



SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE March 6, 2024

PREPARED FOR Mayor and Town Council

PREPARED BY Heather Abrams, Town Manager

SUBJECT Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the Town Manager to Enter into an Agreement with FM3 for Scientific Survey Regarding a Possible Bond Measure for Road Repairs and Authorize Town Manager to Pay for the Scientific Survey and Postcard in an amount not to exceed \$32,690

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council adopt the attached Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to enter into an Agreement with FM3 for a scientific survey regarding a possible bond measure for road repairs and authorize the Town Manager to pay for the scientific survey and postcard in an amount not to exceed \$32,690.

BACKGROUND

Previous discussions:

The Council and staff have received complaints regarding the state of road repair within the Town. The Town is ranked lowest in Marin County on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), a rating from 0 to 100 of the severity and extent of distresses observed on a pavement surface. The Council has received several presentations from staff and expert consultants regarding the current condition of roads and the limitations of the current budget for repairs within Fairfax, including on February 1, 2023, March 1, 2023, January 10, 2024, and January 24, 2024.

Financial situation:

In 1999, the Council placed Measure K on the ballot to help fund road and infrastructure repairs of up to \$6.83 million, which was expended on Fairfax infrastructure nearly two decades ago. At that time, more than two-thirds of Fairfax voters approved, and bonds were issued in 2000, 2002, and 2006. The Town currently has a rating of AA+, which allows the Town to access favorable financing rates.

Construction costs throughout California continue to escalate and Fairfax's road condition continues to decline. Unfortunately, the cost to complete the deferred maintenance and repairs needed outstrips the Town's current resources. Continuing pay-as-you-go repairs and maintenance will not be sufficient to maintain Fairfax's current low PCI rating, and improving Fairfax's PCI will require even more resources. Extending the existing property tax rate or increasing the property tax rate would provide needed additional funds to complete road projects and stabilize costs in the long term because planned maintenance is far less expensive than emergency repairs and full replacement after deferred maintenance.

Progress thus far:

Since 2022, Public Works Director Umbertis has successfully completed several large projects, including Scenic and Porteous repaving, retaining wall repairs at 145 Canyon, and one-time sidewalk improvements in town. Council approved a project charter to help the Town work with Marin County to apply for grants and repair Bolinas Road, which appears to be gaining traction with federal funders. Grant applications typically require matching funds of 10% to 25%, and bond proceeds would facilitate applying to larger grants than Fairfax could normally access.

Several commentators have mentioned that Larkspur used to have the lowest PCI rating in Marin; Larkspur now has the among the highest PCI rating in Marin, and the lowest place is held by Fairfax. Larkspur was able to make this dramatic upturn in its PCI ranking by increasing the general sales tax from which the Council allocated a portion of the revenue for the repair of its roads.

Steps in the Process:

- Council Direction: On January 10, 2024, the Council discussed and directed staff to pursue a scientific survey on the possibility of a voter approved bond for road repairs.
- Voter Surveying/Polling: If the Council approves the attached resolution, the surveying/polling firm will design and implement a poll of residents on bond options and collect real data on the priorities and willingness to support a tax measure. The Council may wish to appoint a Subcommittee of two Council Members to review the proposed survey questions before the scientific survey begins. Surveying/polling would likely be completed in the Spring.
- Project Planning: At the January 24, 2024, Council Meeting, Public Works staff and consultants presented the draft 5-year plan for paving, based on current resources. If the scientific survey results show that a bond measure may succeed, a draft 5-year plan based on potential bond proceeds can be generated to provide information on which projects could be completed with additional resources.
- Council Approval: By June or July the Council would need to approve placing a measure on the November 2024 ballot. If the Council decides not to act this year, the next probable opportunity is in 2026.
- Voter Campaign: A group of residents would be needed to run the campaign for the measure, as Town staff are only allowed to provide educational information (not campaign materials).
- Voter Approval: If voters approve the measure, staff will bring financing documents and road projects back to the Council for review and approval.
- Project Implementation: Once financing is secured, design will begin, and project timelines will be brought before the Council.

DISCUSSION

Following the Council's direction on January 10, 2024, to proceed with a scientific survey regarding a possible bond measure for road repairs, staff contacted the following well-known firms and asked for cost proposals. In the case of TeamCivx/Godbe Research two separate firms proposed as one team, wherein TeamCivx would provide consulting on communication and Godbe Research would conduct the scientific survey.

Firms contacted:

- [TeamCivx / Godbe Research](#)
- [Tramutola](#)
- [Lew Edwards Group](#)
- [FM3](#)

Staff received proposals from two firms:

- [TeamCivx/Godbe Research](#) for \$32,150 for 20-minute survey, plus communications costs
- [FM3](#) for \$27,500 for 20-minute survey, plus postcard cost

Both firms that submitted proposals are well qualified and can provide the scientific survey services needed. The cost proposed by FM3 was lower, thus staff are recommending that the Council approve the attached resolution to authorize the Town Manager to execute an agreement with FM3. The agreement will be reviewed by the Town Attorney, as is the standard practice.

The service cost is \$27,500, to provide a 20-minute scientific survey with 300 participants, as well as the analysis and report needed to estimate the likelihood of a bond measure's success. In addition to the scientific survey, FM3 offers the option of sending a postcard to residents for an additional \$5,190. The postcard would increase awareness of and participation in the scientific survey. Staff recommends selecting FM3 for the scientific survey and the postcard for a total not to exceed \$32,690.

FISCAL IMPACT

With the acceptance of the bid from FM3 the scientific survey and the postcard totals \$32,690. Funds from the Public Works General Fund 01-51-821 will support this project.

ATTACHMENT

Resolution

RESOLUTION 24-__

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH FM3 FOR THE SCIENTIFIC SURVEY AND POSTCARD DISTRIBUTED TO TOWN RESIDENTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$32,690

WHEREAS, the Fairfax Town Council has received complaints regarding the state of road repair within the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Town is ranked lowest in Marin County on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), a rating from 0 to 100 of the severity and extent of distresses observed on a pavement surface, and

WHEREAS, the Council has received several presentations regarding the current condition of roads and the limitations of the current budget for repairs within Fairfax, and

WHEREAS, in 1999, the Council placed Measure K on the ballot to help fund road and infrastructure repairs, which was expended on Fairfax infrastructure nearly two decades ago, and

WHEREAS, the Town currently has a rating of AA+, which allows the Town to access favorable financing rates, and

WHEREAS, Construction costs throughout California continue to escalate and the Fairfax road condition continues to decline, and

WHEREAS, continuing pay-as-you-go repairs and maintenance will not be sufficient to maintain Fairfax's current low PCI rating, and improving Fairfax's PCI will require even more resources, and

WHEREAS, on January 10, 2024 Council directed staff to pursue a scientific survey on the possibility of a voter approved bond for road repairs, and

WHEREAS, staff requested and received multiple proposals, and

WHEREAS, the lowest cost proposal was from FM3, and

WHEREAS, the service cost is \$27,500, to provide a 20-minute scientific survey with 300 participants, and

WHEREAS, FM3 offers the option of sending a postcard to residents for an additional \$5,190, bring the total cost of the scientific survey and the postcard to a total not to exceed \$32,690, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax, California hereby proclaims and authorizes the Town Manager to execute a contract with FM3 for the scientific survey and postcard distributed to town residents in the amount of \$32,690.

The foregoing resolution was duly passed and adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax at a duly noticed meeting held in said Town on the 6th Day of March, 2024 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

Barbara Coler, Mayor

Attest: _____
Christine Foster, Deputy Town Clerk