



TO: Jonathan H. Hayes, City Manager

VIA: Jared Jones, Assistant City Manager
Clint Murphy, Public Works Director

FR: Matt DeVito, P.E., Deputy City Engineer
Shane Daugherty, Senior Manager of Public Works Operations

RE: Kaiser S8 Gator Walking/Telescopic Excavator Purchase

DT: 10/20/2026

Summary:

The City of Panama City through its executive leadership and our elected officials serving on our City Commission have set a focused goal of becoming the Premier City in the panhandle of Florida. Upon entering the City limits, it is critical to introduce the image of our City by showing adequate infrastructure and curb appeal by having clean and sufficient infrastructure in the form of streets, curbs, sidewalks, drainage and signage. Our Public Works Street Maintenance Division is front and center in this mission as they provide services to lead the way in achieving the appropriate image upholding such a high standard. City leadership has emphasized increased right-of-way maintenance including mowing and litter removal, street cleaning, clean and uniform curbs and sidewalks and Improved stormwater drainage, including the maintenance of our approximately 56 miles of drainage ditches that carry stormwater from our neighborhoods and roadways.

The Public Works team was challenged to look for innovative solutions including outsourcing and advanced equipment technology that could assist us in being more productive when combined with the resources we already have available. It is with this goal in mind that we started looking at ditch maintenance equipment such as the Kaiser S8 Gator walking/telescopic excavator.

Background Information:

The City's Stormwater Drainage Maintenance Crew of eight team members, including one working foreman, is responsible for maintaining the following:

- ≈56 linear miles of ditches
 - 52 stormwater ponds
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- ≈39 Bay-Savers
- ≈20 sand traps
- Servicing pumps at Beck and 19th Street Pond
- Tarpon Dock Bridge maintenance (greasing and cleaning the counterbalance weight pit)
- Tree maintenance
- Overgrown vegetation in City ROW's (beyond typical mowing)
- ≈100 miles of storm pipe (cleaning and non-structural maintenance)
- ≈3,940 storm inlet structures (cleaning and non-structural maintenance)
- All camera inspection of City stormwater infrastructure
- Maintenance of Redwood laydown yard
- Special projects, i.e. Beach Drive Lift Station #80 demolition
- Assisting other City teams as needed

Presently, most of the ditch maintenance work is done using fairly conventional lawn-care equipment and hand tools. Due to the list of responsibilities noted above, ditches are only able to be maintained approximately once per year. The purchase of the Kaiser S8 would allow a team of four to maintain ditches two to three times per year in the first year, increasing to three to four times per year in subsequent years as the team becomes more familiar with handling the equipment and the initial backlog of overgrowth is removed. This would allow the other four members of the drainage crew cross train and assist with other City projects including concrete, ROW maintenance, road grading, asphalt placement, utility cut repair, and to attend to the other responsibilities of the team.

City Staff has determined that the Kaiser S8 could be used on approximately 41.6 miles of the City's 56 miles of ditches, see the attached map. Additionally, Staff expects that other uses will present themselves due to the broad functionality of the equipment, for example land clearing, park maintenance in remote areas, etc.

Employee safety will also dramatically improve using equipment like the Kaiser S8. Maneuvering conventional equipment like excavators and loaders with fixed tracks and tires down steep and/or uneven terrain can be very difficult and time consuming. The articulating legs of the Kaiser S8 provide for a much more stable working platform. See the attached images showing the maneuverability of the equipment.

The operation of equipment such as this requires a higher level of skill compared to typical fixed track and tire driven equipment. The vendor for the proposed equipment will provide two-weeks of on-site training with our operators and maintenance workers showing how to properly use and maintain the equipment.

The purchase price of \$693,834.87 is part of the Florida Sheriff's Association purchasing contract and includes the following implements:

- 60" excavation bucket attachment
- 50" rotary mower attachment
- 36" mulching head
- Heavy duty articulation attachment for full implement maneuverability

Also included in the purchase price is a 3 year, 3,000 hour warranty and the equipment is available for delivery within 2 weeks.

Leasing and rental options are available, and Staff can also explore financing options if the City Commission so desires. Staff received a rental rate of \$17,350 per month with a purchase option at the end of the rental period.

Based on a review of other comparably priced City equipment, we estimate the additional yearly insurance premium will be approximately \$3,800.00 to insure the Kaiser S8.

Attachments:

1. Equipment images
2. Equipment quote
3. Map of ditches the equipment would be used on
4. List of ditches the equipment would be used on