Atascadero City Council
Staff Report - City Manager’s Office

City Participation in Regional and City Specific Tourism Study in Conjunction with the Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Council:
1. Authorize the City Manager to execute agreements with the Economic Vitality Corporation and Strategic Marketing Group for a Strategic Directions Package and Community Tourism Marketing Plan and appropriate $12,000 from the funds set aside for the Economic Development Strategy; and,


DISCUSSION:

Background: The Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) is embarking on a countywide Tourism Study to explore the impacts of tourism on the County and propose a strategy to enhance the industry. Council Member O’Malley is the City’s representative to the EVC and he is currently the Chairman of the Board.

The EVC circulated a Request for Proposal for a tourism study and conducted a selection process. The proposal was revised with the guidance of the EVC to reflect local needs. The EVC also negotiated an opportunity for local agencies to utilize the regional consultant to perform specific analysis for those Cities’s desiring to participate. This allows the participating agencies to leverage their resources in the bigger project.

The proposals for both the countywide and specific agency reports are attached. The EVC has asked for the City to express its interest in funding the countywide study and/or participating in a study specific to Atascadero.
The cities in the County are currently evaluating their participation. One city is contemplating a commitment of $2,500 to the countywide effort and is considering participation in the City specific program, others are still developing their position.

**Analysis:** The City Council has identified Tourism as a potential economic development opportunity for Atascadero. The City is currently reviewing the qualifications of consultants to prepare an Economic Development Strategy which would include tourism. The EVC program would provide a consultant specific to the tourism industry and may produce a more focused strategy.

The countywide study will cost $45,000 and the EVC is seeking public and private sponsors. The Atascadero specific study will cost $12,000 for both phases.

**Conclusion:** Continued cooperation with the EVC, the regional entity supporting economic development, and the study the tourism industry countywide and in Atascadero have been goals of Atascadero. This appears to be a unique opportunity to participate in a regional effort and work with a high quality consultant specializing in tourism strategies.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Depending on the Council commitment the cost of this proposal could be $14,500.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Take no action
2. Study the tourism issues in the City’s Economic Development Strategy and decline participation in the EVC program.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Revised proposal from SMG for countywide study
2. Revised scope of work for a supplemental services for communities within San Luis Obispo County