

DEPARTMENT: MARIPOSA PLANNING

BY: Eric Jay Toll

PHONE: 209-966-0302

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION: (Policy Item: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_)

Approve the acquisition of the H.T.E. Planning and Zoning module and authorize the Planning Director to sign contract with H.T.E. Adjust account 001-0249-575-04-81, software, by \$7,200.

**BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:**

(See attached memo) The Board supported Mariposa Planning's request for permit automation software in the amount of \$19,300 per year. This was to be funded with a 7% surcharge on application fees. Both are approved in the FY 2002 budget. In acquiring bids for the software, Staff determined that the H.T.E. software better meets the County's automation needs at a lower long-term cost. H.T.E. has some one-time start up costs that are \$7,200 higher than the approved budget. However, the annual costs are substantially less than the proposed software program. A follow-up change in fees will capture the change in costs associated with the H.T.E. software.

**LIST ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:**

A no vote results in acquisition of the proposed Accela software with its shortfalls and ongoing costs. Mariposa Planning does not have the ability to absorb the cost in its existing budget without hampering regular staff operations or the General Plan completion. Staff will return to the Board with adjustments in fees that will create the opportunity to recapture the \$7,200.

<b>COSTS:</b>	( ) Not Applicable
A. Budgeted current FY	\$19,300
B. Total anticipated costs	\$26,500
C. Required additional funding	\$ 7,200
D. Internal transfers	\$ _____
<b>SOURCE:</b>	(x) 4/5 <sup>th</sup> Vote Required
A. Unanticipated revenues	\$ _____
B. Reserve for contingencies	\$ <u>357,087</u>
C. Source description:	Change in fees
Balance in Reserve for Contingencies, if approved:	\$ _____

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**  
List the attachments and number the pages consecutively:  
  
**Staff will return with a change in fee structure that will capture all or most of the \$7,200. This proposal, however is written as if fees do not change, with costs covered from contingencies.**

**CLERK'S USE ONLY:**  
Res. No.: 01-340 Ord. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Vote - Ayes: 5 Noes: \_\_\_\_\_  
Absent: \_\_\_\_\_ Abstained: \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved ( ) Denied  
( ) Minute Order Attached ( ) No Action Necessary

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board  
County of Mariposa, State of California

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:**  
This item on agenda as:  
\_\_\_\_ Recommended  
\_\_\_\_ Not Recommended  
\_\_\_\_ For Policy Determination  
\_\_\_\_ Submitted with Comment  
\_\_\_\_ Returned for Further Action

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

A.O. Initials: [Signature]



# MARIPOSA PLANNING

## COUNTY OF MARIPOSA

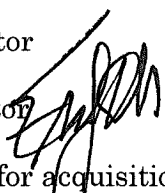
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Eric Jay Toll, Director  
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## MEMORANDUM

Date: December 4, 2001

To: Board of Supervisors  
Greg Iturria  
Ken Hawkins, Auditor

From: Eric Jay Toll, Director 

Topic: Budget adjustment for acquisition of permit automation software

### *Request*

Approve a budget increase of \$7,200 for permit automation software acquisition. Revenue to cover the increase can be generated by an increase in Planning Department fees.<sup>1</sup> This dollar amount will need to be covered initially from contingencies, but will be replaced with application fee changes. We will return with the application fee adjustments for workshop discussion on December 21 and a public hearing at the January 8 Board meeting.

### *Discussion*

In the FY 2002 Budget, the Board of Supervisors approved an amount of \$19,300 to acquire software to automate Mariposa Planning's permitting process. The objective was to be able to improve customer service and departmental efficiency replacing our antiquated paper system with desktop software.

In the process of preparing the budget, Staff was impressed with software published by Accela Data Services of Visalia. The "Permits" software is priced at 7% of revenue. The estimated revenue stream for Mariposa Planning generated revenue of \$19,300 to cover the software's \$19,300 cost. This amount is shown in the FY 2002 budget.

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<sup>1</sup> Staff is undertaking an application fee study, and will be proposing changes to the Board to *reduce* current base application fees and charge rates. The proposed rate reduction was reflected in the FY 2002 Budget revenue dollars. We would adjust the fee reductions to include the cost of the service provided by the acquisition of the H.T.E. software, offsetting the projected \$19,300 revenue for the Accela software. Overall impact would be a reduction in fees with no reduction in projected revenue.

Our Mission is to provide our clients with professional service and accurate information in a respectful, courteous, and enthusiastic manner resulting in a well-planned rural environment.

Because of the cost of the software, staff sought bids from other permit automation software providers. We checked with H.T.E., publisher of the County's financial management software, land management software, and building permit software. We also checked with another PC-based software publisher, Black Bear Systems.

Several empirical objectives were used in the review of the software:

1. **Budget.** The cost of the program must fit within the allocated budget.
2. **Compatibility.** The software needs to be compatible with the County's existing database. In addition it must be directly compatible with the ESRI Arc/Info geographic information system (GIS) that the County will eventually have in place.
3. **Minimum impact on other departments.** After the initial set-up, the maintenance or administration of the software needs to have no or low impact on data services or other County Departments.
4. **Ease of use.** The software must be PC-based so that we are not using a "green screen" or other archaic display and search system. It must be easy for staff to understand and use.
5. **Flexibility.** The software must be simple to customize to meet our needs rather than changing our systems to meet the software's inflexibility.
6. **Internet connectivity.** The software must be able to accept over-the-Internet permit applications and allow for public access to appropriate information about permits through Internet-based inquiries.

### *Summary*

After analysis of the available software systems, we would like to acquire the H.T.E. Planning and Zoning module. H.T.E., however, has a higher front-end cost that exceeds the approved budget. We believe, however, that its substantially lower long-term costs more than offset the needed budget change of approximately \$7,200 over Accela's Permits software. A detailed analysis justifying this request follows.

H.T.E.'s greatest advantage is its direct compatibility with all of the existing County systems. It offers savings in time, record searches, even preparation of accounting records. The program has no impacts on Data Services' time or hardware requirements. The Planning and Zoning module will ultimately allow for permits to be applied for, paid for, and issued over the Internet. While this is a future capability for the software, the County does not have any systems in place to take advantage of the Internet at this time.

Both the Accela and H.T.E. programs are very good and meet our needs. However, the Accela program places burdens on other department that are hidden costs in its implementation.

If you have any questions, please call me at 966-0302.

## A. Budget.

Accela's cost is 7% of application revenues collected. This is an ongoing cost every year. This 7% cost would remain in effect as long as we used this software. Our estimate for FY 2002 generates \$19,300<sup>2</sup> revenue for the software with a seven percent surcharge added application fees.

H.T.E.'s costs are \$21,500<sup>3</sup> for the first year (\$2,200 over budget) plus a mandatory \$5,000 training and set-up cost. Future year maintenance costs are fixed fees, currently, \$9,000 per year. About every two to three years, H.T.E. offers additional training, with a current cost of \$4,000. While FY 2002 budget requirements would be \$7,200 above the amount approved by the Board, future year costs would be \$10,000 per year *less* than the Accela program.

The Black Bear systems cost is substantially less than the others at \$2,000 to acquire, plus \$1,000 per year for technical support. However, this software has significant hidden costs and fails the other review tests.

## B. Compatibility.

Accela is indirectly compatible with the County's database. The program cannot read the data stored on the AS400 computer system. However, as part of its installation, Accela creates an automated program duplicating the database each night into a usable form. The drawback is that this requires additional hardware for the AS400. The Accela system results in the County needing to store all data twice. In addition, this duplication requires some daily staff support from Data Services and doubles the demand for back-up capacity. Further, Data Services staff will require special training to be able to maintain and support this software. Accela is an ESRI-partner, meaning its software is compatible with Arc/Info.

H.T.E. adds the Planning and Zoning module to the existing County software system. The addition of the Planning Department makes absolutely minimal demands on the AS400 and requires no additional hardware. Most important, once the module is installed, Data Services does not require any additional software training or special time dedicated to supporting the module. Its updates, maintenance, and support are all part of the already regularly scheduled maintenance and support for the County's existing H.T.E. system. The most important feature, however, is the Planning and Zoning module interconnects with the County's main software system. All data is based on the Assessor's Land Management module. All our cash receipts and fee collections are automatically catalogued into the financial management module used by the Auditor and Treasurer. The Planning and Zoning Module interconnects with the Building Permits module used by the Building Department. H.T.E. is an ESRI partner and Arc/Info compatible.

Black Bear Systems is a stand alone PC software that is installed on the County's Novell Network. It cannot read the H.T.E. data at all. The company would write a conversion program for Data Services to convert the County's data to a usable format

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<sup>2</sup> Not including sales tax, which would be paid monthly. Sales tax on \$19,300 is \$1,447.50, making the total Accela cost \$20,747.50. Staff was not aware that we are required to pay sales tax.

<sup>3</sup> Including sales tax.

creating a one-time "base record." Either Planning or Data Services would be required to manually enter new data to the base record whenever the Assessor's records changed. This lack of compatibility is a fatal flaw in our consideration of this software.

C. Minimum impact on other departments.

The Accela software requires hardware additions to the AS400 and requires regular, possibly daily maintenance and support from Data Services.

The H.T.E. software fits into existing hardware and systems.

D. Ease of use.

Accela has a Windows-based front end. It is attractive and intuitive in terms of usage. The program is very powerful and is easy to learn. The company provides technical support seven days a week.

H.T.E.'s Planning and Zoning module comes as the "green screen" used by the Auditor, Assessor, and Building Departments. The "green screen" is kludgy and inconvenient to use. However, it also has a Windows-based front end that is attractive and intuitive in terms of usage. Our package includes the Windows-based front-end.

E. Flexibility.

Accela's program has significant customization built into the process. The company comes onsite and works with us to fit their software to our needs. We may have to change some of our processes, but the changes are very minor. There is no cost for this service, however, we do pay for it over the years because the percent of revenue figure does not waiver.

The H.T.E. program is identical. We are required to pay for this service as a part of the mandatory \$5,000 training and set up cost. Other than project numbering, the H.T.E. system fits our current administrative operations.

F. Internet compatibility

Accela is directly compatible with the Internet. It includes an existing module for on-line permitting, credit card payment of fees, and issuing permits.

H.T.E. does not offer the internet module at this time, but expects to have it ready within one to two years.

***Conclusion***

Staff seeks the Board's support in taking this action to increase departmental efficiency. We can better serve the public by automating all our manual processes. This will also provide better tracking information and a reduction in projects or violations that currently "fall through the cracks." We recognize the budget increase request is significant for this fiscal year. However, the long-term investment is a savings to both the County and your constituents.

# BUDGET ACTION FORM

FUND	DEP/DIV	ACCOUNT	DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	INCREASE	DECREASE
001	0249	307-8702	Permitting Software Revenue		(\$7,200)	
001	0249	575-0481	Permit Tracking Software		\$7,200	
001	0104	414-1090	GENERAL CONTINGENCY			
TOTALS					0	

TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS					DEBIT	CREDIT
TOTALS						

ACTION REQUESTED: (Check all that apply)

Budget appropriation by Board of Supervisors (4/5ths Vote Required): Amending the total amount available in the county budget, or in any one fund of the budget , or transferring appropriation from Contingencies

Transfer by Board of Supervisors (3/5ths Vote Required): Moving existing appropriations from one budget to another, or between categories within a budget unit;

JUSTIFICATION

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DEPT HEAD SIGNATURE DATE

APPROVED BY RES NO. 01-340 CLERK mmw DATE 12-4-01

DEPARTMENT

AUDITOR'S USE ONLY  
BA #