

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: WATER TREATMENT PLANT TREE REMOVAL PROJECT

BACKGROUND:

The City is planning to construct a new water treatment plant and associated pipe infrastructure to interconnect the new water plant site with the existing site. The project will involve construction of new pipeline facilities through forested areas adjacent to the Skunk River. The first step in the piping project is to create two clear paths by clearing trees and brush so the construction can occur. All tree removal required by the other construction contracts is combined into a single clearing and grubbing contract. This work is on a critical path to enable the piping construction to begin in 2014.

A habitat assessment performed by Griggs Environmental Strategies, Inc. concluded that the Ames Water Treatment Plant project would have minimal negative effects on habitat of the endangered Indiana Bat. The City's engineering consultant has provided a design that avoids trees identified as potential roosting locations for the bats. The timeline for this project is based on communications with the US Army Corps of Engineers that require removal of any trees identified as potential Indiana Bat habitats during a critical window from October 15 to April 15 to avoid potential impacts to the endangered species.

A February 4, 2014 letter from the Army Corps of Engineers advised that this window has changed to October 1 to March 31, tightening that window. Even though the pipeline route completely avoids all trees identified as potential roosting sites for the Indiana brown bat, staff still desires to complete the tree removal during the critical window to avoid any possible concern over impacting a threatened species. Staff will work with the contractor to try to have all trees cut down prior to the March 31 date. Clearing and grubbing work will likely continue beyond this date with no adverse impacts on the bats. As stated earlier, the consultant has provided a design for this project to completely avoid removal of trees identified as potential roosting locations for the Indiana Bat species, so tree removal work can still take place outside of the identified window as long as trees specifically identified as potential roosting habitat are not removed.

On January 14, 2014, Council approved preliminary plans and specifications and issued a Notice to Bidders for the tree removal project. Bids were opened for the project on February 5, 2014. The six bids received are summarized below:

Bidders	Total Project Bid Price
Aspen Land Clearing	\$54,910.00
J. Pettiecord, Inc.	\$69,125.00
Keller Excavating, Inc.	\$78,867.50
Finco Tree / Wood Service, LLC	\$86,438.34
C. Hansen Services, LLC	\$92,917.50
Con-Struct, Inc.	\$145,181.30

The preliminary plans and specifications for the Water Treatment Plant Tree Removal Project prepared by FOX Engineering have not changed and staff recommends that Council approve these documents as final. The engineer's estimated cost for this tree removal project is \$68,917.75. Engineering expenses are included in the large design contract with FOX Engineering and are not broken out separately. This work was not specifically called out in the Capital Improvements Plan, but is included in the \$183,000 budgeted in the current year's CIP to be paid out of the Water Fund.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Issue final approval of plans and specifications for the Water Treatment Plant Tree Removal Project, and award the project contract to Aspen Land Clearing of Dows, Iowa in the amount of \$54,910.
2. Do not award a contract at this time.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

This tree removal project is necessary in order to subsequently construct the new water treatment plant and associated pipe infrastructure to connect with existing systems. The work is part of the overall critical path schedule to begin major construction activities in 2014. Bids have been received, and the lowest responsive, responsible bid is below the engineer's estimate.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby issuing final approval of plans and specifications for the Water Treatment Plant Tree Removal Project, and awarding the project contract to Aspen Land Clearing of Dows, Iowa in the amount of \$54,910.