

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Administration Committee

December 13, 2023

Agenda Item 2d - 23-1412

Contract Amendment — Market Research Support: EMC Research, Inc. (\$350,500)

Subject:

This item requests Committee approval to authorize the Executive Director or designee to enter into a contract amendment in an amount not to exceed \$921,500 with EMC Research, Inc. (EMC) to provide public opinion research support for major MTC initiatives including return-to-office employer surveys, the Next Generation Bay Area Freeways Study and transportation revenue measure research and polling, for a total contract amount not exceed \$921,500.

Background:

MTC staff is working on several initiatives of high priority for the Commission, including a potential future transportation revenue measure, the Next Generation Bay Area Freeways Study and continued research on Bay Area return-to-transit and return-to-office trends — all of which are key components of implementing Plan Bay Area 2050. This memorandum provides information on the proposed public opinion and market research components of these initiatives.

To explore the potential for placing a transportation revenue measure on the 2026 ballot, MTC staff needs the support of an experienced local market research firm to conduct quantitative public opinion surveys of likely voters in the nine-county Bay Area on their attitudes and priorities around public transit and transportation to inform the future measure and its enabling legislation. In addition, staff require the support of EMC to conduct a public opinion poll to help inform the recommendations of the Next Generation Bay Area Freeways Study. The study is exploring the feasibility of all-lane tolling on freeways with robust parallel transit service in 2035. Staff plans to conduct a public opinion poll to help build a better proposal of recommendations that is more responsive to the public's priorities. Lastly, additional budget is needed to continue the return-to-office employer surveys, extending a body of research that was started in January 2022 and continues to provide staff and our partners with trend data from a range of Bay Area employers about bringing employees back to the workplace.

Contract Overview:

In October 2021, MTC issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to establish an on-call bench of pre-qualified firms to provide services for Public Engagement, Digital Engagement and Promotion, and Market Research support. The RFQ included three service categories including 1) public engagement, 2) digital engagement and promotion, and 3) market research expertise. In December 2021, this Committee approved thirteen firms for placement on an on-call bench for a period ending December 31, 2024, with an option to extend for an additional two years to December 31, 2026. The on-call bench included EMC, which qualified in the market research category.

In January 2022, MTC entered into a contract with EMC for market research support to develop and implement public opinion polls, online surveys, and convene focus groups for MTC's plans and projects. Under this contract, EMC initiated the still-ongoing periodic employer surveys research, conducted and analyzed findings from a March 2023 public opinion poll of 1,800 likely voters, and conducted and analyzed findings from an October 2023 public opinion poll of 2,700 likely voters. In addition to this work, EMC has also conducted several other recent public opinion polls and focus groups, including polls for BAHFA's housing measure.

Next Steps:

The proposed contract amendment with EMC would focus on public opinion and market research to inform the Next Generation Bay Area Freeways study recommendations, a potential transportation revenue measure and continue return-to-office employer surveys. MTC staff will work with EMC to develop the following:

- **Opinion research:** Conduct a statistically significant poll to gauge the public's opinions on congestion, road pricing and complementary strategies to inform the recommendations from the Next Generation Bay Area Freeways Study;
- **Employer research:** Working with employers, conduct periodic surveys to gauge employers' expectations and plans about the return of the Bay Area workforce to a physical workplace; and
- **Transportation research:** Provide additional research and public opinion polling as needed.

Within the next few months, MTC staff will update the Commission on the status and next steps of the aforementioned projects.

EMC is neither a small business enterprise nor a disadvantaged business enterprise and has no subcontractors.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Staff recommends that the Committee authorize the Executive Director or designee to negotiate and enter into a contract amendment with EMC in an amount not to exceed \$350,500 for the work described above, for a total new contract not to exceed amount of \$921,500.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Request for Committee Approval – Summary of Proposed Contract Amendment



Andrew B. Fremier

Request for Committee Approval

Summary of Proposed Contract Amendment

Work Item No.: 1112, 1622

Consultant: EMC Research, Inc.,
San Francisco, CA

Work Project Title: Market Research Support

Purpose of Project: Provide opinion and market research support for MTC projects and initiatives.

Brief Scope of Work: Provide opinion research support for major MTC initiatives including return-to-office employer surveys, the Next Generation Bay Area Freeways Study and transportation revenue measure research and polling.

Project Cost Not to Exceed: This amendment: \$350,500
Current contract amount before this amendment: \$571,000
Maximum contract amount after the amendment: \$921,500

Funding Source: General Fund and RM2 Marketing Funds

Fiscal Impact: \$350,500 is included in the FY 2023-24 MTC Budget

Motion by Committee: That the Executive Director or designee is authorized to negotiate and enter into a contract amendment with EMC Research, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$350,500 for market research support described above and in the Administration Committee Summary Sheet dated December 13, 2023, and that the Chief Financial Officer is authorized to set aside \$350,500 for such amendment.

Administration Committee:

Gina Papan, Chair

Approved:

December 13, 2023