



**REPORT TO CORE AREA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PROGRAM COMMISSION  
MEETING OF FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2013**

---

**SUBJECT     APPROVAL OF COMMUNICATION CONSULTANT**

**ISSUE**

To approve the Communications Consultant for the implementation phase of the Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program.

**BACKGROUND**

The Capital Regional District (CRD) invited submissions for Communications Consulting Services in support of the Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program (the Program) on March 21, 2013. The Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted on the CRD website and the BC provincial procurement web site.

Submissions were received April 10, 2013 from the following firms:

- AHA Creative
- Peak Communication
- Acumen Communication
- Zinc Public Relations
- J Stuempel & Associates
- Encore Communications
- Susan Kerschbaumer

The objectives of the Communications Consulting Services are to:

- (a) Develop a strategic communications plan that will provide a framework and context for all communications activities on the Program.
- (b) Produce communications materials for the Program on an individual assignment basis as requested.
- (c) Provide communications advisory services, including advice on issues management, on an as required basis for 2013.

The Evaluation Committee (Jack Hull, Andy Orr, and Dave Walker) undertook individual reviews of the technical submissions based on predetermined evaluation guidelines with weighted criteria as identified in the RFP including the firm's experience, competence of its personnel and acceptability of the method proposed.

The Evaluation Committee met as a group and developed a team evaluation. Using the CRD's proposal evaluation procedure, only proposals whose technical scores are within 15% of the proposal awarded the highest technical score could have their financial proposals opened and evaluated. As such, the sealed envelopes containing the financial proposals of only three proponents were opened; Acumen Communication, Zinc Public Relations and J Stuempel &

Associates. The financial proposal included a lump sum fee submission for an initial scope of services and hourly rates to develop lump sum fees for future definable services. One of the proponents was removed from further consideration after opening the fee envelope, as in the unanimous opinion of the Evaluation Committee the lump sum fee to complete the initial Communication work plan was unrealistically low.

The evaluation continued with just the two remaining firms and it was determined that Acumen Communication scored the highest in the combined technical and financial areas.

An interview was held with the Evaluation Committee, Acumen Communications and the Chair of the CAWTP Commission. The Chair was present as an observer and did not cast a vote in the Committee's deliberations. Following the interview the Evaluation Committee reached an unanimous decision that Acumen Communications would be recommended as the Preferred Proponent to provide the services of the Program Communications Advisor.

The intent is to award the contract for the duration of the program however it is recommended that the initial commitment be only until November 2013. At that time their role and scope of services would be reviewed by the new Program Director.

Acumen Communication's initial assignment is to prepare a Strategic Program Communications Plan based on the Fixed Fee in their proposal.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

That the Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program Commission

1. Approve Acumen Communications as the Communications Consultant to prepare a Strategic Program Communications Plan in the amount of \$17,475 plus GST, and to provide ongoing services as requested until November 1, 2013.
2. Defer approval of Acumen Communications as the communications consultant.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

The Authorization for Expenditure of \$50,000 includes both the value of the initial assignment \$17,475 and an allowance for additional services that may be required at a later date.

Budget funds are available in the overall Program Budget as well as the approved 2013 budget for this commitment.

### **CONCLUSION**

Acumen's proposal was well presented and addressed all of the key issues needed on the program and it meets the objectives of the Communication Consulting Services requirements. Budget funds are available in the overall Program Budget, as well as the approved 2013 budget for this commitment.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program Commission approve Acumen Communications as the Communications Consultant to prepare a Strategic Program Communications Plan in the amount of \$17,475 plus GST, and to provide ongoing services as requested until November 1, 2013.

---

David N. Walker  
Program Manager  
Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program

---

J. A. (Jack) Hull, P.Eng, MBA  
Interim Program Director  
Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program

DNW/TB:hr