



# CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



August 8, 2023

## ITEM TITLE

Agreement: Approve an Agreement with Cityzen Solutions, Inc., Doing Business As PublicInput, for an Online Public Engagement Platform

**Report Number:** 23-0204

**Location:** No specific geographic location

**Department:** City Manager

**Environmental Notice:** This activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) State Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to State Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) no environmental review is required.

## Recommended Action

Adopt a resolution approving an agreement with Cityzen Solutions, Inc., doing business as (“dba”) PublicInput, for an online public engagement platform, with an initial term through June 30, 2026, and two optional one-year extensions.

## SUMMARY

The City of Chula Vista prioritizes public engagement in all aspects of City operations. In support of expanding and enhancing public participation, staff is recommending the implementation of an online public engagement platform that will centralize and encourage public participation in City projects, programs, and initiatives, while providing rich and intuitive tools for learning and gathering public input. Following a public procurement process, staff recommends entering into an agreement with Cityzen Solutions, Inc., dba PublicInput, with an initial term through June 30, 2026 and two, optional, one-year extensions.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Director of Development Services has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with CEQA and has determined that the activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines because it will not result in a physical change in the environment; therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Thus, no environmental review is required.

## BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Not applicable.

## DISCUSSION

The City of Chula Vista prioritizes public engagement in all aspects of City operations. In support of expanding and enhancing public participation, staff is recommending the implementation of an online public engagement platform that will centralize and encourage public participation in City projects, programs, and initiatives, while providing rich and intuitive tools for learning and gathering public input.

On January 5, 2023, the City posted request for proposals (“RFP”) RFP P09-2023 to Planet Bids, seeking competitive proposals from software providers for an online software as a service (“SaaS”) public engagement platform.

The minimum features to be provided were as follows:

1. Educational: A straightforward, intuitive, platform to present information in multiple readable formats, including text, maps, charts, and lists.
2. Customizable: A flexible platform that will work across a variety of projects to solicit feedback in multiple ways.
3. Visual: The tools must be visually appealing, with a design preference for simplicity over complexity. The platform should effectively present visual elements such as maps, layouts, and photos. Any stock photos on the platform that show people must represent the diversity of Chula Vista.
4. Self-guided: The development and management of the content and data generated by the platform must be usable in an un-facilitated online setting.
5. Accessible: ADA-compliant and conforming to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, as applicable.
6. Capable of integration: Able to host or link documents, images, or other relevant content and able to be embedded on other webpages. Able to download data or content for use in documents, reports, presentations, etc.
7. Compatible: Usable with a variety of web browsers and devices (tablets, smartphones, etc.).
8. Civil: Allow the moderation of comments and the removal of inappropriate comments and messages.
9. Social: Interface with social media platforms, including Instagram, Twitter, NextDoor and Facebook, and support sharing on those platforms.
10. Data-smart: Collect data on participation and survey responses, as well as narrative input and geographic data (if mapping features are used) and provide this data through both native reports and data export.
11. Mappable: Enable users to provide specific locational feedback. Integration with ArcGIS highly desirable.
12. Engaging: Provide for two-way engagement and communication between the City and public.
13. Verification: Employ methods to limit or identify spam comments and interactions by bots, focusing on input from legitimate individual users.
14. Privacy: Employ a strong privacy policy and functionality to safeguard personal identifiable information.
15. Multilingual: Bilingual (English/Spanish) or multilingual functionality is highly desirable.

The City received twelve (12) responses to RFP P09-2023. Each proposal was reviewed for qualifications and evaluated by a selection committee, consisting of staff from the City Manager’s Office, Information and Technology Services, and Housing and Homeless Services. The proposals were ranked, and the top four (4) respondents were invited to provide a presentation and demonstrate their software to the selection committee. Presentations were made by PlaceSpeak, Cityzen Solutions, Inc. dba PublicInput, Social Pinpoint and Granicus, LLC.

The selection committee then evaluated the proposals based on the following criteria:

1. Understanding – evaluation of respondent’s understanding of the purpose of the procurement.
2. Qualifications – evaluation of respondent’s demonstrated qualifications to provide the scope of services.
3. References – evaluation of respondent’s demonstrated ability to undertake the scope of work and produce the required outcome in a timely manner.
4. Proposed Cost – evaluation of the fee proposal, including both one-time and ongoing costs.
5. Demonstration – evaluation of the ability of respondent’s online public engagement platform to provide the features set forth in the scope of work.

Based upon the above evaluation process, staff recommends entering into an agreement with Cityzen Solutions, Inc., dba PublicInput, with an initial term through June 30, 2026 and two, optional, one-year extensions (Attachment 1).

Based on the proposal and the presentation, it is staff’s understanding that PublicInput’s software helps governments build community relationships through engagement and supports active collaboration with residents that:

- Capitalizes on genuine community interest;
- Uses technology to address barriers to participation;
- Offers consistent, predictable interactions that build trust over time;
- Acknowledges differences and identifies gaps in participation; and
- Encourages new pathways for participation and increases engagement.

Among other reasons, staff also recommends PublicInput because it supports equitable access in the decision-making process. Specifically, PublicInput provides:

- Compliant engagement that supports transparent public decision making;
- Increased incidences of representative input beyond the “usual voices”;
- A consistent, accessible, and predictable resident experience; and
- Increased ability to turn engagement data into defensible decisions.

The complete proposal received from PublicInput is provided as Attachment 2 to this item.

The negotiated fee schedule for the term of the agreement, including extensions, is provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Compensation Summary**

<b>Contract Year</b>	<b>Period Start</b>	<b>Period End</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b><i>Initial Term</i></b>			
1	8/8/2023	6/30/2024	\$ 40,290
2	7/1/2024	6/30/2025	\$ 43,953
3	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	\$ 43,953
<b>Initial Term Subtotal</b>			<b>\$ 128,196</b>
<b><i>Optional Years</i></b>			
4	7/1/2026	6/30/2027	\$ 48,348
5	7/1/2027	6/30/2028	\$ 53,183
<b>Optional Years Subtotal</b>			<b>\$ 101,531</b>
<b>Grand Total Including Optional Extensions</b>			<b>\$ 229,727</b>

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“ARPA”) Revenue Recovery funds have been programmed for this purpose through the initial term of the agreement. If the optional one-year extensions are exercised, funding will be identified in future years as part of the regular budget development process.

The proposed agreement, inclusive of the Terms and Conditions, conforms with the City’s Privacy Protection and Technology Transparency Policy.

**DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT**

Staff has reviewed the decision contemplated by this action and has determined that it is not site-specific and consequently, the real property holdings of the City Council members do not create a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov’t Code § 87100, et seq.).

Staff is not independently aware, and has not been informed by any City Councilmember, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

**CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT**

Current-year contract costs will be prorated for the period August 8, 2023 through June 30, 2024, with a current-year fiscal impact of \$40,290. ARPA Revenue Recovery funds have been programmed and appropriated for this purpose in the current fiscal year. There is no current-year fiscal impact to the General Fund as result of this action.

**ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT**

Compensation for the initial term of the contract totals \$128,196 and will be funded using ARPA Revenue Recovery funds. If the two optional one-year extensions are exercised, up to an additional \$101,531 will be expended. Funding for exercised optional extensions will be identified and appropriated as part of the regular budget development process.

## ATTACHMENTS

1. PublicInput Annual Service Agreement
2. PublicInput Response to RFP P09-2023

*Staff Contact: Tiffany Allen, Assistant City Manager*