

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**

**PROCUREMENT DIVISION**

**-MEMORANDUM-**

**TO:** **Maria Alberro Jimenez,**  
**Interim City Manager**  
**Don Nelson, Director of Finance**

**DATE:** **March 16, 2009**

**FROM:** **Michael P. Pounds *MPP***  
**Chief Procurement Officer**

**SUBJECT:** **SOLE SOURCE  
PROCUREMENT  
DETERMINATION**

---

The City of Coral Gables Public Works Department requires a seaweed and debris removal vessel for cleaning of canals in the City that provide access to the bay. The topography of the Coral Gables waterways creates a condition several times a year in which a large amount of seaweed and other materials collects creating severe navigational and health issues. As a result of not being protected by any barrier islands from ocean currents, the City's canals experience a buildup of seaweed and other debris. To combat these issues, the Public Works Department utilizes a system by which the current Weed Witch vessel scoops up seaweed and other debris from the floor of the canal with a front-end loader, which then is used to load City owned barges. These barges are then pushed by the Weed Witch to loading area, where the seaweed and other debris are off-loaded onto trucks.

The Automotive Department in consultation with the Public Works Department requests the purchase of a replacement Water Witch for cleanup of seaweed and other debris from City canals as a Sole Source Procurement under Section 2-770 of the Procurement Code. This proposed replacement vessel, the Mack 2 Low Profile Surface Dredger manufactured by Liverpool Water Witch Marine and Engineering Company, Ltd. replaces the current Water Witch, which is 28 years old and is becoming unreliable. Under 2-770, the Chief Procurement Officer, after a **"good faith review of available sources, determines in writing, pursuant to a request from a department head, that the contract by its very nature is not suitable to competitive bids or proposals, as there is only one source for the required supply, service or construction item capable of fulfilling the needs of the City."** The following is the Chief Procurement Officer's written determination as to whether the purchase of Mack 2 Low Profile Surface Dredger meets the requirements of a sole source procurement.

The main reason why the Mack 2 is a sole source procurement is that it is replacing an existing unit from the same manufacturer that was selected to fit a system designed by the City by which seaweed and other debris is scooped from the bottom of the canal and is

collected in barges, which are pushed by the vessel to an area for off-loading into City dump trucks for hauling to the landfill. Because of the nature of our narrow meandering canals which adjoin residential properties it is necessary to collect and remove debris in a single stage to City owned barges. Other debris removal vessels do not provide this capability. They scoop and can only off-load directly to land abutting the canal, which is a process that would not work in Coral Gables with residences being built so close to the canals.

In addition, some vendors, which have been researched by the Public Works Department, do not have a front-end loader that articulates sufficiently to load the barges that the City owns. To replace barges to accommodate a different seaweed and debris removal vessel would be very costly to the City. Other vendor's units are much too small and lacking in enough hydraulic and horsepower power to scoop the seaweed in our canals and move and maneuver the City's barges to the off-loading area. Other vessels have too large a draft to maneuver in our shallow canal system, which may only be in some areas 3 to 4 feet in depth. Finally, for over 28 years, the City has customized the current Water Witch to meet our specific needs, and the new unit proposed to be purchased will have the same customization.

Procurement Division Contract Specialist, Joe Rodriguez, contacted nine (9) companies who manufacture equipment of this type. Those companies that responded to our inquiry could not meet our unique needs for a seaweed and debris removal vessel as outlined above. To the extent that the research conducted by Procurement Division and the Public Works Department did not reveal any acceptable alternatives to the Mack 2, it qualifies as a sole source procurement.

Therefore, it is the determination of the Chief Procurement Officer, that Mack 2 Low Profile Surface Dredger, proposed to be purchased from Liverpool Water Witch Marine and Engineering Company Ltd. is a sole source procurement as defined in the Procurement Code under Section 2-578, "**by the unique nature of the requirement**" for scooping and removing of seaweed and other debris from City canals to barges and moving and maneuvering said barges to the designated off-loading area.

If you have questions about this determination please let me know.

PC: Danilo Benedit, Procurement Supervisor  
Joe Rodriguez, Contract Specialist  
Clive Cork, Director-Automotive Department  
Ron Van Eyk, Asst. Director of Public Works