

CRITICAL COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SOW SO THAT PROPOSER BIDS ON PROPER LEVELS OF TREE CARE QUALITY:

1) Page 25, exhibit A, Tree, Shrub, Planting Bed Maintenance, Pruning/trimming

Why are there pruning options for 3, 6, and 12 pruning cycles per year? This is against COA's and Forestry's BMP's and standards for tree care. It would be very cost prohibitive to prune trees every 3 or 6 months.

PARD Response: The pruning will not necessarily occur on live plant tissue. Part of our requirements (page 23) include dead wood pruning and shrub shaping/trimming, both of which should be done on a frequent basis. The Pricing Proposal Form (Exhibit A) has been modified from 3 to 4 pruning/trimming cycles per year.

2) Page 23, pruning (raising canopy) height: Do not force unnecessary excessive canopy raising for all trees: "prune trees to raise canopies and ground level branches a minimum of 8 feet (ADA compliance)"

This requirement will drive up the price because all the trees would need to be pruned per this SOW requirement, including the trees in underdeveloped areas, the trees that do not need to have a clearance due to their location (by a fence, in the back of a lot, etc.), and the young trees that are not tall.

PARD Response: Canopy raising will only be required per ADA requirements or to facilitate grounds maintenance activities. Canopies will not be raised in "underdeveloped" areas unless there is an ADA or grounds maintenance need. Scope of Work (SOW) modified to reflect recommendation.

3) Page 22, Weed Control: Herbicides should not be used instead of regular trimming maintenance.

The public asked that herbicides not be used unless absolutely necessary, but the SOW was changed in a manner that herbicides can still be used for routine maintenance to remove weeds around trees instead of mechanical weed trimming. It is more expensive to not use herbicides and trim.

PARD Response: Herbicides will be used as a last resort, per PARD Integrated Pest Management Plan principles. Cultural and mechanical pest control practices will be used preferentially. SOW modified to reflect recommendation.

4) Page 22, Weed Control: Herbicides should not be used unless absolutely necessary: "Herbicide applications for the control of broadleaf and grassy weeds shall be applied as requested by the CCM."

Same as before. The SOW still allows use of herbicides even though several citizens asked that herbicides not be used.

PARD Response: Herbicides will be used as a last resort, per PARD Integrated Pest Management Plan principles. Cultural and mechanical pest control practices will be used preferentially. SOW modified to reflect recommendation.

- 5) Page 24, Pruning/Trimming: Include requirement to monitor trees yearly for dangerous conditions.

This item was deleted, therefore leaving the SOW without a tree monitoring requirement, which is very important to have. Note that tree monitoring adds to the cost of maintenance, so if a monitoring requirement is not included in the SOW, the proposer will not be bid on adequate levels of tree care.

PARD Response: Page 22, V. Comprehensive Tree Survey and Annual Tree Maintenance Work Plan, requires “a Level 1 visual basic inspection at least once every year on all trees included in the initial [tree] survey.” This is in addition to other, more involved, monitoring indicated in that section.

- 6) Page 24, Mulch depth: Maximum mulch depth needs to be specified, otherwise trees can be damaged: “no less than 2 inches of double shredded hardwood mulch...”

This item was not changed and it will drive up the maintenance price if the proposer envisions that the trees will need to have a thick mulch layer, since there is no upper limit specified. Note that a mulch layer thicker than 3-4 inches will negatively impact the trees because mulch reduces access to water and oxygen.

PARD Response: While it is unexpected that the Proposer would incur additional expenses to apply more mulch than specified (2”), SOW modified to “2-4 inches of mulch” which is the standard listed in ANSI A300 Part 2-Soil Management.

- 7) Page 21, Aerification/de-thatching: Be clear that aerification shall not damage roots of trees.

This item was changed to include trees as requested, but it should also include a clear warning about not damaging tree roots because aerification can be done slightly cheaper with large machines that drive under trees damaging their roots. The proposer would know that a large machine cannot be used if the SOW explicitly specifies that tree roots should not be damaged. Often, people don't realize that roots can be damaged as well.

PARD Response: Page 21, S. Aerification states: “Aerification shall not cause damage to surrounding trees, vegetation or structures to include sprinkler heads, vases, valve boxes, and control markers.” SOW modified to reflect recommendation.

Page 4 Introduction:

Citizen Comment: Five year term with two five year extensions is too long since these contractors will have their own equipment upfront to be able to be considered for a contract. PARD's first two contracts were for 15 years each with extensions. Those extensions were granted without public comment. This could be a 15 year contract that is too long for this operation. We cannot allow another 15 year contract with extensions for the new cemetery contractors. Other cities only allow 1 year terms. Change SOW wording to an initial 2 year term with two 2 year extensions depending on performance.

PARD Response: Not recommended.

AMP was not established in 1941.....Exact acreage today is to be confirmed.-

Citizen Comment: AMP was established in 1928 (See History of Austin Memorial Park approved by the Texas Historical Commission -2008). Contractor will not know how much they must take care of with this wording. See Citizen Comment Page 17 below. Delete "Exact acreage today is to be confirmed".

PARD Response: Addressed and Scope of Work (SOW) modified.

Page 10- B. Business Operations

The cemetery offices and sites are closed.....

Citizen Comment: Eliminate sites since on page 11....the gates are opened year round for visitation. Gates should be opened year around for families who might be visiting from out of town and can only visit during holidays.

PARD Response: Addressed and SOW modified.

Page 11

Customer Sales and information packet: ...a copy of the cemetery map....

Citizen Comment: What map will they use? The correct map or the one they use now which is incorrect. Use the latest map filed at the County Clerk's Office.

PARD Response: No change. Final map will be produced as part of the RFP process.

Page 12

Use of cemetery facilities

.....and will only be allowed at AMP....

Citizen Comment: Why only AMP when there are 4 cemeteries on the east side of town and plenty of room at Evergreen? Reword: Equipment will be stored equally at all cemeteries.

PARD Response: No change. Service area has been defined in SOW.

Page 12

Records requiring permanent retention shall be provided to CCM.

Citizen Comment: What does this mean?

PARD Response: No change.

Page 13

Space and Burial Records

Proposer shall support the City effort's in the mapping for the cemeteries to be reconstructed from various records, maps and field review. Cemetery sales.....

Citizen Comment: AMP is already mapped. What mapping needs done and what is the purpose?

PARD Response: No change.

Page 16

II. Cemetery Operations

C. Monument, Marker and Headstone

Annual Assessment:

Proposer shall at a minimum, in January and June of each year, conduct an assessment of monuments to identify those that pose a public safety concern. Following this assessment, the City and Proposer will develop a plan to address any issue identified with the monuments,

including responsibility for repairs, funding and schedule. Proposer shall level and straighten markers or memorials that endanger the health, safety, comfort or welfare of the public.

Proposer will lay the stones down if a safety issue. See page 17 Fee-Based Headstone Resetting.

Citizen Comments: The Texas Health and Safety Code 713.011 requires the city to level and straighten the stones. The phase that the owners be contacted and pay for resetting sets an expectation that the owners can be found and notified which might not be the case.

PARD Response: No change. Addressed in SOW.

Page 17

Grounds Maintenance

....Proposer shall be responsible for grounds maintenance of cemetery properties up to the edge of the street (such as the area from the exterior of the fence line to the street curbside)....

Citizen Comment: This is not consistent with the document of public comments on the PARD website. PARD response to public comments on their website says "**Proposer shall be responsible for grounds maintenance within the boundaries of the cemetery as well as to the edge of the street (including from the exterior of the fence to the street curbside).**" The SOW wording is confusing in that a proposer would think they only have to maintain outside the fence line. The wording should be "Proposer is responsible for grounds maintenance within the fenced areas of the cemeteries except for Plummets that is not fenced and also for the area from the fence to an adjacent street."

PARD Response: SOW modified to address concern.

Page 18-G

Watering by the Public: Proposer shall allow the public to hand water individual plots during standard cemetery hours to supplement watering done by the Proposer. All watering shall comply with City of Austin water conservation regulations. Watering by the public does not replace or reduce the Proposer's responsibility to irrigate.

Citizen Comment: Elderly and disabled people need to water with hose end sprinklers too. It is not appropriate for PARD to make this decision based on "cost control concern". Sprinklers are not the issue here. PARD has no way of knowing how much water is used by the contractor for their personal vehicles and used for other personal use. How much water has been wasted by water leaks? No one knows. But sprinklers are not a problem. They are for the elderly disabled who cannot stand long to hand water. This must be changed to:hand water and use hose end sprinklers on individual plots

PARD Response: Not recommended.

Page 18 - I

Clearing Live Vegetation

Proposer shall remove all small trees (2-inch caliper or less).....that could be damaged by trees....

Citizen Comment: This is unclear and could result in new little trees being removed which were planted by volunteers and approved by the City and Cemetery Contractor for placement. How are they going to determine if something can be damaged by trees?

PARD Response: To clarify, the Department added "Headstones, Curbs and Fence Lines" to the section title.

Page 31

Exhibit B available to Parks Board as requested.

Comment: Why is this not available to the public too?

Citizen Comment: Citizens should have access to the document also.

PARD Response: City of Austin Local Government Records Control Schedule for Cemetery Unit approved and adopted 5/18/09 by the Texas State Library Commission (Exhibit B) has been added as an attachment to the draft SOW.