

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

Agenda Date: 9/15/08  
Reviewed by: BP

**SUBJECT:** Albany Pre-School Seismic Improvements - Contract agreement with ESI Earthquake and Structures, Inc., for design services.

**REPORT BY:** Ana Bernardes, Project Manager  
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**RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize staff to enter into a consulting services agreement with ESI Earthquake and Structures, Incorporated, engineering consultants, for design of seismic improvements for the preschool building, located at 850 Masonic Avenue, in the amount of \$10,000.

**BACKGROUND**

The City-owned building at 850 Masonic Avenue is an older house, with approximately 1,600 square feet of floor area, that was moved onto the site from another location. It is not known exactly when the house was moved to this location, but is likely a result of the BART track construction. The land on which the building is located is adjacent to the Albany Senior Center. The property on which the building is located is leased by the City, which in turn leases the property and the City-owned building to the Albany Pre-School.

While the building seems generally sound, the foundation does not contain the usual seismic restraint provisions required by code. Seismic improvements for the building were authorized by the City Council as part of Capital Improvement Plan in July 2006 and initial estimates were determined to cost \$42,000. This estimate was based on a preliminary assessment done by a structural engineer in September 2003, which visually examined the existing structure and made some recommendations of the levels of seismic improvements that would make the building safer for its use as a pre-school.

In July 2007, Council authorized going out to bid. However, plans had not been prepared at that time and staff became aware that the project would be more difficult than previously envisioned. One reason was because the building would have to be supported during foundation work, and the rest of the work will be performed from within the narrow crawl space under the floor. There is also the problem that the building is in use for most of the year and the Pre-School sessions are only interrupted during the summer for about six weeks. Based on conversations with the Pre-School staff, City staff recommends that this project be

built during summer 2009, at which time the pre-school will temporary relocate its summer program elsewhere. The purpose of this staff report is to initiate preparation of the plans in order to be ready for the 2009 session, and allow the Pre-School adequate time to relocate.

## **DISCUSSION**

Deficiencies being addressed in this update design include the lack of shear resistance in the foundation, and inadequate anchoring between the foundation and the framing. The west wall of the building entirely lacks a foundation, and some of the main floor girder supports do not have interior pad footings. In addition to the work identified on the preliminary design, the furnace equipment is sitting over loose concrete blocks and lacks bracing to support seismic movements. The school has also built several cabinets around the perimeter of the building, which have resulted in insufficient ventilation openings at the crawl space.

This project will provide for sufficient vent openings, replacement of the existing sump pump, and a new concrete pad and proper bracing of the furnace, which was not identified originally as part of the preliminary design.

Staff contacted several structural engineers who either declined to propose on the job because of its size or because they could not meet the terms and conditions of the City's standard contract agreement for consultant services. ESI- Earthquake and Structures, Inc., which specializes in seismic retrofitting of older buildings, did submit an acceptable proposal which is now before the City Council. B.K. Paul, ESI president, holds a valid structural engineer license and has an office in Oakland. According to the ESI Statement of Qualifications, they are familiar with Albany's older homes in that they have prepared designs for several Albany residential additions and foundation replacements. They have also prepared designs in concert with professional architects working in Albany.

Attached is the ESI proposal to provide design plans and specifications for the seismic improvements of the Albany Pre-School building foundation. The design work is estimated to cost \$10,000.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Funds from Measure F will be used for this project. Initial plans were to use the city's per capita funds from Proposition 40, however, this project did not qualify for those funds. Part of this project will be paid from Measure F funds (\$42,000) originally reserved for this project. The remaining funds will come from Measure F monies that had been assigned to the Veteran's Memorial Building (\$44,906). To date, \$4,530 has been expended on the project, of which \$1,600 was for the structural engineer who prepared the preliminary design assessment. Thus, \$82,376 remains for design, and construction.

### Attachment

ESI- Earthquake and Structures, Inc. - Cost estimate for engineering design services