



**City of Tacoma
Environmental Services
Arborist Consulting Services
RFP Specification No. ES21-0545F**

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

All interested parties had the opportunity to submit questions in writing by email to Dawn DeJarlais by Wednesday, September 15, 2021. The answers to the questions received are provided below and posted to the City's website at www.TacomaPurchasing.org. Navigate to *Current Contracting Opportunities / Services*. and then click *Questions and Answers* for this Specification. This information IS NOT considered an addendum. Respondents should consider this information when submitting their proposals.

Question 1: Does having this contract with the City of Tacoma preclude the arborist company from being in opposition to the City in another case? Example: trip and fall representing the opposing private side?

Answer 1: According to our City attorney, it is problematic to consider a proposal from the arborist serving as an expert witness in an open case against the City. It could appear as though the City is using acceptance of the arborist's proposal as an inducement to the expert to modify they're anticipated testimony. The City shall not consider a proposal from this arborist consultant as long as they are acting as an expert for opposing counsel.

Question 2: What is the time commitment based on history for this contract?

Answer 2: This is an on-call contract therefore it is difficult to predict what will happen, but based on past history there have been roughly 70 projects performed since we started this contract five years ago that have included scoping and report generation. All jobs have varying degrees of assessment, which could be looking at one hazardous tree, or 20 blocks of street trees for construction impacts. There are two example Task Authorization requests in the appendix of the RFP that are representative but not all encompassing of the work requested.

The City is starting a hazardous tree assistance program, which is a cost share program between the City and community members who qualify for assistance for the removal of hazardous trees. The upcoming 2022 contract will be used to perform these tree assessments, which is something that was not part of the previous contract and will add an additional volume of work.

Question 3: Who has your current contract and do you have a history of awarding multiple firms with this contract?

Answer 3: We currently contract with Tree Solutions, based in Seattle. This particular contract has not had multiple awardees in the past, and it is our intention to make only one award, however it is possible this contract could be awarded to more than one contractor. We have had different arborist contractors working for the City under other contracts at the same time in the past.

Question 4: Does serving as an expert witness happen on a regular basis with this contract?

Answer 4: Expert testimony from the consulting arborist has not occurred within the timeframe of our current five year contract. In instances where the City has needed to go to court, the City's urban forester has typically provided the testimony. However, the consulting arborist is expected to testify if requested to do so.

Question 5: Do sample reports count in the page limits?

Answer 5: On page 11, Section 12 of the RFP, it states:
"Submittals should be limited to a maximum of 10 pages, double-sided, or 20 pages total, excluding any required forms or resumes. All pages that exceed the specified page limit will not be part of the evaluation."

Required forms shall include sample reports and invoices.

Question 6: Is there anything new in the scope of this contract that was not in the current contract?

Answer 6: While not new, we have requested contractors identify their ability to perform virtual assessment, which are needed sometimes when work has been stopped on a construction project, and there is an inability for the arborist to come to the site in a reasonable timeframe. However, we prefer to have an arborist on-site whenever possible.

Question 7: Does the City provide access to their GIS program (Treeplotter, ArcGIS, etc.) or will the consultant be required to host that service if/when required?

Answer 7: We have not worked with a contractor that has been required to use their own GIS mapping system for this contract. There are City GIS Webmaps, including DART and Access ES that identify infrastructure information, however trees are not inventoried on these mapping systems. The Urban Forestry Program utilizes the TreePlotter system and could provide the contractor permission to access if deemed necessary. We have not used TreePlotter for tree assessments under the current contract. For example, with construction consultations, the City will provide PDF drawings that can be marked-up in the field by the contractor, or the contractor can provide their own drawings.

Question 8: Could the consultant get the City TreePlotter data to upload into their own program (via private license) to collect the data and provide the information to the City?

Answer 8: The City would need to determine if this was needed to get the work done and discuss with the arborist. For example, construction engineering staff don't have access to TreePlotter, therefore if the contractor collected the data using TreePlotter, it would have to be translated into a format that would be user friendly for City staff.

Question 9: Tree appraisal – what percentage would be tree appraisals and what would be the purpose of those appraisals?

Answer 9: Appraisals have been used historically for tree violations, such as illegal tree cutting. The most current version of the Guide for Plant Appraisal authored by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers is used to look at the value of the

removed vegetation. City council is considering legislation to update code to include violations for trees removed in the right-of-way, where the person removing the tree would have to pay the value of the vegetation removed. Appraisals have been used a few times in the current contract, however the frequency of use is likely to increase in upcoming years. Depending upon the situation, the value of the tree is required and sometimes the restoration cost is needed as well, and is dependent upon the conditions of the City Municipal Code for mitigation.

Question 10: Is the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) certification a requirement or preferred?

Answer 10: It is preferred, but not required. The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certification is required, as is the ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ).

Question 11: Is the ASCA tree and plant assessment qualification required?

Answer 11 : No this certification is not required, however, the arborist must be able to fully understand and apply the methodology outlined in the most current edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal authored by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers, and provide the worksheet which must be defensible.

Question 12: Comment: The TPAQ is part of the ASCA

Answer 12: TRAQ (Tree and Plant Appraisal Qualification) is the certification for the tree appraisal above: <https://www.asca-consultants.org/page/TPAQ>. It is not required to perform the appraisal, but it is preferred as it gives more credibility to the arborist for the report.

Question 13: Comment - There are a limited number of people who hold the TRAQ qualification, and it may be difficult to renew or acquire as a result of the pandemic. The course offerings have been limited and some have let their certifications lapse.

Answer 13: The TRAQ must be current at the time of securing the contract and at the time of assessment.

Question 14: When with the responses to questions be shared and will the video be shared?

Answer 14: The answers will be posted by 9/20. The video will not be shared.

Question 14: Do we need to have the addendum signed if one is issued, or can we submit early?

Answer 14: Any addenda that are posted must be signed off on for the proposal to be considered even if the contractor submits the proposal before the addendum.