City of Santa Cruz, and structural assessment, repair recommendations, and abutment design for the Roseville Icehouse Rail Bridge Relocation project for the City of Roseville. The firm proposed to utilize eight subconsultants in a wide range of disciplines to provide required services, all of which have experience working with Mark Thomas on past relevant projects. Positive references were received for the firm.

#### **Staffing and Project Organization**

Both short-listed firms proposed qualified project managers, key personnel, and subconsultants with relevant PA/ED experience to complete the environmental phase of the project.

Alta proposed a qualified project team with relevant comprehensive experience and understanding of the Project issues, risks, and challenges. The team is proficient in the various disciplines required for the Project and brings decades of multimodal trail design expertise combined with local understanding of stakeholders' engagement and consensus building. The team has demonstrated experience working on active transportation projects of similar size and scope.

The proposed project manager has over 21 years of experience managing projects that help communities design and implement innovative active transportation solutions. The project manager's breadth of experience includes managing complex trail and corridor projects, multiple partner agency coordination, and consensus building. The project manager has successfully performed in project management roles and completed various phases of active transportation projects to include the Yerba Buena Island Bay bridge multi-use trail geometric development project in the City of San Francisco, the alternatives analysis for the Metro Rail to River Segment B project and is serving as the design principal as part of the project management team for the LA River Path project.

The proposed design lead has 39 years of experience with large scale and multifaceted active transportation design projects. Recent experience includes serving as principal engineer on the CV Link master plan, design, and engineering, managing the engineering services for the Victorville Mojave Riverwalk project, and principal-in-charge leading design, outreach, and preparation of construction documents for the Culver City La Ballona Elementary Class IV Protected Bike Lane project. The proposed environmental lead has 20 years of experience involving environmental planning, analysis, and compliance for various types of projects including complex transportation and site development projects and is familiar with federal, state, regional and local regulations and guidelines including NEPA, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and general plans. The environmental lead has prepared and obtained approval for various NEPA and CEQA documents. Recent experience includes serving as the environmental lead on the LA River Path project, the Interstate 215 Keller Road New Interchange PA/ED project, and a management support role for the development of the initial study environmental assessment for the State Route 55 (SR-55) Improvement project.

Mark Thomas proposed a qualified project team with relevant experience and understanding of the Project issues, risks, and challenges. The team, including subconsultants, are experienced in the various disciplines required for the Project and have relevant experience in transportation projects in Southern California.

Mark Thomas' proposed project manager has 36 years of experience in civil engineering and project management with a focus on complex capital improvement projects including highways, complete streets, and active transportation. The project manager has project management experience delivering roadway, transit, and components of active transportation projects. Recent experience includes managing the PA/ED for the Yorba Linda Boulevard Widening project, managing the PA/ED development for the Palomar Street grade separation, which included active transportation facilities for the City of Chula Vista.

The proposed design lead has 21 years of planning and engineering experience but limited experience in the role of design lead. Recent experience includes serving as project manager for the engineering design and community engagement for the Santa Ana Standard Avenue Bikeway project, concept development for the Mendez Historic Trail and Green Street Bikeway project, and project manager for the concept cost estimates development for the OC Bike Connectors Study. The proposed environmental lead has 27 years of experience delivering environmental compliance documentation for over 125 transportation projects in southern California in compliance with CEQA/NEPA, OCTA, and Caltrans requirements. Recent experience includes an environmental compliance manager for the OCTA Interstate 405 Improvement project (State Route 73 to Interstate 605) design-build, multiple cities, Caltrans District 12, on-call environmental analysis services and studies, and OCTA State Route 91 Improvement project between State Route 57 and SR-55 PA/ED project.

#### Work Plan

Both short-listed firms met the requirements of the RFP, and each firm discussed its approach to the Project.

Alta presented a comprehensive and viable work plan that demonstrated an understanding of the Project design requirements, constraints, challenges, and risks. Alta's work plan presented a detailed analysis associated with the re-use of the bridge structure, co-locating a new bicycle trail adjacent to an active streetcar line, and determining appropriate trail alignments, and crossing treatments and locations. The work plan listed four evaluation criteria to rank potential alignment options, including feasibility and constructability of the alignment, permit assessment and documentation, stakeholders' buy-in, and possible funding options. The work plan discussed a "communicate early and often with detailed documentation" approach to the NEPA and CEQA processes with emphasis on the critical path items including the environmental site assessment and soil contamination process.

The overall approach to Project execution described in the work plan and presented during the interview identified potential risks, accompanied by design alternatives and operational impact, discussions, and a layered technique that incorporates community buy-in, stakeholders' engagement, and consensus building. The interview confirmed the technical knowledge and expertise of the Alta team, and its comprehensive understanding of the project risks, challenges, and requirements. The Alta team presented a clear vision on project approach and demonstrated in-depth knowledge to the scope of work by providing detailed project-specific responses to all interview questions with participation from all team members present.

Mark Thomas presented a detailed work plan that demonstrated an understanding of the scope of work, project issues, and risks. The work plan proposed an initial risk assessment and included a strategy plan for trails, PEROW, bicycle lane connect, street crossings, hazardous materials, and environmental issues. The work plan discussed in detail the Santa Ana River bridge re-use and soil contamination issues and proposed a four-step approach to further assess the re-use of the existing truss bridge for pedestrian and bicycle use. The approach included an existing condition assessment, multi-use conversion design development, structural assessment, and an advance planning study based upon the results of the three previous steps.

The overall approach to Project execution described in the work plan and presented during the interview demonstrated an understanding of the scope of work, challenges, risks, and project requirements. The Mark Thomas team was responsive to some of the evaluation committee's questions; however, several questions were not fully addressed by the team and the team was unable to demonstrate an adequate level of detail on consensus building and stakeholders' engagement.

#### Procurement Summary

Based on the evaluation of the written proposals, team qualifications, work plan approach and information obtained from the interviews, the evaluation committee recommends the selection of Alta as the top-ranked firm to provide preliminary engineering and environmental services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails. Alta delivered a comprehensive proposal, which addressed all requirements of the RFP.

#### Fiscal Impact

The project was approved in OCTA's Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget, Planning Division, Account No. 1531-7519-A4530-0QC and will be funded through a CTC ATP Cycle 5 grant.



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***Summary***

Staff requests Board of Directors' authorization for the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute Agreement No. C-2-2595 with Alta Planning + Design, Inc., as the firm to provide preliminary engineering and environmental services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails.

***Attachments***

- A. Garden Grove – Santa Ana Rails to Trails
- B. Review of Proposals, RFP 2-2595 Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails
- C. Proposal Evaluation Matrix (Short-Listed Firms), RFP 2-2595 Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails
- D. Contract History for the Past Two Years, RFP 2-2595 Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services for the Garden Grove to Santa Ana Rails to Trails

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