



Recommendation for Action

File #: 19-3295, **Agenda Item #:** 32.

11/14/2019

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of a multi-term contract with Texas Land Conservancy, to provide land acquisition and consulting services for the acquisition of land interests to preserve water quality and quantity, for up to 10 years to be paid from funds previously approved by Council in an amount not to exceed \$750,000, to be divided between the Texas Land Conservancy, Hill Country Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy.

(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)

Office of Real Estate; Watershed Protection Department.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

April 25, 2019 - Council approved original contract, item 33, on an 11-0 vote.

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 Linell Goodin-Brown, at 512-974-2830 or Linell.Brown@austintexas.gov <<mailto:Linell.Brown@austintexas.gov>>.

Additional Backup Information:

The contract will add an additional contractor for 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.

In April 2019, Council approved contracts with Hill Country Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy for these services. These two consultants from the Central Texas area were requested due to their unique specialization and extensive experience in the negotiation and packaging of open space and conservation easements. Since then, another qualified contractor, Texas Land Conservancy, has come forward with interest in providing these services. Since 1982, Texas Land Conservancy has protected almost 92,000 acres of Texas

land through 118 conservation easements and 22 fee simple projects. Among their other qualifications, they are accredited by the Land Trust Alliance.

Adding a third contractor to this contract will provide landowners with greater opportunities to select a land trust to work with and will increase the canvassing of the Central Texas area for potential conservation easement acquisitions. Staff is not requesting additional funding for these services; the same funding approved by Council in April 2019 will be used for this contract and will be divided among the three contractors.

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, and parks, and will also negatively impact the City's efforts to minimize flooding.