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1. Project Budget Questions

Is there an estimated budget in mind for this effort?

Page 5 of the RFP, last sentence: \$1,012,751 is currently available.

An additional \$1.9 million is available within the current Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant for additional/refined tasks in the Tier 1 analysis, and to complete a Tier 2 Analysis (environmental documentation) if needed. However, the accessibility of this additional funding is dependent on the RPCGB's ability to secure additional funding to provide matching monies.

2. DBE Participation Questions

What are the size standards or NAICS code(s) for DBE participation of this project? Our firm is a Service Disabled Veteran Small Business and would like to know if we meet the DBE requirements.

Neither the size of the firm, nor the use of NAICS codes is relevant in the RPCGB's determination of DBE participant eligibility. The RPCGB, following the guidance provided by the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority's (BJCTA) which is FTA grant administrator, has determined that only DBE participants certified with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) shall be recognized as participating DBE firms.

Clarification (February 16, 2010):

The BJCTA recognizes that there are instances where another state or agency may provide DBE certification to a company/firm. However the BJCTA has chosen to defer the determination of DBE eligibility to the Alabama Department of Transportation as they would make the final determination if the company/firm is approved to be on the listing for Alabama.

Proposers may claim credit towards DBE participation if the company(s)/firm(s) are certified as a DBE by another entity. However, these firms should get into the pipeline to obtain ALDOT DBE certification as soon as possible. A final contract between the RPCGB and the selected Prime Consultant cannot be executed until all DBE firms have achieved ALDOT DBE certifications.

The Prime Consultant, after securing permission from the RPCGB, may replace any company/firm claiming DBE status that is unable or unwilling to secure ALDOT DBE certification. The replacement DBE company/firm must be an ALDOT certified DBE. The replacement DBE company/firm must also be provided with at least the same percentage of work (in terms of contract funding) on meaningful tasks as the DBE company/firm that they are replacing.

DBE firms must maintain their ALDOT certification throughout the duration of either the federal fiscal year in which their task is performed, or the duration of the project contract between the RPCGB and the prime consultant. The shorter of these two time periods shall apply.

Disregard the Following

~~The BJCTA also recognizes that there are other DBE certifying entities, both in other states and locally, through which a company/firm may have achieved certification. While this may be true, the BJCTA has chosen to only recognize the certification provided by the ALDOT.~~

~~Firms must not be certified at the time of the proposal submittal. However, they should achieve certification by the time that the contract between the RPCGB and the prime consultant is executed. The prime consultant, after securing permission from the RPCGB, may replace any firm claiming DBE status that is unable or unwilling to secure ALDOT DBE certification. The replacement DBE firm must be an ALDOT certified DBE. The replacement DBE firm must also be provided with at least the same percentage of work (in terms of contract funding) on meaningful tasks as the DBE firm that they are replacing.~~

~~DBE firms must maintain their ALDOT certification throughout the duration of either the federal fiscal year in which their task is performed, or the duration of the project contract between the RPCGB and the prime consultant. The shorter of these two time periods shall apply.~~

3. Administrative/Proposal Structure (Includes Financial Info Questions)

3.1. On page 18, Section 4.4, 2nd paragraph, of the Route 11 RFP – what does the last sentence mean?

“In the event a firm and its subcontractors enter into contract negotiations with RPC on this project, man-day and fee proposal information based on costs to conduct the tasks and produce the deliverables identified in the Scope of Work will be required.”

It means that if a proposer and their project team is selected through this procurement process as the consultant who will conduct this project for the RPCGB, that they will be invited to enter into contract negotiations with the RPCGB. As a part of the negotiation process, the consultant shall provide the RPCGB with man-day and fee proposal information, and that the starting point for developing this information should be based on the tasks, deliverables, and timeline presented in the consultant’s proposal.

3.2. Should Man-Day estimates be included for Tier 2 services?

No. The RFP does not ask for man-day or fee estimates for either Tier 1 or Tier 2. See question 3.1 for additional clarification. It should be noted that cost is not a deciding factor in the RPCGB’s selection process. Therefore, we specifically did not ask that man-day and fee proposal information be provided as part of your submittals.

3.3. On page 17, third paragraph, #4. References...it is stated that we should include three (3) references for the prime Consultant and two (2) for all subcontractors. If we include multiple subcontractors on our team, are we required to include a minimum two (2) references “for each” subconsultant or a minimum two (2) references for “all” subconsultants in total?

Two (2) references should be provided for each subconsultant.

3.4. Is it just the Prime Consultant that needs to complete the required forms?

The Prime Consultant should complete all of the forms.

Subconsultants should complete forms A - D. In addition subconsultants claiming DBE status should include a copy of their DBE certificate. Documentation from the ALDOT does not need to be provided at this time. However, subconsultants claiming DBE status should get into the pipeline to obtain their ALDOT DBE certification as soon as possible. ~~or documentation (typically a letter on the certifying agency’s letterhead) that the subconsultant has applied for DBE certification and that approval is pending.~~ This is identified as Appendix F in the proposal outline.

We apologize that adequate guidance about which appendix documents needed to be completed by subconsultants was not provided in the instructions for completion of the written proposal.

3.5. On page 19, Section 4.10. Financial Information...

This section is not referenced in the Proposal Structure table at the bottom of the page. Does this mean that this section IS NOT included in the page count?

Financial information provided by the primary consultant **IS NOT** included in the page count, and will not count against the proposal. However, please be reasonable about the length of the documentation provided. See next question/comment below as it asks/answers a very similar question.

3.6. Section 4.10 (page 19) – Does the Proposer’s Financial Information count against the 40 page proposal limit? Financial Information is not listed in the Proposal Structure or in the Attachments (Disposition of Proposals section, table at bottom of page 19).

See Question 3.5 for answer.

3.7. Should the required “Financial Information” be placed in a section of its own following the “Other Information” section in the proposal or would RPC like to see it as an attachment (referring to page 19 of the RFP)?

Either way is acceptable. However, for the sake of uniformity and because you asked, our preferred location is after the attachments (behind Attachment F).

We'll make sure to modify future RFP's (the proposal structure) to reflect this. Thank you for the suggestion.

3.8. You have asked that we include a “published audit or Certified Financial Statement”. Our firm is a multi-national firm and has financial documents that are quite lengthy. We have a certified consolidated version of our financial statement which is approx. 3 pages in length. Can we include this instead of the full statement and will this document be included in the total page count?

The 3 page summary is fine. Actually, it is preferred. No, it will not count against the page count.

3.9. On page 17, third paragraph, #6. Page Limit.... it is stated that proposal is limited to 40 pages single side. Please indicate if 20 pages double-sided is also an option.

Yes, 20 pages double sided is also an option. The number 20 was accidentally omitted at the start of the parenthetical statement.

4. Scope of Work Questions

4.1. Section 3.0/Task 1.0b (page 8, second paragraph of task) – Has the Corridor Steering Committee been selected or will the Proposer have input into its size and composition?

No, the Corridor Steering Committee has not been selected yet. The RPCGB has in mind several individuals/groups that it would like to include. However, the Consultant may also provide input to this process. If this is a strategy that you would suggest, please include it in your proposal.

4.2. Section 3.0/Task 3.0 (page 11) – does “1/2 mile area” mean ½ mile radius or ½ mile diameter?

The study area for proposed station planning is ½ mile diameter (¼ mile radius).

4.3. Section 3.0/Task 3.0 (page 11) – Is additional information available regarding the MPO’s desire to track changing conditions and TOD outcomes? Do they have a mechanism in mind to track these changes?

The Birmingham MPO’s request to track changing conditions and TOD outcomes is centered on the desire to accurately attribute community revitalization efforts, in terms of both economic and physical development, to the public transit investments. There are likely several methodologies and/or strategies to track changes. However, the Birmingham MPO desires that some baseline criteria for TOD be established, and the station areas that are identified through the study be compared to this baseline in order to (a) determine the existing conditions of the area in comparison to the baseline, (b) assist in the setting of TOD development goals, and (c) inform performance measures designed to track progress towards achieving/exceeding established goals over time. Ideally, this effort will also help to guide community conversations, influence policies, and shape investment strategies.

There are no specific mechanisms in mind to track changes. The Birmingham MPO is looking to the consultant to provide guidance/direction on how to track changes. This would include the specific measures, the data needed to inform the measures, and the tools that need to be employed.

4.4. Under Task 2.0 the scope indicates that population and employment data from the 2000 Census, 2009 estimates and 2035 forecasts are available. Is this data available at a more refined level than Traffic Analysis zones?

Regarding population and employment data for 2000, 2009, and 2035:

The TAZ estimates and projections are available for years including 2005, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2025, and 2035. This data includes population, housing, income, employment (POW), and school related data. This TAZ data can be aggregated for the census tract and planning district levels of geography as well.

The 2000 Census data is available down to the block level for basic population and housing, but employment statistics (POR) are only available at the block group level.

2009 data estimates, compiled by the national data vendor Claritas, Inc., are available at the block group level geography for a wide range of census-related statistics such as population, housing, and employment (POR).

4.5. Travel demand modeling is a critical aspect of any New Starts Alternative Analysis. Has there been an on-board survey by BJCTA in the last 5 years? Has the modal been calibrated based on that survey? Has the FTA determined that the modal is Alternatives Analysis ready? Is the consultant responsible for the transit operations modeling required for the Alternatives Analysis?

Has there been an on-board survey by the BJCTA in the last 5 years?

An on-board survey was conducted by the RPCGB for the In-town Transit Partnership (ITP) project in 2006. By the time that this study gets underway, and the modeling effort gets into full swing, it is very likely that it will be time to conduct a new on-board survey. The consultant should plan to include an on-board survey as part of their task list.

Has the model been calibrated based on that survey?

Yes, the transit element of the Birmingham MPO's existing travel demand model has been calibrated to the on-board transit survey.

Has the FTA determined that the model is Alternatives Analysis ready?

No. The Federal Transit Administration has not had the opportunity yet to evaluate the Birmingham travel demand model. The previous alternatives analysis projects involved early consultation with the FTA to get input to the travel demand model's development. However, the FTA declined to review the model because the apparent locally preferred alternatives (LPA) for each of the projects did not meet the eligibility for New Starts funding.

Is the consultant responsible for the transit operations modeling required for the Alternatives Analysis?

Yes, the consultant will be responsible for the transit operations modeling required for the Alternatives Analysis.

4.6. Should the Scope of Work include Task 8.0 "Environmental Documentation" as this would be a Tier 2 component?

The scope of work that the proposer's submit may omit detailed information about how they would accomplish Task 8. However, the proposer should assume that they will ultimately be responsible for completing both Tasks 8 and 9, developing the accompanying deliverables. The proposal should acknowledge that the consultant will likely complete any Tier 2 analysis, and should account for this in the RFP's proposed project schedule.