



March 12, 2020

Questions and Answers Report



Mayor Steve Adler

Mayor Pro Tem Delia Garza, District 2

Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison, District 1

Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria, District 3

Council Member Gregorio Casar, District 4

Council Member Ann Kitchen, District 5

Council Member Jimmy Flannigan, District 6

Council Member Leslie Pool, District 7

Council Member Paige Ellis, District 8

Council Member Kathie Tovo, District 9

Council Member Alison Alter, District 10

The City Council Questions and Answers Report was derived from a need to provide City Council Members an opportunity to solicit clarifying information from City Departments as it relates to requests for council action. After a City Council Regular Meeting agenda has been published, Council Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of departments via the City Manager's Agenda Office. This process continues until 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the Council meeting. The final report is distributed at noon to City Council the Wednesday before the council meeting.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL

Item #5: Approve a resolution finding the use of the Competitive Sealed Proposal method of contracting, as authorized by Subchapter D, Chapter 2269 of the Texas Government Code, is the project delivery method that provides the best value to the City for the Austin Convention Center North and South Side Event Space Lighting project to upgrade or replace the event space lighting automation system. (Note: MBE/WBE goals will be established prior to issuance of this solicitation.).

COUNCIL MEMBER TOVO'S OFFICE

1) How long will it take to complete all of the contemplated work?

The Austin Convention Center Department and the Capital Contracting Office anticipate bringing the Construction Contract to Council on July 30, 2020. The renovation work is expected to take two years in an effort to avoid impacting public events and conventions scheduled – meaning the work will almost exclusively be overnight work and may include construction stops/starts.

2) When was the last update made to the event space lighting automation system?

The last upgrade to the lighting controls was done as part of the Northside expansion 2002. However, the 2002 upgrade only changed the control equipment in the south building. The actual field device was not changed and is dated to the original Center construction 1992.

Item #26: Authorize an amendment to an existing contract with Alpheus Media Inc., to provide an oral history library and documentary production, to increase the amount by \$60,000, and to extend the term by three months, for a revised contract amount not to exceed \$121,000. (Note: Sole source contracts are exempt from the City Code Chapter 2-9C Minority Owned and Women Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program; therefore, no subcontracting goals were established).

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1. How will Austin Energy identify stakeholders to interview for the oral history library?

Austin Energy will use the overall anniversary theme of 'Lighting a Brighter Future' (see more details below) to identify people for inclusion in the full documentary/oral histories. Many interviews, including ones with Shudde Fath, a 40-year Electric Utility Commissioner, and Dr. Bruce Hunt, a history professor at the University of Texas, have already taken place as part of the trailer that was shared with the Austin Energy Oversight Utility Committee earlier this year. The goal is to capture the history of the organization from all parts of the utility, while telling the story of how we are a vital part of the overall history of Austin. The Corporate Communications team, along with Austin Energy leaders, will continue to identify current and former employees, area leaders,

customers and more to be interviewed.

2. *What will be the areas of focus in terms of the utility's history?*

The overall theme for the documentary is 'Lighting a Brighter Future.' The video/oral histories will capture the following:

- History
 - Iconic moonlight towers
 - Zilker Holiday Tree
 - Power plants
 - Dam/Lady Bird Lake
 - Decades of energy efficiency programs
 - History of renewable energy goals
 - Historic perspective from long-serving Electric Utility Commissioner
- Customer Driven. Community Focused.
 - Customers are number one
 - Safety
 - Leadership and innovation
 - Benefits of being city-owned
- How the utility keeps up with Austin's growth
- Our employees (current and former) are part of the Austin community
- Future
 - Austin Energy is forward-thinking and committed to providing safe, reliable electric service for years to come
 - Continue to be a leader in renewable energy, climate protection goals

3. *Please provide information about Alpheus Media Inc. – in particular, please provide information about the staff members who will be conducting these interviews and their training and experience in conducting oral histories.*

For more than 20 years, Alpheus Media Inc. has been telling global stories from their headquarters in Austin. They like to tell human stories that motivate people to be part of a cause or community. As the Creative Producer and President of Alpheus Media, Mat Hames will be the staff member conducting oral histories and interviews, in coordination with Austin Energy Corporate Communications staff. Hames is an Emmy award winning filmmaker known for his documentaries on PBS, Sundance TV, Netflix and Amazon Prime. He has interviewed a diverse group of people, across several countries, collecting stories about the Belgian Resistance and escape lines during World War II, civil rights in Austin, Austin's history, Native Americans fighting to reclaim lost artifacts to start a tribal museum on an Indian reservation, Vietnam veterans, and gamers and pop culture personalities. He directed a short film for Robert Redford, which went on to show at 12 film festivals and won several prizes before airing nationally on PBS. Hames has produced stories in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Haiti and Asia.

Additionally, Alpheus and Hames previously produced the Thirst for Power documentary, a PBS series called Power Trip: The Story of Energy, based on the book by University of Texas professor Dr. Michael Webber. The firm also produced a series for PBS called State of Tomorrow. Both productions include footage and interviews that

can be included in Austin Energy's documentary at no charge.

Alpheus has produced historical and institutional documentaries for PBS and KLRU, Austin History Center, the Center for American History, University of Texas, and many area nonprofits, giving them unique knowledge of the subject matter, energy industry connections and the ability to tell Austin Energy's story in a compelling way.

Item #29: Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract with E Source Companies LLC D/B/A ESource, to provide a utility membership and online subscription for independent research, advisory, and information services, for a term of 57 months for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,500,000.

DISCUSSION AT THE AE COMMITTEE MEETING

Provide detail on the amount, term and purpose of the E-Source contract.

Austin Energy is seeking approval of a five year contract in the amount of \$1.5 million with E-Source. Staff uses third party providers such as E-Source to measure customer experience and provide industry best practice insights on effective customer programs. Annually, E-Source surveys our customers and compares customer satisfaction against other benchmark utilities in our region. This data is used to measure our progress against our Customer Experience Strategic Plan goal, and use of an independent third party is critical to securing anonymized, candid input from our customers. Part of the contract provides an online Business Advisor tool for our small and mid-size commercial customers, thus avoiding the need to develop our own online tool. This segment is a very diverse and hard to reach customer segment. The company also provides primary and secondary research on how to better engage customers, design effective programs, expand our distributed energy resource offerings and increase vehicle electrification. E-Source has provided these services to Austin Energy for a number of years, but under multiple separate annual contracts. This RCA consolidates these services into a single five year contract in the amount of \$1.5 million, resulting in savings of \$100,000 for that period of time. Additionally, staff will be afforded increased access to resource offerings and training modules, at a rate that is discounted from the standard rates for 2020.

Item #35: Approve negotiation and execution of an interlocal agreement with the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority to purchase transit passes in an amount not to exceed \$700,000 for use in a pilot program to increase transit ridership.

COUNCIL MEMBER TOVO'S OFFICE

1. *The original resolution stated other ideas for consideration, including offering discounts at area businesses with display of a transit pass. Was this idea explored? Did staff explore the idea of offering a credit or rebate toward a pass after proof of utilization?*

ATD staff along with Capital Metro, City of Austin Equity Office, and the City of Austin Innovation Office researched several ideas for consideration. One option considered was to seek discounts at local businesses for persons using transit. Staff believes this to be a worthy option to pursue and implement, however, we believed this strategy would

require an extended amount of time to find and secure committed partners to offer the discounts.

In evaluating incentive options, staff determined a credit/rebate after proof of transit ridership is unlikely to incentivize *new* ridership; rather, it would provide a reward for existing riders only. The recommended program allows travelers to save money by reducing their dependency on their private automobile, therefore providing an opportunity to spend those saved funds on utility bills or other personal needs at their discretion.

2. *What is the reason to limit program participants to Movability members?*

Movability was identified as a partner to help implement this pilot because of their successful Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs, and for their ability to quickly extend ridership programs to engaged companies and their employees. The City of Austin is a founding member of Movability Austin – our region's Transportation Management Association – and serves on the board of directors.

Partnering with Movability allows the proposed transit incentive program to utilize the TMA's already extensive network of contacts and expertise in changing commuting travel behavior, as well as receive data from their programs to better inform ours. Having participants be Movability members brings them into the resources and services offered by Movability to develop comprehensive commuter benefit programs for their employees, including creating mobility plans, surveying employees, developing marketing materials, and one-on-one support services for employees.

Movability also has membership options for individuals and small companies. Through their new NPO Go! program, non-profit organizations will also be included. This pilot is also an opportunity to reach additional service-related industry employers and government agencies that may not be participating in managing their employee travel demand.

3. *Please provide information about total amount of city funding that has been provided to Movability on an annual basis (prior to the consideration of the increase which is a separate item on this agenda) and indicate what percentage that comprises of Movability's annual budget.*

The City of Austin has an existing three-year contract in the amount of \$450,000 with the Downtown Austin Transportation Management Association Dba Movability. Movability works with downtown employers to encourage their employees to use alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles as transportation for their daily commutes. The amount of city funding in the FY2020 operating budget under the existing agreement is \$150,000.

The proposed item before Council (item 24, authorizing \$100,000 in additional contracting) will pay for services to administer the proposed transit incentive pilot on behalf of the City. This is a new scope of work not previously covered by the Movability contract with the City.

Historically, the City has supported Movability and its predecessor since its inception as transportation demand management (getting people out of their cars) is vital to meeting our city's mobility and livability goals.

The table below shows payments made by Fiscal Year.

Fiscal Year	Payments Made
12	\$ 38,000.00
13	\$ 37,000.00
14	\$ 47,000.00
15	\$ 48,150.00
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18	\$ 145,000.00
19	\$ 125,000.00
20	\$ 135,000.00
Grand Total	\$ 880,850.00

The City of Austin is also a board member of the organization and pays annual membership dues in the amount of \$60,000 annually. For our membership, we receive a seat on the Movability Board, access to reduced cost educational programming, recognition on all marketing materials, coordination on active transportation efforts and more. Membership costs are included in the chart above. We only pay for what is billed for the service, and it has historically not reached the full authorization.

4. *What are the minimum ridership requirements? How much will each pass cost after the 20% discount for non-government entities and the 30% discount for government entities? Will the companies be responsible for any portion of the costs? Will the incentives be limited to those individuals who have not had passes in the past?*

Participants in the program will be required to ride at least 10 times a month (for a regular 5-day work week, this translates to approximately two trips per week) to continue to receive passes in the six-month pilot period.

The proposed pass purchase cost will be the same as the current Capital Metro MetroWorks program discounted passes, which for private businesses is \$33 for a local 31-day pass and \$77 for a commuter 31-day pass; government entities passes are \$28.90 for a local 31-day pass and \$67.40 for a commuter 31-day pass.

Depending upon the recipient, the City will pay the appropriate discounted pass cost. Companies that currently offer free parking to their employees will pay \$5 per pass to Movability to support expanded TDM service to their company. Companies that currently do not provide free parking to their employees will not pay this \$5 surcharge in recognition of their no-free parking policy.

Employers that currently provide transit passes to their employees will not be able to participate in the transit incentive program but will be asked to provide mentoring to companies that participate (note: only 5 private company Movability members currently

provide access to transit passes as part of their internal TDM programs). Additionally, as mentioned in a previous Q&A response, Movability hopes to also attract new members such as small companies and individuals.

All passes will be purchased by the City of Austin through the Capital Metro MetroWorks program. Administration of the program will be provided by Movability, allowing them to provide other TDM planning and administrative type services, including performance monitoring, education and marketing to encourage employees to change their commuting habits.

COUNCIL MEMBER ALTER'S OFFICE

1. Will this pilot program offer transit passes only to new riders?

ATD and Movability do not have the ability to discern who those existing employees at the target companies are that may be using transit now, other than by employee self-reporting. Thus, the pilot is currently designed so that it is available to all employees at the companies. The pilot program will target companies that currently do not purchase or subsidize transit passes for their employees.

2. What is the expected cost of the pilot program, relative to projected usage by Movability members? Please break down into commuter vs. local.

Item 35 requests authorization to purchase up to \$700,000 in transit passes from Capital Metro through their MetroWorks bulk purchasing program. Agenda Item 24 requests an additional \$100 thousand and allows ATD to contract with Movability (the regional transportation management association) for administrative, marketing, and support services to implement the pilot program. ATD staff time will also likely be expended in support of the project as part of our regular transportation demand management (TDM) programming as necessary to track the project and report to Council. Item 35 and 24 combined represent a requested expenditure of \$800 thousand in total.

Through their MetroWorks program, Capital Metro will provide a 20% discount for passes purchased on behalf of private sector companies, and a 30% discount for passes purchased for government entities. Capital Metro has also proposed to waive a \$12 per transaction processing fee as part of the pilot program. A 31-day local pass costs \$33 (with a 20% discount) or approximately \$29 (with a 30% discount). A regional pass costs \$77 (with a 20% discount) or approximately \$34 (with a 30% discount). ATD does not have data to predict how many regional versus local passes will be needed but will be able to track and report on this statistic as we implement the project. We will require participants to use the least benefit required to meet their personal commute needs so that we can reach as many employees and target companies as possible.

3. Council allocated \$500,000 to a transit incentive program during the budget process. The contract allocates an additional \$200,000 – when/how did the additional \$200k come about?

Following the presentation of staff's response to the Resolution No. 20181213-044 during the June 2019 Mobility Committee meeting, ATD included \$500,000 in their

proposed and Council-approved FY 19/20 Budget for transit incentive programs. As the specifics of the program were developed, ATD estimated costs of a pilot program and beyond to be closer to \$700,000. It is important to note that ATD will pay Capital Metro for passes that are purchased through this program, not a flat payment, therefore, costs may be under the authorized \$700,000. Additionally, ATD identified the need to partner with Movability for administration of the pilot and to position the pilot for the greatest potential success, hence the \$100,000 represented by agenda item 24.



Council Question and Answer

Related To

Item #5

Meeting Date

March 12, 2020

Additional Answer Information

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QUESTION/ANSWER: Council Member Tovo's Office

1. How long will it take to complete all of the contemplated work?

The Austin Convention Center Department and the Capital Contracting Office anticipate bringing the Construction Contract to Council on July 30, 2020. The renovation work is expected to take two years in an effort to avoid impacting public events and conventions scheduled – meaning the work will almost exclusively be overnight work and may include construction stops/starts.

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The last upgrade to the lighting controls was done as part of the Northside expansion 2002. However, the 2002 upgrade only changed the control equipment in the south building. The actual field device was not changed and is dated to the original Center construction 1992.



Related To

Item #26

Meeting Date

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QUESTION/ANSWER: Discussion at the AE committee Meeting
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Council Question and Answer

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