



May 8, 2026

City of Lodi
Public Works Department
Attn: Alice Bernardino, Associate Civil Engineer
221 W. Pine Street
Lodi, CA 95240

RE: Bid Protest – 2026-2028 Tree Maintenance, Project No. 26-06

Dear Ms. Bernardino:

West Coast Arborists, Inc. (“WCA”) respectfully submits this formal protest regarding the City’s apparent intent to award the above-referenced contract to Elite Maintenance and Tree Services (“Elite”).

WCA was the second-lowest responsive bidder and understands that Elite is the apparent low bidder by approximately \$70,000. However, based upon our review of the bid specifications and currently available information, WCA has substantial concerns that Elite does not satisfy the mandatory minimum qualifications required under the contract documents and therefore cannot be deemed a “responsible bidder” for purposes of award.

Specifically, Section 6-20.16 of the Special Provisions titled “Tree Inventory Experience” states:

“The Contractor shall have at a minimum two (2) years of experience in collecting tree inventories for cities and other public agencies and developing inventory databases, including an extensive program that simplifies the management of the City’s Urban Forest. The Contractor shall have developed a complete and comprehensive database in at least two (2) California cities.”

The specifications further require the successful contractor to maintain and continue the City’s GPS-based tree inventory system and provide GIS-compatible inventory management capabilities.

These requirements are material components of the contract, not discretionary preferences. The scope expressly includes maintaining the City’s tree inventory database, integrating GIS,



conducting GPS-based data collection, and developing inventory reporting systems for the City's urban forest management program. As such, the experience requirements were clearly established to ensure that only qualified contractors possessing demonstrated municipal inventory expertise would be eligible for award.

WCA has serious concerns that Elite Maintenance and Tree Services lacks the required:

1. Minimum two (2) years of experience performing municipal/public agency tree inventories;
2. Experience developing urban forest inventory databases;
3. Experience maintaining GIS-compatible tree inventory systems; and
4. Completion of comprehensive tree inventory database projects for at least two California cities.

If Elite cannot substantiate compliance with these mandatory qualifications, its bid is materially nonresponsive, and the company cannot lawfully be deemed a responsible bidder under California public contracting requirements.

Accordingly, WCA respectfully requests that the City:

1. Conduct a thorough responsibility review of Elite Maintenance and Tree Services;
2. Require Elite to provide verifiable documentation demonstrating compliance with all minimum tree inventory experience requirements;
3. Disclose the California cities and public agencies for which Elite has completed qualifying inventory projects; and
4. Refrain from awarding the contract until the City has fully evaluated and confirmed compliance with the mandatory qualifications contained in the specifications.

WCA further requests the opportunity to review any documentation submitted by Elite supporting its claimed qualifications before any final award determination is made.

WCA appreciates the City's commitment to maintaining the integrity of the public bidding process and ensuring compliance with all material contract requirements. We respectfully request written confirmation that this protest has been received and will be considered prior to award.



Tree Care Professionals Serving Communities Who Care About Trees

www.WCAINC.com

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Mahoney', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Patrick Mahoney
President
West Coast Arborists, Inc.

CC:
City Manager
City Clerk
City Attorney

West Coast Arborists, Inc.

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