

AGENDA



Thursday, September 24, 2009

**Contract and Land Management
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Item No. 30**

Subject: Authorize negotiation and execution of an amendment to the professional services agreement with WALLACE, ROBERTS, & TODD, LLC, Philadelphia, PA, for professional planning services for the new Comprehensive Plan for the City of Austin in the amount of \$1,190,000, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,340,000.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding in the amount of \$1,190,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Capital Budget of the Planning and Development Review Department.

Fiscal Note: A fiscal note is attached.

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

MBE/WBE: This contract will be awarded in compliance with Chapter 2-9B of the City Code (Minority Owned and Women Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program) with 16.80% MBE and 14.20% WBE subconsultant participation to date.

Prior Council Action: April 23, 2009 - Council authorized the City Manager to enter into contract negotiations with Wallace, Roberts, & Todd LLC (WRT) for the purposes of creating a new comprehensive plan for the City of Austin; July 23, 2009 - Council approved the Scoping Framework for the Comprehensive Plan and authorized the execution of a Phase I contract with WRT.

The purpose of the contract amendment is to authorize funding to complete Phase II (Vision and Plan Framework) and Phase III (The Comprehensive Plan). Phase II will involve a significant public involvement element and include three Community Forum Series of meetings. Phase III will develop the content for the Comprehensive Plan by addressing the ten charter-required elements. This phase will have the final Community Forum Series to gather community input on the draft plan.

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.

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 is not 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 revised estimated budget for these services is \$1,340,000.

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.

On April 23, 2009 the City Council authorized 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.

On July 23, 2009 the City Council approved the Scoping Framework for the Comprehensive Plan and authorized the execution of a Phase I contract with WRT. The Phase I contract was to complete the start up activities for the Comprehensive Plan and to generate a Public Participation Plan that outlines the public participation strategy for the development, evaluation and eventual adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Participation Plan includes the ongoing steps to be taken throughout the planning process for education and outreach through such venues as print and electronic media, newsletters, email, and the Web; the steps for education and outreach for specific milestones in the planning process; and a means to evaluate the efficacy of the outreach methods. The startup activities include:

- Consultant team meets with the community
- Gather and review existing data and plans
- Define the steps in the planning process, including the generation of a participation plan
- Establish roles and responsibilities between staff and the consultant team

During Phase II outreach activities will be conducted to elicit citizen values and aspirations for the future. This effort will include facilitation of the first of several community forum series to be held in locations throughout Austin, focused on identifying “Issues and Aspirations” with citizens. Similar exercises will be conducted through community surveys and made available on the project website and in other venues, as defined in the public participation plan prepared in Phase I. The results, including indication of areas of agreement or “common ground,” will be tabulated and made available for public review. This public input will then be used in articulating a draft Vision Statement to define and describe the future of Austin, representing the “destination” for which the Comprehensive Plan will be the “roadmap.” A current trends scenario will be developed based on a projection of conditions and trends to depict “what Austin will likely look like in 25 years if we don’t change course”. Based on the comparison of the Vision to the trend scenario, one or more alternative scenarios will be prepared to highlight choices available to move the City in the direction of the future desired by citizens. The trend and alternative scenarios will be evaluated to assess their comparative performance with regard to indicators such as sustainability, neighborhood quality of life, and fiscal and economic health.

The Draft Comprehensive Plan created during Phase III will define specific strategies and actions to implement the Plan Framework. While the Plan will address the elements required by Austin's City Charter, interrelationships between the different elements related to the key themes and principles defined in the Plan Framework will be emphasized. In addition to the elements required by the Charter, additional elements may be prepared based on community input and the results of the planning process. The Draft Plan will be submitted for review by the public and various boards and commissions, followed by initiation of the formal public hearing and adoption process.