

REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

MOTION NO. 98-4 BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS

Meeting:	Date:	Agenda Item:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Executive Committee	1/16/98	No. 7-A	Paul Price David Beal	206-689-4760 206-684-1883

ACTION:

Executive Committee authorization to execute a contract with Huckell/Weinman Associates, Inc. for the Everett-to-Seattle commuter rail environmental impact statement (EIS). This contract will have a maximum value not to exceed \$1,248,425, consisting of an award of \$1,040,355 plus \$208,070 (20%) contingencies (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 decisions. 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 EIS proposed to be funded by this action will evaluate the project-level specific impacts of various commuter rail station and track design alternatives within the Everett-to-Seattle corridor selected in *Sound Move*. An EIS for this corridor is a legally required next step prior to selection of final station sites and track design, commitment of federal funds, initiation of final design and construction, and project permitting.

In response to Request for Qualifications & Proposals No. RTA/CR 22-97, eight interested firms submitted statements of qualifications. Four firms were invited to make presentations to an interview panel. These firms are: David Evans and Associates, Herrera Environmental Consultants, Kato & Warren and Huckell/Weinman Associates, Inc. The recommendation of the interview panelists that a contract should be awarded to Huckell/Weinman Associates was made unanimously.

This consultant work funded through the subject contract was anticipated to be a Federal *Environmental Assessment* (EA), the process used when a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is anticipated. Initial project investigations have since led the RTA and FTA to the conclusion that a full Federal *environmental impact statement* is in order. This is because it is probable that significant impacts may be caused by some necessary railroad track and capacity improvements in sensitive (shoreline and wetland) areas. An EIS is required, among other reasons, to determine necessary appropriate mitigation actions. The supporting engineering, biological assessment and public involvement activities are much more involved for an EIS than for an EA. Also, the document will be a combined state/federal EIS to meet the requirements both of the State and National Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA and SEPA). An off-setting benefit is that though

more work will be funded under this environmental stage than anticipated, it is work that would have to be funded eventually in order to secure certain permits for construction.

Informal public scoping/information meetings have been scheduled in the affected communities during the first two weeks of February, 1998.

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 Huckell/Weinman will undertake all activities and tasks that could be reasonably anticipated in order to complete the EIS process.

With Executive Committee approval staff will have authority to approve expenditures above the contract award through change orders or contract modifications, up to the maximum contingencies amount (20%). Expenditures above the contract award which individually or collectively exceed the 20% contingencies limit will be brought before the Executive Committee for 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. Contingencies would remain at a maximum 20%.

FUNDING:

The currently adopted Sound Transit budget for 1998 includes \$15,784,000 for the development of stations and other capital facilities along the Everett-to-Seattle commuter rail corridor. This contract amount is consistent with the adopted budget and will be funded from that \$15,784,000. The Executive Committee approval will represent a maximum of 7.9% of all expenditures budgeted in 1998 for the Everett-to-Seattle corridor.

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:

No practical alternatives to the proposed action exist, unless the Executive Committee wishes to: 1) reject the proposed contract, 2) negotiate with another of the qualified firms, and/or 3) repeat the Request for Proposals solicitation. This course of action is not recommended since Huckell/Weinman Associates 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 Everett and Seattle, the FTA has determined that an EIS 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 an EIS. Therefore, contracting for these services is a necessary step prior to proceeding into final design and construction of facilities.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY:

The environmental phase must precede selection of final station sites and track design, 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.

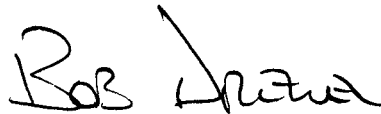
Regional Transit Authority
Motion No. 98-4

A motion of the Executive Committee of the Regional Transit Authority for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish counties region to approve award of a contract to Huckell/Weinman Associates, Inc. for the Everett-to-Seattle commuter rail environmental impact statement (EIS). This contract will have a maximum value not to exceed \$1,248,425, consisting of an award of \$1,040,355 plus \$208,070 (20%) contingencies.

Motion:

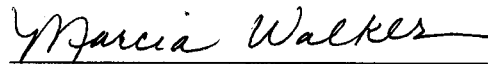
It is hereby moved by the Executive Committee of the Regional Transit Authority that a contract with a maximum value of \$1,248,425, consisting of an award of \$1,040,355 and a contingency of \$208,070 (20%) be awarded to Huckell/Weinman Associates, Inc. for the Everett-to-Seattle commuter rail EIS.

Approved by the Executive Committee of the Regional Transit Authority for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region at a regular meeting thereof on the 16 day of January, 1998.



Bob Drewel
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator