

# South Bay Cities Council of Governments

November 19, 2020

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: Jacki Bacharach, SBCCOG Executive Director

SUBJECT: 2021 General Assembly Virtual Event Management Services

## Adherence to Strategic Plan:

*Goal D: Organizational Stability.* Be a high performing organization with a clear path to long-term financial health, staffing continuity, and sustained board commitment.

## **BACKGROUND**

Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) will be conducting the 2021 General Assembly in a virtual format. Staff is looking forward to exploring the advantages that this format can provide - potentially increasing the number of attendees and delivering valuable content to a larger audience. The event is scheduled for Thursday, March 18, 2021.

Over the last 21 years, the General Assembly has been held annually in person with attendance typically around 350 people. The event focuses on important issues for local governments with several speakers and panelists discussing topics of interest to our members. The event on average has about 22 sponsors who receive benefits such as exhibit space along with name promotion on materials before, during, and after the event. In addition, SBCCOG member cities and partners are invited to exhibit during the event.

The 2021 event preparations are underway. Similar to past events, the agenda currently has 12 confirmed speakers. Sponsors have also already started committing their support. The event is expected to last between 5.50-6 hours and staff is reviewing options for sponsor/member/partner benefits such as a virtual exhibit hall.

## **ANALYSIS**

SBCCOG staff does not have the tools, staffing, or expertise to conduct an event of this scale virtually. To address this gap, a Request for Quotes was issued. Specifically, the SBCCOG requested services to manage and execute the overall virtual event; provide the centralized virtual platform to host the event; assist with selection and implementation of sponsor benefits; and conduct post event activities such as analytics and video.

Three firms responded and the top firm was interviewed. Based on their quote (see attached proposal) and interview, the Verdical Group is recommended to provide the virtual event management services to the SBCCOG for the 2021 General Assembly. The firm has previous experience including supporting and managing virtual events such as the Net Zero Conference and Expo, Façade Tectonics World Congress, B Corp Champion Retreat, The ABCs of ZNE Workshop, and Emerging Technologies Coordinating Council Summits in the past (see pages 7 – 11 of attached proposal for more details). Verdical Group uses the Swoogo virtual platform to host events, which has proved to be dynamic and reliable and is provided through the proposal at

no extra cost for the SBCCOG. Additionally, Verdical Group will provide a team of four staff members to plan, prepare, and support the event, specifically allotting two staff members coupled with Swoogo technical support to aid and engage participants during the day of the event.

### **COST**

The Verdical Group proposed a set of basic services for a set price of \$15,660 (see Base Proposed Scope of Services on page 5 of attached proposal). This service packet adequately provides the elements needed to conduct the event. In addition, the firm provided optional services that the SBCCOG can select to enhance the event (see Optional Additional Services on page 6 of attached proposal). Examples of additional services include virtual Expo Hall platform setup and management, sponsorship outreach (securing sponsors), virtual production consulting to produce sponsor commercials, alternatives to our in-person lunch coordination (sending out lunches), and event marketing support. Staff is currently reviewing these options to assess added value for the event. The optional services total is \$16,470 which added to the basic services would bring the total contract cost to \$32,130. This cost is similar to past in-person general assemblies which included expenditures for items such as sponsorship outreach and development, audio / video support, photography, food, linen rentals, and gift items. For the last two in-person general assemblies (2018 and 2019) these costs averaged \$31,747.

Although we do not expect to take advantage of all of the optional services, at this time staff is recommending approval of a contract budget not to exceed \$32,130 which would include both the basic and optional services. This budget will allow Staff to access optional services as/if necessary, as needs are identified.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve contract with Verdical Group in an amount not to exceed \$32,130 for proposed basic as well as optional services to be accessed as needed.