



▶POTENTIAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN EXPIRING CITY CONTRACTS.....1
▶CITY'S FOCUS ON INCREASING MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN NON-CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS.....2
▶ASIAN VENDOR CORNER.....3
▶CENSUS DATA TO UNDERSTAND BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT4
▶CITY OF AUSTIN NEWS HIGHLIGHTS5

ACA Newsletter

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Potential Business Opportunities in Expiring City Contracts

Austin—City of Austin’s award winning website, Austin Finance Online, is a treasure trove of information on where and how the city’s tax dollars are spent. Delineated in the eCheckbook and Contract Catalog on the city website (see illustration) are every contract awarded, contract amount, year to date expenditure per contract, and contract deliverables among other things.

For city vendors, Austin Finance Online provides the ideal tool to search contracting information, not only for current solicitations, but also for past and expiring contracts.

Expiring contract information can be valuable since the majority of city contracts will be re-solicited if no extension remains, which affords potential bidders or proposers an early glimpse of what’s coming down the city pipeline. They can also better position themselves when these solicitations are ready to go out.

For minority vendors scouting for subcontracting or sub-consulting opportunities, this information can serve as a window to the winners circle, especially when they have yet to secure their first contract with the city. Knowing what is on the horizon will allow them time to contact potential primes early in the game and perhaps foster future partnerships. It has been a known fact that many minority vendors have had to wait patiently for three years or longer to be on their first city project, and three years is a long time to survive a competitive market. Their hope is that city’s primes will be encouraged to broaden their pool of utilization and start new partnerships with equally capable minority vendors wherever they can be found.

Too often familiar prime bidders or consultants already have had their subs selected and lined up for non-low bid projects, these eager to do business minority vendors hardly stand a chance. Since no Good Faith Efforts are necessary, no additional minority vendors will be contacted or solicited.

While being a minority subcontractor or sub-consultant is one of the ways to get one’s foot in the door to massive city projects, as their businesses grow, some have been able to compete as a prime and succeeded. Whether it be their experiences or capacities to help them win, a crucial element in having an edge for any company large or small

over their competitions is the ability to see future trends. Fortunately, the city’s innovative website offers ample open data for everyone who has come to the race to mine and make good of.

To find out what city contracts are up for renewal, there are a few simple steps to take to pull a report on all expiring city contracts.

Firstly, go to Austin Finance Online by googling “Vendor Connection,” which is the quickest way to find the link without typing the web address. The city’s listing will appear on the very top and will take you directly to Austin Finance Online’s main page.

Next click on “CONTRACT CATALOG” in one of the tabs right below “Austin Finance Online.” To the right of the Contract Catalog page, there is a section called “Additional Resources.” Click on the third bullet, Reports. Select “Contracts Expiring Next 180 Days. You will see a drop down window that says “View All.” Select the category you are interested in to obtain the complete list. To see contract details, simply copy the Master Agreement number beginning with MA, and search on Google to bring up the specific contract.

If you need assistance, please contact ACA by sending your questions to asiancontractor@gmail.com.

The screenshot shows the 'Austin Finance Online' website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'HOME', 'FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS', 'CONTRACT CATALOG', 'eCHECKBOOK', 'UNCLAIMED PROPERTY', 'OFFICES', 'VENDOR CONNECTION', and 'FAQ'. Below this is a secondary menu with 'MAIN', 'CONSTRUCTION', 'GOODS', 'NON-PROFESSIONAL', 'PROFESSIONAL', 'COOPERATIVE', 'SINGLE SOURCE', and 'OTHER'. The main content area is titled 'EXPIRING CONTRACTS' and 'Contracts Expiring in Next 180 Days'. A 'Special Note' states: 'This list includes contracts with optional extensions that may or may not be selected by the City. Until the extension is put in place, the contract is considered to be "expiring".' Below this is a 'Description' section: 'Viewing expiring Professional Services contracts expiring in the next 180 days as of 10:43 AM on 07/09/17. This list is sorted by Expiration Date, Category and Contract Number.' There is a 'Professional Services' dropdown menu and a 'Quick Filter' field. A table of contracts is displayed with the following columns: Category, Contract, Expires, Auth Limit, Ordered, and Spent.

Category	Contract	Expires	Auth Limit	Ordered	Spent
MA - 7400 - S050005	ADA SIDEWALK, RAMP & BIWAY IMPROVEMENTS	12/31/17	\$5,000,000.00	\$3,289,275.15	\$3,250,928.98
MA - 6100 - SA130000005	COMPREHENSIVE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REVISION	12/31/17	\$6,028,030.45	\$6,028,030.45	\$3,960,310.93
MA - 6100 - PA130000001	2012 SCADA SERVICES ROTATION LIST	12/31/17	\$3,750,000.00	\$3,182,587.49	\$2,262,079.98
MA - 6100 - PA120000007	2012 ABA ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING ROTATION LIST	12/31/17	\$9,750,000.00	\$9,295,244.22	\$5,382,207.99
MA - 6100 - PA110000073	WALLER CREEK CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS TESTING AND TUNNEL SURVE	12/31/17	\$945,000.00	\$945,000.00	\$923,700.23
MA - 6100 - PA110000062	2011 SMALL SCALE CIVIL ENGINEERING ROTATION LIST	12/31/17	\$6,400,000.00	\$4,944,753.59	\$4,427,153.57
MA - 6100 - PA110000043	SMALL DIAMETER WATER AND	12/31/17	\$5,000,000.00	\$4,369,521.03	\$3,075,478.29

City's Focus on Increasing Minority Participation In Non-Construction Contracts



The city's Purchasing Office, often on center stage in council meetings regarding high dollar contract awards, manages as many as 1,000 or more non-construction contracts in any given fiscal year totaling nearly \$2 billion in expenditure authorization .

These contracts, different from construction and professional services projects, can go through Co-ops, single source, or interlocal agreements. Cooperatives and Interlocals are competitive contracts of other governments and single source contracts are goods and services that can only be provided by one source.

For most of the other procurement the office receives from various city departments, they are either buying in bulk or buying for one scope of work or one commodity code, which normally results in no participation goals regardless how many certified minority vendors are available.

Following calls from the Asian Contractor Association to improve utilization of minority vendors in these contracts, the office has begun an effort to add additional scopes in what they buy.

Leading in the new endeavor is Shawn Willet (above photo), Deputy Purchasing Officer, along with her colleague, Deputy Purchasing Officer Yolanda Miller, under the leadership of Purchasing Officer James Scarboro.

It's a balancing act, she said, whether we should keep a contract big so to offer more subcontracting opportunities or to break them up so M/WBE firms can be the primes. The city's centralized procurement structure, unlike many other major cities in Texas where each city department handles its own purchases, however, allows them the flexibility to package their projects to suit the city's needs, as Ms. Willet discovered after visiting a few cities as a city business process consultant in 2013.

Construction projects have larger scopes and multiple pieces and lend themselves more to opportunities, she said, so single scope projects, which make up many of the contracts coming through her office, is still one the biggest challenges to procure with minority participation goals.

Nonetheless, she revealed, that does not mean there are no opportunities, and the way to do it is to "ask the right questions."

By asking each department to look hard for opportunities and educating each department the importance of the city's M/WBE procurement ordinance, she found that many city departments are quickly on board to work with her.

A simple conversation was all it took, she added, and that the good relationships she has fostered within the city over the years has made it much easier. Ms. Willet also commented that public employees in general do not seek out government jobs motivated by pecuniary gains but rather a passion for public service, so the extra work and time it needs to help minority businesses is well spent in their view.

A recent success is adding new scopes and goals to an IT project that they normally do not have after really looking and identifying different pieces that make up the project, she pointed out.

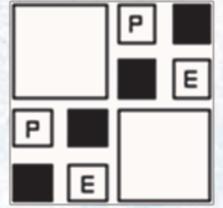
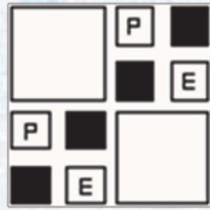
She also reported that in 2016 alone, 17 contracts have set M/WBE goals, an improvement from years past, and 10 contracts were awarded to M/WBE firms as primes, and eight of them did not have goals.

One example is a court case management software project issued with no goals, but the selected vendor added a \$200,000 subcontract to a MBE for programming services. She said that these are projects that they will learn from, and they know next time what opportunities there may be.

Asking the right questions also means asking directly the primes for opportunities. For Co-op agreements with Texas Department of Information, she said they can also start asking the prime vendors if they can subcontract out to minority vendors. "Sometimes even if it is a proprietary software contract that they normally won't let a sub-consult do it, but we are learning that there are times that they will. Same thing with programming, we need to ask more questions, can someone else do it? How about the training piece? We are learning to ask better questions."

Another example the veteran government buyer gave was a contract for playground equipment through Co-ops. She discussed with all the manufacturers likely to be used in the future the importance of the city M/WBE ordinance. All the M/WBE firms certified in similar commodity codes were invited to meet with the makers to work together by getting M/WBE firms trained as their certified installers.

Ms. Willet said that her office is open to suggestions and encourages all interested minority businesses to contact their trade associations or her office if they see additional scopes/commodity codes that can be added to a project to offer subbing opportunities.



Professional StruCIVIL Engineers, Inc. - 20 Years Experience, Austin, Texas, USA

Our approach to serving our client population is doing the same today as when we started in 1997: Provide great service for great clients. Working out of our Austin office, we combine the talents of engineers, planners, design technologists and consultant service teams to develop client tailored solutions that have lasting value. Our team of talented technical, administrative and professional staff serves a diverse and expanding client base in order to meet the increasing need for the services we provide.

Our area of work within structural engineering includes the design of Residential Buildings, Commercial Buildings, Industrial Buildings & Bridges. Our capabilities are shown in the Steel Structures, Timber Structures, Light Gauge Structures, Reinforced Concrete Structures, Tilt up Structures & Structural Drafting we have designed.

Our civil engineering component includes commercial site and subdivision planning. Our capabilities produce a dimensional vision that often reaches past our clients development requirements all while maintaining strong working relationships with governing municipalities. This includes a study of the proposed site to determine the best use of land that allows us to showcase a design that suits that the needs of our clients. We have consistently and successfully designed sites that are atypical in size and require innovative thinking to achieve our client's goals.

Our Core Values

Professional StruCIVIL Engineers, Inc. is a successful firm on the cutting edge of technique, knowledge and technology. We believe in, value our associates, and have an enjoyable work atmosphere. Productivity is important, but not at the expense of personal growth and fulfillment, dignity or family needs. Our associates are supportive of company leadership and its vision for our organization.

Our Core Values are the non-negotiable philosophies by which we operate and make our decisions.

TEAMWORK

We believe in dignity, loyalty and respect for all of our associates and all those with whom we come in contact. We respond to our client's needs and our common goals by sharing ideas and working together in a cooperative and coordinated manner. We cohesively work with all consultants utilized through our firm or by choice of our clients.

OPTIMISM

We believe that having a positive outlook on life is a choice despite the inevitable obstacles or difficulties that come our way. We always approach our work and our relationships with a positive attitude. We perform our duties in a way that is uplifting to those around us and those with whom we come in contact.

INNOVATION

The business world is moving fast and we do not believe in standing still. We believe in equipping our employees with the latest and most efficient technological tools and training to increase their effectiveness for our clients. This philosophy requires a significant ongoing investment that our organization continues to make.

GOAL ORIENTED

New challenges keep us passionate about what we do. Personal growth and high performance rarely take place without high goals and a commitment to achieve them. We believe in encouraging and equipping our associates to make the most of their potential while working with our firm.

PSCE project photos ~~~



Census Data to Understand Business Environment

Are you looking for data to help you start or grow a business or understand the business landscape for a region?

The **Census Business Builder (CBB)** is a suite of services that provide selected demographic and economic data from the Census Bureau tailored to specific types of users in a simple to access and use format.

[2.1 Update](#)

[2.0 Beta](#)

[Overview](#)

[Video & Webinars](#)

[Help & FAQs](#)



(Select to Launch)

Small Business Edition is built primarily for small business owners who need key data for their business plan or to better understand their potential market. It presents data for a single type of business and geography at a time.



(Select to Launch)

Regional Analyst Edition is built for chambers of commerce and regional planning staff who need a broad portrait of the people and businesses in their service area. It presents data for all sectors of the economy and for a user-defined region made up of one or more areas.

Key Features

- Easy to use menus and Search tools to select the location you'd like to research and nearly all types of businesses
- Interactive maps to browse and download data about the selected area and type of businesses
- A customizable dashboard that includes time series and geographic comparison charts
- Interactive and downloadable reports (including charts) that can be easily incorporated into your research
- Optimized for your smartphone or tablet

Widgets

View widgets that allow you to embed a link to CBB on your website.

Flyers

View flyers that describe these new features in more detail.



Census Business Builder: Small Business Edition v. 2.1 [1.9 MB]



Census Business Builder: Regional Analyst Edition v. 2.1 [1.8 MB]

Feedback

Please email us at census.cofb@census.gov with your feedback on the tool, including what you like about it as well as what changes you'd like to see in future versions. (Source: US Census Bureau)

City of Austin News Highlights

Council Authorized Safety Improvement in Mobility Bond

The 2016 Mobility Bond provided \$15 million in funding toward safety improvements at high-crash locations throughout Austin as part of ATD's [Transportation Safety Improvement Program](#). Construction of improvements at the first three intersections is anticipated to begin in the next few months.

First up, a new traffic signal will be constructed at the intersection of Slaughter Lane and Alice Mae Lane, near the Southpark Meadows Shopping Center. The need for this signal was identified in the safety study of Slaughter Lane and South 1st Street. The improvements at Slaughter Lane and Alice Mae Lane will help increase safety of the road network and positively impact safety and mobility at Slaughter Lane and South 1st Street. Construction of the signal is anticipated to begin by the end of June. Other improvements at Slaughter Lane and South 1st Street are still in design and would likely be constructed in fall 2017.

ATD anticipates construction to begin at the intersection of Pleasant Valley Road and Elmout Drive by September 2017. Improvements will include a dedicated left-turn lane and center median on Pleasant Valley Road, a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists necessary to accommodate the new turn facilities, enhanced pedestrian crossings and connectivity to crosswalks, ADA-compliant curb-ramps, and a new center median on Elmout Drive, east of the intersection.

Finally, staff is finalizing design plans for improvements at South Congress Avenue and Oltorf Street. Design is anticipated to be completed in the next few months, with a goal of beginning construction in fall 2017.

At June 15th's City Council meeting, Council approved funding for construction contracts related to these improvements. In total, staff anticipates the 2016 Mobility Bond to fund improvements at 15 to 18 of the intersections on the [high-crash intersection list](#). For more information, visit the [Transportation Safety Improvement Program webpage](#).

IRS Re-Releases Proposed Partnership Audit Regs

On June 13, 2017, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) re-released proposed regulations that repeal the current rules governing partnership audits and replaces them with a new centralized partnership audit regime that generally assesses and collects tax at the partnership level. The proposed regs provide rules for partnerships subject to the new regime, including procedures for electing out of the centralized partnership audit regime, filing administrative adjustment requests, and the determination of amounts owed by the partnership or its partners attributable to adjustments that arise out of an examination of a partnership. The proposed regs affect partnerships for tax years beginning after December 31, 2017, and any partnerships that elect application of the centralized partnership audit regime for tax years between November 2, 2015, and January 1, 2018. The IRS originally released these proposed regulations on January 18, 2017, and withdrew them following the release of a January 20 White House memorandum ordering a freeze on all new and pending regulations.

Link to rule: https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=IRS_FRDOC_0001-1579.

Applications Now Available for Annual CityWorks Academy

The City of Austin has begun accepting applications for the ninth-annual CityWorks Academy. The academy is an opportunity for the Austin community to get involved in local government and to learn first-hand about the programs and services the City provides from the people who operate them. The application deadline is **July 21**.

Participants will have the chance to learn the "A to Z" of City operations through 14 class sessions that conclude with a graduation ceremony. These sessions are designed to give participants a hands-on, behind-the-scenes look at their City government. Classes start the first week of September and end the second week of December. Each session will be held at a different City facility on either Tuesday or Wednesday from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The CityWorks Academy will be led by City of Austin Executive Team members, Department Directors, and other City staff who will share information about the City's operations and discuss key issues facing our community.

CityWorks Academy applications are available online at <http://austintexas.gov/atx-cw-app> or at Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second St. (third floor reception area). CityWorks Academy is limited to 30 participants.

Since the program's beginning in 2009, more than 150 Austin residents have graduated from the academy and several have gone on to serve on City boards, committees, and other leadership positions. Each year the City receives more than 250 applications for the 30 available spots.

For more information visit <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/cityworks-academy> or contact: Marion Sanchez at 512-974-2955 or marion.sanchez@austintexas.gov.

2017 Austin Green Business Leaders Announced

39 local businesses recognized for sustainability efforts

By resolving to go green, many local businesses are helping to protect the environment, reduce their carbon footprint, and make Austin a more livable place. These organizations strive to make sustainability a key part of day-to-day operations by reducing waste, using alternative transportation, conserving water and energy, offering employee health programs, and giving back to the community. At the same time, they can also trim operating costs for their business. This year 39 businesses have been recognized for their commitment to sustainability as [Austin Green Business Leaders](#), bringing the program total to 214 member businesses, representing almost 40,000 employees and more than 15 million square feet of office space.

PLATINUM MEMBERS:

Brookfield Residential Properties, Connolly Architects & Consultants, Drillinginfo, Inc., Freese and Nichols, Inc., IBM, Indeed, Inc., Integral Group, Lake|Flato Architects, Mountain Sun Resources, Office for Local Architecture, Snooze an A.M. Eatery: South Lamar, SunflowerDESIGN.net, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department,

GOLD MEMBERS:

Boundless, Doucet & Associates, Earthly Labs, Greenbelt Solar, Griffin School, HDR, JOSCO Products, Madras Pavilion, Mint, Snooze an A.M. Eatery: North Lamar, SunPower Corporation, The Purple Fig Eco Cleaning Co., LLC

SILVER MEMBERS:

Austin Roofing and Construction, Downtown Austin Alliance, Fuerte Fitness

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

Austin Community Design and Development Center (Gold), BCL of Texas (Gold), Castle Hill Fitness (Platinum), HM Risk Group (Platinum), Recycled Reads (Platinum), SeaLab LLC (Platinum), Silicon Labs (Platinum), Texas Mutual Insurance Company (Platinum), Walter P. Moore (Platinum), Wayside Schools (Platinum), Zero Waste Strategies LLC (Platinum)