

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 10/27/08

Item Number: A-6

AGENDA ITEM: Approval of a Budget Amendment for the Building Safety Division for Contractual Structural, Electrical, Plumbing, and Mechanical Plan Check Services.

Contact Person/Dept.: Craig Johnson Phone Number: (310) 253-5802
Building Safety Division

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐ General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐

Public Hearing: ☐ Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒

Public Notification: Master E-Mail Notification List (10/22/08)

Department Approval:
Sol Blumenfeld (10/17/08)

City Attorney Approval:
Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (10/22/08)

Chief Financial Officer Approval:
Jeff Muir (by M. Noller) (10/22/08)

City Manager Approval
Jerry B. Fulwood (10/22/08)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council approve a budget amendment for the Building Safety Division for structural, electrical, plumbing and mechanical contractual plan check services in an amount not-to-exceed \$150,000 to Account 10151500.371300 (Plan Check Services) and Account 10151500.619800 (Other Contractual Services).

A four-fifths affirmative vote is required to amend the budget.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

Valuation of building permits is an important measure of building activity. Over the past several years, the Building Safety Division workload has increased substantially which is reflected in construction permit valuations. (Attachment 1). In 2007-2008, construction valuations were approximately \$180.4 million as compared to \$21.7 million in 2001-2002. While in-house staff has generally performed the majority of the plan checks in previous years, Building Safety has contracted structural engineering plan check services for some extraordinary projects. Even with these services, the increased workload has negatively impacted plan check turn-around times and customer service standards.

To this end, the Building Safety Division is now requesting funds to assist with structural, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical plan checks for the remainder of the 2008-2009 fiscal year. These services would be applied only to the largest projects and only when staff workload levels and availability do not facilitate prompt plan check turn-around times. In the first three months of FY 2008-2009, Building Safety has already issued permits with construction valuations of approximately \$24.7 million.

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Staff has identified proposed contract plan check firms (Attachment 2), that have successfully provided contract structural plan check services to the Building Safety Division in the past as well as those firms qualified to provide contract electrical, plumbing, and mechanical plan check services in the future.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Staff is requesting a budget allocation and amendment of \$150,000 for FY 2008-2009 for assistance in plan check services. Revenues collected for plan check services are anticipated to offset the increased appropriation request.

In FY 2007-2008 there were a total of 2,546 building permit applications submitted. Only 708 applications required plan checks and of these applications, contractual structural plan check services were utilized to finalize seven building permits. The total Building Safety Division revenue for FY 2007-2008 was \$3,034,993. Approximately \$1,055,378 was collected in plan check fees and \$192,743 was expended for contract structural plan checks.

To this end, staff proposes that contractual plan check service costs should be funded by a portion of the City plan check fees collected. In general, structural engineering review costs have averaged approximately 50% of plan check fees for an individual project.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1: Previous construction valuations, revenues, and staffing.

Attachment #2: Previous and proposed plan check firms.

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Approve a budget amendment in an amount not-to-exceed \$150,000 to Account 10151500.371300 (Plan Check Fees) and Account 10151500.619800 (Other Contractual Services) to fund the services of contract structural, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical plan check services.

A four-fifths affirmative vote is required to amend the budget.