STATEMENT OF ISSUE:
At the City Council’s July 26, 2013 retreat, the City Council discussed various governance topics, including exploring a more proactive legislative advocacy program. In response to the Council’s direction, staff developed and released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Professional Legislative Advocacy Services on December 6, 2013. Thirteen proposals were submitted in response to the RFP. After a review of all proposals, six of the most qualified firms were invited to a preliminary interview with the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem. Of the six firms, two firms were selected for a final interview with the full City Council.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
Review the Professional Legislative Advocacy Services proposals presented and direct staff to enter into an agreement with the firm that the Council determines can best meet City Council requirements and objectives.

DISCUSSION:
Walnut Creek has historically been proactive in taking leadership positions on a variety of key regional, state and federal issues. The City participates in the National League of Cities, the California League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the East Bay Leadership Council as well as other regional and state organizations that have an influence in local, state and federal affairs.

In 2003, the City Council adopted a resolution establishing a legislative advocacy program for the City of Walnut Creek. At the time, this advocacy program’s primary focus was the preparation of an annual legislative platform, used for furthering the City’s interests on a variety
of state legislative affairs. The work was traditionally undertaken by City staff, based on the policy direction of the Council.

Over the years, Walnut Creek has met many local public improvement needs through state and federal appropriations and grants for specific capital improvements. For example, funding for the Treat Boulevard Overlay, City Hall Solar Project, Ygnacio Valley Adaptive Signal Timing Project, and multiple pedestrian and bicycle improvements were the direct result of staff’s proactive approach to identifying and securing state and federal funding opportunities.

Looking forward, as Walnut Creek continues its efforts to maintain its aging infrastructure, as well as continuing the City’s longstanding practice of taking leadership positions on key state and federal issues, it will become increasingly important to work with a professional and experienced legislative advocacy firm. Furthermore, as the competition for federal and state funding intensifies, the City must optimize its share of these limited resources.

Acknowledging the value of an effective legislative advocacy program, at the City Council’s July 26, 2013 retreat, the Council directed staff to develop a Request for Proposals for professional legislative advocacy services. In response to the Council’s direction, staff prepared and released an RFP for Professional Legislative Advocacy Services on December 6, 2013. The RFP was structured so as to identify state and federal advocacy firms with experience representing cities and regional local government coalitions, as well as a successful track record of advancing local government legislative agendas and successfully securing state and federal funding opportunities.

The proposed scope of work includes monitoring and advising the City of important state and federal legislation, working with the City Council and staff to develop an annual legislative agenda, coordinating meetings with state and federal representatives and working with staff to align project needs with funding opportunities. Firms were also asked to describe their experience developing and working with regional lobbying coalitions, in the event neighboring jurisdictions are interested in partnering in the future.

Staff received thirteen proposals in response to the RFP. The proposals were reviewed by a cross-departmental team of staff from Public Services, Community and Economic Development and the City Manager’s Office. Upon completion of this review, six of the thirteen firms were invited to a preliminary interview with the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem. Based on this initial interview, the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem selected two firms—Townsend Public Affairs and Platinum Advisors—to interview with the full City Council. Both firms have a successful track record and extensive experience working with local governments to further their legislative priorities and secure state and federal funding opportunities.

Each firm has been allotted 25 minutes to provide a brief presentation and respond to questions from the Council. Copies of each consultant’s proposal are attached for the Council’s consideration and review.
FINANCIAL IMPACTS:
The proposals are presented as not to exceed fees. The proposed fee schedules for both firms are as follows:

**Townsend Public Affairs**
- Monthly Fee: $8,500
- Total Annual: $102,000

**Platinum Advisors**
- Monthly: $10,000
- Total Annual: $120,000

If the Council directs staff to proceed with entering into an agreement with one of the firms, any fees incurred during the remainder of the 2013-2014 fiscal year would be charged to the Council’s contingency budget. Going forward, staff would include the cost the proposed 2014-2016 Budget.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS:
1. Choose to not interview consultants at this time and provide alternative direction to staff.
2. Direct staff to gather additional proposals for evaluation and consultant contract award consideration.

DOCUMENTS:
Attachment 1: Proposal - Townsend Public Affairs
Attachment 2: Proposal - Platinum Advisors

COUNCIL ACTION RECOMMENDED:
Review the Professional Legislative Advocacy Services proposals presented and direct staff to enter into an agreement with the firm that the Council determines can best meet their requirements and objectives.

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