

MEMORANDUM

TO: Claire Powell, City Manager

FROM: Stacie Anaya, Director of Parks and Recreation

DATE: April 15, 2024

SUBJECT: **Approval of a Contract with Integrated Environmental Solutions, LLC., McKinney, Texas in the Estimated Annual Amount of \$92,775 for Urban Forest Management Services; and Authorization for the City Manager, or Her Designee, to Execute the Contract.**

BACKGROUND

The Prairie Creek Urban Forest Management Plan was developed by Halff Associates in 2019. The plan included recommendations such as testing various methods of removal of invasive plant species to determine the most sustainable method, then reestablishing native plants and trees along the greenbelt.

In 2020, Integrated Environmental Solutions (IES) was contracted to begin testing removal methods for invasive plant species in the quadrats identified in the plan and determine the best strategy for applying these methods along the entire greenbelt. The initial contract was for \$25,905, and testing was completed in February 2021. IES worked with the Parks & Recreation Department to determine the scope of work for the remainder of the Greenbelt. In 2022, IES conducted their initial removal of invasive species in the Prairie Creek area using both mechanical and chemical methods based on the results of the quadrat studies. IES conducted another round of invasive removal in the Prairie Creek area in 2023 after seeing a concerning amount of regrowth. In 2024, the area is ready for supplementary plantings of native trees and plants, and IES plans to work with Lewisville Parks and Recreation Department to conduct a community planting event on November 2, 2024, to coincide with Texas Arbor Day.

IES also provided services into another project area at Central Park in 2023, dividing the forest into three quadrats. The initial quadrat (along the trail near the playground and Chin Sculpture) was addressed with both mechanical and chemical treatments for invasive species removal. The work has provided a clear line of sight through this area of the park and provided much needed relief to the understory of the forest.

In February 2023, the City adopted the Parks & Recreation Healthy Infrastructure Plan (HIP) which includes an objective (Objective 5.2) to preserve and grow the urban tree canopy. Some of the specific action items included improving survivability of younger stands of long-lived, native

trees (5.2.3), protecting riparian forest buffers surrounding riverine features within the City of Lewisville (5.2.2), and conducting follow-up studies to monitor urban forest parameters (5.2.6)

ANALYSIS

As the established contracted work comes to an end, moving forward with invasive species removal projects in Lewisville is crucial as these species can outcompete native plants and lead to reduced biodiversity. By identifying and removing these species, Lewisville can restore native habitats, which are vital for supporting local wildlife and maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Additionally, invasive species can threaten the urban tree canopy, a critical component of the city's natural infrastructure that provides shade, reduces heat island effects, and improves air quality. Preserving and expanding the urban tree canopy through targeted invasive species removal will enhance the city's resilience to extreme weather events, increase green spaces, and improve the overall quality of life for residents.

A request for sealed proposals (RFP) was created to solicit proposals from potential management companies for Urban Forest Management Services intended to serve as the tree care or riparian restoration professional to assist the City of Lewisville with the planning and implementation of an urban forestry management plan.

Specifications were created in accordance with Texas Local Government Code Chapter 252.042, Requests for Proposals for Certain Procurements. Specifications under this chapter of the law state requests for proposals must specify the relative importance of price and other evaluation factors.

Proposals were due February 13, 2024 and three (3) proposals were received. An evaluation team, consisting of the City's Purchasing and Parks & Recreation departments, was created to review, analyze, and score the proposals in accordance with weighted factors listed in the specifications. The proposal was evaluated using the following criteria:

Adequacy/Locations of Facilities	10 pts
Availability and Qualifications of Proposed Staff	30 pts
Service Plan/Procedures	20 pts
References of Similar Projects	5 pts
Knowledge and Experience	15 pts

At the conclusion of the evaluation, Integrated Environmental Solutions LLC., is being recommended for award of the Annual Contract for Urban Forest Management Services with an estimated annual cost of \$92,775.00.

If the proposed agreement is approved, Integrated Environmental Solutions will be responsible for supporting the Urban Forester in five key areas concerning the management of the urban forest, a full description is detailed in the RFP:

- Program Management and Coordination
- Forest Management Plan
- Inventory Assessment (Concurrent Site Visit)
- Strategic Plan
- Streambank Assessment Study.

Initial areas for future projects will include:

Central Park Areas Zones 2 & 3
Wayne Frady Park
Timber Creek Greenbelt
Green Commons (Rodeo Grounds)

The area of Prairie Creek that sits west of Valley Ridge Greenbelt Park will be one of the first streambank locations to be analyzed. This area has been closely monitored by staff in recent years and needs to be assessed properly. Timber Creek is another location that will be prioritized due to new trail developments that will provide additional access to the area. This would include Central Park and other areas along the riparian corridor.

The term of the contract will be twelve (12) months, with options to extend for up to three (3) additional twelve (12) month periods. Funding is available through the Urban Forestry Management Project.

The Urban Forester will be working closely with IES to ensure the success of these projects. They will assist in assessing the extent of invasive species in the targeted areas and help develop a comprehensive management plan. This will include collaboration on the most effective removal techniques and helping to oversee the execution of the plan. After the removal process, the Urban Forester will work with IES to monitor the areas for any signs of regrowth and evaluate the success of the removal efforts. Together, the Urban Forester and IES will plan future project areas that will most greatly benefit the urban tree canopy. The Urban Forester will also play a large role in educating the community about the importance of invasive species management and the benefits of a healthy urban forest.

CITY STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council approve the contract and authorize the City Manager, or her designee to execute the contract as set forth in the caption above.