

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Contract Award for RFP #2024-02 for On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy Services

FROM: David Mark, Director of Customer Experience

DATE: April 23, 2024

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**Action Requested**

Staff requests the Finance and Administration Committee recommend that the Board of Directors award a contract for On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy Services to the Joint Venture between Circa Now, LLC and Ben-Her Marketing, LLC for an initial two-year base term with a one-year option term exercisable at LAVTA’s sole discretion for a maximum compensation amount of \$878,000.

**Background**

LAVTA does not provide creative design or media services in-house due to the specialized technical skillset and campaign management resources required for a comprehensive marketing plan. Over the next three years, the agency expects to increase the content quality and frequency of its stakeholder communications, and the Customer Experience team will need marketing tools and subject matter experts to carry out projects supporting the agency’s objectives.

Since 2019, LAVTA has utilized qualified consultants to provide On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy Services. LAVTA's previous consultants developed the current website, but LAVTA's rebranding project was disrupted by limited marketing opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To use staff resources more efficiently and speed up marketing project timelines as needs arise, LAVTA issued Request for Proposals (RFP) #2024-02 for On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy Services. This RFP solicited interested firms that could provide a full range of marketing services including:

- Planning and Strategy Services
- Advertising and Media Services
- Creative Services
- Website and Digital Services
- General Services
- Optional Research Services

**RFP Process**

LAVTA issued RFP #2024-02 on January 31, 2024, and proposals were due on March 1, 2024. The solicitation was e-mailed to known vendors, posted online at the agency website and TransitTalent.com, and advertised in the East Bay Times. A virtual pre-proposal conference with 21 participants was held on February 15, 2024, and two addenda were issued providing

clarifications and answers to questions received. LAVTA received six (6) proposals prior to the submission deadline from the following firms:

- Staples Marketing, LLC d/b/a Affirm, Pewaukee, Wisconsin
- Axiom of Purpose, San Diego, California
- Celtis Ventures, Inc., Newport Beach, California
- Joint Venture between Circa Now, LLC, Santa Rosa, California; and Ben-Her Marketing, LLC, San Francisco, California (Circa Now and Ben-Her)
- Convey, Inc., Emeryville, California
- Hunter Marketing, Columbus, Ohio

Proposals were evaluated based on the criteria included with the RFP:

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Max Points</b>
Company Qualifications, Experience & References	<b>25</b>
Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel	<b>25</b>
Approach to Providing Services, Team Organization, and Task Order Management Plan	<b>35</b>
Costs and Value	<b>15</b>
<b>Total =</b>	<b>100</b>

The evaluation committee included LAVTA staff as well as marketing heads from other local and out-of-state public transit agencies, all familiar with the range of projects LAVTA typically undertakes. The committee reviewed the proposals to evaluate and rank the relative strengths of each firm, and subsequently conducted interviews via teleconference on April 3, 2024, with the two top-ranked proposers, Circa Now/Ben-Her and Hunter Marketing. Staff contacted and confirmed references for these proposers. Following interviews, the committee concluded that LAVTA's interests would be best served by Circa Now and Ben-Her. The evaluation committee's composite scores for Circa Now and Ben-Her and Hunter Marketing is as follows:

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Total Points (Avg/ 100 points)</b>
Circa Now / Ben-Her	95
Hunter Marketing	87

### **Discussion**

The Circa Now and Ben-Her joint proposal demonstrated significantly more direct experience and familiarity with the residents and demographics of the Tri-Valley market than the other proposers. They also have existing strong relationships in the local media market to assist in best leveraging our limited advertising budget. The evaluators found their creative work to be superior compared to more conventional transportation template materials offered by other proposers. Circa Now and Ben-Her's staff have done extensive work with various public-sector and transportation agencies including Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA), Oakland International Airport, and air carrier JSX. Circa Now and Ben-Her also presented a strong branding approach to complete the Tri-Valley Wheels rebranding implementation, which was

disrupted in 2020. Finally, Circa Now and Ben-Her offer a “digital first” approach that can target riders and communities according to their channel and content requirements.

### **Fiscal Impact**

There is no guaranteed amount of work or total compensation under this contract. The services will be provided on an as-needed basis pursuant to task orders issued during the term of the contract. The maximum compensation amount that may be expended under the contract is \$878,000 and is subject to Board-approved funding contained in the annual budget.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Finance and Administration Committee recommend the Board of Directors approve Resolution 14-2024, authorizing the Executive Director to execute a two-year contract with a one-year option term exercisable at LAVTA’s sole discretion with the joint venture between Circa Now, LLC and Ben-Her Marketing, LLC for On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy Services for a maximum compensation amount of \$878,000.

Attachment:

1. Resolution 14-2024

**RESOLUTION 14-2024**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE LIVERMORE AMADOR VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
AWARDING ON-CALL CREATIVE, DESIGN, AND MEDIA STRATEGY SERVICES  
CONTRACT TO THE JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN CIRCA NOW, LLC, AND BEN-  
HER MARKETING, LLC FOR A MAXIMUM COMPENSATION AMOUNT OF  
\$878,000**

WHEREAS, LAVTA requires the services of a qualified firm to provide On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy services on an as-needed basis; and

WHEREAS, the agency issued Request for Proposals (RFP) #2024-02, On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy Services, seeking a firm to provide a range of marketing services related to Planning and Strategy Services, Advertising and Media Services, Creative Services, Website and Digital Services, General Services, and Optional Research Services, among other tasks requested in the RFP; and

WHEREAS, LAVTA utilized the “Best Value” method for procurement, in conformance with applicable procurement guidelines and procedures; and

WHEREAS, the evaluation committee reviewed the six proposals received in response to the RFP, conducted interviews, and determined that the proposal from the Joint Venture between Circa Now, LLC, and Ben-Her Marketing, LLC is responsive to the RFP, provides the best value to LAVTA, and the proposers are responsible; and

WHEREAS, work will be issued on a task order basis as outlined in the RFP, and the consultants will complete the services within the timeframes and budgets specified in each task order; and

WHEREAS, the maximum compensation amount that may be expended under this contract is \$878,000, and funds for the contract shall be within the annual budget adopted by the Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, staff and the Administration and Finance Committee recommend that the Board of Directors authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with the Joint Venture between Circa Now, LLC and Ben-Her Marketing, LLC for On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy Services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority that the Executive Director is authorized to enter into a contract for On-Call Creative, Design, and Media Strategy Services with the Joint Venture between Circa Now, LLC, and Ben-Her Marketing, LLC for a two year base term for a maximum compensation amount of \$582,000, in a form approved by Legal Counsel; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the Executive Director to exercise an optional 1-year contract extension, which is exercisable at LAVTA’s sole discretion for a maximum compensation amount of \$296,000, and to take all other actions necessary to give effect to this Resolution.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 6th day of May 2024.

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Melissa Hernandez, Chair

Attest:

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Christy Wegener, Executive Director