Request for Information (RFI) 2015-04
for
Web Based Transportation Weather Forecasting Services
October 22, 2015

New York State Department of Transportation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, New York 12232
# Table of Contents

1. **Introduction** .......................................................... 3  
   1.1 Guidance for Respondents ........................................... 3  
   1.2 NYSDOT Response Location/Designated Contact .................. 4  
   1.3 Schedule of Dates .................................................. 5  
   1.4 Questions regarding the RFI ....................................... 5  
   1.5 Demonstrations ..................................................... 5  
   1.6 Follow-Ups/Response Clarifications ............................... 5  
   1.7 Due date .................................................................. 6  
   1.8 Announcements ...................................................... 6  

2. **Background** ............................................................... 6  
   2.1 NYSDOT Organization ................................................ 7  
   2.2 Vision of Scope and Solutions ...................................... 7  

3. **Concepts and Questions** .......................................... 9  

4. **Potential Requirements** ............................................. 9  

5. **Response Requirements** ............................................ 9  
   5.1 Communications ...................................................... 9  
   5.2 Cover Letter .......................................................... 9  
   5.3 Company Literature ................................................... 10  
   5.4 Response Checklist .................................................. 10  

**Attachment**  
   1. Concepts and Questions ............................................. 12
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Web Based Transportation Weather Forecasting Services

Request for Information

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) hereby issues this “Request for Information” to identify system capabilities and operational and maintenance models with respect to the Department’s Web Based Transportation Weather Forecasting Services Project.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to gather information from vendors with experience in providing web based weather forecasting services for governmental transportation agencies such as the New York State Department of Transportation.

This is not a Request for Proposals. Vendors are asked to carefully review the contents of this document and follow the response requirements.

Accurate weather forecasts, especially during the winter season, are extremely important to the Department. Detailed weather information supports managers and field crews in making informed decisions for snow and ice control operations, emergency management, and routine maintenance activities. In addition, this type of information is increasingly being used to support traffic operations management decisions.

1.1 GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDENTS

NYSDOT may issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) using information from submissions to this RFI. Responders to this RFI will not be precluded from responding to a future RFP, if any.

Contact information received from parties interested in this RFI shall be kept and used to inform said interested parties regarding any RFI updates as well as information regarding a potential future RFP. All materials submitted by a respondent shall become the property of NYSDOT and may be returned to the respondent at the sole discretion of NYSDOT.

NYSDOT will not be liable for any costs incurred by any respondent pertaining to the preparation and submittal of any written responses or for participation in a demonstration in response to this RFI. Any content that is proprietary and/or confidential should be marked as such in the response. Failure to mark content as proprietary and/or confidential
may result in its disclosure in the event a response is the subject of a Freedom of Information request under Public Officers Law Section 87.

Since this RFI is designed as a tool to collect information and shall not result in a procurement contract it does not fall under the requirements if State Finance Law Sections 139-j and 139-k (the Procurement Lobbying Law). This is an invitation to provide the Department with information regarding current technologies and viable approaches to accomplishing objectives with respect to web based weather forecasting services. Additionally, responses will be used to gauge the level of interest in the Weather Forecasting Services Project. Information obtained may be used to develop a needs requirement upon which future procurement might be based.

Responses shall be mailed to NYSDOT using the information in Section 1.2. Please submit 3 hard copies of your response document and an electronic version in a labeled DVD or Flash-drive. The electronic version shall include two software versions: one as a PDF file and the other in Microsoft Office Word. Responses should follow the format and sequence provided in Section 5 of this RFI.

If submitting responses for multiple solutions, separate response documents must be submitted.

**1.2 RESPONSE LOCATION/DESIGNATED CONTACT**

US Mail:

ATTN: Mary Anne Mariotti, P.E
New York State Department of Transportation
Contract Management Bureau, 6th Floor
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12232

E-mail: maryanne.mariotti@dot.state.ny.us
1.3 SCHEDULE OF DATES

The following key events and dates apply to the RFI:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release of RFI</td>
<td>10/22/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent Questions are due</td>
<td>10/29/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reply to Respondent Question</td>
<td>11/5/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written RFI Response due</td>
<td>11/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period for Demonstrations</td>
<td>11/19/2015 through 12/03/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFI Follow-Ups</td>
<td>11/12/2015 through 12/03/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that RFI schedule dates may change.

1.4 QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RFI

Respondents are encouraged to submit questions via email to the designated NYSDOT contact person, if they require clarification, or for any reason concerning this RFI.

All inquiries concerning this RFI must be submitted to the address in Section 1.2, by October 29, 2015. Questions and answers to all questions will be compiled, publicly posted and shared with all vendors that have either submitted questions or registered their interest in the RFI by November 5, 2015. At its discretion, NYSDOT may contact vendors who submit questions for clarification before issuing a response.

1.5 DEMONSTRATIONS

After RFI responses are reviewed by staff, NYSDOT may, at its discretion, invite interested entities to visit its Main Office located at 50 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12232, for further facilitated discussions or demonstrations, consistent with the intent of this RFI.

1.6 FOLLOW-UPS/RESPONSE CLARIFICATIONS

NYSDOT may seek additional information (clarifying or otherwise) following the receipt and consideration of RFI Responses and/or completion of further discussions or demonstrations. This may be through e-mail exchanges, phone discussions, meetings, web-ex demonstration follow ups and/or correspondence, and may be with an individual respondent, a subset of respondents, or all respondents. As RFI responses are reviewed, NYSDOT reserves the right to send follow-up clarification questions to vendors of further interest. This includes the right to request a further interview and/or demonstration.
1.7 **DUE DATE**
RFI responses must be received by NYSDOT no later than COB, November 12, 2015, to the address in Section 1.2 for guaranteed consideration.

1.8 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
NYSDOT may issue announcements amending this RFI in response to vendor questions. All firms expressing interest in this RFI will be notified via e-mail regarding release of any new RFI 2015-04 information. All RFI information shall be publically released via NYSDOT’s website at:

[https://www.dot.ny.gov/business](https://www.dot.ny.gov/business)

2. **BACKGROUND**

The New York State Department of Transportation relies on accurate and detailed weather forecasts when planning responses, primarily to winter weather events, and other weather events such as heavy rains, flooding, winds, thunderstorms, and extreme heat and cold. Additionally, weather forecasting is important for planning routine transportation maintenance activities. In recent years, the state has experienced extreme weather events that have significantly impacted infrastructure, commercial traffic, tourism, and emergency services operations. As the state becomes more heavily involved in responding to such extreme events, in particular winter weather situations, maintaining appropriate levels of service on the state’s highway system continues to be a paramount focus of the department.

The department seeks a statewide comprehensive web based weather forecasting service, with functionality to best support the transportation management activities of this agency. As related to winter weather, transportation managers and field supervisors will use the forecasts provided by this service, along with data collected from existing road weather stations, to make decisions in allocating resources and deciding what snow and ice control chemicals and plowing cycles are needed to address the service-forecasted pavement temperatures and conditions. Actions such as these, based on accurate weather forecasting, are critically important to public safety, the State’s economy and the environment. As related to routine maintenance activities, the forecasting service will provide value during non-winter months for activities such as paving, crack sealing, pavement striping, bridge maintenance, and herbicide applications along the highway; many of these activities are dependent on humidity and temperature.
2.1 NYSDOT ORGANIZATION

NYSDOT is comprised of eleven Regions across New York State. Each Region has a regional office as well as transportation maintenance facilities known as residencies and sub-residencies, totaling 257 maintenance facilities statewide. The department maintains approximately 43,500 lane-miles of highways, of which 36,350 lane-mile are maintained by state forces during winter months. The balance of the lane miles are maintained by utilizing snow and ice contracts with local municipal public works agencies.

![Figure 1 – NYSDOT Regions](image)

The department utilizes 1450 snow plows and employs about 3800 snow and ice operational staff. Operational managers and supervisors utilize mobile communication devices (e.g. smartphones) while patrolling roads or managing staff on worksites.

2.2 VISION OF SCOPE AND SOLUTIONS

The scope of the web based weather forecasting product and solutions to support transportation management is anticipated to include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Web based forecasting service covering all weather related events such as snow, ice, freezing rain, thunderstorms, lightning, winds, flooding, shoreline erosion, cold/heat waves, wild land fire, fog; and all severe weather situations that could have a significant impact on any part of the State transportation system. Vendor shall demonstrate verification of weather source data.
• Individual access to the service for up to 600 users.
• Color weather radar displays (national, regional, statewide, local, street level) including but not limited to current and future radar imaging, and precipitation timing predictor.
• Geographical information system base mapping with typical level functionality (highways, rivers, satellite view, NYSDOT regional boundaries and headquarters, etc).
• Ability for individual users to customize presentation page with display “favorites”, and monitor weather information for at least ten defined geographic locations.
• Service available via downloadable applications for use on smart phones, tablets, etc. of common operating systems.
• Ability to select and display existing traffic camera views, generally available through the NYSDOT 511 system (www.511ny.org)
• User-defined weather alerting via email, smart phone, text messaging, etc. Ability for hazardous weather alerts to follow smart phone user locations.
• Weather forecast maps covering New York state, minimum twice per day indicating weather predictions, precipitation/weather impact begin and end timelines, weekend/holiday forecasts, updates as necessary; available on-line, email, and printable in color 8.5”x11”.
• Meteorologist consultation directly on-line and by toll free phone number, available 24 hours/day, seven days/week, including participation in emergency operational planning phone conferences and webinars.
• Weather forecasting system requirements including Road Weather Information System (RWIS) data hosting, pavement temperature forecasting (with or without RWIS sensors), and treatment recommendations based on NYSDOT Highway Maintenance Guidelines Chapter 5, Snow and Ice Control. Guidelines link: https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/operating/oom/transportation-maintenance/repository/NYS_SI_Manual_Apr2006_RevJan2012.pdf
• Ability to provide “animated” colored weather maps that display progression of various types of weather features, such as predictive snow storm accumulations, ice accumulations, rain intensities, forecasted, temperatures, etc.
• Archive weather data and forecast information for future reference or claims.
• Provide NYS snowfall contour maps for each winter season and 10 year averages.
• Provide 24 hours/day, seven days/week technical “help desk” support for users.
• Provide on-site initial training sessions at locations around the state to be determined; and refresher training webinars.
• Provide pre-season winter weather outlook webinars for statewide viewing.
• All web based service, mapping, etc. to be hosted by the vendor, entirely outside of NYSDOT IT network. Downloading of map data, special applications, etc. requiring access through the department’s network will not be permitted.
3. CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS

The primary intent of this RFI is to seek information about vendors’ solutions in providing NYSDOT with a statewide comprehensive web based weather forecasting service, with functionality to best support the transportation management activities of this agency. Refer to RFI Attachment 1 for a list of questions and concepts for which NYSDOT is requesting responses and comments. NYSDOT also welcomes and encourages commentary on any other relevant topics not specifically identified.

4. POTENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Vendor to promptly provide updated/newest versions of service at no additional cost.
- Service shall not require any software or data to be downloaded into NYSDOT IT system. All access and data must be via internet, outside the NYSDOT IT firewall.
- Service to be compatible with current NYSDOT ITS standards.

5. RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

5.1 COMMUNICATIONS

All communications should go through the NYSDOT contact person via E-mail (maryanne.mariotti@dot.ny.gov). At the beginning of all written/E-mail communications please clearly identify the company name, mailer’s name, and reference to “RFI 2015-04”.

5.1.1 INITIAL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Please send an initial e-mail to the designated contact in section 1.2 to express interest in this RFI and include your basic contact information. If you have already expressed interest please do not resend your contact information.

5.2 COVER LETTER

The respondent should provide a cover letter (limited to no more than 2 pages in length) that includes the following corporate information:

- Company name
- Primary contact name & job title
- E-mail address
- Telephone number
- Mailing address

Please provide the contact information (name, job title, E-mail address) for any additional contact persons as appropriate.
5.3 COMPANY LITERATURE

Relevant company literature, product fact sheets, brochures, etc. should be provided. Information provided should be organized and should not require research to obtain an overview of the products/solutions being presented. Examples of any recent weather information services related RFPs, RFP responses, or contracts with other transportation agencies are encouraged to be shared. Please identify any materials which are confidential and not subject to public release. For supplemental information (e.g., case studies, user manuals, etc.), links to online relevant information can be provided.

Include a brief statement regarding why you are interested in this RFI. Responses should include information regarding the company’s organization and history of providing transportation design solutions and services. This should include information regarding relevant background experience in providing similar scale solutions to similar types of customers. Include information about any relevant business partners.

5.4 RESPONSE CHECKLIST

All of the following items are not mandatory but are requested to be included a response to this RFI:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RFI Submittal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cover letter including:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contact information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expression of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responses to the list of Concepts &amp; Questions (RFI Attachment 1):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Company (Numbers 1-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Scope (9-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Approach (15-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Estimate (19-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Product Evaluation (21-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Timeframes (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Archiving Data (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Training (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maintenance and Support (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Company literature including:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrate company stability, depth of resources, and control of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- History of providing transportation design solutions and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Examples of providing similar scale solutions to similar types of customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sample RFPs, proposed approaches, and/or other relevant documents from dealings with other transportation agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product literature (e.g., list of functionality, published price sheets, etc.):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional information, feedback, &amp; suggestions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questions for NYSDOT:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please submit 3 hard copies of your response document and an electronic version in a labeled DVD or Flash-drive. The electronic version shall include two software versions: one as a Adobe pdf file and the other in Microsoft Word. However Microsoft Word version is not required for company and product literature.
ATTACHMENT 1

Concepts & Questions

RFI #2015-04 QUESTIONS & CONCEPTS

Please provide responses to the following questions. Although encouraged, providing a response to any or all of the questions is not mandatory nor a condition of qualification for this RFI or any potential future RFP. The information provided in response to these questions will not be shared with other vendors. However, any questions/inquires asked of NYSDOT, along with the NYSDOT provided responses, may be shared.

COMPANY

1. Provide information to indicate that your company has adequate experience and resources to administer a possible contract of this magnitude, should NYSDOT competitively procure for these services.

2. Provide recent examples where your company has supplied similar solutions to other large transportation agency customers.

3. Identify what aspects of your company separate you from other vendors.

4. Does your company have direct administrative control of the majority of the proposed products and solutions? If not, please expand upon what arrangements are anticipated to be in place to address critical technical issues in a timely manner.

5. Identify if your firm has any necessary business partners, describing that business relationship and for how long.

6. Does your company have authorized resellers or certified business partners capable of providing some or all other services described in this RFI?

7. Is your company an officially designated vendor with the State of New York?

8. Provide information for your company’s products and services that may not be directly related to any of the stated objectives or potential functional requirements, but that may help NYSDOT to more fully understand your capabilities.
SCOPE

9. Describe how your company is currently able to provide all of the necessary products & solutions to achieve the Vision of Scope and Solutions as stated in RFI Section 2.2 and Potential Requirements, Section 5.0.

10. Describe how your company is currently able to provide all of the necessary training, maintenance, and support to achieve the Vision of Scope and Solutions as stated in Section 2.2 and Potential Requirements, Section 5.0.

11. Would a proposed approach allow for the incorporation of products/services from a third party provider as a possibility (e.g. data from RWIS equipment)?

12. Would the incorporation of products/services from a third party provider be required to achieve any of the Vision of Scope and Solutions as stated in Section 2.2 and Potential Requirements, Section 5.0?

13. Identify your experience with the products proposed as well as any partnerships established to support similar solutions for other similar customers.

14. Describe any applications currently available or in development that you feel would enhance the identified core business functions. If in development, when will the applications anticipated to be generally available?

APPROACH

15. What potential requirements or concepts are most divergent from your company’s anticipated approach to providing these services?

16. What general approach would you propose based on the information provided? Provide details regarding potential variations and/or options. Multiple approaches can be presented.

17. Identify and discuss any recommended additions to, or not clearly identified elements of, the potential service provisions which may have significant costs associated with them (e.g., internet cloud service).

18. Describe the approach, procurement & licensing mechanisms, and scope of any recent dealings with other departments of transportation agencies or toll authorities for weather forecast related services.
ESTIMATE

19. What information is most critical for you to be provided in order for you to develop a reasonable proposal and cost estimate should NYSDOT make a decision to procure web based weather forecasting services? What obstacles or uncertainties do you see which could increase your risk considerations?

20. Based on the limited information and potential scope implied in this RFI, provide a very high level or ball park cost estimate (to the nearest ten thousand). If it is possible (without injuring your competitive stance), please provide itemization for following general components: Weather forecasting services, initial and subsequent training, and maintenance & support. Ranges are acceptable. Assume a theoretical 3 year contract term. Note: any responses are non-binding, and are being requested solely to establish a sense of scale.

PRODUCT EVALUATION

21. Provide any recommendations for the product & solution demonstrations.

22. Provide any recommendations for potential testing & evaluation by NYSDOT during the RFP evaluation stage.

23. Possible product and solution demonstrations shall be done at NYSDOT offices. Vendors shall be self-sufficient for the demonstration with respect to internet access. Also provide any logistical requirements such a demo would entail.

24. Would two to three hours be sufficient time to adequately demonstrate the fundamentals of your company’s products and services that apply to this potential contract?

TIMEFRAMES

25. It is anticipated that this web based weather forecasting service be available for use, including implementation, training sessions, etc., as soon as May 2016, or sometime shortly after the Notice to Proceed date. Weather Forecast service is a critical need to maintain public safety making the schedule to fully implement the core business product and solutions a priority. Describe how your company will implement your product and meet the May 2016 desired date, or indicate a schedule for full implementation.

ARCHIVING DATA

26. Provide your company’s plan to archive weather data, weather maps, treatment recommendations, etc. Such data may be needed for future legal claims, FOIL
requests, or for weather history needs. Describe your company’s archive capabilities and maximum time frames. This information shall be made readily available at no charge to the department, even upon expiration of the contract.

TRAINING

27. Provide a training schedule including a projected timeframe, and what training regimen would be recommended, for getting users trained to effectively utilize the weather forecasting service. Initial training may be in-person at up to the ten regional locations across the state and by webinar. Overall total number of users is approximately 600 people. Annual pre-winter refresher training by several webinars will be required. Training locations, computers and internet access will be provided by NYSDOT for the training sessions.

28. Describe any available training resources & materials (online videos, online user forums, training manuals, live chat support, live phone support, in-product help, commercially available books, etc.).

MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT

29. Describe technical support arrangements your company would provide to users of your product.