



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-506, **Version:** 1

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*Report Prepared by: Joseph D. Angulo, Environmental Project Manager, Engineering*

**SUBJECT:** Award Contract to Rincon Consultants, Inc. for Environmental Compliance Services for the Well Site #3 Tank Removal, Project No. 117047

### REPORT IN BRIEF

Consider awarding a contract in the amount of \$41,740 to Rincon Consultants, Inc. to prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the proposed removal of the Well 3 water storage tank at 511 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

### RECOMMENDATION

**City Council** - Adopt a motion:

- A. Awarding a contract for the proposed Well 3 water tank removal environmental impact report to Rincon Consultants, Inc., in the amount of \$41,740; and,
- B. Authorizing the City Manager or Assistant City Manager to execute the necessary documents.

### ALTERNATIVES

- 1. Approve, as recommended by staff; or,
- 2. Approve, subject to modifications as conditioned by City Council; or,
- 3. Refer to staff for reconsideration of specific items; or,
- 4. Deny.

### AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200, et seq.

Services with an estimated value greater than \$30,000 are made by written contract in accordance with Merced Municipal Code, Title 3 - Revenue and Finance, Chapter 3.04.

California Public Resources Code, Section 5024.1 - California Register of Historical Resources

California Public Resources Code, Section 21158 - Focused Environmental Impact Report

### CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As provided for in the 2017-18 Adopted Budget

### DISCUSSION

### Municipal Well Site 3

Merced's Well Site #3 is located at 511 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The well site currently includes a groundwater supply well designated Well 3C and a 140-foot high elevated water tank structure. The 300,000-gallon riveted steel tank was installed in 1934 for maintaining water system pressure in the growing City of Merced. The system was designed so that groundwater is pumped out of the well and into the elevated storage tank. The water then flows under the influence of gravity from the elevated tank to the City's piping distribution system. When the water reaches a low level in the tank it automatically turns on Well 3C to refill the tank. This arrangement served to maintain pressure in the piping system to provide a dependable water supply for the City's residents and businesses. However, if other Merced wells are pumping and supplying adequate water pressure to the system, then the tank will remain full and Well 3C will not start pumping.

The original City well 3 was installed on the subject site in the 1920's. Replacement wells 3A and 3B were installed on the parcel in the 1950s. These two wells were impacted by the chemical Tetrachloroethylene, also known as Perchloroethylene (PCE), and were removed from service. PCE is a chlorinated solvent that persists when discharged to the environment. Wells 3A and 3B were destroyed in 1987 due to the PCE impacts and Well 3C was installed that same year to replace the older, shallower wells. Unfortunately, Well 3C was also impacted by the PCE and it has intermittently contained detectable concentrations of PCE ranging from 0.5 to 2.2 ug/l (micrograms per liter or parts-per-billion.) This is below the State drinking water standard of 5 ug/L.

A PCE groundwater treatment system consisting of four (4) twenty-thousand (20,000) pound carbon vessels was installed at the site in September 2017. The groundwater is pumped from Well 3C, through the carbon filtration vessels, and then directly into the water piping distribution system. This plumbing arrangement completely bypasses the elevated tank. One important aspect of the PCE treatment system is that Well 3C must be operated (pumped) to send as much water as possible through the carbon vessels. Besides the primary purpose of providing a clean drinking water source to Merced, this is also to prevent the water in the vessels from becoming stagnant and facilitating the formation of bacteria on the carbon media. The 300,000-gallon water tank cannot be used as in the past because it would cause idle periods of non-pumping due to the large storage capacity of the tank. This situation will hinder the proper operation of the PCE treatment system as noted above.

Staff recommend demolishing the Well Site #3 tank as it is no longer needed to operate Merced's water supply system. In addition, its continued use would serve as an impediment to the proper operation of the PCE groundwater treatment system.

### California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Staff expected that a CEQA negative declaration for environmental impacts would be applicable to the tank demolition. A Request-for-Quotes for environmental services was issued and it included an Initial Study to ensure compliance with CEQA. Staff received one quote and approved an August 16, 2017, Statement-of-Services contract to Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon). The contracted work included completing the CEQA Initial Study and related tasks for the not-to-exceed cost of \$16,174.

Rincon initiated work and requested a September 18, 2017, teleconference to discuss related historical resource findings on the tank:

- In 1985, the City of Merced Redevelopment Agency received grant funding from the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The funds were used to conduct a historical building survey for the purpose of identifying buildings or sites as eligible for inclusion in the local register of historical resources. The “Station No.3 Water Tower” was included in the 1985 survey.
- The water tower has been used for placement of telecommunications equipment on its upper catwalk. In 2001, Nextel Communications (Nextel) completed a historical survey for the tank in compliance with Federal Communication Commission (FCC) rules. This work was done in preparation for erecting cellular antennas on the tank. Nextel’s consultant discovered the tank was listed in the California Historical Resource Information System (CHRIS database). The consultant provided the OHP with this finding and requested that the project be approved based on a conclusion that the antennas would not adversely affect the “historical property”. The OHP responded in an August 9, 2001, letter that included “...*the Station No. 3 Water Tower in Merced is eligible for the NRHP...*” (National Register of Historic Places).

In the September 18, 2017, teleconference Rincon informed City staff of the significance of the 2001 OHP findings. Under Section 15064.5 of CEQA, a resource shall be considered “historically significant” if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources (CHRIS database). The tank is currently included on the list and therefore the proposed demolition of the tank is a significant impact to the environment. This triggers the requirement for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), rather than the negative declaration for environmental impacts anticipated by staff.

#### Rincon Consultants, Inc. Scope of Work

The Rincon contract under consideration includes the preparation of an Initial Study and a Focused EIR. The EIR will include analysis of three project alternatives, including the No Project Alternative, as required by CEQA. The contract also includes assisting staff with reporting and public review requirements of CEQA.

### **IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES**

This project was established as a Capital Improvement Project and account 557-1106-637.65-00-117047 contains sufficient funding to complete the project.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Site Photographs
2. State Office of Historic Preservation Inventory Form
3. State Office of Historic Preservation 2001 Correspondence
4. Contract