

## Access to Information on Public Sector/Government Purchases & Contracts

**Issue:** That awarded contracts and tenders should be made public information, with full contract details accessible to the general public.

**Proposed Solution:** That the City's standard RFP terms include the statement that awarded bids will be made public information. This is in keeping with rulings from the *Information and Privacy Commissioner* that the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* exemptions no longer apply once this statement is made on bid solicitation documents.

### Benefits:

- 1) Transparency for Government/Public Spending.
- 2) Greater assurance to the public that funds are being properly spent and contracts are fairly awarded.
- 3) Encourages greater competition in bids in the future, of particular benefit to local suppliers bidding against contracts previously sent out of town.
- 4) Prevents issues (such as the recent MFP Leasing issue with Toronto and Hamilton) where Suppliers may abuse or violate terms of their contracts. Greater scrutiny by the general public is encouraged.

### Possible Arguments Against:

- 1) Personal Privacy issues; Confidential financial information issues. These can be avoided by allowing certain very specific information to be submitted separately as confidential addendum, such as financial statements.
- 2) Reduction of Quality Bid Responses. In jurisdictions where disclosure is standard practise, there has been no evidence that bid responses have declined in either quantity or quality. In fact, bid prices generally have become more competitive due to the openness of the process of examining past bids.