



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

**DATE:** May 9, 2018  
**TO:** Planning Department Consultant Pools and Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Lisa Gibson, Environmental Review Officer  
**RE:** Administration of San Francisco Planning Department –  
Environmental Planning Qualified Consultant Pools

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This planning department memorandum describes the environmental planning (EP) division's guidance on its process for selection of environmental, historic resource evaluation, archeological review and monitoring, and transportation impact analyses consultants for privately sponsored projects. Under Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code (Chapter 31), EP serves as the lead agency for environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for all private projects requiring public approvals. CEQA permits the City's CEQA-related environmental review to be prepared by contractors. However, the City is legally obligated to exercise its independent judgment and to participate actively and significantly in the process of preparing and drafting environmental review documents. EP developed the process set forth in this memorandum to ensure the quality and integrity of the CEQA process in San Francisco.

## **Overview of Environmental Planning Pre-Qualified Consultant Pools**

All privately-sponsored projects are required to use the Department's pre-qualified consultant pools (consultant pools) for CEQA work associated with the following disciplines: environmental review, transportation impact analysis, historic resources evaluation, and archeological resources evaluation and monitoring. The only exception to this requirement is for the consultant pools for historic resource analysis and this is described below under the historic resources subheading.

For planning department sponsored projects, the department will select consultants from the pool on a contract-by-contract basis. Some of these may be master contracts with consultants, from which task orders can be issued for specific work during the life of those contracts. The selection process will depend on the scope of the necessary environmental review, consistent with City contracting requirements.<sup>1</sup> For projects sponsored by other public agencies, these agencies may choose to use any consulting firm on the planning

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<sup>1</sup> Projects funded with state or federal grant funds may not utilize the pools if the grant procurement requirements conflict with this RFQ process.

department's consultant pool for environmental review of their projects, but will not be required to do so.

Additionally, the administration of the pre-qualified consultant pools will be conducted separately for all of the following consultant services, as applicable: environmental, historic resource evaluation, archeological review and monitoring, and transportation impact analyses. Once all the consultants are selected for a project, it is up to the project sponsor, planning department, and consultants' discretion to determine if the consultants for individual technical areas will be subconsultants to the environmental consultant or will operate under separate contract(s).

The process for administration of the pre-qualified consultant pools for privately sponsored projects is discussed in more detail below for environmental, historic resources, archeological review, and transportation consultants.

### **General Environmental Review Consultant Pool Procedures**

This section describes the process for administration of the general environmental review consultant selection for privately-sponsored projects and the preliminary consultant list selection (PCL) process. When consultant services are warranted, private projects sponsors may select a consultant from a subset of three consultants, known as the preliminary consultant list or "PCL". The PCL is administered by the planning department from the appropriate pool, according to the process set forth below. (Besides general environmental, these PCL procedures also apply to the historic resource evaluation, archeological review, and transportation impact analyses pools, as applicable and described further below.)

1. When consultant services are indicated, EP will provide project sponsors with a list of three consultants from the applicable pool, which shall be known as the preliminary consultant list or "PCL". The PCL will be selected according to a rotational order in conjunction with the case-specific criteria described below.
2. EP may depart from the rotation based on considerations relevant to the

quality and integrity of the environmental review process, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Project scope or scale;
  - b. Special expertise of a firm within the pool;
  - c. Consultant performance after the effective date of inclusion in planning department consultant pool (including quality, timeliness, and cost of submittals for other projects); and
  - d. Any other factors that bear on a consultant's expected quality, the overall robustness of the City's consultant pools, and the integrity of the City's environmental review process.
3. When the planning department is notified that consultant services are warranted, the Department will send out the PCL list to the three consultants included and the project sponsor.
4. Consultants included in the PCL may withdraw from the list by informing the consultant pool manager as soon as feasible and within five working days of their notification. Within that five-day period, consultants may request that EP extend this period to 10 working days if circumstances make it infeasible to reach a decision on withdrawal from the PCL within 5 days. If a consultant chooses to withdraw, the firm will retain its position in the pool rotation queue.<sup>2</sup> If a consultant withdraws, EP will then identify the next eligible consultant for inclusion in the PCL. If a consultant on a PCL does not submit a bid on a project, but does not withdraw within the 10-working-day period, the consultant will not retain their place in the rotation. A consultant may not withdraw after the project sponsor has made their selection of a consultant.

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<sup>2</sup> Consultants will retain their position in the consultant pool rotation if they withdraw from the PCL within the five-day period. In the subsequent PCL, if the consultant chooses to withdraw for a second time, the consultant would lose their position within the consultant pool rotation and a different consultant would instead be included in the next PCL. Consultants can voluntarily remove themselves from a consultant pool rotation by informing the Planning Department.

5. The project sponsor may select any one of the three identified consultants. Once selected by a project sponsor, both the consultant and the project sponsor must email [CPC.EnvironmentalReview@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.EnvironmentalReview@sfgov.org) within 24 hours of the consultant selection. EP's consultant pool manager will maintain a list of selected consultants for each case. Following assignment of an environmental planner within EP, the project sponsor can initiate the necessary background studies identified in the initial assessment and an initial scoping meeting will be held if necessary.
6. Once a firm is selected, EP will post the PCL and the selected firm on the department's website at the following [link](#). Firms may submit a written notice of protest on the question of inclusion on the PCL for a project within 5 business days of the posting. The notice must state the specific basis for the protest, based on the firm's qualifications and the nature of the project in question, and must specify facts and evidence sufficient for the department to determine the validity of the protest. The protest must be signed by the designated contact person for the firm. Protests must be submitted, by 5 p.m. on the fifth working day after the posting, to Bella La, Contracts Administrator, at the planning department. If a protest is determined to be legitimate, EP will remedy the matter in a subsequent PCL for a comparable project.

### **Transportation Consultant Pool Procedures**

This section describes the environmental planning division of the planning department's process for transportation consultant selection for privately-sponsored projects. The administrative consultant pool procedures vary depending upon the scope of the project, and whether the project is defined as a site circulation or regular project, or a complex project.

1. For site circulation or regular projects, EP transportation staff will notify the project sponsor to select any one of the transportation consultants within the established pool of consultants (as of 01/24/2018). Site circulation or regular projects are projects that require analysis of one or more transportation topics within a geographic area

that may include the project block or extend beyond the project block. Project sponsors may select any consultant from the pool for regular projects. The department posts this list here: [link](#).

2. For complex projects, the department will send out the PCL list to the three transportation consultants included. Complex projects are multi-phased, require a large infrastructure investment, include both programmatic and project-level environmental review, or statewide, regional, or areawide significance as defined in CEQA. The PCL administrative procedures are described above under the general environmental review consultant pool subheading.

Project sponsors must directly email [CPC.TransportationReview@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.TransportationReview@sfgov.org) once a consultant is selected for a project. Project sponsors must wait for a confirmation email from the planning department with an assigned EP transportation planner. Please email [CPC.TransportationReview@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.TransportationReview@sfgov.org) if you have any questions about these procedures.

### **Historic Resources Consultant pool**

This section describes the process for selection of a historic resources consultant for privately-sponsored projects. Use of the historic resource consultant pool is only required for the following types of projects:

1. A project that creates ten or more dwelling units; and/or
2. The construction of a new building or addition to an existing structure of 10,000 square feet or more (non-residential).

These triggers defined above align with the department's Preliminary Project Assessment ("PPA") process for projects. When the proposed project meets any or both of the triggers above, the project sponsor may select a consultant from the PCL administered by the planning department from the historic preservation consultant pool, according to the procedures outlined above under the general environmental review consultant pool subheading.

Project sponsors must directly email [HRE@sfgov.org](mailto:HRE@sfgov.org) once a consultant is selected for a project. Project sponsors must wait for a confirmation email from the planning department with an assigned preservation planner. Please email [HRE@sfgov.org](mailto:HRE@sfgov.org) if you have any questions about these procedures.

### **Archeological Review Consultant pool**

This section describes the environmental planning division of the planning department's process for archeological review consultant selection for privately-sponsored projects. All projects requiring archeological review consultant services must be administered through the PCL process.

The archeology PCL is administered after a project goes through a preliminary archeology review, where EP's archeology staff has determined that a technical background document is required to conduct environmental review, or is required for mitigation monitoring. Project sponsors may also request the PCL for fulfilling their mitigation monitoring requirements, which occurs after the environmental review is complete.

Project sponsors must directly email [CPC.Archeology@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.Archeology@sfgov.org) once a consultant is selected for a project. Project sponsors must wait for a confirmation email from the planning department with an assigned preservation planner. Please email [CPC.Archeology@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.Archeology@sfgov.org) if you have any questions about these procedures.

If you have any questions about administration of the consultant pool, please contact Chelsea Fordham, Consultant Pool Manager, at (415) 575-9071 or [Chelsea.Fordham@sfgov.org](mailto:Chelsea.Fordham@sfgov.org).