

## **Increasing Participation in Transit Aspects of Metropolitan Transportation Planning: RFP Questions and Responses**

Question - The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board in its FY10 Unified Planning Work Program made specific reference to consultant services to “establish greater participation by transit users and other citizens interested in transit in the metropolitan planning process.” As written, the RFP’s purpose is to “promote greater participation and understanding of transit issues in the region...[leading] to a greater level of participation by all segments of the population.” While not at cross purposes, it does seem that the goal of the RFP does not place emphasis on participation by transit users and other people interested in transit. Can you clarify the intent of the RFP?

*Answer - As stated in the RFP, the intent of the RFP is ‘greater participation and understanding of transit issues’. The RFP utilizes a four-step process to achieve this goal. 1<sup>st</sup> step is utilization of existing transit ridership information that has been obtained through studies, outreach efforts, surveys, public meetings and/or data analysis efforts. Compiling of information regarding transit ridership may include but not be limited to efforts to identify rider characteristics such as age, employment, status of vehicle ownership; trip characteristics such as trip purpose, trip frequency, origin and destination, and transit rider utilization of service such as fare payment, transit system information sources, trip planning techniques and transit amenities preferred. The 2<sup>nd</sup> step is the development of educational and marketing materials. Information obtained from the 1<sup>st</sup> step may be utilized to develop these materials if the 1<sup>st</sup> step reveals pertinent information about the transit rider the materials may be targeted to. The 3<sup>rd</sup> step will be to organize focus groups that will be a forum for facilitated discussion. The 4<sup>th</sup> step will be documentation and production of a deliverable that can be utilized in future efforts that may benefit from ‘greater participation and understanding of transit issues’. This documentation will be a compilation of all the information that was gathered through direct and secondary sources.*

Question - Can community-based civic organizations qualify as “consultants” for the purpose of responding to this RFP? Is there any specific registration or pre-qualification requirement associated with being a “consultant” as is often the case in State and local government contracting?

*Answer - Yes, community-based civic organizations can respond to this RFP.*

Question - It appears that the BMC has identified a very proscriptive approach to public outreach in this RFP. In the interest of establishing greater public participation, is the BMC interested in alternative approaches beyond those specified in items 1 – 3 of the Scope of Work? Can the responding organization propose such approaches, along with clear milestones and deliverables?

*Answer - Please respond to the RFP by providing a narrative describing the understanding of the effort and methods of developing the products requested. Include descriptions of the specific tasks and subtasks to be undertaken. Please feel free to provide innovative approaches. The approaches described in your proposal will be considered and evaluated on the basis of experience, skill, and technical approach as it responds to the scope of work and evaluated on the basis of the selection criteria on page 7.*

Question - Is it required that the focus groups be conducted like professional industry focus groups e.g. in special facilities complete with a one-way mirror and separate viewing area for members of the consulting team, video taped, compensation for participants, etc or can the focus groups be facilitated by invitation discussion groups to obtain input, answers to questions, and receive comments on potential public involvement measures?

*Answer - Special focus group facilities will not be required for this task. Please provide a narrative describing your recommendations for an approach for focus group location and structure, including descriptions of specific tasks and/or subtasks that may contribute to a successful effort.*

Question - Do you have a sense of the volume of information that is available and expected to be summarized? Also, how many years back are you expecting the consultant to review data and documentation.

*Answer - The respondent will identify and summarize relevant recent data going back no more than five years that will be used to identify the characteristics of current ridership and potential ridership.*

Question - For sub-task A, is BMC looking for these focus groups to be held at formal focus group facilities with separate rooms for observers?

*Answer - Special focus group facilities will not be required for this task. Please provide a narrative describing your recommendations for an approach for focus group location and structure, including descriptions of specific tasks and/or subtasks that may contribute to a successful effort.*

Question - Is this task meant to be a summary and final report of the previous tasks or are you expecting the consultant to attend/observe other meetings over the course of the project as well?

*Answer - The report should directly pertain to information obtained in Tasks 1 and 3. Attendance at other meetings is not expected. Other relevant information may be included if it contributes to meeting the purpose of the scope of work.*

Question - The stated purpose of the work is “promot[ing] greater participation and understanding of transit issues in the region...[and]a process that leads to a greater level of participation by all segments of the population.” However, many parts of the scope appear to be focused on increasing transit ridership and providing better transit service. We are trying to better understand if you are looking for a better public participation process for transit planning at the regional level and the appropriate promotional materials to support that process, or if you are looking for characteristics of transit riders and where transit should better serve. For example:

- a. Task 1 asks us to summarize current information about transit ridership for helping to determine long-term transit quality improvements.
- b. Task 3b has the focus groups providing input on desired service to specific locations.

*Answer – You may provide a narrative describing your recommendations for an approach that may be useful to address increasing participation in transit aspects of metropolitan planning organizations planning.*

- a. Yes, summarize information about transit ridership.*
- b. No, the focus groups are not to provide service recommendations.*

Question - Task 1: In the second half of the paragraph that talks about the materials from the MTA and LOTS, is the primary purpose of this to get feedback on what has or has not worked in their public outreach activities, or is it intended to obtain what the publics’ input was on various studies?

*Answer - You may provide a narrative describing your recommendations for an approach for addressing reporting about the ridership information you have obtained from your research and interviews with the MTA and the LOTS.*

Question - Task 3b: Will BMC provide a list of locations and contact information?

*Answer - Yes, BMC/BRTB has a list that can be provided.*

Question - While we can get a list ourselves, it would be helpful to know if you already have a list of institutions and specific people in mind, so that we can accurately represent the time involved in this task.

*Answer - Yes, BMC/BRTB has a list that can be provided.*

Question -Task 3a: Are you anticipating that the focus groups will all be held in English?

*Answer - English-only focus groups are not required for this task. You may provide a narrative describing your recommendations for an approach for addressing this matter.*

Question - Task 4: What do you mean by “Document and analyze public participation in meeting summaries? ”

*Answer - You may provide a narrative describing your recommendations for an approach for addressing how you will document your research, focus groups findings and marketing and education materials approach in the final report.*

Question - Task 4: What do you envision as part of the final report other than the results of the previous 3 tasks?

*Answer - You may provide a narrative describing your recommendations for an approach for addressing information obtained in Tasks 1 through 3. Other relevant information beyond tasks 1 to 3 may be included if it contributes to meeting the purpose of the scope.*

Question - Will the final deliverable consist of an outreach plan and outreach materials (electronic versions), or are you also expecting that the outreach materials be prepared and disseminated?

*Answer – You may provide a narrative describing your recommendations for an approach for an appropriate deliverable to meet the goal of greater participation and understanding of transit issues for increasing participation in transit aspects of metropolitan planning organization transportation planning..*

Question - We are assuming that the scope of the deliverables includes an assessment of BMC’s current outreach/public participation strategy, a proposed new strategy and plan, and supporting outreach materials. Please let us know if this assumption is incorrect.

*Answer – No, assessment of the public participation strategy is not expected.*