



Recommendation for Action

File #: 19-1623, **Agenda Item #:** 33.

4/25/2019

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of two multi-term contracts with Hill Country Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, to provide land acquisitions and consulting services for the acquisition of land interests to preserve water quality and quantity, for up to 10 years for total contract amounts not to exceed \$750,000 divided between the contractors.

(Note: This procurement was reviewed for subcontracting opportunities in accordance with City Code Chapter 2-9B Minority Owned and Women Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program. For the services required for this procurement, there were no subcontracting opportunities; therefore, no subcontracting goals were established).

Lead Department

Purchasing Office.

Client Department(s)

Real Estate Office; Watershed Protection Department.

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$750,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Capital Budget of the Watershed Protection Department. Funding for the remaining contract term is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

Purchasing Language:

Professional Service.

For More Information:

Inquiries should be directed to the City Manager's Agenda Office, at 512-974-2991 or AgendaOffice@austintexas.gov <<mailto:AgendaOffice@austintexas.gov>> or to Claudia Rodriquez, at 512-974-2959 or ClaudiaR.Rodriquez@austintexas.gov <<mailto:ClaudiaR.Rodriquez@austintexas.gov>>.

Additional Backup Information:

These contracts will provide consulting services and acquisitions to preserve land, or interests in land, within the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Recharge and Contributing Zones, both inside and outside Travis County, for the protection of water quality for the citizens of Austin.

On November 6, 2018, Austin voters approved bond Proposition D, which included \$72 million in funding to purchase land and conservation easements on properties in Austin's southern watersheds that feed the Edwards Aquifer, Barton Springs, and the Colorado River.

Contracts with these specific consultants from the Central Texas area are being requested due to their unique specialization and extensive experience in the negotiation and packaging of open space and conservation easements on the scale required to be effective from both a cost and functionality standpoint. The Nature

Conservancy (TNC) holds and manages more conservation easements than any public or private organization in Texas, totaling more than 400,000 acres. Since 1990, TNC has procured 415,000 acres of conservation easements and fee title land for public land management agencies in Texas, including the City of Austin, City of San Antonio, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas General Land Office, Texas A&M Forest Service, National Park Service, and United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Since 1998, TNC has purchased and negotiated over 15,000 acres of fee title and conservation easement water quality protection land for the City.

The Hill Country Conservancy (HCC) has procured and managed conservation easements for 19,000 acres of water quality and conservation land. HCC has secured over 7,500 acres of water quality protection land for the City and since 2004 has secured over \$10 million in matching funds for the City land and water protection purchases.

If other contractors are identified in the future who have the required level of experience to provide this service on the scale needed, staff will return to Council for authorization for additional contracts. This is the first time a contract for these services has been established. Contract estimate is based on the approved bond amount. A failure to acquire land and conservation easements in Austin's southern watersheds will compromise the quality and availability of water in Austin's aquifers, springs, greenbelts, parks and ultimately contribute to flooding.

Contract Detail:

<u>Contract Term</u>	<u>Length of Term</u>	<u>Contract Authorization</u>
Initial Term	5 yrs.	\$750,000
Optional Extension 1	5 yrs.	-
TOTAL	10 yrs.	\$750,000

Note: Contract Authorization amounts are based on the City's estimated annual usage.