



NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

April 15, 2025
Agenda Item No. 10

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: Professional Services Agreement with Carpi & Clay, Inc. for Federal
Advocacy Services

ABSTRACT:

Staff recommends the City of Newport Beach enter into a professional services agreement with Carpi & Clay, Inc. of Washington, D.C. for federal advocacy services. The firm was selected after a detailed Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The recommended agreement is for an initial one-year term, with two, optional one-year extensions, for a total not-to-exceed cost of \$343,800.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Approve the Professional Services Agreement with Carpi & Clay, Inc. of Washington, D.C., for federal advocacy services for an initial one-year term, ending April 15, 2026, with two, optional one-year extensions and a total not-to-exceed amount of \$343,800, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the agreement.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The City engages federal advocacy consultants to advance its legislative priorities and drive federal action on issues that benefit the community. In recent years, the City has hired lobbyists to support its ocean and harbor dredging initiatives, as well as to secure funding through the Army Corps of Engineers for the current federal dredging project in Newport Harbor. Additionally, lobbyists have assisted the City in its efforts to address aircraft noise and air quality concerns caused by operations at John Wayne Airport, and to advocate for community engagement in Advanced Air Mobility planning efforts. The agreement between the City and its most recent federal advocacy consultant expired March 30, 2025.

Request for Proposals and Evaluation

Staff developed an RFP solicitation with a scope of services detailing the required federal advocacy expertise and services. The City sought a consultant that would effectively promote the City’s legislative policy interests, and assist in the development of strategies for advancing actions at the federal level that are beneficial to the City in two areas:

1. Its ocean/harbor dredging and ocean-beach-related programs, projects and services including securing federal funding via the Army Corps of Engineers; and
2. Its efforts to mitigate the aircraft noise and air quality impacts John Wayne Airport’s operations have on the Newport Beach community and to prepare for the future, nationwide implementation of Advanced Air Mobility technologies.

The RFP was published on December 23, 2024, when it was posted on the City’s electronic public procurement platform, PlanetBids, and distributed directly to known consultants providing these services. The RFP submission deadline was January 24, 2025, and the process yielded five proposals.

The RFP was evaluated in two phases. Phase 1, the Technical Evaluation, involved an evaluation panel consisting of staff from the City’s Public Works Department and City Manager’s Office independently reviewing each proposal and rating them on the following technical factors:

- Qualifications and experience of the firm;
- Demonstrated understanding of the City’s current dredging and ocean-beach-related projects and/or current community issues related to John Wayne Airport and the future implementation of AAM technologies;
- Subject matter expertise and ability to perform the requested services.

The RFP instructed proposers that only those proposals earning a minimum of 70% of the available points from Phase 1 would be eligible to advance to Phase 2, the Cost Evaluation, in which the City’s Purchasing Division staff would compare and calculate the costs from each proposal. Of the five proposals received by the City, two qualified to advance to the Cost Evaluation phase. Virtual interviews were conducted with the finalists to augment the evaluation panel’s findings. The results of the panel scoring are provided in the table below.

Proposer	Carpi & Clay	Warwick Group Consultants
Phase 1: Technical Review -Proposal Review <i>Maximum 2400</i>	2200	1840
Phase 2: Cost Review <i>Maximum 600</i>	376.96 (\$9,550.00 Retainer)	600.00 (\$6,000 Retainer)
Total Score <i>Maximum 3000</i>	2576.96	2440.00
Overall Rank	1	2

The RFP asked proposers to provide an all-inclusive, fixed-fee monthly retainer for services rendered. In Phase 2 (the Cost Evaluation) of the RFP evaluation, Purchasing Division staff members compared the proposed monthly retainers from each of the finalists and assigned points to each proposer wherein the proposal with the lowest retainer cost would receive the maximum of 600 points and each subsequent proposal would receive points proportional to the difference in retainer cost. The results of the Cost Evaluation are included in the table.

Despite proposing a higher retainer than the other finalist, Carpi & Clay was rated as the top proposer for federal advocacy services by the evaluation panel, based on the content of the firm's proposal and the interview City staff conducted with the firm's lobbyists that would be assigned to work with Newport Beach. The firm's proposal and interview demonstrated Carpi & Clay's thorough understanding of the City's harbor dredging and sand management projects as well as its aviation-related challenges and actions, particularly regarding aircraft noise, Advanced Air Mobility, and Unmanned Aircraft Systems. Further, the firm clearly demonstrated the depth of its current Congressional and federal agency contacts, a key requirement of this RFP process. The firm has established connections with California's Congressional delegation, members of Congress, Congressional committees, and staff within federal agencies, including the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Carpi & Clay has previously provided federal advocacy services to the City and currently represents multiple cities on various federal legislative and regulatory matters.

Should the City Council approve the professional services agreement, the firm's lead lobbyists for the City's project would be Julie Minerva, Channon Hanna and Zac Commins. Ms. Minerva is a recognized leader in infrastructure investments with a two-decade career in Washington, D.C., securing over two billion dollars in federal assistance for infrastructure projects including those related to navigation channels, environmental restoration and flood control. Ms. Minerva has strong relationships across Congress and federal agencies, including having extensive contacts at the Corps.

Ms. Hanna has more than 20 years of experience in federal transportation and aviation policy, including her previous work with the Senate Aviation Subcommittee. She has played a key role in drafting and negotiating FAA reauthorization bills and has extensive experience working with the FAA, DOT and the Office of Management and Budget.

Mr. Commins has a decade of experience in federal policy, funding and regulatory matters. His background includes roles on Capitol Hill and in local government, where he led efforts to secure funding for transportation projects, including provisions for quieter, lower-emission aircraft.

The technical ranking of Carpi & Clay reflects the firm's comprehensive expertise in the City's federal advocacy needs, particularly in infrastructure and aviation matters.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The adopted budget includes sufficient funding for this contract. It will be expensed to the Aviation Issues account in the City Manager's Office budget, 01020001-811008 and to the Public Works Department budget, 010800005- 811008.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – Professional Services Agreement