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Maryland MetroAccess Strategy Study RFP Question Responses

August 30, 2024

The Washington Suburban Transit Commission (WSTC) received questions from prospective respondents to the Maryland MetroAccess Strategy Study RFP (WSTC-2025-001). Responses to those questions are below. Some repetitive questions have been combined and addressed with a single response. Some questions have been edited slightly for clarity.

Question 1 - Have the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Counties committed to providing data in a timely manner?

Response: WMATA and the Counties are aware of the study and that there may be data requests associated with the study. WSTC staff will facilitate data requests to ensure data is available in a timely manner.

Question 2 - How do you envision coordination with external agencies to be performed?

Response: WSTC will act as the primary liaison to external agencies, including on data requests. Direct communication between external agencies and the consultant can be considered by WSTC upon request from the consultant.

Question 3 – Is there a style guide or format for the report and power point presentations?

Response: WSTC does not have a style guide. WSTC will provide the organization's letterhead and logo, which should be used as the basis for formatting of deliverables.

Question 4 – Is there a context to the study that informs why this topic, now and in this manner?

There is no specific context driving the timing and manner of the study. Maryland perennially accounts for an outsized share of MetroAccess expenses. Accordingly, understanding how to provide paratransit while managing the long-term cost curve is a critical need. This study reflects an initial and early effort to better define the problem, understand what can be learned from others, and then use that information to suggest a high-level roadmap for future actions for Maryland should consider.

Question 5 - What is the budget for this study?

Response: WSTC will not provide the budgeted amount for this study. The study budget is in alignment with the Maryland Department of Transportation - State Highway Administration's [Project Cost Classification B](#). The budget reflects the high-level nature of the study as an initial and early effort to provide paratransit while managing the long-term cost curve.

Question 6 - Can a firm bid if they are located outside of the State of Maryland, Prince George's County, Montgomery County region?

Response: Yes

Question 7 - If we report a current contract with MDOT, what additional information is needed to establish there is no actual or potential conflict of interest?

Response: No additional information regarding actual or potential conflict of interests is needed.

Question 8 - Is there an early payment discount for this project?

Response: No

Question 9 - Is the agency interested in stakeholder and community interviews to inform this study?

Response: Please see the "Coordination and Meetings" section of the RFP.

Question 10 - Is the Maryland State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation still active or has that agency been reconvened recently?

Response: The Maryland State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation is currently inactive. It is in the process of being reactivated. There is not currently a firm timeline for reactivation.

Question 11 - Is a recent database available showing transportation programs in Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties for people with disabilities and older adults offered by human service agencies, individual towns and cities as well as County governments? That database would show the fleet used with seating capacity, span of service in which rides are provided, vehicle service hours, and ridership. A pre-pandemic database may have been developed by the Maryland State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation.

Response: The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) report, [2023 Update to the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region \(Appendix B\)](#), contains an inventory of specialized service providers in the region. The WSTC is not aware that database with operating characteristics exists. However, WSTC does not foresee a need in this study to provide a full and detailed review of the operating characteristics for existing alternative transportation services. Rather, recommendations for higher-level alternative paratransit solutions are required.

Question 12 - Has the Maryland State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation, MDOT, or WSTC explored developing an efficient and attractive alternative to MetroAccess for human service client mobility needs? That effort would be at minimum include rides subsidized by the State and corresponding County Departments of Aging, Disabilities, Health, Human Services and Labor.

Response: WSTC is not aware of past efforts to explore such a model. This study (Task 3) will

propose a strategy roadmap for Maryland to consider how to refine its paratransit approach. This could include past and novel concepts that are responsive to the paratransit needs in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

Question 13 - Does the Maryland Department of General Services or MDOT have a contract for demand response transportation dispatch/scheduling/communications technology platforms and for vehicles that is open to other Maryland or local agencies?

Response: WSTC is not aware of such a contract.

Question 14 - Has the performance of Abilities-Ride contractors been assessed in serving requested trip origins and destinations in primarily low income and/or minority as well as industrial/warehousing census tracts or traffic analysis zones, as compared to the service area as a whole?

Response: WSTC is not aware of such an analysis.

Question 15 - Has either the Montgomery County Department of Transportation or the Prince George's County Health Department Non-Emergency Medical Assistance Transportation (NEMT) Programs assessed the relative proportion of rides provided to clients, as well as individual clients served, by MetroAccess and Abilities-Ride, Public Transit services, contracted and dedicated Medicaid NEMT providers, other local government subsidized transportation providers or non-profit organizations (primarily serving Medicaid Waiver clients)?

Response: WSTC is not aware of such an assessment. WSTC anticipates that this study would include an analysis of current MetroAccess usage and identify strategies to divert trips to lower-cost transportation services.

Question 16 - Are there any particular challenges or issues you foresee that we should be aware of?

Response: WSTC believes that the scope of work is reasonable and can be accomplished by the selected contractor. WSTC does not foresee particular challenges or issues to completing this work.

Question 17 - What specific data will be provided by WMATA, and how will it be accessed?

Response: Each proposal should include its anticipated data needs to complete the scope of work. WMATA will provide data, as available, to support the analysis.

Question 18 - Are there any existing studies or reports that will be shared with the selected contractor?

Response: WSTC will share relevant additional material available to WSTC.

Question 19 - Can you clarify the expected frequency and format of the bi-weekly meetings?

Response: WSTC expects virtual bi-weekly 30-minute meetings for the duration of the contract.

Question 20 - Will there be a need for in-person meetings, or will all meetings be held remotely?

Response: The consultant may propose a virtual, in-person, or hybrid kick-off meeting. All other meetings should be held virtually.

Question 21 - How involved will local jurisdictions (Prince George's County, Montgomery County, etc.) be in the study process?

Response: WSTC is the client for the study. WSTC can facilitate coordination with the local jurisdictions, as needed, to support the respondent's proposal for accomplishing the scope of work.

Question 22 - Are there any key stakeholders or advisory groups that we should prioritize for engagement?

Response: Each respondent should include a proposal for the level of stakeholder outreach needed to accomplish the scope of work.

Question 23 - Are there any regulatory guidelines that we need to follow for analyzing costs?

Response: WSTC is unaware of any regulatory guidelines for cost analysis.

Question 24 - The PDF version of the Proposal is due on Sept. 13 by 2:00 pm. Is there a specific due date/time for the three hard copies of the Proposal?

Response: Please provide the three (3) hard copies by Wednesday, September 18, 2024 by 3:00pm.

Question 25 - Are there any specific aspects of the project approach that you consider most critical for a successful proposal?

Response: Please refer to the "Evaluation Criteria" section of the RFP.

Question 26 - Can you elaborate on the "Labor hour, Indefinite quantity with fixed unit prices" contract type and how it will be managed?

Response: The Bid Form (Attachment B) will serve as the basis for price negotiations that will establish the hours and costs per task and overall study cost. The selected contract will provide monthly invoices that must include prior costs, current costs, and remaining budget per task and overall. The selected contractor will not be able to exceed the overall total cost for the study. With WSTC approval, the contractor may shift budget between the tasks.

Question 27 - How will responses to questions and any addenda be communicated to potential bidders?

Response: Question responses and addenda will be posted on the WSTC website with notification provided to each firm who submitted an Intent to Submit or attended the pre-solicitation conference.

Question 28 - Has a list of peers been identified?

Response: No. Each respondent should include a proposal for peers that can offer the most valuable lessons for Maryland in furtherance of the study objectives.

Question 29 - Please confirm that the Bid Form in Exhibit A is asking for fully loaded rates for each staff member who is being proposed for the study.

Response: Correct. Respondents may elect to provide supplemental cost information with their proposal.

Question 30 - The Bid Form is designed for one company to submit a bid. If we are using a subcontractor, should we include the subcontractor staff within the Staff Positions and clearly mark that staff person with the name of the subcontractor company?

Response: Yes, please include the subcontractor staff within the Staff Positions and clearly mark that staff person with the name of the subcontractor company. Resumes submitted for each Staff Position should also clearly indicate the employee's company.