



## REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

Approved by:

*Aurdo Rodriguez*

Department Director

*Aurdo Rodriguez*

City Manager

Council Meeting of: October 2, 2019

Agenda Number: B-4

### SUBJECT:

Consideration of a Resolution approving the request from Madera Downtown Association for the City of Madera to contribute \$15,000 for a Crow Hazing program and amending the City of Madera Fiscal Year 2019/20 budget in the amount of \$5,000.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends adoption of a Resolution approving the request from the Madera Downtown Association (MDA) for the City of Madera (City) to participate in a Crow Hazing program and amending the City's Fiscal Year (FY) 2019/20 Budget.

### SUMMARY:

On September 18, 2019, the City Council (Council) discussed a request from the MDA to contribute \$15,000 towards continuation of a crow abatement program originally started in FY 2018/19. The Council may recall that last crow season, the Council approved a contribution from the City in the amount of \$10,000 to go towards the crow abatement pilot program. In anticipation and recognition of the nature of the program requiring a multi-year approach, staff appropriated \$10,000 towards continued support of the abatement program in the FY 2019/20 budget; however on August 28, 2019, the MDA submitted a request for a \$15,000 contribution. As a result, a \$5,000 budget amendment is included as part of this report. In short, staff supports the request in an effort to reduce the negative impact that the crows have on businesses, private and public property, and the vehicles that park in downtown.

### DISCUSSION:

In December 2018, the MDA made a request to Council to designate \$3,500 of Parking District Funds to engage Integrated Avian Solutions in humanely abating the crow population in downtown. The initial one-month trial proved successful and the MDA returned to Council in January 2019 to request a partnership between the MDA, the City, and the County to continue

the abatement program through April 2019. At that meeting, Council approved the MDA's request for an additional \$1,500 of Parking District funds and a \$10,000 contribution from the General Fund. At the end of the pilot program, Integrated Avian Solutions presented compelling evidence that the program was successful with the reminder that crows are migratory in nature and are likely to return until such time they reacclimate to another area. The suggestion was also made to begin the program earlier in the year to redirect the crows at the onset of the season.

Due to the program's overall success, the MDA is requesting to continue the program this season. The following is a summary of the program (*in no particular order*):

- \$15,000 contribution from the City
- \$15,000 contribution from the County
- \$31,500 program budget
- Program will begin the first week of October 2019 and run through April 15, 2020
- Program covers 25 blocks in downtown
- The vendor shall furnish labor and falconry trained raptors to abate the roosting crows

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Approval of this resolution will impact the City's General Fund Community Promotions budget by an additional \$5,000 as \$10,000 was previously budgeted.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE VISION MADERA 2025 PLAN:**

Approval of this item is consistent with Strategy 115 of the Vision Plan – Economic Resource Provision: Ensure sufficient economic resources to provide adequate City services and prepare for future growth; as well as Vision Focus Area: A Safe, Healthy Environment – Strategy 404 Community Wellness, Promote increased community wellness.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

As an alternative to approving the requested funding and amending the City's budget accordingly, the Council may elect to:

1. Reject the funding request, which will likely result in a return of the crows to the affected area;
2. Fund the program to a lesser extent;
3. Refer the item back to staff for additional information.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Resolution with Exhibit AA Budget Amendment
2. Letter from the Downtown Association requesting funding
3. Work program, including a map of the project area

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE REQUEST FROM MADERA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION FOR THE CITY OF MADERA TO CONTRIBUTE \$15,000 FOR A CROW HAZING PROGRAM AND AMENDING THE CITY OF MADERA FISCAL YEAR 2019/20 BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000**

**WHEREAS**, City staff was advised of nuisance caused by a high concentration of crows in the Madera Downtown Association (MDA) program area and surrounding areas; and

**WHEREAS**, the City would like to assist the Downtown Area and surrounding areas in abating the crows to create a healthier and more pleasant experience for the visitors to the area; and

**WHEREAS**, funds in the amount of \$10,000 already exist in the City of Madera's Community Promotion budget for this purpose; and

**WHEREAS**, the MDA is the lead organization for the crow abatement program; and

**WHEREAS**, the County of Madera will also be contributing \$15,000 to the program; and

**WHEREAS**, the overall program budget is \$31,500; and

**WHEREAS**, the appropriation amendment to the City of Madera Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Budget, listed in Exhibit AA attached hereto, is necessary to fund the additional contracted services expense;

**NOW THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MADERA DOES HEREBY** resolve, find and order as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct.
2. The request for of the Madera Downtown Association to utilize Community Promotion Funds in the amount of \$15,000 for crow abatement purposes, is hereby approved.
3. The budget amendment set forth in the Exhibit AA, attached hereto, is approved.
4. The City Clerk is authorized and directed to forward a copy of the resolution to the Director of Financial Services, who is authorized to take such action as necessary to implement the terms of this resolution.

\*\*\*\*\*





August 28, 2019

Mr. Arnaldo Rodriguez  
City Manager  
205 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Madera, CA 93637

Dear Arnaldo,

As you know, last year the Madera Downtown Association contracted with the firm Avian Solutions for a pilot program to humanely rid our downtown of the annual migration of crows and the mess they leave. With the help of the City and County of Madera the crows were completely eliminated from the targeted areas. However, this is not a “one and done” process as the crows and their offspring need to be trained to stay away. Over time, it will take less flights, but this year’s schedule of 90 flights over the same target area will run \$31,500. We are hoping the City and the County can contribute \$15,000 each. As a Business Improvement District, we are bound to stay within the confines of the downtown area as defined by those of us who are self-assessed. BID money is supposed to be used for promotion, and this is really more of a maintenance issue. Putting in \$10,000 last year caused us to operate in a deficit for the first time in our history. Considering our entire budget is \$20,392 we cannot afford to contribute that amount again this year. We hope to take \$1500 out of our parking district account to cover the remainder of the cost.

Avian Solutions has submitted a bid to include the Howard Road area for an additional \$13,500. That is out of our sphere of influence, but thought we would pass it along if you are interested.

The results last year were nothing short of amazing. If we stop now, the crows will surely return. As a migratory bird, we will need to maintain hazing the crows with hawks next year until they and their offspring learn that the targeted area is not for them.

We would like to get on the council agenda as soon as possible to present this proposal. I hope we can count on you to help convince the City Council that this investment is well worth the benefit this brings to the health and aesthetics of our city.

Very truly yours,

Rochelle Minneti Noblett, Secretary

# INTEGRATED AVIAN SOLUTIONS

Falconry-based Bird Abatement for Industry & Agriculture

California, Oregon, Washington

www.avian-solutions.com

845.532.5401



## Bird Abatement Proposal

15 August 2019

### PURCHASER

Madera Downtown Association / City of Madera / Madera County

### PURCHASER'S REPRESENTATIVE

Steve Copland

Integrated Avian Solutions (Vendor), under contract with the Madera Downtown Association (Purchaser), successfully cleared roosting crows from an approximately 25-block area of downtown Madera, CA in the winter of 2018-19. Due to the project's success and the broad scope of the crow problem in Madera, we are proposing a continuation of the work next year. Our work has provided an effective solution to the long-standing crow problem in Madera's Business Improvement District (BID), and virtually eliminated unsightly crow droppings. However, crows will return each autumn to roost in downtown Madera. The need for comprehensive ongoing crow management is evident, and we are excited to help forge a long-term solution for Madera.

We are proposing a full-season program to start on 1 October 2019 and run through 15 April 2020. The Project Area depicted on Page 5 includes the BID, county and city buildings, police station and post office. This area hosts the highest crow densities and highest pedestrian traffic. Our proposal offers considerable value, in that we can service the entire project area for a 30% decrease from last year's rate. Efficiencies gleaned during our work last year allow us to provide our services to you at a reduced rate.

Our proposed Schedule of Services is outlined on Page 2. Services will be billed at \$350 per day and total program costs will not exceed \$31,500.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our proposal. We have enjoyed working with you and look forward to helping you keep your downtown clean again this year.

Sincerely,

Adam Baz  
Project Manager  
845.532.5401

Kort Clayton  
Principal  
971.217.0080

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

<u>Month</u>	<u>Shifts/week</u>	<u>Total shifts</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Oct 1-14 <sup>th</sup>	4	10	350	3,500
Oct 15-31 <sup>st</sup>	3	8	350	2,800
November	3	13	350	4,550
December	3	13	350	4,550
January	3	14	350	4,900
February	3	12	350	4,200
March	3	13	350	4,550
April	3	7	350	2,450
				<b>\$31,500</b>



## SCOPE OF WORK

### EXISTING SITUATION

From approximately October through April, impressive numbers of American crows gather to roost in downtown Madera. They come from the surrounding agricultural areas and residential neighborhoods to begin assembling just before sunset. The birds eventually settle in to roost in street trees and on power lines, and during the course of the night leave an unsightly and unhygienic mess on the sidewalks, benches, restaurant tables, lamp posts, parked vehicles, and everything else beneath them. Pressure washing can be cost-prohibitive and does not address the root of the problem.

Crows have roosted in downtown Madera during winter months for decades. However, the population has escalated in recent years to levels that are now deemed problematic by much of the affected business community. Local businesses have filed complaints with the Downtown Association and City. Past efforts made by the City and Sheriff's Department—including shooting crows and amplifying predator calls—have been ineffective and inhumane.

At the request of the Madera Downtown Association and Chamber of Commerce, we initiated a partial-season of falconry-based crow control on 5 December 2018, covering 25 blocks in historic downtown Madera. We typically suggest beginning crow management projects on October 1<sup>st</sup>, however we did not begin discussions with the Purchaser until November. Upon arrival we found high numbers of crows roosting throughout the BID, with notable groups on the roof of Madera Government Center and La Quinta Inn, on the power lines and traffic signal poles at Gateway Dr and 4<sup>th</sup> St, and throughout the street trees along Yosemite Ave and 6<sup>th</sup> St. Within weeks of launching the program the crows were absent from the project area, and have remained at bay. In mid-January we expanded the project pro bono to include the police station and post office, to address a group of crows roosting there.

Businesses within the BID have been exceptionally pleased with the results, and we are confident that our program offers Madera the most effective, humane, and cost-efficient solution available to address your crow problem. We are the only company to have successfully implemented a crow abatement project of this scale, and we look forward to bringing our experience and knowledge to further resolve your crow problem in Madera.

### BIRD CONTROL PROCESS

Bird abatement is accomplished through hazing, which is any number of methods used to intimidate and displace pest birds. Conventional hazing tools such as amplified predator calls, reflective mylar strips, raptor decoys, propane canons, and pyrotechnic noisemakers only yield temporary results because they quickly lose effectiveness as pest birds become acclimated.

We use a falconry-based hazing program. This method works, and because birds have an intrinsic fear of raptors, efficacy does not diminish. The sight of a hawk or falcon flying with purpose always compels birds to abandon what they are doing and flee the area. Birds never become habituated to the threat posed by a live, free-flying raptor.

Our abatement team will include two to three licensed falconers with Harris's hawks. The team will strategically clear the project area by "sweeping" crows from primary roosting corridors. Specifically, a





falconer will walk along a street occupied by crows and their hawk will fly from perch to perch (including trees, signs, buildings, and the falconer's glove). This approach will elicit a strong antipredator response from the crows, which will retreat as the hawk approaches. The crows will quickly learn that the project area is no longer a comfortable or safe place for them to loiter or roost.

Falconers will work both independently and in coordination to efficiently clear the entire project area during each shift. Our team will adapt tactics to achieve maximum impact each night. For example, each falconer may work separate areas with their hawks, or we may work together by deploying multiple hawks in the same area. We will coordinate between falconers and execute flanking maneuvers to steer retreating crows outside of the project area.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

A. Vendor shall furnish the labor and falconry-trained raptors to assist in the abatement of roosting crows within the project area. Vendor is well experienced in bird abatement and possesses the relevant licenses and permit. All raptors used will be legally allowed for bird abatement.

B. Services will commence with written notice-to-proceed. Services may also be extended by mutual agreement.

C. Services will include mobilization/demobilization to and from the project area, assessment and observation of pest birds, free flying of raptors, raptor feeding and maintenance, equipment maintenance, and tracking of wayward or lost raptors if required. Raptors are the primary method of bird abatement, but our falconers may use other tools such as noisemakers and visual deterrents (e.g., tree tappers, laser pointers, whistles, etc.).

D. Abatement activities will begin around sunset when crows are staging to roost. Shifts will end once crows have retreated from the project area.

E. Vendor and Vendor's falconers are independent contractors and are not employees of Purchaser.

F. Purchaser shall assist Vendor in properly advertising the project and notifying relevant stakeholders (e.g., Police Department, City officials, local businesses, etc.) of the proposed activities.

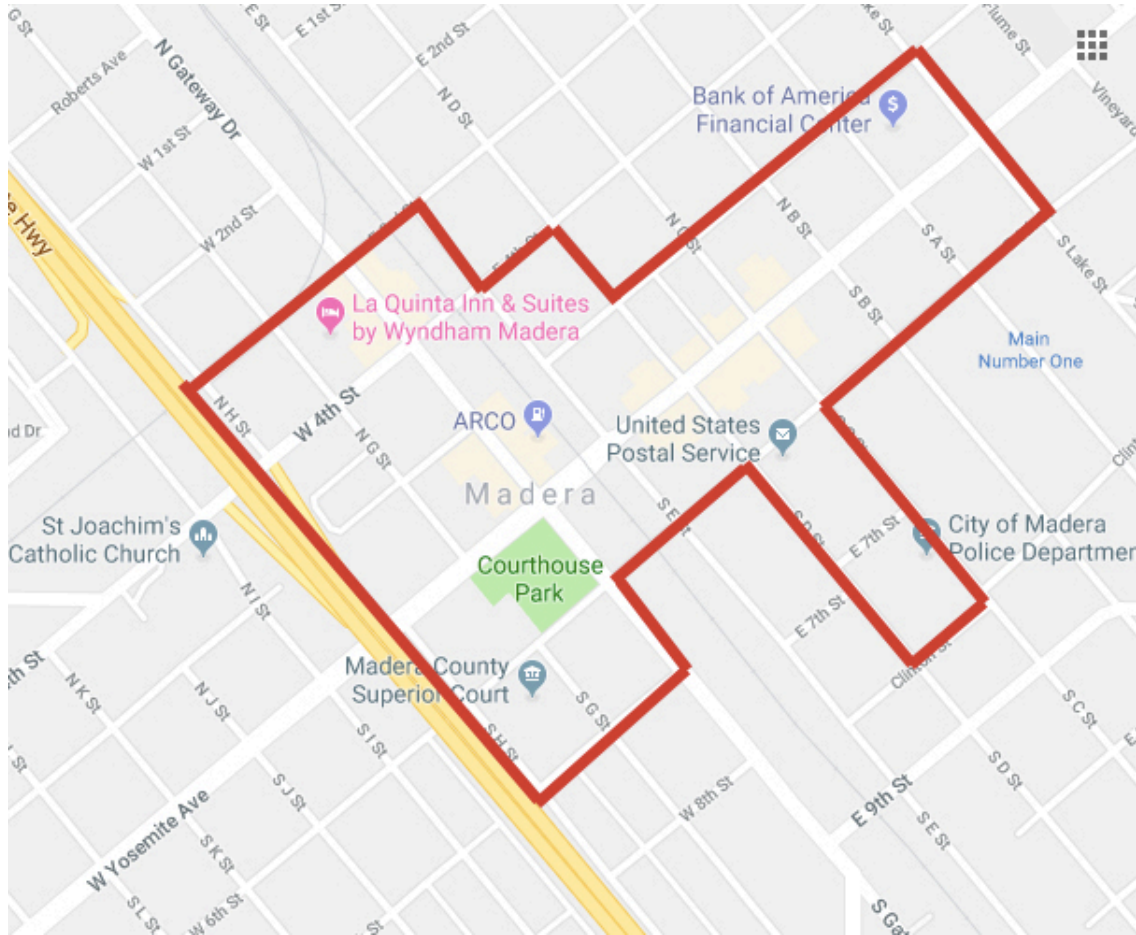
G. Vendor shall submit monthly invoices to Purchaser. Payment terms are Net 15. Invoices remaining unpaid beyond thirty (30) days may be subject to service charge of 5% per annum.

H. This Proposal is confidential and contains proprietary information and intellectual property of Vendor. The rates, schedule, scope-of-work or other elements may not be disclosed to anyone outside this agreement without the express written permission of Vendor.

I. This agreement incorporates Vendor's standard Terms and Conditions (available upon request).

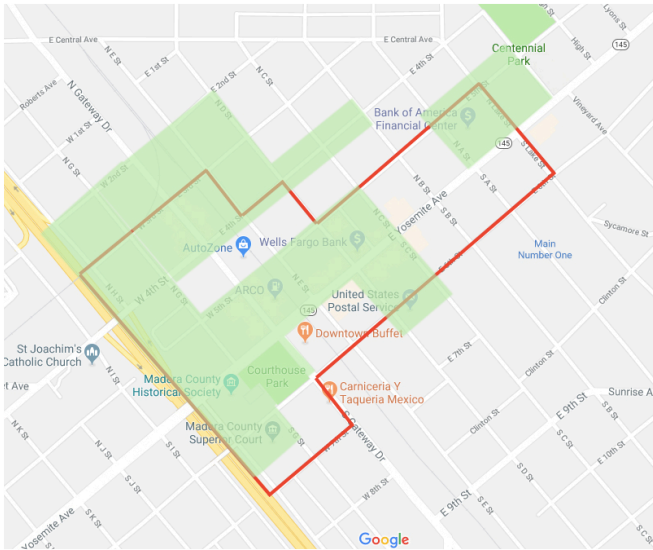


# PROJECT AREA MAP

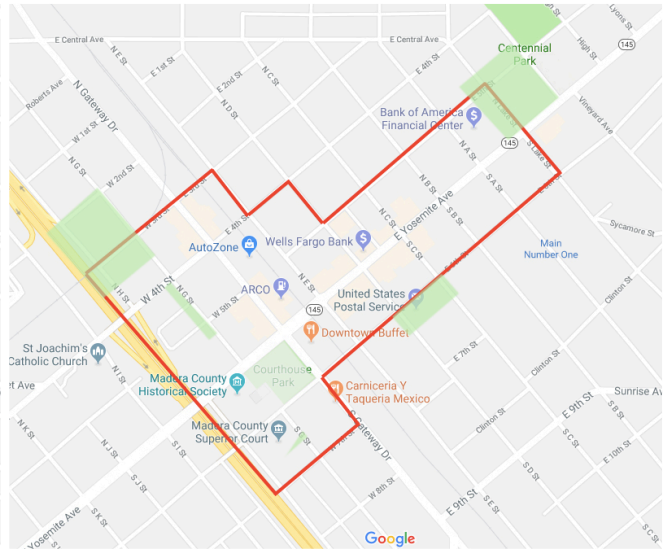


## DEMONSTRATION OF RESULTS

The following images provide a before-and-after look at the crow situation during our work in Madera. The “Before” image is from December 2018, when the project began. The “After” image is from February 2019, part way through our hazing efforts. The shaded green represents areas of crow activity, and the red line delineates the current project area.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



## ABOUT US

Integrated Avian Solutions is a network of talented falconers, experienced wildlife biologists, and passionate bird management professionals. We take a long and comprehensive view of every new opportunity and bring all our faculties and resources to bear with the singular goal of solving your bird problem. Our company is unique in that it is run and managed by falconers who also hold graduate degrees in wildlife biology. Thus, we offer a deep and unparalleled understanding of avian biology, which is invaluable for managing nuisance bird problems. Falconry is the foundation of our business and the most powerful bird management tool on the market. When everything else falls short, pest birds will not ignore the threat posed by a free-flying falcon or hawk. Our falconry programs are turn-key, natural, non-lethal, and sustainable.



**Kort Clayton** (Principal) is a Master Falconer with 25 years of experience. He has delivered and managed bird abatement services for a broad spectrum of clients, including vineyards, berry farms, solid waste, commercial real estate, and heavy industry. Kort holds an M.Sc. in Wildlife Biology and is well versed in both state and federal wildlife regulations from his 15 years of environmental consulting experience. He was a former Director and President of the Oregon Falconers Association.



**Adam Baz** (Project Manager) is a licensed falconer and holds an M.Sc. in Avian Biology from Portland State University. He has worked as a wildlife biologist for over 10 years throughout California and Oregon, focusing on birds and human-wildlife conflicts. He delivers abatement services and manages contracts throughout central and southern California.

