

**CITY OF ALBANY  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: January 18, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Community Satisfaction & Racial Equity Survey Services Contract Award Follow Up

**REPORT BY:** Nicole Almaguer, City Manager

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**SUMMARY**

This report is provided in follow up to Council direction to staff on January 3, 2022 regarding the proposed service agreement with Probolsky Research to conduct a Community Satisfaction & Racial Equity Survey. Probolsky Research has provided a supplemental narrative as requested by the Council regarding their experience with racial equity survey work.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the Council:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2022-02, authorizing the City Manager to execute Contract No. C22-01 with Probolsky Research for community satisfaction & racial equity survey services in an amount not to exceed \$57,500 and identify a subcommittee of the City Council to coordinate with staff and the consultants to prepare the survey content; or
2. Provide direction to staff to instead prepare a Request for Qualifications specific to a racial equity survey, or potentially a more extensive racial equity engagement program, and establish a subcommittee of the Council to review proposals received to select most competitive for recommendation of a contract award to the City Council

**BACKGROUND**

On [September 7, 2021](#), the Council reviewed a request from the Social & Economic Justice Commission for implementation of a racial equity survey. The Council requested staff provide additional information regarding the option to further the scope of the survey to include questions to identify any potential gaps in City services. On [October 4, 2021](#), staff provided additional information to the Council based on research conducted regarding the potential cost and scope of such a survey. On [November 1, 2021](#) the Council authorized issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP).

On [January 3, 2022](#), the Council reviewed a summary of the proposals received in response to the RFP, with a recommendation to award a contract to Probolsky Research. The Council requested staff further coordinate with Probolsky Research to obtain additional information regarding the firm's experience in conducting racial equity survey work. Probolsky Research has provided a supplemental narrative regarding their experience with racial equity survey work (Attachment 3).

## **DISCUSSION**

The Community Satisfaction and Racial Equity Survey is intended to provide baseline data regarding the sentiment of the entire Albany community that can be tracked over time to determine progress. The survey can help identify any areas of concern or gaps in service as expressed by the community so that further resources may be allocated as appropriate and available, including the need for more extensive engagement or outreach programs that may be made evident in the survey results.

It should be noted that the original request from the Social & Economic Justice Commission asked that a survey be conducted. However, based on some of the comments received during the discussion on January 3, 2022, a more extensive community engagement program regarding racial equity may be of interest. The RFP that was prepared and approved by the Council on [November 1, 2021](#) specifically defined the scope of work as a survey, which does not typically include a robust community engagement program, but instead is a mechanism to develop informative questions that are then administered across the full community to receive statistically relevant data. However, rather unique to the proposal received by Probolsky Research, there is an option to conduct “focus groups” which could potentially serve to provide additional engagement with particular community groups if desired. The focus groups could be conducted to further examine certain subjects with particular community groups.

As included in the staff recommendation, two possible options have been suggested for the Council to consider regarding this matter as further discussed below. Other options are likely available depending on the collective preference of the Council:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2022-02, authorizing the City Manager to execute Contract No. C22-01 with Probolsky Research for community satisfaction & racial equity survey services in an amount not to exceed \$57,500 and identify a subcommittee of the City Council to coordinate with staff and the consultants to prepare the survey content; or

This action will allow for the initiation of the survey work, as well as establishment of a subcommittee of the Council to further coordinate with staff and the consultant team on the preferred survey content, and any related particulars. The subcommittee of the Council would meet directly with staff and the consultants to discuss the overall scope and approach, review draft survey questions and agree on final survey questions. As expressed as part of the [staff report on January 3](#), staff would also coordinate with a subcommittee of the Social & Economic Justice Commission and the consultant team regarding the racial equity component of the survey. Similar to the Council subcommittee, the Social & Economic Justice Commission subcommittee would work directly with staff and the consultants to discuss the goals of the racial equity survey and review proposed questions.

The consultants would administer the survey once all survey questions are affirmed. Survey results would then be quantified and presented by the consultants back to the City Council.

2. Provide direction to staff to instead prepare a Request for Qualifications specific to a racial equity survey, or potentially a more extensive racial equity engagement program, and establish a subcommittee of the Council to review proposals received to select most competitive for recommendation of contract award

This option aims to address the potential interest in focusing solely on racial equity, and possibly conducting a more extensive outreach/engagement program. If the Council would like to gain more insight on consultants or other service providers specific to the areas of racial equity/DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), issuance of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) may be a helpful approach to determine most experienced consultants/organizations that would then be invited to submit a proposal to implement a racial equity/DEI outreach and engagement program.

It is envisioned that a subcommittee of the Council would work in coordination with staff to issue an RFQ, review responses to the RFQ, as well as subsequent proposals to determine most effective and competitive group to conduct a racial equity/DEI outreach and engagement program.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Next steps are contingent upon direction from the Council regarding the options proposed above, or potentially a different approach as identified by the Council to address this matter.

## **SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS**

As expressed in previous staff reports, conducting a survey on community satisfaction & racial equity with City services will provide information to further inform social equity and inclusivity considerations on an ongoing basis. In addition, conducting a more extensive racial equity/DEI outreach and engagement program would also directly address social equity and inclusivity goals.

## **CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES**

Implement racial equity survey is included in the City Council Strategic Plan. Goal 2 - Engage our diverse community, Objective 3 - Community Inclusivity.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The City of Albany promotes equal opportunity and non-discrimination on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, age, disability, medical condition, marital status or other interests protected by state and federal law. The City strongly values contract participation by minority owned and women owned businesses. However, the City is unfortunately restricted in its ability to implement any form of preference program associated with those groups on City contracts based on limitations imposed under the California Constitution, which do not permit any public agency in the state to grant preferential treatment to any entity “on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin” in public contracting. (Cal. Const., art. I, § 31.) This constitutional restriction, which is commonly referred to as Proposition 209, was approved by voters in 1996. An effort to overturn this restriction placed on the November 2020 ballot (Proposition 16) was not approved by voters. The only exception to the bar under

Proposition 209 is for federally funded projects where the City has historically and will continue to fully and actively promote participation by minority owned and women owned businesses.

As included in the proposal from Probolsky Research, the total cost of the survey project will be at a not to exceed level of \$57,500. This includes both the community satisfaction and racial equity survey as well as the voter polling services. The cost to conduct the survey is \$25,000. The focus groups can be conducted at a cost of \$7,500, all included in the total not to exceed amount.

If the Council prefers to focus specifically on a racial equity/DEI survey or outreach and engagement program, costs for this work would be further determined as part of the RFQ for such services.

**Attachments:**

1. Resolution No. 2022-02
2. Contract No. C22-01
3. Supplemental Narrative provided by Probolsky Research