

Thursday, January 13, 2022

**Submitted via email**

tkerr@arfed.org

Tim Kerr, P.E., General Manager  
American River Flood Control District  
185 Commerce Circle  
Sacramento, CA 95815

**Re: Proposal for Election Redistricting Services for the American River Flood Control District**

Dear Tim:

**SCI Consulting Group** ("SCI") is pleased to submit this brief proposal to the American River Flood Control District ("District") for Election Redistricting Services. We understand the District is interested in converting from an "at-large" to a "by-district" system for electing District Board members and seeks professional consulting assistance to make an informed decision.

SCI is a California Corporation formed in 1985 and is well experienced in developing geographic zones and districts within larger local agency boundaries, balancing complex political, social, ethnic/racial, economic, commercial, infrastructural, and other priorities. For this Project, SCI will meet with District elected officials and staff, as well as community stakeholders, to develop project goals. SCI will then analyze available data, including the U.S. Census, American Community Survey, California Statewide Database data, real estate, and parcel data, GIS data, including school locations, important local landmarks, features, and other non-traditional data sources. Additionally, SCI will analyze localized political and community trends. SCI will develop and propose two to four draft district plans that satisfy the project goals, work iteratively with the District to finalize the plan and assist the District in communicating the selected approach to the broader community. All plans will be consistent with the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 and other applicable law and legal decisions.

As part of this Project, SCI will pay particular attention to the goals of the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 (Elections Code Sec. 14025 et seq.) in regard to ensuring there is no racially polarized voting which disadvantages a protected class, as well as to the requirements of the federal Voting Rights Act (52 U.S.C. Sec. 10301 et seq.) which disallows "the denial or abridgment of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color."

We respectfully offer the following strengths, which differentiates our firm from others, for your consideration:

**LOCAL POLITICAL PROCESS EXPERTISE** With over 35 years of experience in the specialized field of political data analysis for public agencies, we are proud of our industry-leading record of assisting public agencies. For example, for agency-wide revenue measures, which include a survey, SCI has a success rate of over 95% with over 130 successful ballot measures.

---

**POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ANALYSIS EXPERTISE** SCI engineers and consultants use state-of-the-art computer-based analytical tools to perform data analysis to support the development of zones and districts, including database systems and Graphic Information Systems (GIS). SCI has developed and utilizes a number of proprietary programs to perform our work since the off-the-shelf software used by other firms does not provide the level of accuracy we require.

**POLITICAL OUTREACH EXPERTISE INCLUDING SOCIAL AND WEB-BASED MEDIA** We have a long history of developing and implementing successful community outreach for our clients, including the critical development of key messaging developed and tested as part of our mailed survey approach. Our approach is based upon the distribution of key messages and supporting information as part of our comprehensive community outreach through talking points, FAQs, newsletters, mailers, press releases, e-mail, text, nextdoor.com, Facebook, text, door-to-door, website, hotline, small group meetings, open house meetings, and public hearings.

**LOW OVERHEAD/LOW-COST PROVIDER** We understand the demographic services must be provided in a cost-effective method to keep the District's costs within the budget constraints. For this reason, we maintain the lowest overhead and leanest structure in the industry. While other firms maintain multiple offices, hierarchical administration, and much higher overhead costs, we operate more effectively and with a lower overhead cost from one central office in a low-cost business area.

**UNMATCHED TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES** Every person in our firm, aside from our administrative staff, is a database expert. We have developed in-house, specialized programs to improve our demographic services. We are also GIS and mapping experts. We invite you to compare, or better yet, test, our databases and technical expertise with the staff from any other firm.

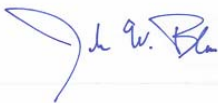
**UNMATCHED RESPONSIVENESS AND SERVICE** We invite you to call our toll-free taxpayer inquiry line at (800) 273-5167 to compare our level of service and responsiveness with any other firm. We answer calls directly with knowledgeable staff. We also provide the highest level of service and responsiveness for our clients, including responding to our clients within the same day.

**OUR CLIENTS ARE OUR BEST REFERENCES** We encourage you to speak with any of our clients, not just the listed references. They will attest to the comprehensive nature of our services, our level of client responsiveness, and our levy administration abilities.

This proposal is binding for 90 days from the submission date of January 13, 2022.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. I can be reached at (707) 430-4300 or by e-mail at john.bliss@sci-cg.com. We look forward to this opportunity to assist the District with this important project and stand ready to proceed.

Sincerely,



John Bliss, P.E.  
President

cc: Arcelia Herrera, SCI Consulting Group

## **SCOPE OF WORK AND APPROACH**

SCI would begin this Project with a kickoff meeting with the District. The project goals and overall approach will be refined at this meeting, along with required deliverables and project timelines.

### **Task 1: Development of Districting Database**

SCI will develop a database utilizing decennial Census, American Community Survey, and California Statewide Database data. SCI will add various attributes to the data set, including voter data, voter history, parcel data such as values, use, and other attributes.

### **Task 2: Incorporation of GIS Data**

SCI will incorporate GIS and shapefile data to create a rich data set that links with political, social, ethnic/racial, economic, commercial, infrastructural, voter, and parcel data with location and size information. School locations, important local landmarks or features, local neighborhood boundaries, and other desired lines and shapes will be included.

### **Task 3: Development of Draft Districting Plans**

SCI will develop and propose two to four election districting plans consistent with the project goals, the California Voting Rights Act of 2001, and other applicable law and legal decisions. The proposed election districts will be designed to facilitate and promote equitable representation on the District Board. The following project goals will be pursued in the development of the by-district plans:

- The election district will be developed consistent with all applicable laws.
- The election district boundaries will not be gerrymandered.
- The election district boundaries will be compact, cohesive, and contiguous.
- The election district boundaries will include whole census blocks when possible.
- The election district boundaries will be designed to not deny any citizen the right to vote because of race or color.
- The election district boundaries will be designed considering population density, land use, important facilities, topography, and geology, other natural division.
- The election district boundaries will avoid, when possible, the pairing of incumbents.

### **Task 4: Meetings**

SCI will actively participate in public meetings, including up to three District Board meetings. SCI will describe legal, administrative, financial, and political considerations and community outreach. Based upon input from staff, Board Workshop, and experience, SCI will prepare two to four options. SCI will provide outreach, and coordination of up to three public outreach meetings, including the development of material. SCI will recommend the final product to the Board for consideration in June. SCI will facilitate bi-lingual documentation and verbal communication throughout the process – three of our twelve consultants are fluent Spanish speakers.

## **PROJECT TIMELINE**

Senate Bill 594 (Glazer) passed last year requires all special districts to pass a board resolution adopting their updated maps by April 17, 2022, if their regular election is on the same day as the statewide November 2022 general election. The project timeline will be determined upon initiation of the Project, focusing on presenting districting plans to the District Board before April 17, 2022.

## **PROJECT TEAM**

If selected, Arcelia Herrera, Senior Consultant, would serve as the project manager. John Bliss, President of SCI, will serve as principal-in-charge. Senior Consultants Susan Barnes and Chris Coulter will also contribute to the Project.

### **Arcelia Herrera, Senior Consultant**

Arcelia Herrera, an assessment administration specialist, contributes over 16 years of experience in finance, administration, and consulting services to the SCI team. Ms. Herrera has extensive expertise with creating and administering benefit assessments, special taxes, and fees. In addition, Ms. Herrera is a computer, GIS, and database expert, with advanced degrees and training in these fields. Arcelia graduated from California State University, Monterey, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Computing.

### **John Bliss, M.Eng., P.E., President**

John Bliss specializes in tax/fee/assessment engineering, demographics, balloting, cost estimating and budgeting, database design and implementation, regulatory compliance, and revenue measure formations. He has over 20 years of experience with special taxes, property-related fees, benefit assessments, public works engineering, and database applications. He has been involved in all phases of the opinion research, assessment engineering, demographic analysis, and ballot proceeding processes entailed in over eighty successful benefit assessment and special tax ballot measures for public agencies in California. During his tenure at SCI, Mr. Bliss has served as the responsible Engineer on over 300 engineer's reports for new or increased assessments, fees, and charges – comprising more successful post-Proposition 218 new assessment/fee/charge engineering than any other assessment engineer in the State.

Mr. Bliss graduated from Brown University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering and holds a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering from The University of California, Berkeley, where he was a Regent's Scholar. He is a licensed Professional Civil Engineer in California and is a LEED accredited professional.

### **Susan Barnes, Senior Consultant**

Susan Barnes contributes over 16 years of experience in finance, administration, and consulting services to the SCI team. Ms. Barnes has expertise in creating and administering benefit assessments, special taxes, property-related fees, public opinion research projects, meeting facilitation, and other consulting services. In addition, Ms. Barnes has extensive media and educational outreach experience. Ms. Barnes graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and holds a Master's Degree in Organizational Development from Sonoma State University.

**Chris Coulter, Senior Consultant**

Chris Coulter contributes experience in funding measure feasibility, data analysis, and financial analysis services to the SCI team for public, private, and non-profit organizations. Mr. Coulter specializes in rate study analysis and Proposition 218 formation of benefit assessment districts, community facility districts, and fee rate structures. In addition, Mr. Coulter is experienced in spatial and regional analysis, opinion research, public outreach, demographic studies, and ballot measure development. Mr. Coulter is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature.

**OTHER INFORMATION**

**Employment Policies.** SCI Consulting Group ensures compliance with all civil rights laws and other related statutes. SCI does not and shall not discriminate against any employee in the workplace or against any applicant for such employment or against any other person because of race, religion, sex, color, national origin, handicap, age, or any other arbitrary basis.

**Conflict of Interest Statements.** SCI has no known past, ongoing, or potential conflicts of interest for working with the District, performing the Scope of Work, or any other service for this Project.

**Insurance.** SCI carries professional Errors and Omissions insurance in the amount of \$2 million per occurrence and \$2 million aggregate. SCI also carries general liability insurance in the amount of \$2 million per occurrence and \$4 million aggregate.

**Independent Contractor.** If selected, SCI shall perform all services included in this proposal as an independent contractor.

**FEE SCHEDULE AND MANNER OF PAYMENT**

In consideration of the work accomplished, as outlined in this proposal, SCI shall be compensated a fixed fee of \$64,750. A progress payment of \$25,000 shall be due and payable on May 1, 2022, with the remaining fees due upon completion of the project.

The scope of service includes up to seven (6) meetings. Additional in-person meetings shall be \$550 per consultant, per meeting.

Incidental costs incurred by SCI for the purchase of property data, maps, travel and other out-of-pocket expenses shall be reimbursed at actual cost with the total not to exceed \$3,500 without prior authorization from the District.

In the event the District elects to request optional, additive scope of work, SCI will work with the District to negotiate compensation for these additional tasks and execute an Addendum to the agreement for these additional services.