



Recommendation for Action

File #: 23-3134, **Agenda Item #:** 9.

11/9/2023

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for engineering services for the Sunken Gardens Habitat Enhancement and Historic Wall Repair project with HDR Engineering, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$850,000.

[Note: This contract will be awarded in compliance with City Code Chapter 2-9B (Minority Owned and Women Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program) by meeting the goals with 6.71% MBE and 3.60% WBE participation].

Lead Department

Financial Services Department.

Managing Department

Capital Delivery Services.

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$680,000 is available in the Capital Budget of the Watershed Protection Department. Funding in the amount of \$170,000 is available in the Capital Budget of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Purchasing Language:

The Financial Services Department issued a Request For Qualifications (RFQS) 6100 CLMP352 for these services. The solicitation was issued on June 26, 2023, and closed on August 8, 2023. Of the two offers received, the recommended contractor submitted the best evaluated responsive offer. A complete solicitation package, including a log of offers received, is available for viewing on the City's Financial Services website, Austin Finance Online. Link: [Solicitation Documents](https://financeonline.austintexas.gov/afo/account_services/solicitation/solicitation_details.cfm?sid=138656)
<https://financeonline.austintexas.gov/afo/account_services/solicitation/solicitation_details.cfm?sid=138656>.

For More Information:

Direct questions regarding this Recommendation for Council Action to the Financial Services Department - Central Procurement at: FSDCentralProcurementRCAs@austintexas.gov or 512-974-2500. Respondents to the solicitation and their Agents should direct all questions to the Authorized Contact Person identified in the solicitation.

Additional Backup Information:

The Sunken Garden Spring, also known as Old Mill Spring, is one of four springs in the vicinity of the Barton Springs Pool in Zilker Park. Like the others, the spring supports populations of the endangered Barton Springs and Austin Blind salamanders. In 1937, the National Youth Administration constructed a masonry structure to create a pool around the Sunken Garden Spring to allow bathers to access the Spring. The site is a contributing structure to the Zilker Park National Register Historic District.

Sunken Garden Spring discharges into Barton Creek approximately 500 feet downstream of Barton Springs Pool through an outlet channel connecting the spring to Barton Creek. This outfall channel is experiencing

severe erosion that threatens to damage a pedestrian bridge, the historic masonry walls, and critical salamander habitat. Habitat rehabilitation at Sunken Gardens, through a combination of reconstruction and restoration, is a conservation measure established in the 2013 Barton Springs Pool Habitat Conservation Plan in conjunction with the Section 10(a) Incidental Take Permit issued to the City. In addition, the historic masonry walls which surround the upper tiers of Sunken Garden have been studied and repairs were recommended in the 2014 Barton Springs Master Plan.

This contract will provide engineering services to design and implement erosion repairs, stream stabilization, and improvements to the hydraulic structures associated with Sunken Garden. In addition to the repair of the stream channel, it is a primary goal of this project to preserve and improve salamander habitat in the spring-fed pool and channel. Additionally, a major goal of this project is to address structural deficiencies and restore the historic stone masonry walls associated with Sunken Garden. The Watershed Protection Department and Parks and Recreation Department have decided to proceed with final design, which includes a partial realignment and expansion of the spring-fed stream channel to a new outfall on Barton Creek, as well as stabilization of a portion of the existing channel and modification to the inner-most stone wall to improve the outlet from the spring-fed pool. The design also includes improvements to the recreational trail along Barton Creek, bank stabilization along Barton Creek, and replacement of an existing pedestrian bridge with a new, longer prefabricated truss bridge to span the new outfall. Overall, this solution meets the goals of the project by creating a stable spring-fed channel with a significantly expanded area for salamander habitat. The final design contract will also include an evaluation of the historic stone masonry walls surrounding the Sunken Garden Spring and design for repair and restoration of the structures.

Combining the erosion repair, habitat enhancement, and structural restoration elements into one contract for design and construction balances the combined expertise of the Watershed Protection and Parks and Recreation Departments, and will result in reduced impacts to the public, cost savings, and delivery of the best possible project.

All public impacts will be coordinated with the Parks and Recreational Department. Construction will impact recreational activities, trails, and access at Zilker Park.

A delay in approval of this contract will result in further erosion of the outlet channel, additional deterioration of the Sunken Garden walls, and further loss of salamander habitat.

This authorization provides for funding of the above-listed services. This request allows for the development of an agreement with the qualified contractor that Council awards. If the City is unsuccessful in negotiating a satisfactory agreement with the awarded contractor, negotiations will cease with that contractor. Staff will return to Council so that Council may award another qualified contractor and authorize contract negotiations with that contractor.

This project is located in District 5.