



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 26-2628, **Agenda Item #:** 20.

10/22/2026

Posting Language

Authorize a contract for engineering services for the 2026 Reservoir Improvement Program Contract for Austin Water with Freese and Nichols, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$10,000,000. Funding: \$10,000,000 is available in the Capital Budget of Austin Water.

Lead Department

Austin Financial Services.

Managing Department

Austin Water.

Fiscal Note

Funding is available in the Capital Budget of Austin Water.

Procurement Language:

Austin Financial Services Department issued a Request for Qualifications solicitation RFQS CLMP396 for these services. The solicitation was issued on May 12, 2026, and closed on July 8, 2026. Of the two responses received, the recommended firm was selected as the most highly qualified provider of the services. A complete solicitation package, including a log of responses received, is available for viewing on the City's website. This information can currently be found at:

https://financeonline.austintexas.gov/afo/account_services/solicitation/solicitation_details.cfm?sid=143946.

MBE / WBE:

This contract will be awarded in compliance with the City Code Chapter 2-9A (Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program) by meeting the goals with 16.50% MBE and 9.00% WBE participation.

For More Information:

Direct questions regarding this Recommendation for Council Action to Austin Financial Services - 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.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

October 14, 2026 - Recommended by the Water and Wastewater Commission on a 6-0 vote with one commissioner off the dais, three absences, and one vacancy.

Additional Backup Information:

The City of Austin owns and operates approximately 44 potable and reclaimed water storage reservoirs. These reservoirs maintain system pressure, store treated water, and provide critical emergency and fire flow capacity during outages and peak demand periods. Many of these reservoirs have been in service for decades and wear out on a predictable maintenance cycle. Typical wear and maintenance for these reservoirs consists of

corrosion, water quality risks, and emergency repairs that also require the reservoirs to be taken out of service. To address these needs, Austin Water established an annual capital program, the Reservoir Improvement Program, to perform a yearly evaluation of tanks and address which ones require rehabilitation. Historically, Austin Water has utilized multi-year engineering contracts to keep the recurring work on schedule and to avoid procuring services tank-by-tank each cycle. The most recent contract for this work was in 2018 for the 2018 Reservoir Improvements Program Contract.

This request is for authority to negotiate and execute a new multi-year engineering services agreement to continue the Reservoir Improvement Program. The consultant contracted for these services, will provide condition assessments, recommendations, design, construction documents, and construction-phase support needed to deliver annual reservoir rehabilitation work. These services require specialized expertise in coatings, cathodic protection, structural evaluation of steel and concrete reservoirs, geotechnical investigation, and environmental permitting. The work supports Austin Water's asset management goals by ensuring reservoirs are rehabilitated on a planned cycle, protecting water quality, maintaining emergency and fire-flow storage, and extending the useful life of existing assets. Aligning this program with the City's strategic outcomes for Health, Environment and Safety ensures the continued reliability of treated water infrastructure.

Work associated with this program occurs at existing City-owned water storage reservoir sites that are not open to the public. Reservoirs are taken out of service individually during low-demand winter months to maintain system pressure for customers. No sustained water outages are anticipated. If temporary lane closures, traffic control, or brief service interruptions are needed at specific sites, Austin Water will coordinate with affected customers and Austin Transportation and Public Works, and advance notice will be provided.

A delay in contract approval could impact the City's ability to complete required maintenance within the winter low-demand window. Reservoirs cannot be drained during the summer's peak-demand season and a delay would push out required projects by 12 months or more.

This request allows for negotiation with the recommended firm, and if negotiations are successful, for execution of an agreement with that firm. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be negotiated, staff will end negotiations with that firm. Staff will return to Council for authority to negotiate and execute an agreement with the next most highly qualified firm for these services.

This project is located within Districts 1-10.<https://maps.austintexas.gov/GIS/CouncilDistrictMap/>.