



# STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** David Loya, Community Development Director

**PREPARER:** Delo Freitas, Senior Planner

**DATE:** October 15, 2025

**TITLE:** **Award a Contract in the amount of \$115,190 to HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. for CEQA/NEPA Services for the Roger’s Garage Affordable Housing Project; Authorize a 10% Increase for Contingencies; and Approve Necessary and Associated Related Actions.**

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Council:

- 1) Award a contract in the amount of \$115,190 to HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. for CEQA/NEPA Services for the Roger’s Garage Affordable Housing Project;
- 2) Authorize the City Manager or designee to increase the contract price by up to 10% (\$11,519 for a total not to exceed \$126,709) to allow for contingencies; and
- 3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all applicable documents.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The City sought proposals from qualified consultants for preparation of an Initial Study and Environmental Impact Report (EIR), per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and preparation of an Environmental Assessment, per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), required for the “Roger’s Garage” Affordable Housing Project. The Roger’s Garage project has been brought forward by an outside applicant, but the City’s Land Use Code requires that the City shall prepare environmental documents directly or by contract with a qualified consultant, as determined by City Council protocols.

City staff released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for providing CEQA/NEPA services in August and received four competitive responses before the RFP deadline. A selection committee reviewed and ranked all four proposals and determined that HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. provided the best overall response, and their cost proposal was competitive. Staff recommend authorizing the award with an approximate 10% cost contingency. This action will award the contract to HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. to conduct the work.

The City posted its RFP for Arcata Zoning Updates – Planning Services, on August 19, 2025, (<https://www.cityofarcata.org/bids.aspx?bidID=166>), with responses due on September 11, 2025. The City received four proposals and the selection committee chose to interview the two highest-ranked respondent teams. The panel’s rankings considered both the written and interview responses of both teams (Attachment A). The proposals were highly competitive, but the review panel ranked HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. slightly higher, due largely to their demonstrated experience with similar projects across the state.

The recommendation of contract award to HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. is based on staff's interest in choosing a firm that can develop high-quality, comprehensive environmental review documents that meet all legal requirements and address the concerns of the public. HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc., has a proven track record of working with communities on environmental review associated with multifamily housing projects using State and Federal grant funding, and staff is confident that HELIX's team will be a good fit for the project.

Staff anticipates bringing work product to the community and decision makers over the next nine-month period before bringing final documents for approval in late summer/early fall 2026.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REVIEW:**

The work product will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and committees as appropriate before being adopted by the Council. Staff will continue to ensure the Council has access to the work as it develops.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA):**

The contract award is not subject to environmental review. It is not a project as defined by CEQA. The work completed in this award directly involves CEQA project review.

**BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:**

The City will contract with HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. as required by the City's Land Use Code to ensure preparation of an independent document. The environmental work will be funded either by the applicant or by the Community Development Block Grant Program Income (CDBG PI), if the use of CDBG PI is available. Environmental review is an eligible CDBG expenditure for affordable housing projects. If the project does not produce affordable housing, the cost of environmental review will be borne by the applicant. There will be no fiscal impact to the City's budget.

**RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:**

Motion to:

- 1) Award a contract in the amount of \$115,190 to HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. for CEQA/NEPA Services for the Roger's Garage Affordable Housing Project;
- 2) Authorize the City Manager or designee to increase the contract price by up to 10% (\$11,519 for a total not to exceed \$126,709) to allow for contingencies; and
- 3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all applicable documents.

Consent Calendar vote.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Scoring Results Summary
- B. HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. Cost Proposal Table for Arcata Zoning Updates