



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/15/2025

File #: 25-463

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Authorization for the Director of Humboldt County Planning and Building Department to Execute a Pre-Competed Government Contract Purchase Order Between the County of Humboldt and Carahsoft Technology Corporation for Continuing the Accela standard Web-Based Permitting Software in the Amount of \$238,088.51 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 and renew annually for a total of 5 years, not to exceed \$1,315,554.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive the staff report; and
2. Authorize the Director of Planning and Building to execute a purchase order between the County of Humboldt (County) and Carahsoft Technology Corporation to subscribe to the Accela standard web-based permitting software and to renew the subscription annually for 5 years; and
3. Authorize the Director of Planning and Building to execute amendments to this contract after approval by County Counsel, Risk Management and the County Administrative Office.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Workforce & Operational Excellence

Strategic Plan Category: 3002 - Invest in county facilities

DISCUSSION:

The Planning and Building Department is requesting that the Board authorize and direct the Director of the Planning and Building Department to execute the required purchase order between the County of Humboldt and Carahsoft Technology Corporation to continue utilization of the Accela standard web-based permitting software and to allow the Director to continue renewing this subscription annually for up to 5 years. Furthermore, staff requests to authorize the director to obtain a new quote for pre-competed government rates every 5 years for continued Accela subscription services without having to return to your Board for approval.

On May 23, 2017, the Board authorized the department to execute a purchase order with Carahsoft Technology to subscribe to the Accela standard web-based permitting software (Accela). In September of 2018 via a pre-competed contract with Carahsoft Technology Corporation, a General Services Administration approved vendor, the department successfully migrated to the Accela permitting software. Unlike the previous permitting software system used by the Planning and Building Department, the Accela web-based subscription service has seen consistent upgrades and improvements since the department's initial transition. The Accela web

-based subscription service requires no on-site system or server hardware beyond the standard desktop computer, and there are no operating system or hardware maintenance costs. This allows staff to access the needed files and information from any computer with internet access. This global access has been instrumental in the department's continuity of operations during emergency and field operations and proved to be a vital tool throughout the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response. Since the transition in 2018, the software has gone from version 10 to version 25.1.0 resulting in many new features and repairs that improve stability, security, and efficiency. These upgrades do not result in additional costs to the department because upgrades are included in the subscription service.

Adaptability and rapid improvements are among the benefits of the Software as a System (SaaS) model utilized by Accela. The Accela subscription service is both flexible and scalable, providing significant potential to continually evaluate, improve and automate our staff processes. This configuration enables all staff to access and update information from any computer with internet access, ensuring continuity of operations and mobile operations. The system and all record data is stored and backed up at multiple off-site locations to avoid catastrophic loss.

On March 30, 2020, the Accela web-based subscription service transitioned to the Microsoft Azure Cloud, the Planning and Building Department opted to partner with Accela to be one of the first agencies to make this transition. The transition to the Azure Cloud provides numerous advantages over the previous database and web servers, including improved service availability, uptime, performance and streamlined troubleshooting and support for customer agencies. Additionally, the transition to Azure Cloud facilitates the use of dynamic informational tools within Accela to provide reports and data to staff and management to inform decision making and department process improvement.

The Accela Citizen Access Portal (ACA) allows the public to monitor and interact with applications and permits. Frequently requested reports may also be made publicly available via this portal, minimizing staff time to respond to inquiries and requests for data. There are many options available to enhance the public portal to enable the public to open permit applications and pay fees and there are plans to continue to expand the use of these options for customers over the course of the continued subscription.

On June 16, 2020, your board authorized the Division of Environmental Health (DEH) to execute purchase order with the Carahsoft Technology Corporation to provide data migration services through SEP Technology Consulting and to subscribe to Accela standard web-based permitting software. By allowing DEH to acquire the Accela web-based permitting software, land use permits, and other programs processed by the Planning and Building Department and DEH can be accomplished through a single system. These cooperative efforts have benefited the permit streamlining process by providing a single system that allows project tracking across both departments. Citizens and staff utilize the ACA portal to obtain and exchange information about project activity by using the platform. The Accela web-based subscription permitting service, which is considered the industry standard, is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They also allow and enable rapid development and fielding of tailored products, data sets, and processes for addressing the dynamic data requirements of the department's core programs as well as supporting and referral agency changes.

In July of 2023, the Planning and Building Department began the process of transitioning to an all-electronic application format for applications and project referrals. The Department has seen measurable cost savings in both material (print, postage, and ink) and staffing hours, savings which are in turn passed onto the applicant. With this in mind, on January 10, 2024, the Department implemented the electronic only format for both Planning and Building applications and project referrals, a service provided by the Accela platform. Citizens and Partner Agencies were encouraged to set up an Accela Citizen Access (ACA) account. Project referrals are sent by way of email notifications to Partner Agencies when the project proposed deems it necessary, or we determine it is warranted. The ACA account is a vital tool our Partner Agencies use to review and respond to referrals for both Planning and Building projects. This transition to electronic application and referral format was made with intent to streamline the application and project approval process and utilize our resources most effectively and is fully supported by the Accela web-based permitting service.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Permit Fees from Current Planning (277), Building (262), Code Enforcement (269), and a portion paid by the General Fund (1100)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The costs to the Planning and Building Department are separated into the same three components which include 1) initial 55 user licenses, 2) additional 35 licenses, and 3) Accela Citizen Access Portal (ACA). The subscription fees for the 5-year term are as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4)	Year 5
35 Licenses	\$87,109.40	\$91,465.15	\$96,038.25	\$100,840.25	\$105,882.00
55 Licenses	\$146,460.05	\$153,782.75	\$161,471.75	\$169,545.75	\$178,022.90
ACA	\$4,519.06	\$4,730.70	\$4,967.23	\$5,228.66	\$5,490.10
TOTAL	\$238,088.51	\$249,978.60	\$262,477.23	\$275,614.66	\$289,395.00

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

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

The cost increases by 5% each year. It is known that 5-year quotes for this subscription will always see an increase of 5% year over year based on the previous 5 years (the 5th year just completed is where start with the pricing for year 1. No supplemental budget is requested for the Planning and Building Department because the department budget includes the cost of the Accela web-based subscription service. A 3-year extension is an available option at a higher cost per year and higher overall costs from both Accela and Carahsoft.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Department of Health and Human Services (DHSS) Environmental Health Division uses a customized module that depends on the Planning and Building Accela baseline. Should the Planning and Building Department migrate away from Accela or have a break in service from the existing system, it would also immediately and directly impact Environmental Health’s records, permits and operations.

Additionally, the data extracted from the Accela system is integral to the production, timeliness and accuracy of numerous operational layers of the Department’s Geographic Information System (GIS). These layers are heavily used by other county agencies including Public Works, Sheriff’s Office, Office of Emergency Services, Assessor’s Office and numerous coordinating inter-agency agencies related to land use and regulation.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could choose not to approve this request; however, this is not recommended as it would negatively impact the ability of the department to meet the permitting and code enforcement needs of the public. Furthermore, your Board could choose not to authorize the director to execute amendments after approval by County Counsel, Risk Management and the County Administrative Office. However, this is not recommended as the costs come from a pre-competed government contract.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Carahsoft Proposal and Quote for Accela
- 2. Carahsoft Terms and Conditions

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: May 23, 2017, June 19, 2018, June 16, 2020
File No.: 17-1907, 18-624, 20-646