STAFF REPORT
Consent Agenda Item

DATE: October 5, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Amy Nilsen, City Manager

SUBJECT: **Informational Update on GHD Professional Services Agreement for Lower Eel River Wetlands Acquisition Due Diligence**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file this informational report regarding the City Manager's execution of a professional services agreement with GHD for pre-acquisition environmental due-diligence services for the Lower Eel River Wetlands Acquisition.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City is pursuing acquisition of approximately 244 acres along the Lower Eel River. The proposed acquisition would protect coastal wetlands and uplands, with approximately 7.2 acres retained by the City for a future riverfront park and the remaining property transferred to the Wiyot Tribe. As part of pre-acquisition due diligence, the State Coastal Conservancy requires a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and a baseline conditions report. GHD will prepare these documents under a professional services agreement with a total not-to-exceed amount of $21,172. The State Coastal Conservancy, one of the granting agencies supporting this acquisition, is requesting these docments by November 1, 2026. The City's Purchasing Procedures authorize the City Manager to approve purchases of goods or services from $10,000 to $100,000. Accordingly, Council approval is not required for execution of this agreement. This report is provided to keep the City Council informed of the work, cost, schedule, and funding source.

CORE VALUES: STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2036:

This work supports the community core values of Quality of Life: Family, Nature & Neighbors, Clear Direction, and Community Character. It also advances Strategic Plan Priority 6, Parks, Trails & Outdoors - Fortuna's Natural Advantage, which identifies protection and activation of the Eel River and development of Lower Eel River Park with river access as long-term direction. The environmental due-diligence documents will provide information needed to evaluate the proposed acquisition.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The agreement has a total not-to-exceed amount of $21,172 and provides for time-and-materials compensation. Costs will initially be paid from general park acquisition and improvements account, 9105, which has a total budget of $145,000 for FY 26/27. These funds are expected to be reimbursed by the State Coastal Conservancy.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Because this is an informational item and no Council action is requested, no alternatives are presented.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

1. Receive and file informational report. Consent agenda vote.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Attachment A: GHD Professional Services Agreement