



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 15, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Kevin Fong, Director, Information Technology

Subject: Contract No. 32000177 Amendment: NextRequest for Public Records Act (PRA) Response Software

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute an amendment to Contract No. 32000177 with NextRequest for software hosting, implementation, maintenance and related services for a Public Records Act Response Software System, for an additional amount not to exceed \$61,098, for a total not to exceed value of \$194,475.07, for the period commencing on July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2027.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Funding for the additional software license term in the amount of \$61,098 is available in the Department of Information Technology's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 and 2027 IT Cost Allocation Fund as itemized below. Spending for this contract and related amendments in future fiscal years is subject to Council's approval of the proposed citywide budget and annual appropriation ordinances.

FY 2026: Software Maintenance
 \$29,094 Budget Code: 680-35-364-000-0000-000-472-613130
 (IT Cost Allocation, 311 Customer Service, Software Maintenance)

FY 2027: Software Maintenance
 \$32,004 Budget Code: 680-35-364-000-0000-000-472-613130
 (IT Cost Allocation, 311 Customer Service, Software Maintenance)

\$61,098 Total FY 2026-2027: Software Maintenance and Professional Services

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

City staff currently use the NextRequest PRA platform to receive public records requests, manage internal communication and data collection for these requests, and respond to the community. Community members, who issue public records requests, receive automatic email confirmations from NextRequest and can track the status of their request through the NextRequest portal.

In 2024, City staff received and processed 2189 new public records requests for the City via the NextRequest system. The average time to respond to these requests was eight days, and the average time to fulfillment was twenty-five days.

The NextRequest Public Records Act Response software system is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing the city's goal to be a customer-focused organization that provides excellent, timely, easily accessible service and information to the community.

BACKGROUND

Prior to installing NextRequest software, Community members would submit requests by email, US Mail, in person through the City Clerk's office, or directly to City departments. PRA requests were completed using an on-line form by City Clerk staff and allocated to the responsive department to take action.

In 2011, in an effort to streamline the process, the City adapted the case forms in the Lagan CRM system, a case management system used by 311 Customer Service Call Center, to capture requests for public records. Lagan CRM captured case information but lacked the capability to capture the requirements needed to fulfill PRA requests. In addition, the Lagan CRM was not easily searchable by "key words", and staff responding to a PRA could not access report information on notes, attachments or case description. This limitation made searching for past responsive documents challenging. As a result, departments such as Planning and Public Works who routinely receive multiple requests for the same information were forced to duplicate work that had already been performed to fulfill a PRA request.

Furthermore, the Open Data Commission required the City of Berkeley to report annually on the number of PRA's handled. The report was processed by the City Attorney's office and required information including the quantity of PRA's responded to on time, the number of PRA's where primary fulfillment date is beyond the required ten days, and the total number of days to fulfill a PRA. To produce this report, the City Attorney's office worked extensively with the 311 Customer Service manager and took weeks to prepare. The system did not produce the level of detail needed to respond to the Open Data Commission.

Given the challenges of the system, on November 14, 2018, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) #19-11255-C for an improved Public Records Act Response System, including a redaction module to enable better management of redacting the sensitive information.

The City received two (2) responses to the Public Records Act Response System RFP by the December 13, 2018 deadline. A committee of 7+ staff from the City Clerk, City Attorney, Planning, Fire, Police, and Information Technology departments conducted a comprehensive evaluation process that included proposal reviews, vendor demonstrations, and reference checks. NextRequest was selected because they offered the most comprehensive and user-friendly solution to meet the City's needs.

The City completed the implementation of the NextRequest platform in November 2020.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

NextRequest provides an improved system with a secure customer-facing portal to allow individuals to conduct self-service searches for public record requests. Additionally, requestors receive City generated documents systematically, reducing paper, use of copy equipment, and trips to City Clerk's office to view and retrieve documents. This supports the reduction of our carbon footprint and goals of the City's Climate Action Plan. Further the public can search, find, and retrieve document records stored in the PRA portal, reducing the need to enter a new public records request.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends continuing the use of the NextRequest PRA processing software as it best meets City needs and they scored the highest in the evaluation performed by City staff. NextRequest excels at meeting the City's requirements for a secure public facing portal to provide customers with self-service (24/7/365) technology to make requests and to check the status of PRA requests. Publishing common documents to the portal streamlines service delivery for customers and eliminates publishing duplicate requests. Both City staff and the community greatly benefit from the functionality offered by NextRequest.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternatives were considered as staff finds this software extremely helpful both for City staff and to the community. Additionally, ongoing software licensing and support is required for usage.

CONTACT PERSON

Kevin Fong, Director, Information Technology, 510-981-6541

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT NO. 32000177 AMENDMENT: NEXTREQUEST FOR PUBLIC RECORDS
ACT RESPONSE SOFTWARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has identified the need to improve the efficiency of its management of Public Records Act requests; and

WHEREAS, on November 14, 2018, the City of Berkeley issued a Request for Proposal No.19-11255-C for an improved Public Records Request Response Software System and received two responding bidders; and

WHEREAS, in response to the City's Request for Proposal, NextRequest responded with a proposal that received the highest rating among those submitted by competing vendors; and

WHEREAS, the City receives approximately 2000 requests per year and maintaining software support is critical to the proper functioning of the system; and

WHEREAS, funding for the additional software license term in the amount of \$61,098 is available in the Department of Information Technology's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 and 2027 IT Cost Allocation Fund, and spending for this contract and related amendments in future fiscal years is subject to Council's approval of the proposed citywide budget and annual appropriation ordinances.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is hereby authorized to amend Contract No. 32000177 with NextRequest for software hosting, implementation, maintenance and related services for a Public Records Act Response Software System, for an additional amount not to exceed \$61,098, for a total not to exceed value of \$194,474.07, for the period commencing on July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2027.