



**REPORT TO SEATERRA PROGRAM COMMISSION  
MEETING OF FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2013**

**SUBJECT    CONTRACT FOR ACUMEN COMMUNICATIONS**

**ISSUE**

Engagement, outreach and communications consulting services are required to implement the communications plan for the Seaterra Program.

**BACKGROUND**

On May 17, 2013 the Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program (now Seaterra Program) Commission approved Acumen Communications as the Communications Consultant to prepare a Strategic Program Communications Plan and to provide ongoing services. The recommendation for award was based on an evaluation of Requests for Proposals. The intent of the award was to approve an initial commitment until November, 2013, at which time, the new Program Director would review the role and scope of services required. This review is now complete and a communications plan for the Seaterra Program is in place.

The projected costs of the recommended communications plan for the five year Program are:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Projected Cost</b>
Education and Awareness	\$783,000
Public Engagement and Outreach	\$600,000
Media Relations and Issues Management	\$637,000
Strategic Communications	\$242,000
Events	\$207,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,469,000</b>

The projected program costs to support the communications plan are:

Acumen contract	\$1,643,000
Seaterra direct costs	<u>826,000</u>
Total	<u>\$2,469,000</u>

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the Seaterra Program Commission awards the contract for Communications Consulting Services to Acumen Communications. The estimated contract from December, 2013 to March 31, 2018 totals \$1,643,000 plus applicable taxes; or
2. That the Seaterra Program Commission provide direction to staff to initiate a new Request for Proposal call.



**IMPLICATIONS**

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Alternative 1: Cost efficiencies will be achieved by continuation of communication services by extending the existing contract. Acumen Communications has developed a strategic plan, gained technical knowledge, and provided other communications advisory services from May, 2013. Given the length of the program, Acumen has proposed an approximate 6% reduction in hourly rates. The Program Management Office, Capital Regional District and Seaterra Commission are very pleased with the quality of services being rendered by Acumen.

Alternative 2: Selection of a new Communications Consultant will require additional resources to provide history and to develop technical knowledge. The Program may also incur delays in delivering effective communications.

**CONCLUSION**

Award of the Communications Services contract to Acumen Communications will enable a cost effective and efficient transition from development of the strategic plan to implementation of that plan. The estimated fees are within the approved Seaterra budget.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Seaterra Program Commission awards the contract for Communications Consulting Services to Acumen Communications. The estimated contract from December, 2013 to March 31, 2018 totals \$1,643,000 plus applicable taxes.

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Rob Hodder, B. Comm, CMA  
Financial Manager  
Seaterra Program

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Albert Sweetnam, P.Eng,  
Program Director  
Seaterra Program

RH:HR

**APPENDIX #**

**APPENDIX TITLE**