

CIP EXPENSE DETAIL

DATE OF COUNCIL CONSIDERATION:
CONTACT DEPARTMENT(S):

6/20/13
WPD / Purchasing

SUBJECT:

Approve award and execution of a professional services contract with ZARA ENVIRONMENTAL LLC, for structure design and implementation for recharge feature maintenance of caves in the Blowing Sink Balcones Canyonland Preserve (BCP) for the Watershed Protection Department in an amount not to exceed \$246,345.

CURRENT YEAR IMPACT:

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Department: | Watershed |
| Project Name: | Recharge Feature |
| Fund/Department/Unit: | 4850 6307 2044 |
| Funding Source: | Drainage Utility Funds |
| Current Appropriation: | 105,000.00 |
| Unencumbered Balance: | 105,000.00 |
| Amount of This Action: | (105,000.00) |
| Remaining Balance: | <u>0.00</u> |

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Department: | Watershed |
| Project Name: | Recharge Feature |
| Fund/Department/Unit: | 4850 6307 9010 |
| Funding Source: | Drainage Utility Funds |
| Current Appropriation: | 200,000.00 |
| Unencumbered Balance: | 148,030.31 |
| Amount of This Action: | (141,345.00) |
| Remaining Balance: | <u>6,685.31</u> |

ANALYSIS / ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

This professional services contract with Zara Environmental, LLC, Manchaca, TX, is for structure design and implementation for recharge feature maintenance of caves in the Blowing Sink Balcones Canyonland Preserve (BCP) for the Watershed Protection Department.

Five large sinkholes on the Blowing Sink tract are in the process of collapsing and plugging from erosion of unstable slopes. Most of the influx of sediment into the caves is extremely difficult to remove. The cave extends to a depth of over 200 feet where rare aquatic salamanders have been discovered in the cave stream, and a high level of sensitivity is needed for the restoration work across the site. The site also has a strong hydraulic connection to Barton Springs. Although the site is not publicly accessible, the open 100-foot deep pits at the sinkholes present an immediate public hazard, in part because a high school is presently a short distance south and trespassing frequently occurs. Permanent, secure cave entrances are necessary to protect public safety.

Because of the sensitivity of the site, the contractor must have cave-trained specialists able to work in caves under adverse conditions, are vertical trained in specific caving techniques to safely negotiate vertical shafts over 100 ft. deep, and to negotiate tight-partially water-filled passages. These individuals must have entered and be familiar with the Federal permit cave ecosystems and the five project caves, and be experienced in the

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construction of stabilization chimneys necessary to prevent sediment influx and allow runoff to infiltrate. Zara Environmental LLC has specialized knowledge, expertise, experience, education, and certifications that make them uniquely qualified to perform the restoration work. In addition, US Fish & Wildlife-permitted biologists are required to supervise or conduct the site work, and the Contractor must be listed on a research access permit by the City of Austin (CoA) BCP program in order to access the Blowing Sink tract.

Public Works Department has planned needed expansion and realignment of Davis Lane just north of the Blowing Sink tract, and restoration of the five sinkholes was offered to U.S. Fish and Wildlife to help mitigate potential impacts to the BCP caves.