

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action (Purchasing)

Austin City Council	Item ID:	33396	Agenda Number	43.
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Meeting Date:	June 12, 2014
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Department:	Purchasing
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Subject

Authorize award and execution of a 12-month requirements supply agreement with FIREWATCH AMERICA, LLC, to provide a wildfire detection sensor system and installation services in an amount not to exceed \$350,000, with three 12-month extension options in an estimated amount not to exceed \$10,000 per extension option, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$380,000. Related to Item # 17.

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding in the amount of \$350,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Operating Budget of the Austin Fire Department. Funding for the extension options is contingent upon available funding in future budgets. Travis County will reimburse half of the funded amount (\$175,000) to the City of Austin for the shared use of the wildfire detection sensor system.

Fiscal Note

There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

Purchasing Language:	Exemption-Public Health & Safety per Section 252.022, Local Government Code.
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Prior Council Action:	Resolution No. 20140213-047 directed the City Manager to identify feasible locations for smoke sensors, develop recommendations for implementing an early wildfire detection system, and negotiate with Travis County and other stakeholders to implement an early wildfire detection system. Resolution No. 20120823-070 directing the City Manager to study the technology developed by FireWatch America to determine the feasibility and appropriateness of use by the City of Austin to assist in the detection and suppression of fires in the Wildland Urban Interface and identify possible opportunities for interlocal agreements and cooperation.
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For More Information:	Erin D'Vincent, Senior Buyer, 512-972-4017
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Boards and Commission Action:	
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Related Items:	
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MBE / WBE:	This contract is exempt from the MBE /WBE Ordinance. This exemption is in compliance with City Code Chapter 2-9D (Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program). No subcontracting opportunities were identified; therefore, no goals were established for this solicitation.
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Additional Backup Information

This contract is for a pilot project to test the effectiveness of an early warning detection system for wildfires using smoke sensors. The primary coverage will be the western portion of Travis County for approximately one year. The Austin Fire Department (AFD) will develop recommendations for wildfire detection on a long-term basis including the continuation of the use of smoke sensors, alterations to the methods used, expansion of the use of smoke sensors, and other factors that may present themselves during the one year pilot project.

The City evaluated and interviewed two vendors to determine which vendor would best fit the needs of the City and AFD. AFD has chosen to conduct the pilot with FireWatch America. The City of West Lake Hills currently has FireWatch equipment in use which makes FireWatch America the optimal vendor to partner with since this equipment will interface with the equipment purchased by AFD. FireWatch America is able to complete the entire installation of the system within 60 days. Travis County will reimburse half of the funded amount to the City of Austin (COA) for their shared use of the FireWatch America system.

FireWatch America's early detection system consists of a computer based configuration of high-resolution optical sensors and a remote central office to provide smoke detection within a range of up to six miles with just one camera (depending on terrain features). The image processing software analyzes the motion, structure, and brightness of smoke plumes and automatically alerts monitoring personnel within six minutes during daylight and within twelve minutes at night. Monitoring personnel receive target images and coordinates to alert the appropriate response resources.

The sensor systems are installed on high towers or buildings and are allowed to rotate up to 360 degrees every four to six minutes during daylight and eight to twelve minutes at night. If the sensor detects a column of smoke, it sends information to an operator. The operator will be located at a central office during wildfire high hazard days. Once the sensor image is reviewed by a qualified operator, generally a specifically trained firefighter, it will be reported to the Austin/Travis County Emergency Communications Center for dispatch.

AFD recommends partnering with the Travis County Emergency Services District to staff the central office. Staffing will be split 50/50 between COA and Travis County. This reflects the current staffing of the Travis County firefighting helicopter. Staffing is only needed on days of very high or extreme weather conditions, typically for 10-12 hours per day. Staff will be utilized during normal work hours; however, some overtime may be necessary for weekends and extended periods of extreme weather conditions.