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January 3, 2024

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Kevin Smit
Manager of Power Planning Resources

SUBJECT: Authorization for Contract with Rockcross Consulting for DER Technical Support

PROPOSED ACTION

Staff recommends authorization to contract with Rockcross Consulting for distributed energy resources (DER) technical support in an amount not to exceed \$96,000 for the 2024 fiscal year.

SIGNIFICANCE

Distributed energy resources are becoming increasingly important for the power system and overall power planning. Rooftop solar and battery storage are a couple prime examples of DER technologies that are being implemented at a rapid pace. Council staff need to better understand how these technologies are impacting our power supplies in the region. We are working towards enhancing our expertise as well as our ability to model these technologies along with generating resources and energy efficiency.

The proposed contract with Rockcross Consulting (Angela Long) will provide Council staff with the expertise needed to build foundational knowledge and understanding of distributed energy resources (DER) and flexible loads. This includes supporting the Council in defining DER protocols and processes, developing analysis and methods, and conducting modeling that can be adopted by staff for developing the Ninth Northwest Power Plan (Plan). The work will be completed by Angela Long. She has a

strong resume that includes Sr. Manager of Strategy and Planning at Portland General Electric (renewable energy, DERs, distribution planning, resiliency), Planning Manager at PacifiCorp (DER programs, electrification strategy), Program Manager at CLEAResult (Energy Efficiency), DNV GL (Energy Efficiency), and State Energy Office of Ohio (Managed DOE ARRA grants). Angela's background is a direct fit with the current needs of the Power Division, and this contract will provide a good foundation as we begin to develop these relatively new areas for the Ninth Power Plan.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The budget impact for this will be \$96,000 and will include up to 480 hours of technical consulting services from Rockcross Consulting (Angela Long).

BACKGROUND

[The 2021 Power Plan](#) showed that the Northwest power system is changing rapidly and is very different than in the past. The primary driver of these differences is renewable generating resources which are intermittent in their operation. Because these resources are displacing base-load resources such as coal-fired plants, the importance of storage and other DERs is also increasingly important (and valuable). The 2021 Power Plan included some DERs in our overall analysis, including [demand response supply curves](#), [battery storage](#), and accounting [for rooftop solar](#) in our demand forecast. However, going forward we need to continue to expand our knowledge of and ability to model these resources that provide overall system flexibility. For the next Power Plan (ninth), we hope to include more DERs and more robust ways to model and value these resources.

The council staff issued an [RFP](#) for these services in December, and have selected Rockcross Consulting as our recommendation to provide the needed services.

ALTERNATIVES

The Council needs to enhance its DER expertise. This proposed contract would result in hiring that expertise to both educate our staff and provide valuable technical services. The primary alternative would be to hire another full-time staff person to focus on this area. Another alternative would be to develop the expertise and analysis entirely within the existing staff, which would require more time (and likely delay the ninth power plan development) and take staff away from their current responsibilities.