NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Transit Service Information & Technical Support Services for
New York State Transit Agencies
Contract #C031378

Attachment 15

Questions and Answers

**Question #1:** What is the expected need for the selected Consultant team to meet with the Steering Committee? Does the Consultant’s Project Manager need to physically attend those meetings, and could the Project Manager join some meetings remotely?

**Answer:** The Consultant’s Project Manager will be expected to attend the first meeting and any subsequent meeting where interpretations of the delivery of the scope will be discussed. However, remote attendance will be allowed for most routine meetings.

**Question #2:** Who is the designated NYSDOT Project Manager?

**Answer:** Jonathan Cmaylo, ITS 1 in the Public Transportation Bureau of NYSDOT is the technical manager in charge of the project.

**Question #3:** The core description of the RFP’s Scope of Services in the Background section mentions collecting data in GTFS/SDP formats, but maintaining them specifically in the GTFS Editor and GTFS Data Manager tools. Yet Task 2 mentions translation of data to both GTFS and SDP formats. Task 4 mentions validation of SDP data. Will the scope of work entail creating SDP in addition to GTFS, or will SDP be used only as an input?

**Answer:** No, the team will not have to store data in SDP format. Westchester County BeeLine and Coach USA both presently provide automated feeds that are based on SDP structures. These structures are readily translatable to GTFS, but the feeds are not natively GTFS. There are a number of service concepts that SDP considers that are outside of the current GTFS schedule and real time standard. As 511NY and other NYS Transit agency customer information or planning initiatives evolve over the term of this contract working familiarity with SDP concepts (real time, facility, fares and planning) may inform development choices. Thus NYSDOT will look to the selected contractor to be/or become familiar with SDP concepts that may apply to evolving services. However SDP is not anticipated to be deployed under this contract.

**Question #4:** Task 2 mentions “GTFS Data Manager and other agency customer support tools as needed”. What “other” tools are referred to here, and is this in reference to a particular category of agencies? For example, does this refer to other GTFS logging/archiving systems in use by larger Category 1 Agencies specifically?

**Answer:** The Consultant team is expected to understand the various uses of the electronic data within a transit agency and as such if there are problems with any of the agency’s 511 inputs they should be able to discuss with the system the impacts to any of the other systems if they make changes to accommodate 511NY.
**Question #5:** Can specification documentation for the SDP format and/or an example dataset be provided?

**Answer:** Yes it is located on this website: [http://www.consystec.com/tsdea/index.html](http://www.consystec.com/tsdea/index.html).

**Question #6:** A: How many agencies currently submit data sets to 511NY? B: How many data sets does the current ConSysTec contract process annually? C: Does 511NY or other NYSDOT programs accept and process SDP data sets?

**Answer:** A: Eight (8) agencies currently submit data sets to 511NY, which includes those manually uploaded and fetched automatically from an agency developer page. B: 19 different feeds on average 4 times a year – 76 feeds. C: Currently Westchester County provides an SDP export and Coach USA is completing an SDP-based feed. Those need to be converted to GTFS for the new 511NY site.

**Question #7:** A: What are the most common issues NY transit agencies deal with when transmitting their data? B: What kinds of data transmission problems has NYSDOT experienced under the current contract?

**Answer:** A: Service calendar problems and bad trip data including times overlapping and duplicate trips and stops. B: Less transmission problems and more making sure version is the correct one.

**Question #8:** Task 2.2 is to support translation of data from native formats to GTFS. How many distinct formats are in use and what are they? For which category of agency (1, 2, or 3) will this support function be necessary? Will this be a one-time translation or ongoing support function (i.e. does new translator software need to be written, and will the selected contractor be required to develop this software)?

**Answer:** The native format depends on the type of software the schedule data resides in at the agency. Currently there are several active vendors and most of the vendors support GTFS export tools. However, as their products tend to be based on “builds” that may vary by agency and the agencies themselves may apply uniquely structured schedule representations in the products using these feeds can require various interpretation or cycles of post processing and data Q/C. Trapeze, Init, and Strategen are the three current vendors, as well as some home grown system for the commuter railroads and Coach USA.

**Question #9:** Has NYSDOT considered how it will keep the GTFS data maintained after the conclusion of this project?

**Answer:** NYSDOT intends to maintain a common schedule data repository to support 511NY and other agency and 3rd party customer information and planning initiatives. 511NY and the Department’s TDM Program both provide viable options to serve this evolving function moving forward. This contract is intended to support agency outreach and data collection, Q/C and management in collaboration with those other two contracts. NYSDOT anticipates that all three of these contracts will inform the decision-making process with respect to the most efficient long term data hosting and access strategies.

**Question #10:** Does the RFP’s Scope of Service include the production and validation of GTFS-realtime in addition to the GTFS schedule and fare information listed in the RFP?
Answer: Task 4.4 includes working with Type 1 agency to develop the data collection techniques to bring real-time data to 511NY to augment trip itineraries with appropriate incident data. The 511NY contractor is already configuring the NYS OTP install to include results for this functionality. It is not anticipated that this contract will cover production of GTFS-RT. However, technical support in validation or integration of data being produced and supplied by agencies to NYSDOT may be sought under this contract.

Question #11: How many agencies use GTFS versus other formats such as SDP?
Answer: See the answers to Questions 3 and 6.

Question #12: Is NYSDOT's expectation that all 116 agencies' service information be entered/available in the NYSDOT system at the end of year 1?
Answer: Not at the end of contract year 1, the steering committee and the contractor will develop a prioritized timeline for inclusion of data in the trip planner. There are several factors included in terms of volume of trips, connections to other services, resources at the local level to engage and verify data.

Question #13: Please provide additional information regarding the consultant support on this RFP from IBI and Conveyal. Can proposers request that certain information be redacted from the responses reviewed by the consultants?
Answer: Neither IBI nor Conveyal have had any role or input into the development of this RFP, the review of proposals or in the consultant selection process. No information submitted by proposers will be shared with these firms.

Question #14: Will the selected Consultant be responsible for supporting agency schedule changes on a periodic basis throughout the term of the contract?
Answer: Yes as directed by agency changes to schedules.

Question #15: Given the comprehensive nature of this study, we would like to understand the budget to effectively develop the technical approach.
Answer: It is not NYSDOT’s policy to normally publish project budget information in its RFPs, as NYSDOT prefers that vendors accurately and competitively price the cost of the services offered. NYSDOT will work with the selected vendor should the cost of proposed services greatly exceed NYSDOT’s available budget.

Question #16: Aside from the User Manual in Attachment 12, are there additional training materials for the GTFS Editor Tool? Are any of the transit agencies currently using the tool?
Answer: Currently there is also a training video within the system. There are no agencies using the GTFS editor at this time. NYSDOT is still working with its Contractor to finalize the tools at which time there will be an outreach period to engage the Category 2 operators. IBI has reviewed most of the Category 2 agencies and updated the data brought over from the previous 511NY system to align with current website data.

Question #17: Precisely which tasks/scope on which pages of Attachment 13 should be considered as needing to be performed under Task 4.1?
**Answer:** There are no page numbers, generally Tasks 6, 7, 8 and 10.

**Question #18:** Does GTFS Editor, or another application to be used in this work have an import SDP function or other function for seamlessly converting SDP to GTFS? If not would the contractor be required to convert those files for the completion of Task 4.2?

**Answer:** The tools developed to translate the SDP format into GTFS was completed under the C030677 contract. As a start, those tools will be available to the selected consultant to be further develop/enhanced as necessary. SDP was designed to embed GTFS structures and concepts. Thus the conversion of SDP to GTFS is considered to be straightforward. The inclusion of SDP, as noted elsewhere, is to reflect that there are two existing carriers who provide data in this format rather than GTFS and that there are concepts embedded within SDP that may have applicability in supporting evolving functions over the term of this contract.

**Question #19:** From the RFP: “There may be data concepts… not in GTFS that support requirements of the 511NY Trip Planner as it evolves or other downstream transit applications that use schedule data. Technical support may be needed to facilitate production or validation of schedule data to meet these requirements.” In order to support these data concepts and requirements through the evolution of the 511NY project, is it planned that new capabilities will be added to GTFS Editor over time? If so, what is the desired or required participation from the selected contractor in this process:
- A: Identify new needs in GTFS Editor software?
- B: Develop development/design documentation for new features?
- C: Work directly with other software developers?
- D: Edit source code of GTFS Editor software?

**Answer:** A: The main effort of this contract is to understand the agency perspective on what utility and functions are missing from the OTP and hence what work flows and data flow development needs to be completed (in what order) to improve the trip planner and the downstream uses of the schedule data. B: Draft concept of operations, uses cases and work flows may be required. C: No. D: No.

**Question #20:** Does the language of Task 5 ("identify prioritized list of carriers") indicate that NYSDOT believes that there are transit providers in New York State that are not represented in Attachment 14 but will be included in this project as Category 3 Agencies? If so what categories of transit providers might eventually be included in this project (e.g. airport and medical shuttles, university and community college transportation systems, dial-a-ride services, etc.)? Alternatively does Task 5 indicate that the list of Category 3 Agencies is complete, but needs to be prioritized?

**Answer:** Transit service always changes in NY. The list in table 14 is not the ceiling, only the current snapshot. Since technology is always changing, the category assigned today may also change as software becomes more available to smaller systems or other factors change. The inclusion of additional carriers is a project objective and will be pursued on a prioritized basis within the constraints of resources available under this contract. University shuttles and open to the public services that are not in the Public STOA program may be considered. NYSDOT recognizes that Route deviation rural services will not be as robust in the trip planner as NYSDOT would prefer, so the development or ways to fully recognize those services will be part of this effort. With the primary focus of this effort being schedule information,
NYSDOT does not anticipate Dial-a-ride services being part of the trip planner under this contract. However, if information on accessing these services can be captured and conveyed via 511NY, then this contract may be engaged as a mechanism to support collection and maintenance of this information (on a prioritized basis within the constraints of resources available under this contract).

**Question #21:** How many of the agencies in category 2 are already successfully using GTFS Editor for the maintenance of their schedule data? For those who are already using the system, should any initial training be expected, or only ongoing support, training for new staff, etc.?

**Answer:** None. Also, see the answer to Question 16.

**Question #22:** What are the technical steps necessary to fulfill on Task 7? Is this merely delivery to relevant parties? Or is it a process that can be managed through the GTFS Data Manager? Uploading data to various platforms?

**Answer:** Making sure the deployment file which contains all agencies that have signed off on their data being released are current in the file. This is basically a weekly task to make sure no systems are expiring without a next feed available, or if the file is produced in GTFS editor that the agency has approved their feed service range to be extended.

**Question #23:** Most agencies in Attachment 14 are not in Google Maps. Is Google Maps to be considered as one of the 3rd party app developers mentioned in Task 8.1?

**Answer:** Google Maps is considered a 3rd party app developer in the context of this RFP. Currently Transit Agency must sign an agreement with Google to have their data show up in the Google maps application. Some agencies have not signed on and NYSDOT is working with those agencies to develop a strategy. NYSDOT feels that having NY State transit service data available in Google, Bing or other 3rd party systems is a complementary objective of 511NY in marketing the use of transit as broadly as possible and another reason to keep the feed current and accurate.

**Question #24:** What information/data was used to establish the number of operators in the State of New York. Does this include only STOA recipients? Typically, STOA recipients are merely a pass through for multiple agencies. We are concerned that if the list of recipients only includes STOA recipients then the list of operators would be higher.

**Answer:** The list was generated from the STOA program. However, as described in Question 20 the project objective is ultimately to extend coverage, to the extent possible with limited project resources, beyond STOA recipients to include a fuller range of mobility services. Priority for implementation is to ensure as full a representation of STOA carriers as possible. However, if non-STOA carriers can be incorporated within project resources (for example if a University system were to manage their data in GTFS Editor with limited support needed) that would be consistent with project/contract objectives.

**Question #25:** Would NYSDOT be open to a budget that proposes firm fixed price for some tasks and T&M for other tasks?

**Answer:** No, as the RFP requires that the resulting contract’s payment method be hourly based plus reasonable reimbursement for direct, acceptable expenses.
**Question #26:** We would like to confirm that the cost evaluation is based on proposed contract year 1’s total budget, and that the total evaluated cost of the contract (3 years) is the year 1 total cost multiplied by 3?

**Answer:** Confirmed.

**Question #27:** As this is a multiple year contract, can our cost estimate include an escalation of 1.5% per year?

**Answer:** No, as the RFP’s draft contract (Article 6, Item I) already contains a provision to administer any rate adjustments for contract year 2 and for contract year 3.

**Question #28:** Does the minimum 12 point font size requirement apply to text in tables (outside of the table headers) and figures, text filled in to required forms, and/or text included in headers and footers?

**Answer:** No. RFP’s the minimum 12 point font size requirement applies to proposal main body text and not to tables, headers, footers, etc.

**Question #29:** On RFP page 8, can you please clarify whether proposers are to submit 1 or 2 complete soft copies of the Technical Proposal on CD/thumbdrive?

**Answer:** To clarify: Please submit one (1) complete soft copy of your technical proposal on CD/thumbdrive, and please submit one (1) complete soft copy of your technical proposal on CD/thumbdrive.

**Question #30:** Do subconsultants need to fill out any of the RFP’s required forms, or is that just the responsibility of the prime firm?

**Answer:** Filling out and submitting the RFP’s required forms is just a responsibility of the prime firm.

**Question #31:** In RFP Attachment 6, is the reference to “up to two past relevant company projects” with regard to a total of two past project references for the proposal or two past project references per team member?

**Answer:** This should be interpreted as two past project references for each team member of the bid.

**Question #32:** A formerly certified NYSUCP DBE has reapplied for certification. The registration is pending and may take 60 days to process. By what point in the selection process must a firm be a certified DBE consultant in the NYSUCP DBE Directory?

**Answer:** To be a valid DBE submission, the proposed DBE firm must be certified by a Unified Certifying Partner and currently listed in the UCP Directory prior to proposal submission. If a firm previously certified as a DBE lost their DBE certification, to be a valid DBE offer, that firm must be certified by a Unified Certifying Partner and currently listed in the UCP Directory prior to proposal submission. Proposing a firm which is in the process of becoming a certified DBE is not a valid DBE submission and could lead to proposal dismissal (ie, no pending DBEs).
DRAFT CONTRACT QUESTIONS. The following questions pertain to the RFP’s Draft Contract (Attachment 1):

*Question #33:* Can the language in the Insurance Article be modified in the following respects?

a. *Coverage Types and Policy Limits.* The types of coverage and policy limits required from the Consultant are specified in subarticle B below. Insurance shall apply separately on a per job or per project basis.

*Answer:* NYSDOT accepts this change.

b. Modify Primary Coverage to read:

All insurance policies, excepting workers’ compensation and professional liability insurance, shall provide that the required coverage be primary as to any other insurance that may be available to the Department for any claim arising from the Consultant’s Work under this contract, or as a result of the Consultant’s activities.

*Answer:* NYSDOT accepts this change.

c. Modify Waiver of Subrogation to read:

As to every type and form of insurance coverage required from the Consultant except professional liability insurance, there shall be no right of subrogation against the State of New York/New York State Department of Transportation, its agents or employees. To the extent that any of Consultant’s policies of insurance prohibit such a waiver of subrogation, Consultant shall secure the necessary permission to make this waiver.

*Answer:* NYSDOT accepts this change.

d. Modify Policy Renewal/Expiration in Section 12 to read:

At least thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of any policy required by this contract, evidence of renewal or replacement policies of insurance with terms no less favorable to the Department than the expiring policies shall be delivered to the Department in the manner required for service of notice in subdivision (A)(3) above.

*Answer:* NYSDOT accepts this change.

e. Modify Self-Insured Retention/Deductibles to read:

Self insured retentions and deductibles shall be approved by NYSDOT which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld. Consultants utilizing self-insurance programs are required to provide a description of the program for Department approval. Collateralized deductible and self insured retention programs administered by a third party may be approved. Except as may be specifically provided in the Contract Documents of a particular project, Consultant administered insurance deductible shall be limited to the amount of the bid deposit or $100,000, whichever is less. Security is not required if it is otherwise provided to an administrator for an approved risk management program. The Department will not accept a self insured retention program without security being posted to assure payment of both the self insured retention limit and the cost of adjusting claims. The Consultant shall be solely responsible for all claim expense and loss payments within any
permitted deductible or self-insured retention. If the Consultant’s deductible in a self-administered program exceeds the amount of the bid deposit, the Consultant shall furnish an irrevocable Letter of Credit as collateral to guarantee its obligations. Such Letter of Credit or other collateral as may be approved by Department must be issued by a guarantor or surety with an AM Best Company rating of “A minus” or higher. If, at any time during the term of this agreement, the Department, in its sole discretion, determines that the Consultant is not paying its deductible, it may require the Consultant to collateralize all or any part of the deductible or self insured retention on any or all policies of insurance or, upon failure to promptly do so, the same may be withheld from payments due the Consultant.

Answer: NYSDOT accepts this change.

Question #34: Can Article 18 Code of Ethics be modified to read in part:
The Consultant shall not engage assign to perform work under this Agreement, on a full or part-time or other basis any professional or technical personnel who are or have been at any time during the period of this Agreement in the employ of the Federal Highway Administration or the highway organizations of any public employer, except regularly retired employees without the consent of the public employer of such person.

Answer: NYSDOT accepts this change.

Question #35: Can Section 11 of Appendix C ‘Special Equal Employment Opportunity Provisions’ be deleted, the one which requires Special Training?

Answer: No. Article 11 of Appendix C is optional and can be removed from the final contract during contract negotiations should this optional feature not be invoked.