



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 9/26/2023

File #: 23-1215

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Professional Services Agreement with Planet Labs PBC to Continue to Provide High-Resolution Imagery Services

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve, and authorize Chair of the Board to execute, the attached professional services agreement with Planet Labs PBC for high resolution imagery in the amount of \$623,062.62 for the term of the agreement, not to exceed \$207,687.54 annually; and
2. Authorize the Director of Planning and Building to execute subsequent amendments during the term of this agreement following review and approval by County Counsel, Risk Management, and the County Administrative Office; and
3. Direct the Clerk of the Board to return one fully executed original copy of the attached professional services agreement with Planet Labs PBC to the Planning and Building Department.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Code Enforcement General Fund Allocation (1100269)

DISCUSSION:

Since 2018, the Planning and Building Department has pursued increased efficiency and effectiveness through the innovative use of aerial imagery. To allow these efforts to continue, the Planning and Building Department is requesting that the Board of Supervisors approve the extension of the existing professional services agreement with Planet Labs PBC.

By incorporating Planet Labs PBC aerial imagery into the county geospatial information system (GIS), the Planning and Building Department has been able to address several inspection challenges, which include:

Code Enforcement:

The Humboldt Environmental Impact Reduction (HEIR) team is responsible for processing complaints and opening and closing violations related to cannabis cultivation violations. The team utilizes the aerial imagery to monitor compliance progress and/or continued non-compliance on active cannabis violations and to investigate complaints related to illegal cannabis cultivation. The HEIR program has addressed over 1,200 violations since inception, and there are approximately 200-300 current cannabis violation cases actively being addressed by the HEIR team. In addition, the Traditional team is responsible for investigating code violations concerning substandard housing, junk vehicles, unpermitted structures, and other non-cannabis violations to the County Code. This team utilizes the aerial imagery to conduct site inspections for compliance and on-going code violations, and to follow up on new construction complaints. This allows the team to investigate the potential activity prior to sending a staff to the location.

Post Approval Monitoring of Cannabis Projects:

The aerial imagery has proven to be a valuable resource in that it aids the Post Approval Monitoring (PAM) team in the ability to conduct, document, and follow up on required annual cannabis inspections for over 1,200 approved permits to ensure compliance with cannabis ordinances and that cultivation activity aligns with the approved site and operations plan. The aerial imagery provides efficient, effective, and timely inspection results during the cannabis cultivation season and can bring to light any problems that require corrective actions. Additionally, by using the various technologies available in the Planning and Building Department, inspections at cannabis cultivation sites have been scheduled in two-week cycles with a three week notice to permit holders. By comparing permit data to imagery data prior to visiting the site, the Planning and Building Department can review what has been at the site, what should be at the site and what is at the site. By integrating satellite data with the county GIS, the Planning and Building Department has realized significant savings in route planning and on-site inspection time. These tools working together also enhances safety by identifying problem areas in advance.

Discretionary Team:

The Discretionary team of the Current Planning Division is responsible for processing all land use applications, including but not limited to existing cannabis applications. Discretionary staff utilize the aerial imagery in lieu of a site visit in the initial stages of an application to document and confirm site plans and structures existing on the property. This is primarily useful for cannabis projects with existing cultivation because the imagery can verify the cultivation footprint for several years.

Building Inspection and Permit Issuance:

The Building Inspection and Permit Issuance teams use aerial imagery to verify information for the Safe Homes Program. The Safe Homes Program allows property owners a path forward in bringing unpermitted residential structures into compliance. The aerial imagery provides staff access to historic imagery that can help estimate the age of a structure. With the age of the structure identified, the Permit Issuance team can apply the Building Code applicable to that period of time. In addition, the Building Inspection team uses the aerial imagery to evaluate grading and tree removal sites associated with permit applications and potential violations associated with these activities. Having access to the

current and historic aerial imagery has proven to be a valuable resource across all functions of the Planning and Building Department.

There is a significant costs savings benefit of having the aerial imagery, as it reduces the amount of staff time normally required to conduct site visits to locations spread across more than 4,000 square miles in Humboldt County, which are often in remote, forested areas with challenging road systems. In addition, the costs savings is equivalent to a minimum of 1.5 full time employees. The continued use of aerial imagery will enable existing staff to have the tools necessary to engage and produce effective reports, to ensure compliance activities, and to overall support department functions.

The Planning and Building Department has negotiated a renewal with Planet Labs PBC at a 30% reduction from the previous agreement. This reduction recognizes the importance of cost savings while allowing the Planning and Building Department to continue to benefit from the operational advantage of satellite imagery and retain the benefits realized since 2018.

Aerial imagery is also valuable to other county departments including the Assessor (to evaluate new and existing structures for tax assessment), Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office, Department of Public Works (roads), and Office of Emergency Services.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expenditures (Fund, Budget Unit)	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26* Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$296,696.49	207,687.54	207,687.54
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$296,696.49	\$207,687.54	\$207,687.54
Funding Sources (Fund, Budget Unit)	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26* Projected
General Fund	\$296,696.49	\$207,687.54	\$207,687.54
Total Funding Sources	\$296,696.49	\$207,687.54	\$207,687.54

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

The attached professional services agreement with Planet Labs PBC has a total payable of \$623,062.62 for the term of the contract, not to exceed \$207,687.062.62 annually. In the event funding is reduced or eliminated, the agreement includes a termination provision.

Approval of this agreement will not have an additional impact on the General Fund. The General Fund allocation in fiscal year 2023-24 budgeted for the ongoing use of Planet Labs PBC for satellite imagery data.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board’s Strategic Framework priority of providing community-appropriate levels of service and managing resources to ensure sustainability of services.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could choose not to sign the agreement with Planet Labs PBC. This is not recommended because satellite imagery has allowed the Planning and Building Department to carry out the work of the department for less cost by evaluating site characteristics and scheduling routes.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Professional Services Agreement: Planet Labs PBC - Partially executed
2. Insurance Certificate from Planet Labs

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: C-12

Meeting of: April 10, 2018

File No.: 18-298