



**October 5, 2023**

## Questions and Answers Report



Mayor Kirk Watson

Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison, District 1

Council Member Vanessa Fuentes, District 2

Council Member José Velásquez, District 3

Council Member Josè “Chito” Vela, District 4

Council Member Ryan Alter, District 5

Council Member Mackenzie Kelly, District 6

Council Member Leslie Pool, District 7

Council Member Paige Ellis, District 8

Council Member Zohaib “Zo” Qadri, District 9

Council Member Alison Alter, District 10

*The City Council Questions and Answers Report was derived from a need to provide City Council Members an opportunity to solicit clarifying information from City Departments as it relates to requests for council action. After a City Council Regular Meeting agenda has been published, Council Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of departments via the City Manager's Agenda Office. This process continues until 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the Council meeting. The final report is distributed at noon to City Council the Wednesday before the council meeting.*

## QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL

**Item #7:** Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for water management strategy assessment and vulnerability evaluation consultant services with The RAND Corporation, for a term of two years in an amount not to exceed \$271,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER ALISON ALTER'S OFFICE

*1) To what extent and how will this analysis consider the water quality implications of the different scenarios being assessed?*

The RAND Corporation will be performing work to evaluate water supply reliability of different groupings of water management strategies in a variety of climate, hydrologic, demand, and regional supply scenarios. This analysis is not intended to assess water quality implications related to those scenarios. Through the City's existing interlocal agreement with the University of Texas at Austin (UT), Austin Water has developed a separate work order for a collaboration with UT to evaluate extreme weather events occurring in Water Forward climate and hydrology scenarios. This work will be a basis for further evaluation of potential water quality implications in these scenarios

**Item #8:** Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for LinkedIn Learning Hub subscription services with Carahsoft Technology Corp., for a term of three years in an amount not to exceed \$400,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER ALISON ALTER'S OFFICE

*1) Please describe how City employees can access these resources.*

The City of Austin's LinkedIn Learning contract grants employees access to the service using single sign-on based on the employee's email address verified through the City's Active Directory. Employees can use single sign-on from four starting points:

1. Downloading the LinkedIn Learning app to their phone or tablet.
2. LinkedIn Learning Home Page – [www.linkedin.com/learning](http://www.linkedin.com/learning) (or just [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and selecting "Learning" at the top right).
3. City of Austin enterprise link (<https://lnkd.in/eSXrjzn>) posted on CitySpace (<https://cityspace.austintexas.gov/Career-Development-Training/Find-a-Training>).

4. Through an email sent automatically to the employee when LinkedIn Learning detects a new employee in the City's Active Directory (updated once per hour for most City employees and once per week for Austin Energy and Aviation).

If the employee voluntarily chooses to link the free LinkedIn Learning access to their personal LinkedIn profile, the service will then be accessed going forward using the personal email associated with their LinkedIn profile OR their City email address AND their personal LinkedIn profile password through any of the four methods above.

**Item #19:** Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for early wildfire detection services with Pano AI, Inc., for up to five years for a total contract amount not to exceed \$3,225,600.

MAYOR PRO TEM PAIGE ELLIS' OFFICE

- 1) *Areas of District 8, District 10, District 6, District 5, and District 1 are in the Wildland Urban Interface but outside the Austin Energy service area. What steps are being taken to ensure these Austin residents not served by Austin Energy will receive equitable monitoring and early warning of potential wildfires?*

This product is an early warning fire detection system for wildfires and situational awareness for use by first responders. The product will use a system of cameras, algorithms, and artificial intelligence to detect the potential presence of wildfires in large geographic areas which may extend outside Austin City limits. The Austin Fire Department, multiple local Emergency Service Districts, surrounding counties' first responders, and the Texas A&M Forest Service will all be provided access to the system's live camera feeds. Austin Energy is helping to coordinate and facilitate this access and will use the tool to proactively de-energize lines during active events as necessary. In the event of an alert, the vendor will contact Austin Travis County 911 and Austin Energy's Energy Control Center, ATC911 will then dispatch the appropriate emergency response personnel to respond depending on the location of the alert and Austin Energy will determine if further action is necessary.

- 2) *Is the City exploring deployment of these life-saving technologies via the Austin Fire Department in these areas?*

As mentioned above, this product's cameras may be accessed by the Austin Fire Department, multiple local Emergency Service Districts, surrounding counties, and the Texas A&M Forest Service for situational awareness; the contractor-monitored system will provide alerts directly to Austin Travis County 911 and Austin Energy's Energy Control Center in response to potential wildfire events.

**Item #20:** Approve a resolution finding the use of the design-build method of contracting, as authorized by Subchapter G, Chapter 2269 of the Texas Government Code, is the project delivery method that provides the best value to the City for the Airport Expansion Development Program: AUS Central Utility Plant Relocation Project.

## COUNCIL MEMBER VANESSA FUENTES' OFFICE

### *1) What labor standards are specified in these contracts?*

#### Prevailing/Living Wage Monitoring

The Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA) labor standards (29 CFR Parts 1,3,&5), TX Statute 2258, and City's prevailing wage ordinance will be utilized for wage compliance on all construction performed with these contracts. Wage Compliance includes monitoring active City of Austin construction projects to verify compliance by the Contractor with Section 00830 of the Contract Documents, which covers Wage Rates and Payroll Reporting. All laborers and mechanics working on these projects must be paid at least the prevailing wage for their trade, as set by the U.S. Dept. of Labor, or the City of Austin minimum living wage as established by City Ordinance, whichever is higher.

City wage staff monitor for compliance by visiting the project site, requiring display of wage postings, and conducting wage audits. Wage rates shall be posted by contractor at site(s) of Work in prominent, easily accessible places where they can be seen by all workers. The following shall also be posted by the contractor: City of Austin wage contact posters (English and Spanish), City of Austin Equal Employment Opportunity posters (English and Spanish), Workers' Compensation Notice (English and Spanish), Texas Payday Law (English and Spanish), City Rest Break Ordinance (English and Spanish), City of Austin Non-Discrimination Statement (related to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act), OSHA-10 worker requirements and Federal Notices, as appropriate.

#### OSHA

The contracts include provisions that require compliance with relevant local, state, and federal safety laws. Provisions also require all construction workers on the project receive personal protective equipment, free of charge. In addition, all construction workers on the project receive and complete a 10-hour, OSHA approved construction worker safety class prior to commencing construction work and all safety supervisors on the project receive and complete a 30-hour, OSHA approved construction worker safety class prior to commencing construction work.

#### Apprenticeship/Trainee

The contracts include provisions that Apprentices and Trainees will be permitted to work as such only when they are registered, individually, under a bonafede Apprenticeship or Trainee program registered with the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, United States Department of Labor. Commercially reasonable efforts are made that 30% of the project's workforce be student or graduates of local, DOL-registered apprenticeship programs or DOL-approved bilingual craft training programs that offer hands-on instruction at no cost or nominal cost to the worker.

#### Workers Compensation

The contracts include provisions that require all construction workers on the project to be covered by workers' compensation insurance.

**Item #29:** Set a joint public hearing between the City Council and Planning Commission to consider an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 25-2 (Zoning) regulations applicable in single-family (SF) zoning districts and to dwelling unit occupancy (Suggested date: October 26, 2023, at Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, Texas, 78701); and set a public hearing to consider an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 25-2 (Zoning) regulations applicable in single-family (SF) zoning districts and to dwelling unit occupancy (Suggested date: December 14, 2023, at Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, Texas, 78701).

COUNCIL MEMBER ALISON ALTER'S OFFICE

*1) When will the draft amendments be posted in advance of the suggested hearing on October 26th?*

Information describing the proposed changes will be available by October 13, 2023.

**Item #33:** Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance amending Ordinance No. 20230816-007 to establish revised Power Supply Adjustments, Community Benefit Charges, and Regulatory Charges for Austin Energy customers, and make corresponding amendments to the Austin Energy Fiscal Year 2023-2024 operating budget in Ordinance No. 20230816-008.

COUNCIL MEMBER RYAN ALTER'S OFFICE

*1) Do we pay a congestion fee, and if so, how much is that and how much of this \$130 million is attributable to that fee?*

ERCOT market participants including Austin Energy incur congestion costs on every hour's electric demand that varies depending on local load, local generation, state-wide generation, and state-wide transmission system constraints. Austin Energy has incurred \$123 million in net congestion costs from October 1, 2023, through August 31, 2023, compared to \$20-30 million per year prior to FY2021. Power supply costs approved in the budget were based on modeled results in January 2023 that, due to model constraints, under-estimates congestion costs. The \$130 million adjustment is based on more recent historical costs through August 2023 that more accurately reflect current congestion and the complex and dynamic price formation systems within ERCOT.

*2) How much renewable curtailment have we experienced this year (# of MWh and # of days of curtailment)?*

Generation curtailment is a process by which ERCOT directs a generation resource to produce less power than it is actually capable of producing at a given point in time. Austin Energy has experienced approximately 809,208 MWh of renewable curtailment in Fiscal Year 2023 through the first eleven months ending August 31, 2023. The amount of time curtailed varies widely among facilities, but, on average, Austin Energy's twenty large renewable facilities experienced 482 hours of curtailment each.

*3) Are you able to calculate how much local generation capacity could have prevented this additional expense?*

Some of Austin Energy's congestion expense would not be prevented by local generation, as it is the result of state-wide conditions. However, other congestion costs, which we might call load zone congestion, have the potential to be greatly reduced by local generation. This subject will

be further examined in Austin Energy's Resource Generation Plan update, but a preliminary estimate indicates that 400 MW to 600 MW of additional local dispatchable generation would likely have eliminated most of Austin Energy's load zone congestion costs in FY2023.

#### COUNCIL MEMBER QADRI'S OFFICE

*1) What is the yearly financial increase to inside/outside CoA limits residential customers, and other customer classes by average usage?*

For the average residential customer, impacts are:

- Inside COA - \$1.09/month (\$13.09/year)
- Outside COA - \$1.44/month (\$16.09/year)

For commercial, there is no typical customer, as consumption varies widely among commercial customer types. However, the percentage impact ranges for secondary voltage commercial customers are:

- Inside COA – 0.8% to 1.3%
- Outside COA – 0.3% to 0.6% (outside COA customers are not subject to COA Service Area Lighting)