

AGENDA



Thursday, February 28, 2008

**Watershed Protection and Development Review
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

Item No. 50

Subject: Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract with the Austin Community Foundation (ACF) to manage the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund according to the requirements of the City's Urban Forest Grant Program (UFGP) guidelines in the current amount of \$350,000.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2007-2008 operating budget of the Watershed Protection and Development Review Department, Urban Forest Replenishment Fund.

Fiscal Note: A fiscal note is not required.

For More Information: Michael Embesi, 974-1876; Julia Lee, 974-3357

MBE/WBE: This contract will be awarded in compliance with Chapter 2-9C of the City Code (Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program). This contract is exempted under Chapter 791 of the Texas Local Government Code and no goals were established for this contract.

Boards and Commission Action: Recommended by the Urban Forestry Board.

The Urban Forest Grant Program (UFGP) provides funding to promote conservation and improvement projects that benefit Austin's urban forest. This program is financially supported by the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund, which was created to mitigate the impact of development on trees. The Environmental Criteria Manual states that funds may be accepted for tree removal only after all reasonable tree preservation and mitigation options have been evaluated. The UFGP will enhance the urban forest through projects associated with tree planting, education, public service announcements, award programs, disease control, inventorying, and other related efforts. The contract period coincides with the City's fiscal year and will be assessed annually to determine proposed allocation amounts. The fund balance is sufficiently large to provide adequate funding for this program. The funds will be available to public or private entities such as individuals, businesses, governmental agencies, academic and private institutions, home owner's associations, and youth organizations.

After investigating the City's needs in managing the fund, the Austin Community Foundation (ACF) was suggested as an appropriate entity. Regulated by State law, the ACF was established as a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the community. The ACF has served other City departments in a similar way.

The advantages of having the Austin Community Foundation manage the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund are:

- (a) It would provide a single avenue for reviewing proposals.
- (b) The City would be able to submit proposals for use of the funds.
- (c) All of their costs would be reimbursed by interest on the fund.
- (d) Due to the nature of the granting procedures, it is estimated that the City would have to designate someone full-time to coordinate the Fund. The ACF is already experienced in this activity, would be able to simplify the process, and will use interest from the fund for the costs of managing the program.
- (e) The ACF's non-profit status would be of benefit in encouraging private donations to the fund.