



---

Date: December 17, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers

From: Marti Brown, City Manager

Subject: Prentice Long Contract Amendment to Comprehensively Update the Willows Municipal Code

---

**Recommendation:**

Authorize the City Manager to execute a second contract amendment with Prentice Long for time only through **March 30, 2026**, to complete the comprehensive update of the City of Willow's Municipal Code.

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

The contract with Prentice Long to comprehensively update the City of Willows Municipal Code will expire on December 31, 2024, and the code update is not yet complete.

**Background:**

Recognizing that the Willows Municipal Code was outdated, the City Council approved funding for an update for the fiscal year 2022-23 budget. Staff circulated a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consulting services in January 2023 and extended the deadline twice (until April 2023) to ensure an adequate number of qualified responses were received. The RFP was posted in the Valley Mirror and delivered to 10 qualified firms. By the due date, the City received three total qualified responses, which were presented to the City Council on June 13, 2023.

After reviewing the proposals received, the majority of the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a contract with Prentice Long to update the Willows Municipal Code comprehensively.

**Discussion & Analysis:**

The City of Willows recently changed contract city planning services to Harris & Associates ("Harris") to review Title 18 (Zoning) before finalizing the Code. Harris received the revised document in early October after the new contract was executed. In their review of the document, they have recommended more changes than are currently reflected in the draft document. Those changes would take considerably more time **and cost approximately \$60,000 (not including CEQA analysis)**. As Title 18 and streamlining development processes are critical to the growth and development of the city, staff recommends working with Harris & Associates to update Title 18, ensuring that it's a business and investor-friendly document before approving the entire Municipal Code.

However, due to the City's financial circumstances, especially this fiscal year, staff recommends holding off on any code changes and work by Harris & Associates until July 1 of fiscal year 2025-26. This project would be added to the new fiscal year's workload and budget. Please note, the City will not receive any revenue from the new sales tax until April 2025; therefore, any additional spending outside of the current approved budget must be judicious and only if completely necessary.

Based on the above recommendation, staff recommends executing a separate task order with Harris to review and revise Title 18 (Zoning) of the Municipal Code starting July 1, 2025. Should the Council wish to take this approach, staff further recommends holding a Special Joint City Council-Planning Commission meeting in July 2025 to learn more about the high-level Title 18 policy changes and best practices that Harris & Associates would recommend to the City and provide feedback and direction to staff on the proposed changes. Harris would then make those changes and revisions and provide them to Prentice Long for legal review. Both contractors would present the complete draft of the Municipal Code at another Joint Council-Planning Commission meeting in December of 2025 or January 2026. The final document would be presented to the Council for approval in March of 2026.

**Fiscal Impact:**

There is no fiscal impact to the City by amending the contract with Prentice Long for a time extension only. However, should the Council wish to enlist the services of Harris & Associates to make further revisions to Title 18, the cost estimate is \$60,000 and does not include any required CEQA analysis that may be necessary.