





MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

THROUGH: Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager 

FROM: Lauren Middleton-Pratt, Planning Department Director 

DATE: October 3, 2024

SUBJECT: October 10 City Council Agenda Item 16 - Planning Consulting Contracts

On October 10, 2024, the Planning Department will seek City Council authorization to negotiate and execute contracts with six consultants to create a “consultant bench.” Item 16 requests a total contract bench amount not to exceed a total of \$5.5 million divided among the six contractors over five years.

Background. This item was set for the September 26, 2024 agenda, [a memo to the City Council](#) was sent out announcing the request for postponement. A consultant bench is similar to a vendor rotation list but provides departments with the flexibility to contract with a consultant out of a rotation cycle. Many departments utilize a consultant bench to streamline operations, ensure that the department has adequate resources to fill any gaps in service, and reduce the need to go through a lengthy solicitation process each time service needs are identified.

Purpose. Due to the significant volume of work and timeframe demands on work product delivery and the potential for additional directives from City Council in the future, staff intends to use consultant expertise in a wide variety of assignments, including fulfilling the following Council priorities:

- [Resolution No. 20240201-054](#) – Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Overlay
- [Resolution No. 20240201-054](#) – Directing Transit Supportive Policy and Code Updates, including an update of the East Riverside Corridor Plan
- [Resolution No. 20230921-102](#) – Directing Implementation of the Palm District Plan
- [Resolution No. 20230309-016](#) – Directing future ETOD work
- [Ordinance No. 20220817-004](#) – Adopting the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget to include annual operating funding in support of ETOD Planning
- [Resolution No. 20240814-028](#) – The Downtown Austin Plan update
- [Resolution No. 20240418-076](#) – The 78702 Initiative

In response to concerns expressed by the City Council, the Imagine Austin update has been removed from the list of potential projects that can be supported by the bench consultants.

The contracts will provide additional support in the development and implementation of plans, policies, regulations, and studies in response to City Council policy direction. Additionally, the recommended contractors provide specialized expertise for the City such as market and financial analysis capacity.

The recommended consultant bench includes the following firms:

- AECOM Technical Services Inc.
- HR&A Advisors Inc.
- Lionheart LLC
- Perkins & Will Inc.
- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP
- The Goodman Corporation

Approval of this agenda item will ensure that the Planning Department can effectively fulfill its obligations to the City Council, City departments, and the community to produce long-range planning and supporting work directed by the City Council.

Next Steps. Staff anticipates returning to the City Council's Housing and Planning Committee this December with project cost estimates and a potential schedule of long-range planning activities through 2026.

If you have any questions about this item, please contact April Geruso, Planning Division Manager, at April.Geruso@austintexas.gov or 512-974-9364.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
CMO Executive Team