

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

Agenda Date: 6/20/11  
Reviewed by: BP

**SUBJECT:** Amendment to waterfront planning contract between the City of Albany and Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) for community engagement services associated with the proposal to locate a second campus of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) on the Golden Gate Fields property

**REPORT BY:** Beth Pollard, City Manager

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That Council authorize the City Manager to execute a contract amendment with Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) to perform community engagement services associated with the proposal to locate a second campus of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) on the Golden Gate Fields property, conditioned upon the cost of these services and expenses to be fully reimbursed by the owner of the Golden Gate Fields property.

**BACKGROUND**

The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) is seeking a location for a second campus within 25 minutes of its current location in the Berkeley hills. LBNL issued a request for proposals from owners of property in the East Bay interested in being considered for this campus. LBNL received 21 proposals, from which six sites were selected for further consideration. The Golden Gate Fields (GGF) property in Albany and Berkeley is one of those six sites.

The essence of the GGF proposal is that the racetrack, stables and related structures would be removed, and the 140 acre property that spans the cities of both Albany and Berkeley would contain the second campus, commercial development, and open space. More information about the Lab second campus and the possibilities for the GGF proposal are expected to be provided at a community meeting that LBNL is conducting on Wednesday, August 3, 2011, 7:30 pm, at the Albany Community Center.

**DISCUSSION**

From 2008 to 2010, the City contracted with Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) to involve the Albany community in a participatory process through which the voices of Albany residents could formulate a clear and strategic vision for the future of Albany's waterfront –

primarily the GGF property. Known as *Voices to Vision*, the process was educational and engaging. FTA researched the complex history of the waterfront property, published an information guide that was sent to every household, and maintained an interactive website for questions and answers and new information.

FTA facilitated 39 neighborhood sessions in Phase One of the process, where residents learned more about the property, discussed possible future scenarios and consequences in small groups, and created maps showing potential configurations and uses. These 199 maps were coalesced into a range of scenarios that served as the backdrop for a second round of 10 community sessions, which involved additional information and individual choices among the options. In the meantime, all Albany households were invited to express their opinions in a confidential survey, with both specific and open ended questions. In all, more than 1,200 Albany residents, or one in ten adults, participated in a session and/or survey.

The results of *Voices to Vision*, described in a 97-page report and 842-page appendix, included recommended guidelines for built area and dedicated open space; height limitations; allowable uses within the built area; site design and architectural quality; and financial implications. As stated in the report, these guidelines “are meant to be a tool for both the City of Albany and the current or future owner(s) of the privately-owned 102-acre site in Albany...to effectively develop the site as its use, or ownership, changes in the near to long-term future.” These guidelines reflect the community’s vision of expanding the open space area on the waterfront while making every effort to retain (and possibly increase) the tax revenue generated from the site.

All of the *Voices to Vision* materials remain accessible at the website:  
[www.voicestovision.com](http://www.voicestovision.com)

## **ANALYSIS**

*Voices to Vision* serves a critical role in guiding the property owner, City, and community in developing and evaluating the possibilities for a second LBNL campus on the GGF property. Just as importantly, Fern Tiger Associates would serve as a critical resource in helping the affected parties fully understand the underpinnings of the guidelines and the context for shaping potential development and open space scenarios. The firm's excellent track record in engaging the Albany community, establishing trust with its residents, and producing a high quality outcome bode well for the value of their involvement with ensuring that the creation of the LBNL proposal will reflect the values and vision of the Albany community. By contracting with FTA, Albany has a stronger chance that its concerns, aspirations, and goals will be an integral part of the project planning.

Staff recommends that the City amend its contract with FTA for *Voices to Vision* to include FTA conducting community engagement services associated with the proposal for the LBNL second campus at GGF. This work would include, but not be limited to communications, public education, consulting, facilitation, graphics and other professional services. This recommendation is conditioned upon execution of an agreement between the

City and the property owner for the property owner to reimburse the City for the cost of these services. The property owner has conceptually agreed to this reimbursement arrangement.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT**

Sustainability principles are incorporated into the Site Design and Architectural Quality guidelines in *Voices to Vision*.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

None to the City, as the contract costs will be fully reimbursed by the property owner.