

REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

**MOTION NO. 98-14
BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS**

Meeting:	Date:	Agenda Item:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Finance Committee	3/5/98	No. 4	John Hubbard	(253) 581-8137
Executive Committee	3/6/98	No. 5	Paul W. Price	(206) 689-4760

ACTION:

Executive Committee authorization to execute a contract with Berger/Abam Engineers, Inc. for the Lakewood-to-Tacoma commuter rail combined environmental assessment (E.A.) (to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements) and expanded environmental checklist (checklist) (to meet State Environmental Policy Act requirements). This contract will have a maximum value not to exceed \$490,632, consisting of an award of \$408,860 plus \$81,772 (20%) contingency (copy of contract on file).

BACKGROUND:

Sound Move was the product of more than seven years of planning work, including preparation of an EIS in 1993 evaluating the impacts of various system alternatives. That EIS was prepared as part of a "phased" environmental review process. Phased environmental review is designed to help agencies and the public focus on issues that are "ready" for decisions, and to exclude issues that are already decided or not yet ready for decision. The 1993 EIS on the regional transit system plan was the first phase of environmental review. It focused on broad, regional, system level impacts. The combined environmental document (E.A. and checklist) proposed to be funded by this action will evaluate the project-specific impacts of various commuter rail station and track design alternatives within the Lakewood-to-Tacoma corridor selected in Sound Move. The proposed environmental document for this corridor is a legally required next step prior to Board selection of station sites and track design, commitment of federal funds, initiation of final design and permitting, and construction.

In response to Request for Qualifications & Proposals No. RTA/CR 37-97, eight interested firms submitted statements of qualifications. Three firms were invited to make presentations to an interview panel. These firms were:

Berger/Abam
Earthtech
URS/Greiner

The selection committee included RTA staff-members and the City of Tacoma's TA Projects Coordinator. City of Lakewood staff had also been invited to participate, but due to scheduling conflicts were unable to do so.

The interview panel unanimously recommended that a contract be awarded to Berger/Abam Engineers, Inc. The firm and its sub-consultants are well qualified to complete this work on time and on budget. Previous local experience on the Tacoma Dome Station, as well as other relevant environmental and engineering experience, was considered in their selection.

Sub-consultants on this project will include the following firms: Tsang Partnership (architecture and urban design), MBE, Tacoma; Herrera Environmental (natural resources), MBE/ DBE/SBA 8A, Seattle; Heffron Transportation (traffic engineering) WBE/DBE, Seattle; Patterson and Associates (rail engineering), Orange, CA; Larson Anthropological/Archeological Services (archeologists and historical), WBE/DBE, Seattle; Michael Minor and Associates (noise assessment), Portland, OR; White Shield (mapping and land surveying), WBE/MBE/DBE Bellevue; and Entech Northwest (air quality), MBE/WBE, Tacoma. Berger/Abam will be responsible for project management, land use, sociology and economics.

This contract funds the preparation of environmental documents for the project, including a federal Environmental Assessment (E.A.), the process used when a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is anticipated. The work for the E.A. will be combined with an Expanded Environmental Checklist, done under the State Environmental Policy Act and cross-referenced to the federal E.A. Initial project investigations have led the RTA staff to the conclusion that a full environmental impact statement is not required.

Informal public scoping/information meetings/open houses, which are planned to coincide with the scoping being done for the Tacoma Link light rail segment, will be scheduled in the affected communities during the early weeks of this contract. Given the very recent station area planning work done in the communities, it is anticipated that the public involvement process already started will transition smoothly to encompass environmental issues.

Work under this contract is scheduled to begin as soon as possible, with the expectation that a draft environmental document will be available for public and agency review late this summer. After responding to all comments, a final document will be prepared for issuance and submittal to the FTA by early fall.

The contract for this project, as proposed, meets current agency M/W/DBE goals.

RELEVANT BOARD POLICIES AND PREVIOUS ACTIONS TAKEN:

Adoption of Sound Move (May 31, 1996)
Adoption of Implementation Guide (May 22, 1997)
Adoption of 1998 Budget (December 11, 1997)

KEY FEATURES:

The proposed contract establishes a fee for which Berger/Abam Engineers, Inc. will undertake all activities and tasks that could be reasonably anticipated in order to complete the combined environmental documents.

With Executive Committee approval, staff will have authority, if it should prove necessary, to approve expenditures above the contract award through change orders or contract modifications, up to the maximum contingency amount (20%). In the unlikely event that there need to be expenditures above the contract award, which individually or collectively exceed the 20% contingency limit, this issue will be brought back before the Executive Committee to request additional approval. Committee approval will still provide staff the flexibility of negotiating a final contract for a lower overall cost than the maximum reflected in this motion. Contingency would remain at a maximum 20%.

FUNDING:

The currently adopted Sound Transit budget for 1998 includes funds for the preparation of environmental documents for the development of stations and other capital facilities along the Lakewood-to-Tacoma commuter rail corridor. This contract amount is consistent with the adopted budget and will be paid for with a portion of those funds.

The RTA has received a \$1,300,000 grant from FTA (80% FTA/20% RTA match) to fund environmental work for both the Everett-to-Seattle and the Lakewood-to-Tacoma commuter rail corridors. Therefore, a significant portion of the expenses incurred by the RTA through the proposed contract will be reimbursed by the FTA.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Executive Committee may wish to: 1) reject the proposed contract, 2) negotiate with another of the qualified firms, and/or 3) repeat the Request for Proposals solicitation. These alternative courses of action are not recommended since Berger/Abam Engineers, Inc. was the unanimous recommendation of the interview panel as most qualified, and negotiations have proceeded well.

If commuter rail service is to be implemented between Lakewood and Tacoma, the FTA has determined that an E.A. will be required. The Commuter Rail Department does not currently have on staff the requisite expertise (such as civil and geotechnical engineering, noise & vibration, biology) to perform and complete a combined E.A./expanded checklist. Therefore, contracting for these services is a necessary step prior to proceeding further into project development.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY:

Environmental review must precede Board selection of station sites and track design alternatives, federal funding, final engineering/design, permitting, construction and, ultimately, the operation of passenger service. Delays at this stage would have a proportional delaying effect on later project phases, and ultimately the initiation of commuter rail service to South Tacoma and Lakewood.

**Regional Transit Authority
Motion No. 98-14**

A motion of the Executive Committee of the Regional Transit Authority for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish counties region authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate a contract with Berger/Abam Engineers, Inc. for services in connection with the Lakewood-to-Tacoma commuter rail combined environmental review process (copy of contract on file). This contract will have a maximum value not to exceed \$490,632, consisting of an award of \$408,860 plus \$81,772 (20%) contingency.

Background:

Sound Move was the product of more than seven years of planning work, including preparation of an EIS in 1993 evaluating the impacts of various system alternatives. That EIS was prepared as part of a "phased" environmental review process. Phased environmental review is designed to help agencies and the public focus on issues that are "ready" for decisions, and to exclude issues that are already decided or not yet ready for decision. The 1993 EIS on the regional transit system plan was the first phase of environmental review. It focused on broad, regional, system level impacts. The combined environmental document (E.A. and checklist) proposed to be funded by this action will evaluate the project-specific impacts of various commuter rail station and track design alternatives within the Lakewood-to-Tacoma corridor selected in Sound Move. The proposed environmental document for this corridor is a legally required next step prior to Board selection of station sites and track design, commitment of federal funds, initiation of final design and permitting, and construction.

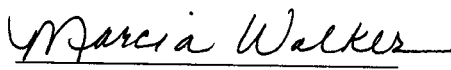
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Motion:

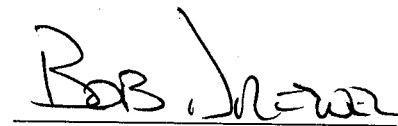
It is hereby moved by the Executive Committee of the Regional Transit Authority that the Executive Director is authorized to negotiate a contract with Berger/Abam, Inc. to provide professional services in connection with the Lakewood-to-Tacoma commuter rail combined environmental review process for an amount not to exceed, \$490,632, consisting of an award of \$408,860 as the contract amount, plus a contingency of \$81,772 (20%) to be reserved for unforeseen conditions (copy of contract on file).

Approved by the Executive Committee of the Regional Transit Authority for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region at a meeting thereof on the 6th day of March, 1998.

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator



Bob Drewel
Board Chair