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ACA Newsletter

Commodity Code Crosswalk Underway to Improve City's Bid Process

Austin, TX— In an effort to improve the solicitation and bid process for city contracts, worth over \$1 billion annually, the City of Austin's Commodity Code Crosswalk Project was created to improve the current commodity code system with codes numbering in the tens of thousands. A new methodology is expected to be developed before the end of the year by Periscope Holdings, contracted by the city to work with the City to provide crosswalk between BIBS, CSI, and NIGP Codes.

Periscope/SNAP will focus on the mapping of CSI codes to NIGP codes to streamline process and improve correlation between construction specs, bid sheets, and vendor data. Phase 1 focuses on "Proof of Concept-Test" to examine Crosswalk 8 bid items, meet with stakeholders to get input into process, feedback, direction, understand registration versus certification, and finally meet with IT at City to understand technology infrastructure related to project areas.

A general forum was held on Thursday, November 15, at 2:30 PM, at City Hall during the first phase of developing the methodology and testing. Key stakeholders such as the Black, Asian, and Hispanic trade associations were all invited to participate in the discussion and provide inputs.

The selected bid items include:

1. 642D Silt Fence for Erosion Control
2. 510-AW PVC Pipe for Water
3. 340S-B HMAC
4. 803S-MO Barricades, Signs and Traffic Handling (The code 5507818 Barricades, Traffic, Portable was listed in the Top 3 for the most commonly coded items in a trade summary. Traffic control is also often used for minority goals).
5. 700S-TM Total Mobilization (This item was chosen because it's a very commonly used item but also because I suspect several other commodity codes/ services fall within this item).
6. 201S Sub-grade Preparation (This item was chosen because it's a common construction item but I

suspect it is coded under several different codes. It also has a component of surveying which is a commonly used code and minority opportunity).

7. 432S- Concrete Sidewalk

8. 506S Manholes

The City of Austin typically uses standard bid items on unit price contracts and specifications organized primarily by CSI (Construction Specifications Institute) Divisions for lump sum contracts. Project Managers currently use the National Institute of Government Purchasing (NIGP) codes in order to create trade summaries that support the development of MBE/WBE goals and project availability lists. The availability lists are provided to Bidders so that Certified Minority and women owned firms registered with the City under the commodity codes listed have opportunities to participate in construction projects. The goal of this project is to establish methodical relationships by cross-walking commodity codes to Standard Bid items and CSI codes.

A Commodity Code is a classification tool that is governed by standardized laws and principles covering the classification of any useful thing. Such a tool uses a hierarchical structure of component codes that together can provide a detailed account of a useful thing, usually an article of business interest. In our case, purchasing items related to construction goods and services.

As a tool, the commodity code provides a structure for standardized purchasing, used to bring efficiency to automated purchasing.

A Cross-Walk builds relationships between two or more standardized sets of commodity or service codes so that within a computerized accounting and reporting system (eCapris), entering one code will bring up all the same or like codes under a different system. The scope of this project is to establish consistent relationships between City of Austin Standard Construction Bid Items and the components that make up a bid item, with nationally recognized coding systems. It can be thought of as a sort of translator or conversion tool for a series of data. In this case, construction commodity codes which Minority and Women Owned Businesses are Certified to perform construction activity with the City bid items.

The outcome of this project should make bid tabulations and cost estimates easier for all of the stakeholders in a bidding process.

Asian Contractors Corner



GLOBAL ENGINEERS, INC.
DBA: GLOBAL ENGINEERS AND CONTRACTORS,
INC.

Global Engineers and Contractors, Inc. prides itself on having a staff with 32 years of accumulated experience in building design and construction. Munir Khan, who started the company in 2006, holds a Ph.D in construction engineering and a master's degree in constructional management engineering & management from the University of Nevada, Reno.

He also earned a master's degree in landscape architecture from Sheffield University in England, a post-graduate diploma in planning and development from Dhaka University in Bangladesh, and a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from the Bangladesh Institute of Technology.

While in Bangladesh in 1982, Mr. Khan worked for two Universities and served as an executive engineer at the biggest Airport in Bangladesh providing services in both design and construction supervision.

Afterwards, Mr. Khan enrolled in the University of Sheffield, U.K. and completed his master's in architectural studies and worked one year in Sheffield, England.

Mr. Khan then moved to Reno, Nevada for his master's and Ph.D credentials there. After completion of his master's degree, he was offered a engineering position with the City of Ely, Nevada, where he initiated and designed the city's first five-year master plan since 1970. During his three years as the city engineer, he also worked on numerous city construction projects such as the development of wastewater pond, land field, parks.

He later moved to Dallas, Texas and worked as a consultant for TxDot and several cities and counties including Dallas, Irving, Plano, Carrollton, DeSoto, Allen County, and Denton County as a land development engineer and transportation engineer.

A job offer to work as a consultant on the SH 130 Toll

Road project with DMJM Harris moved Mr. Khan and his family to Austin in 2004. Two years later in 2006, he started his own firm in Austin.

Following the completion of the project, which lasted for four years, Mr.

Khan was sent by the company to Phoenix and Albuquerque to work on several highway projects. One year afterwards, Mr. Khan decided to return to Austin to expand his business base in Central Texas.

2006 was a year when the economy and the construction industry were beginning to slow down; however, Mr. Khan was patient and kept the company going by maintaining a consistent presence in the market place. Since then, he has done contracting work for the City of Austin, AISD, TxDot, Williamson County, Travis County, TCEQ and other cities and counties in the Austin area.

He strategy as a consultant is to use his expertise as a construction engineer to cross over to the construction side. He believes his firm has a great position as a design builder capable of designing and constructing a project simultaneously from scratch, a capability which Mr. Khan thinks will infuse any project with a synergy that elevates its workmanship and cut cost and time at the same time.

On a personal note, Mr. Khan has been active in the Asian community and volunteered in various organizations in Austin. He is a founding board member of Bangladesh Association of Greater Austin (BAGA).

He feels fortunate to have the support of his lovely wife, Shamima Khan, MD. He also has two grown sons, Shamsul, a computer engineer, and Rahat, a UT law school student. For pastimes, Mr. Khan enjoys soccer, chess, and traveling. Reading and writing are his main hobbies.

His advice to any contractor who is interested in doing business with the City of Austin is to have patience and consistency.

Great patience is the key. As the economy turns downward, city and other governmental revenues also see reductions, a circumstance where it is vital to have patience. Quality work, timely completion and within budget are all very important for a construction firm to sustain. Building good relationships with clients certainly is always an integral part of any successful business, according to the engineer turned entrepreneur.

"If you lost a bid, always put on your analytical glasses and dig deep to find out what was missing. Work might be slow in the beginning, but persistency and consistency will help you win the race in the end. Don't shun from small projects. Any amount of work is still work. Remember, sincerity and honesty is the best policy," advised Mr. Khan.



City Hosts First City-Wide Procurement Workshop for Minority- and Women-owned Enterprises and Small Businesses

The City of Austin hosted its first city-wide workshop to help small and minority business owners understand the ins and outs of doing business with the city. An estimated 300 local business owners joined the seminar titled

“Expanding Opportunities: Procurement Workshop & Reception,” held on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at the Palmer Events Center.

Various sessions were conducted simultaneously on topics regarding the process, eligibility, and requirements to bid on city contracts either as a certified small business, women-owned enterprise, or a minority vendor.

The City of Austin has an award winning purchasing program for women and minority contractors to participate in the city's purchasing process. Under the Austin City ordi-



nances, the city will provide assistance and set participation goals in city contracts for women and ethnic groups such as the Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians.

The 5-hour procurement workshop consisted of three sessions and an executive panel discussion. Session 1 covered Certification 101, How to be Compliant with the City's MBE/WBE Procurement Program Ordinance; Session 2 covered Construction, Qualification Based Selection Process (for Professional Services); Session 3 covered Purchasing Contracts, Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Overview & Forecast.

Staff members from Austin Energy, Aviation Department, Consolidated Rental Car Facility, Communications & Technology Management, and Public Works teamed up to present latest bid opportunities from their respective departments and fielded questions from participants.

The Department of Small and Minority Business Resources, which facilitated the workshop, has posted handouts used in all sessions at the following link, <http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/outreach>, for those who were not able to attend the meeting.

The workshop was followed by the annual MBE/WBE Appreciation Reception & Awards. Please see below a list of awardees for 2012.

Consultant of the Year - CH2M Hill Inc.
Contractor of the Year - Texas Solar Power Company
Small Businesses of the Year:
C.L. Elder Trucking
JS Electric, Inc.
Metalink Corporation
White Photographic Services

Special recognition was also given to SMBR Service Providers, namely, Asian Contractor Association, Austin Area Black Contractors Association, and US Hispanic Contractors Association. ACA would like to congratulate all of the honorees and look forward to a successful year for all women- and minority-owned contractors.

