

AGENDA



Thursday, July 23, 2009

Contract and Land Management RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Item No. 17

Subject: Approve the Scoping Framework for the new Comprehensive Plan; and authorize execution of a contract to begin Phase I activities with WALLACE, ROBERTS, & TODD, LLC, Philadelphia, PA to provide professional planning services with the City of Austin for Phase I, in an amount not to exceed \$150,000.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Capital Budget of the Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department.

Fiscal Note: There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

For More Information: Mark Walters 974-7695; Rosie Truelove, 974-3064; April Thedford, 974-7141

MBE/WBE: The awarded firm is in compliance with Chapter 2-9B of the City Code (Minority Owned and Women Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program) by meeting the goals with 16.50% MBE and 14.20% WBE subconsultant participation.

Prior Council Action: April 23, 2009 - Council authorized the negotiation of a professional services agreement with WALLACE, ROBERTS, & TODD, LLC, Philadelphia, PA.

The current Comprehensive Plan of record, the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan (ATCP), was developed during the 1970's and adopted in 1979. It has been amended numerous times through the adoption of Neighborhood and Transportation Plans. In 2008 it was amended through a limited update that removed obsolete policies and replaced them with current ones. Even with this most recent update, the ATCP remains a product of its time and does not address many contemporary issues facing the City such as sustainability and climate change. Also, the ATCP has lost its relevance and remains largely unknown to the majority of Austinites. The lack of a contemporary, community-based vision for the City's future has lead to many "ad hoc" policy directives.

On April 23, 2009 the City Council approved authorizing the negotiation of a professional services agreement with Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC. Direction was given to staff to take the drafted scope of work for discussion and review to the Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee, Full Planning Commission, the Council's Land Use and Transportation Committee, and then return to Council for approval and execution of the contract.

The new plan is needed to chart Austin's near, intermediate, and long-term future to preserve and enhance the community's cherished quality of life. The plan will need to address key themes currently at the center of civic debate such as growth and development, sustainability and climate change, environmental protection, neighborhood preservation, affordable housing, economic development, and local and regional mobility. Additional key themes may also emerge through the public participation process.

The new Comprehensive Plan will have two components. The first is a Vision and Policy Framework component that lays out the vision for the community and incorporates and integrates key themes to

respond to the question “Where are we going?” The second component creates the ten City Charter-required elements and addresses the question “How do we get there?” The required elements are:

1. Future land use element
2. Traffic circulation and mass transit element
3. Wastewater, solid waste, drainage and potable water element
4. Conservation and environmental resources element
5. Recreation and open space element
6. Housing element
7. Public services and facilities element that includes but not be limited to a capital improvement program
8. Public buildings and related facilities element
9. Economic element for commercial and industrial development and redevelopment
10. Health and human services element.

Once developed, the Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed by the Planning Commission. An aggressive two-year timeline is proposed for the development of the new Comprehensive Plan. The estimated budget for these services is \$1,300,000.

The proposed scoping framework consists of three phases: Plan Kickoff, Vision and Plan Framework, and the Comprehensive Plan. The first phase, the Plan Kickoff phase, will provide direction to the other two phases. The Plan Kickoff phase, which is to be funded by the initial phase of the contract, is composed of two parts—Designing the Process and Beginning the Process. During Designing the Process an initial exercise will be conducted to scope and prepare an Organizational Design (i.e., a “Plan for a Plan”) for the Austin Comprehensive Plan, including the following:

- The specific roles and responsibilities of staff and the consultant team
- Protocols for communications and outreach to provide a variety of opportunities for input from Austin’s citizens
- The organization of data to inform the planning process
- Methodologies to be employed in developing and testing future scenarios
- A framework to utilize and reference Austin’s array of neighborhood plans and other plan and policy initiatives.

The second part, Beginning the Process, will consists of periodic briefings of the comprehensive planning process to various audiences. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CPCAC) will be formally organized and given an orientation as to their role and responsibilities. Plans, policies, GIS information, and other data will be assembled and analyzed for use in the planning process. In addition, a series of small group interviews will be held with representative stakeholder groups and community opinion leaders to provide an initial scan of key issues. The results of this process will create a framework and guide for the remainder of the comprehensive planning process— Vision and Plan Framework, and the Comprehensive Plan phases.

Participation subgoals stated in the solicitation were 1.70% African American, 9.50% Hispanic, 5.30% Native/Asian American and 14.20% WBE. The awarded firm has provided a MBE/WBE Compliance Plan that met the goals of the solicitation and was approved by the Small and Minority Business Resources Department.