

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action (CLMD)

Austin City Council

Item ID:

9463

Agenda Number

10.

Meeting Date:

September 22, 2011

Department:

Contract and Land Management

Subject

Authorize negotiation and execution of a professional services agreement with FOUND DESIGN LLC, dba MERJE, West Chester, PA or another qualified responder to RFQ Solicitation No. CLMP083, to provide Planning Design services for the Austin Downtown Wayfinding System, in an amount not to exceed \$180,000.00.

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Capital Budget of the Planning and Development Review Department.

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is attached.

Purchasing Language:

Staff recommendation is the most qualified firm out of eight firms evaluated through the City's qualification-based selection process.

Prior Council Action:



For More Information:

Tonya Swartzendruber 974-7189; Rolando Fernandez 974-7749; April Shaw 974-7141

Boards and Commission Action:



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) by meeting the goals with 19.00% MBE and 16.00% WBE subconsultant participation.

Related Items:

Additional Backup Information

Since 1980, Austin has grown from 345,890 residents to an estimated 790,390 residents in 2010. In the next 30 years, the population is expected to increase by another 750,000 residents. As the population of Austin has grown, so has the face of Austin's Downtown. Austin's Downtown has undergone an amazing transformation spurred in part by the 6,000 new residents who inhabit many of the recently constructed buildings that have dramatically transformed the skyline, energized downtown streets, and activated public spaces. Downtown Austin has become a place where people live, work, play, and visit.

The Wayfinding system is intended to work as an integrated tool to direct the public in navigating and understanding downtown. The Austin Downtown Wayfinding System will be primarily located in Downtown Austin. It will encompass an approximate 1,000-acre area bounded by Martin Luther King Boulevard on the north, Interstate Highway 35 on the east, Lady Bird Lake on the south, and Lamar Boulevard on the west. In addition, the project area will include portions of entryways and arterials leading into downtown including, but not limited to: East 7th, 11th and 12th Streets, Cesar Chavez Boulevard, West 5th and 6th Street, Enfield Road at 15th Street, South Congress Avenue, Guadalupe Street, Lavaca Street, South First Street, East Riverside Drive and Lamar Boulevard.

The Consultant is expected to design a system which meets the following objectives:

1. **Emphasize the Downtown area as a destination:** Promote Austin's downtown as a unique, mixed-use, eclectic, and active destination. By its design, the system should contribute to the success and market potential for restaurants, retail, arts, entertainment, historical, cultural, governmental, educational, and recreational destinations within the urban core.
2. **Highlight Key City Attractions:** The system should identify and highlight the key landmarks, nodes, districts, and paths that make the Downtown area a unique and desirable destination.
3. **Enhance the User's Experience:** Travelers will be able to enjoy the accessibility of the City.
4. **Improve Mobility (pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular):** Provide a safe means of traversing the City for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. Aim for a "Park Once" approach that promotes walking within a district or destination by directing visitors and residents towards parking and then encouraging them to keep walking by presenting other opportunities for discovery.
5. **Reinforce Links:** Link together public transportation, motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians to major commercial, cultural and historical destinations in Downtown.
6. **Integrate a Range of Navigation Tools:** Incorporate devices that will support the overall understanding and accessibility of the system: phone applications, social networking websites, and other technology driven features.
7. **Reinforce Community Identity:** Reflect the Austin community and creative spirit; promote neighborhoods and serve to enhance Austin's sense of place and cultural identity.
8. **Enhance Urban Design:** The System should aim to promote interaction between people, places, and the environment, and enhance the urban form, that leads to a successful urban environment.
9. **Develop an Adaptable Wayfinding System:** In anticipation of continued evolution of the Downtown area it will be adaptable to changes in traffic patterns, destinations, and levels of pedestrian activity.

Notification of issuance of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the subject services was sent to 323 firms on June 20, 2011. The RFQ was obtained by 47 firms, and nine (9) firms submitted qualification statements. None of the firms were

certified M/WBE firms.

RECOMMENDED FIRM: Found Design LLC, dba Merje

ALTERNATE FIRM: 212 /Harakawa INC, dba Two Twelve

This request allows for the development of a professional services agreement with a qualified responder that Council selects. If the City is unsuccessful in negotiating a satisfactory agreement with the selected responder, negotiations will cease with that provider. Staff will return to Council so that Council may select another qualified responder and authorize contract negotiations with this provider.