

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council		Item ID	10262	Agenda Number	9.
Meeting Date:	11/3/2011		Department:	Economic Growth and Redevelopment	
Subject					
Approve the Schematic Design for Seaholm Substation Wall Art in Public Places Project prepared by NADAAA, Inc., and authorize proceeding with Design Development Services.					
Amount and Source of Funding					
Funding for design services in the amount of \$194,465 is available through Art in Public Places funds for the Austin Energy Reclamation Center project, funds from Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, and funds from Austin Energy approved by City Council for this project.					
Fiscal Note					
Purchasing Language:					
Prior Council Action:	February 12, 2010: Council authorized funding for the design and construction of the Austin Energy Seaholm perimeter wall, not to exceed \$750,000, as part of the Seaholm East Redevelopment District, and as a public art project as outlined in Chapter 7-2 of the City Code (Art in Public Places). August 26, 2010: Council authorized staff to begin contract negotiations with the team led by Nader Tehrani.				
For More Information:	Megan Crigger, EGRSO, 974-9312; Meghan Turner, EGRSO, 974-9314				
Boards and Commission Action:	Recommended by the Art in Public Places Panel, the Austin Arts Commission, and the Design Commission. Reviewed by the Downtown Commission.				
MBE / WBE:					
Related Items:					
Additional Backup Information					

The Art in Public Places (AIPP) Program is commissioning a work of art, inclusive of design, engineering, and construction, that will serve as infrastructure in the form of a wall enclosing the Seaholm Substation. Artist, Nader Tehrani, was selected as the commissioned artist, and a professional services contract was executed with him on August 17, 2011.

The artist and team have been working closely with project stakeholders, including Boards and Commissions, and City staff (including EGRSO and Austin Energy representatives) to inform an appropriate design given the goals and parameters of the site and project as a whole. In order to ensure sufficient community input into the wall design, staff developed a stakeholder input process, which is being implemented during all phases of the design process. On July 18, 2011, AIPP staff and the artist team conducted a Design Forum with city staff and the community stakeholder group to collect input to inform the schematic design of the wall. Based on the discussion and ideas shared at this workshop, the artist team developed a schematic design proposal and presented it to the Design Forum participants on August 31, 2011, for response and additional feedback. This schematic design consists of preliminary approaches to wall materials, size and scale, functionality, aesthetic aspects, and context.

In action taken on August 26, 2010, Council directed that the design agreement “require that the design team consider including, to the extent possible, green elements both from a vegetative and environmentally conscious perspective, as well as adherence to the urban design guidelines for Austin.” In response to this directive, the artist team has preliminarily identified materials that are easily sourced, low maintenance, and sustainably produced. These material examples include concrete incorporating recycled materials, recycled materials for use in a metal mesh, and Forestry Stewardship Council-rated timbers. Inclusion of vegetative materials is inconsistent with the National Electrical Safety Code to which Austin Energy adheres, and disallows a root system that extends into the substation. However, the wall’s design may be complemented by additional landscaping provided by adjacent development, and the team will explore how those options could be considered or incorporated as part of design development.

The schematic design was unanimously approved by the Arts in Public Places Panel and the Austin Arts Commission. The Design Commission approved the schematic design as presented with a request that the artist consider adjustments to the northeast corner articulation design and the scale of the mesh selection. The proposed design was also reviewed by the Downtown Commission and while no action was taken, members of the Commission recommended that the artist incorporate elements of light, color, and playfulness.