City Council Agenda Item Request
Submit to Clerk's Office
No later than 30 days before proposed Council meeting

1. **Date submitted to Clerk's Office:** August 15, 2025

2. **Primary contact person and Department requesting agenda item:**
   Walter Ear, Interim Capital Management Director, and Jill Weissman, Project Manager

3. **Requested Council meeting date:** September 09, 2025

4. **Subject:** Helene Recovery - 8 River Arts structure restoration

5. **Action Requested:** Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with Novus Architects, in the amount of $207,225, for design and engineering services required to restore the building at 8 River Arts Place; and further authorizing the City Manager to execute any change orders that may arise during the project up to the contingency amount of 10% ($20,723); and approval of a budget amendment of $227,948 to add federal and state funds to the General Capital Projects Fund.

6. **Note if time sensitive, and why:** This is a **"**Helene Recovery" (FEMA PA-funded) project that is time sensitive due to the need to align the timelines of FEMA cost estimating and Consultant cost estimating. In addition, the building, which has been non-operational since September 2024, is an historic structure that includes public restrooms and leasable space. Restoring its functionality as soon as possible will return a valuable asset to the public and the City.

7. **Potential fiscal impact(s) - if known by staff at time of request:** The proposed contract for this project, including contingency, totals $227,948. This amount is expected to be fully offset by reimbursements from a combination of federal and state sources.

8. **Identify all vendor outreach for Minority & Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE):**
   - Staff performed outreach to minority and women owned businesses, through solicitation processes using the State's Interactive Purchasing System in accordance with the State statute regarding professional service contracts.

9. **Identify all Boards, Commissions and Council Committees with tentative dates - add in the vote and recommendation from each Board:** N/A

10. **Identify key issues:**
    - In late September 2024, the City of Asheville experienced unprecedented rainfall both from Tropical Storm Helene and a predecessor heavy rain event. A state of emergency covering Asheville was declared on September 25th, 2024 in relation to Tropical Storm Helene.
    - The 8 River Arts Place building is located in a Special Flood Hazard Area (Zone AE) and was significantly damaged by flood waters.
    - In 2016, the City granted a variance from Floodplain Protection ordinances (in advance of a building rehabilitation).
    - The building is listed on the National Historic Register as a contributing structure to the Riverside Industrial Historic District. Therefore, close coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and FEMA Environmental Historic Preservation (EHP) experts will be required throughout Design to ensure compliance with all standards and code.

- On May 9th, 2025, staff posted a Request for Qualifications (298-FY25-8RiverArtsRecovery) for this project soliciting statements of qualifications from interested design firms for full design services, including a review/inventory damages, providing resilient design services to prevent or lessen damages from future events, cost estimates and FEMA coordination.
- Six (6) statements of qualifications were received from different design teams.
- A six (6) member selection committee evaluated and ranked the statements of qualifications and interviewed two firms.
- Novus Architects was selected as the most qualified firm based on the criteria listed in the RFQ.
- Funding for this project is anticipated to come from FEMA PA and 406 mitigation grants.
- The scope of this design contract includes early site investigation, cost estimating, FEMA coordination, community engagement, and construction administration services.
- The schedule of this project design phase is expected to last through Summer 2026.