

**TRN 10-001
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
Livable Centers Study
for the Downtown Management District**

CLOSING DATE: Monday, March 22, 2010, at 3:30 p.m. (local time)

FORMAT: Hard copy, bound/stapled and signed, 12 point minimum Arial font, black ink text, 8 ½ x 11 paper size.

NUMBER OF COPIES: Ten (10)

**SUBMIT TO: Meredith Dang
Land Use Transportation Coordinator
Houston-Galveston Area Council**

Mailing address
**P.O. Box 22777
Houston, TX 77227-2777**

Physical/delivery
**3555 Timmons Lane, Suite 100
Houston, TX 77027**

Contact information
**Main number: (713) 627-3200
Desk: (713) 993-2443
Fax: (713) 993-4503
Email: meredith.dang@h-gac.com**

Those responding to this solicitation may elect to either mail or personally deliver their proposals to H-GAC offices. Failure to submit the required number of copies as stated above may result in disqualification from the proposal process. H-GAC will not accept any proposals delivered by telephonic, electronic or facsimile means.

The deadline for the submittal of proposals is no later than 3:30 PM on March 22 , 2010. H-GAC shall date-time all proposals upon receipt. Proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted. Respondents may submit their proposal to the H-GAC office any time prior to the deadline.

Submission of a proposal will constitute acknowledgement and acceptance of all the terms and conditions contained in this RFP. Proposers, their authorized representative, and their agents are responsible for obtaining, and will be deemed to have, full knowledge of the conditions, requirements, and specifications of this Request for Proposal at the time a proposal is submitted to H-GAC.

PRE-PROPOSAL COMMUNICATIONS

A Pre-Proposal Meeting is to be held on Wednesday, February 17, 2010, from 10:00-11:00 a.m. in the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) 2nd Floor Conference Room C. Those unable to attend this meeting in person may participate via conference call. Please notify Meredith Dang no later than Tuesday, February 16, 2010, if you plan to attend the meeting, or wish to be included on the conference call.

It will be assumed that potential Proposers attending this meeting have reviewed the RFP in detail and are prepared to raise any substantive questions which have not already been addressed by H-GAC. H-GAC requests that, as much as is practical, Proposers submit all questions in advance in writing, via email or fax, prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference. No additional questions regarding the RFP will be accepted after 5:00 PM on February 17, 2010. Questions submitted in advance should be sent to Meredith Dang, H-GAC Land Use Transportation Coordinator, via email at meredith.dang@h-gac.com or via fax at 713-993-4503. All questions and answers from the Pre-Proposal meeting will be compiled and provided to participating Proposers, as well as posted on the H-GAC web site.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SPECIFICATIONS

Requests for additional information and questions should be addressed to Meredith Dang, Land Use Transportation Coordinator, Community and Environmental Planning Department, Houston Galveston Area Council, telephone – 713.993.2443 fax - 713.993.4503, or e-mail – meredith.dang@h-gac.com, no later than February 17, 2010 at 5:00 PM local time. H-GAC will provide written responses to all questions received in writing on or before the written question submittal deadline (see Pre-Proposal Meeting). Questions received from all respondents, including those raised at the Pre-Proposal Meeting, shall be answered and sent to all respondents who are listed as having obtained Requests for Proposal, as well as posted on the H-GAC web site. Proposers shall be notified in writing (via email) of any changes in the specifications contained in this Request for Proposal, and any changes will also be posted on the H-GAC web site.

NON-RESPONDERS TO THE RFP

If unable to submit a proposal, please contact H-GAC in writing advising the reason for not submitting a proposal. Reasons for non-response to the RFP may be submitted to Meredith Dang at meredith.dang@h-gac.com.

OBJECTIVE

H-GAC is seeking consulting services to conduct a study and develop a plan to further the goals of the Livable Centers program in the City of Houston Downtown area. The Consultant (team) will develop a plan that address the application of the Livable Centers program goals to the identified study area, including identification of transportation improvements that could leverage private investment and improve the quality of life in the project area.

The consultant (team) will be required to have knowledge and expertise in the following areas:

- Creating quality, walkable, mixed-use places, creating multi-modal travel choices, improving environmental quality, and promoting economic development.
- Estimating potential for private investment to be leveraged from public improvements.
- Planning and design of street, sidewalk, signage, and lighting improvements, including developing cost estimates.

Please see the Livable Centers section of the H-GAC website for additional Livable Centers program information: www.h-gac.com/livablecenters.

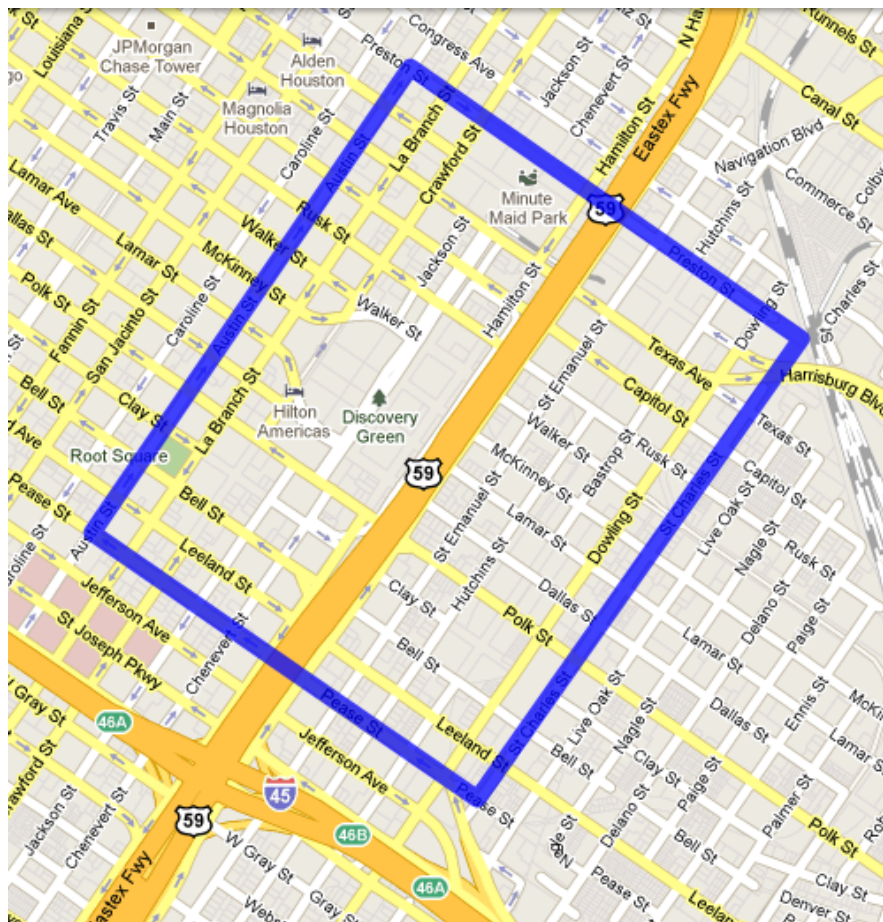
Since this project requires a range of research, transportation, urban design, economic development, and planning expertise, a team of specialized firms is encouraged. A consultant, or team of consultants, with one prime contractor, is a typical type of consultant contract used by H-GAC.

BACKGROUND

H-GAC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the eight-county Houston-Galveston Transportation Management Area (TMA). This study (and resulting recommended project(s)) is one of a number of action steps adopted by H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council to address mobility challenges and quality of life in the region.

STUDY AREA: Downtown and East Downtown (EaDo) Houston

The study area for this project is 12x14 blocks bounded by Preston Street, St. Charles Street, Pease Avenue, and Austin Street. Within this area much development of national and regional attraction has occurred such as the George R. Brown Convention Center, Minute Maid Park, Toyota Center, Discovery Green, and the Columbia Tap Hike & Bike Trail. Still much more is proposed such as a new stadium for Houston's Major League Soccer (MLS) team- the Houston Dynamo, new METRO Light Rail facilities, and new public spaces.



SCHEDULED TIME FRAME

The work is scheduled to begin on or about June 1, 2010 and to be completed within nine months of the start date. H-GAC reserves the right to extend and/or expand the scope of this contract, subject to H-GAC Board of Directors approval and additional funding availability.

PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK:

The scope of work to be performed is for the preparation of a plan/(plans) to further the goals of the Livable Centers program including the identification of transportation infrastructure investments to support the goals of the study within the defined study area. The overall goal of the study is to create a Development Framework plan for the Downtown Management District/ EaDo District study area that includes land use, economic development, circulation, connectivity greening, and lighting and signage concepts. The framework for new projects and infill development will be made with the intent of creating all new attractions to be accessible by public transportation along with workforce and multifamily housing in proximity to jobs and entertainment destinations

Downtown East & East Downtown (EaDo) spanning Highway 59 together have the potential to create a viable transit oriented, mixed use, & mixed income environment, all in immediate proximity to the region's largest employment center; the Downtown CBD. However, pedestrian facilities in the area are deteriorated or lacking, street lighting inconsistent, and US59 / George R. Brown convention center poses a substantial barrier to circulation, both real and perceived, and high volume traffic flows create the potential for pedestrian conflicts. This raises imperative for a planning effort to insure maximum synergy between existing projects, the development of additional desired land uses, and connectivity to adjacent communities to create a great district in the city center.

Background Plans: This project will capitalize on the momentum generated by the following planning efforts:

- Intown Living Task Force Study (Central Houston, Spillette Consulting, Page Southerland Page)
- TIRZ 15 vision session (Gensler)
- Avenida –East End Study (Gensler)
- Land Use & Demographics, East Downtown (CDS Market Research)
- East Downtown Infrastructure Assessment (HNTB)
- George R. Brown Masterplan update (concurrent)

These efforts provide a starting point from which the Consultant (team) will offer an assessment of barriers and opportunities to creating an urban pattern of development, including market demand, financial feasibility, and regulatory perspectives. Information from previous studies as well as the needs assessment (see Task 1) will be compiled and assembled into CAD and GIS formats to allow detailed resolution of study outcomes in the project area.

Overall the Livable Centers study should create a plan for the area that analyzes the safety and quality of the pedestrian environment, identifies existing as well as potential future pedestrian generators, and provides design solutions for an enhanced, attractive, connected and safe pedestrian environment, according to the tasks outlined below:

Scope of Work:

Task 1: Needs Assessment

The Consultant (team) will collect any data necessary to evaluate existing transportation and land use conditions and recommend Livable Centers improvements within the project study area(s). This effort should include an inventory of existing land uses, an evaluation of the existing street network, including an identification of current mode split, and any impediments to the use of alternative modes of transportation. The data collection should pay particular attention to the pedestrian realm and the opportunities for economic development. The Consultant (team) must be sensitive to the needs of the historic and evolving demographic profiles of the community and their culture(s), and have strong communications skills and language capabilities.

The needs assessment should be reviewed by the project sponsor and stakeholders and refined, as necessary.

Task 2: Conceptual Plan

Based on the needs assessment, the Consultant (team) will prepare a draft conceptual plan identifying strategic investments and policies in the transportation and land use realms that, if implemented, will improve the safety and feasibility of using alternative modes of transportation, increase the sense of historic and contemporary identity, support economic development and leverage private investment in the study area.

Specifically, the study shall provide an analysis of the current and potential future land use mix within the study area and analyze the potential for redevelopment of land uses that will be supportive of and encourage alternative modes of transportation. This analysis should propose specific improvements to transportation infrastructure that will improve the pedestrian realm and pedestrian safety. The analysis should also identify possible investment strategies and policies to leverage the desired land use mix and development types.

The study shall provide recommendations to improve the connectivity within the study area, focusing on physical connectivity across highway 59, and to the adjoining neighborhoods. The study shall analyze and develop concepts to enhance connectivity, circulation and access within the study area. The analysis should include:

- **Pedestrian Environment:** Analyze the safety and quality of the pedestrian environment, identify existing as well as potential pedestrian magnets, and provide design solutions for an enhanced, attractive and safe pedestrian environment. The analysis should look at how to create additional pedestrian enhancements to connect major pedestrian generators within the study area. The plan should develop specific solutions for pedestrian crossings across highway 59. The plan should create concepts for signage, wayfinding, and gateway portals, as well as landscaping and greening.
- **Connectivity and circulation:** Analyze and develop a vehicular circulation and connectivity plan. Analysis should also include an examination of internal and external site circulation and access, street and block patterns, and connectivity to area and regional destinations.
- **Economic Development:** Analyze existing land uses, scales and development types. Propose development concepts that enhance the identity and activity within the study area. Research and documentation should be made of pending development projects and existing vision plans will be sorted and tested for economic viability.

The draft plan should be presented to the project sponsor, stakeholders, and the community for comment, and refined as necessary.

Task 3: Specific Proposed Recommendations and Finalized Conceptual Designs

The consultant (team) shall propose and provide finalized conceptual design drawings of improvements that could be replicated within the study area so as to improve the sense of identity and establish a unifying set of characteristics for the area. This should include streetscapes and similar elements as well as examples of voluntary design guidelines for use within the study area. The finalized conceptual design drawings should reflect and embrace the unique character of EaDo and the east side of the Downtown District.

Task 4: Implementation Plan for Proposed Recommendations

Working with the project sponsor, the consultant (team) shall prepare an implementation plan for the proposed recommendations, including a fiscal analysis that outlines the proposed funding source and/or identification of leveraging of public and private investment and potential partnerships for the recommendations. The implementation plan should include proposed project scopes, cost estimates, timing of implementation, priority levels, and should identify phases for development/implementation. Plan elements requiring elevated expenditures for operations and maintenance should be identified along with suitable funding sources. Infrastructure investments that can be combined with or leverage similar City of Houston expenditures should be identified. Transportation infrastructure investments that are suitable for consideration within H-GAC's Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (RTP/TIP) should be identified.

The study should also quantify the benefits of the recommended projects, including estimating the reduction in number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the study area that could be attributable to the implementation of study recommendations.

Public involvement:

Coordination with the City, the management districts, property owners, community groups, transit agency, and other stakeholders within the study area will be necessary, including the formation of a stakeholder's advisory committee, to meet monthly or at appropriate benchmark intervals during the course of the project.

Current ideas will be tested with participating stakeholders. Using compiled information, work will be done with stakeholders to collect advice and opinions for a development vision for study area that addresses increasing density and preservation of the "edgy" character found in the area (EaDo) today.

In addition, public meetings should be held at appropriate intervals during the project. The Consultant (team) must be sensitive to the needs of the community and their culture, and have strong communications skills and language capabilities

Deliverables

- Final plan (addressing tasks 1-4 in scope of work and all other specific elements) (15 hard copies, 1 electronic format)
 - Documentation of Livable Centers needs assessment, stakeholder meetings and materials, as necessary, and documentation of additional needs as identified through stakeholder input, as appendices to the final report (3 hard copies, 1 electronic format for each study area)

- Written description of projects contained in the plan, with a fiscal analysis containing supporting documentation of methodologies used in calculations, and cross listing of potential funding categories for each project (3 hard copies, 1 electronic format for each study area)

PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Proposals should, at a minimum, include the information described in Sections A-G below:

A. Cover Letter

This letter should include a brief summary of key aspects of the consultant's (team's) qualifications and approach to achieving project within the available budget and time frame. The letter should also include the primary contact name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address for each firm in the proposed team. (Maximum 2 pages)

B. Project Work Program and Schedule

The consultant (team) should detail their approach to undertaking the tasks listed in this RFP. A recommended methodology for performance of each task identified in the scope of work should be included, along with a timeline for completion. The described work program should clearly delineate the proposed work program for the two study areas. The timeline should illustrate key milestones and anticipate necessary meetings with H-GAC staff, the project Stakeholder Advisory Committee, the local project sponsor and others. This contract will be completed within nine months of execution. (Maximum 5 pages)

C. Project Organization and Management

A project organization and management plan should be developed. The plan should include project staffing with an indication of the personnel to be involved, their respective roles, and person-hours by task dedicated to the project. A general summary of the approach to be used in accomplishing the work should be given. The consultant (team) should describe functions and responsibilities of the firms and staff involved. Proposals should clearly delineate all individuals, by names and titles that will be working on this study and their areas of responsibility. If substitutes or back-up personnel are planned on a contingency basis, they should be indicated in the plan. H-GAC requests the prime contract signatory be specified, with title, to facilitate the preparation of the contract. (Maximum 5 pages)

D. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Goal

For projects funded by grants from the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), H-GAC has established a goal of 24% DBE participation in its total annual third party consulting opportunities. Each respondent is encouraged to take affirmative action and make every effort possible to use DBE firms in the performance of work under this contract. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to require the utilization of any DBE firm that is either unqualified or unavailable.

E. Title VI Requirements, EEO and Conflict of Interests/Debarment

Successful respondents will be required to demonstrate compliance with all requirements imposed by Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 (49 U.S.C. Section 2000d), the Regulations of DOT issued hereunder (49 C.F.R. part 21), and the assurances by H-GAC thereto.

Equal Employment Opportunity – Successful respondents will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations.

Proposals should state whether there is a potential conflict of interest and be cognizant of the requirement for executing a debarment certification stating that they have not been barred from doing work involving federal funds. A signed Debarment Certification will be required for each of the consultant team members prior to contract execution.

F. Conflict of Interest Questionnaire

Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code requires vendors and consultants contracting or seeking to contract with H-GAC to file a conflict of interest questionnaire (CIQ) if they have an employment or other business relationship with an H-GAC officer or an officer's close family member. The required questionnaire is located at the Texas Ethics Commission website <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/>. H-GAC officers include its Board of Directors and Executive Director, who are listed on this website.

The CIQ must be completed and filed with a bid/proposal response if an employment or business relationship defined in the law exists.

G. Budget

Funding for this contract, estimated at \$220,500, is dependent upon the successful execution of an interagency agreement between H-GAC, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Houston Downtown Management District. H-GAC reserves the right to expand the total budget and scope of the contract. Respondents are not required to submit a budget of categorical costs in their proposals, but should indicate the approximate percentage of the available funding that will be required for each task. Respondents should be prepared to provide a detailed budget in a timely fashion should they be selected. (Maximum 3 pages)

H. Responsibility and Qualifications

The project manager and other key staff members must be specified and a clear indication given as to their involvement in the project, the amount of time they will be on-site and the percent of their time dedicated to this project. Brief resumes of staff members should be included. The successful respondent to this RFP must understand they are expected to provide qualified personnel to accomplish each portion of the work in this planning study. Substitutions for essential personnel involved in the study will not be allowed without H-GAC's prior approval and resulting delays will be the responsibility of the consultant. H-GAC retains the right to request the removal of any personnel found, in H-GAC's opinion, to be unqualified to perform the work. (Maximum 10 pages)

IN SUMMARY

While the above items provide a general description of what sections and information are expected in the proposal, they are not meant to limit or exclude other pertinent information.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A Proposal Evaluation Team consisting of selected staff from H-GAC, the Downtown Management District, and the Texas Department of Transportation, will review the responses to the RFP received by the designated closing date **(Monday, March 22, 2010 at 3:30 pm)**, using the Evaluation

Criteria described in the following section. The Proposal Evaluation Team reserves the right to contact respondents for clarification of information submitted and to contact references to obtain information regarding past performance, reliability, and integrity.

Consortiums, joint ventures, or teams submitting proposals will not be considered responsive to this RFP unless they have demonstrated in a “management plan” that all contractual responsibility rests solely with one “prime” contractor or legal entity of the “team”. A duly authorized official of the prime respondent must sign the cover letter and other pertinent certifications. Requests for a debriefing must be made within one week of notification of non-selection. H-GAC reserves the right to not conduct debriefings if requests are made after that time.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The proposal evaluation criteria for the ranking (and possible short-listing) of the consultant will include:

Capabilities (25%)

Consultant (team) must have demonstrated capabilities in planning quality, walkable, mixed-use places and creating a multi-modal transportation environment. Consultant (team) must be able to analyze data from a variety of sources, including databases, GIS, travel surveys, traffic counts and plan documents. Consultant (team) must possess knowledge of “best practices” for design of Livable Centers investment and an understanding of the types of projects that are eligible for federal funding.

Approach (25%)

The proposal must delineate an effective approach to achieving project objectives within available time frame and budget. Consultant (team) should provide a project schedule and timeline for achieving key milestones, such as project meetings with H-GAC staff and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. An estimated budget for achieving major project tasks should also be provided.

Project Management, Organizational Structure and Key Personnel (20%)

The Consultant (team) must have a qualified Project Manager. Proposal must demonstrate an effective organizational structure. Key personnel assigned to the project must possess necessary qualifications and be available to perform the work within the project time frame.

Past Performance (20%)

The Consultant (team) must have a demonstrated track record of timely performance, quality and integrity, as evidenced by a list of client references. **Contact information for client references, including email addresses, is required to be included.**

Other Elements (10%)

H-GAC’s Proposal Evaluation Team may also evaluate other elements in the proposal that it deems pertinent to the Consultant’s (team) capability to perform the required tasks. These elements may include innovations that save time and money, creative financing schemes, bilingual capabilities, etc.

CONTRACT AWARD

Evaluation team scores for each RFP respondent will be averaged using a methodology of H-GAC's choosing. The ranked respondents may be reduced to a shortlist of no less than two and no more than four by score. H-GAC reserves the right to NOT conduct interviews with the short-listed respondents.

H-GAC will provide short-listed respondents with instructions as to how the final Consultant (team) ranking will be determined. These may include, but not necessarily be limited to, questions about elements of the proposal submitted, specific scope of work questions and/or interviews. A recommendation will be presented to the Budget and Finance Committee of the H-GAC Board of Directors for approval to negotiate, and execute, a contract with the ranked Consultants (teams) in descending order. The targeted date for Board approval is **May 18, 2010**. H-GAC reserves the right to delay that date as needed and to reject any and all proposals as deemed in its interest

COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Respondent's attention is called to the fact that any contract between H-GAC and the selected respondent(s) will be subject to financial assistance contracts between the H-GAC, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and the Houston Downtown Management District. The contract to be awarded, therefore, is subject to the terms of these agreements and will not proceed without these agreements having been duly executed. The successful respondent will be required to comply with, in addition to other provisions of the agreement, the conditions required by applicable federal regulations, including those regulations which must be documented in the proposal, as indicated in sections D, E, and F of the Proposal Contents section of this RFP.

RESOLUTION OF PROTESTED SOLICITATIONS AND AWARDS

Any Proposer who is aggrieved in connection with a purchase transaction may file a grievance. The grievance may be filed at any phase of the procurement, up to 10 working days after first action by H-GAC Board of Directors to authorized negotiation with top-ranked Proposers. Grievances filed more than 10 days after action by H-GAC Board of Directors will not be deemed timely and will not be considered. In order for a Proposer to enter the grievance process, a written complaint must be sent to the Chief Financial Officer of H GAC by certified mail which includes the following:

1. Name, mailing address and business phone number of the complainant.
2. Appropriate identification of the procurement being questioned.
3. A precise statement of the reasons for the protest.
4. Supporting exhibits, evidence or documents to substantiate any claims.

The grievance must be based on an alleged violation of H-GAC's Procurement Procedures, a violation of State or Federal Law (if applicable), or a violation of applicable grant or contract agreements to which H-GAC is a party. Failure to receive a procurement award from H-GAC in and of itself does not constitute valid grievance. Upon receipt of grievance, the Chief Financial Officer will initiate the informal resolution process.

The Procurement Officer or Departmental Director responsible for the solicitation shall contact the complainant and all interested parties and attempt to resolve the allegations informally within ten (10) working days from the date of complaint. If the allegations are successfully resolved by mutual agreement, documentation will be forwarded to the Office Services Manager of the resolution with specifics on each point addressed in the original complaint.

If the Procurement Officer or Departmental Director is not successful in resolving the allegations,

the complaint along with the comments will be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer immediately. The Chief Financial Officer will review all documentation. All interested parties will be given written notice of the date, time, and place of hearing and an opportunity to present evidence. A written decision will be issued within five (5) working days after the hearing along with notice of appeal rights.

The complainant may appeal the Chief Financial Officer's decision by submitting a written appeal, within five (5) working days, to the Executive Director of H-GAC. The Executive Director, upon receipt of a written notice of appeal, shall contact the complainant and schedule a hearing within ten (10) working days. The Executive Director of H-GAC has the option of appointing a Hearing Officer to preside over the hearing. If appointed, the Hearing Officer shall conduct a hearing and forward a summary and recommended resolution to the Executive Director.

The decision reached by the Executive Director or his designee shall be final and conclusive. This decision will be forwarded to the complainant in writing within thirty (30) working days.

The Proposer may, if it elects to do so, appeal the final and conclusive decision of the Executive Director to a Court of competent jurisdiction.

H-GAC RESPONSIBILITIES

H-GAC is responsible for project administration and final decisions on all contractual matters. All responses to inquiries about the RFP and attachments will be posted on the H-GAC website as often as possible:

<http://www.H-GAC.com> to access the RFP page

No inquiries about the Scope of Work, specifically, will be answered prior to the pre-proposal meeting on **February 17, 2010**. Inquiries about the Scope of Work or other sections of this RFP should be directed to:

Meredith Dang
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P.O. Box 22777
Houston, TX 77227-2777
Main number: (713) 627-3200
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