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Title: Award a revised contract to VRPA Technologies, Inc. in the amount of \$333,367 for Fixed Route System Restructure Public Involvement Services as required by the Federal Transportation Administration
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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

August 24, 2017

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SUBJECT

Award a revised contract to VRPA Technologies, Inc. in the amount of \$333,367 for Fixed Route System Restructure Public Involvement Services as required by the Federal Transportation Administration

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council authorize the award of a revised contract to VRPA Technologies, Inc. of Fresno, California, in the amount of \$333,367 to conduct Fixed Route Restructure Public Involvement Services as required by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of several decades, the City's public transportation system, Fresno Area Express (FAX), has been incrementally extending routes in order to provide access to new development. In response to this issue, the department partnered with the Fresno Council of Governments (COG) to conduct a Fresno Clovis Metropolitan Area Public Transportation Strategic Service Evaluation with a goal of reducing transit travel times and improving access to major trip generators. As a result of this planning effort, a FAX Preferred System Network, which was subsequently presented to Council that identified a number of service improvements, which once implemented, would help to increase ridership.

Prior to implementing any significant changes (more than 25 percent), FTA requires a Service Equity Analysis be conducted as part of its Title VI requirements. Title VI requires recipients of federal funding to determine if service changes will have a discriminatory impact based on race, color, or national origin (disparate impact). On November 17, 2016, FAX issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to conduct Fixed-Route System Restructure Public Involvement Services. As part of the Title VI Analysis, the consultant will develop the threshold for what determines a major service change, as well as written policies, required for Title VI compliance, defining disparate impact, and disproportionate burden unique to the population.

On May 11, 2017, the Council did not support a proposed agreement with VRPA Technologies, Inc., to conduct the required community outreach and mandatory Service Equity Analysis that must be conducted before any significant changes can be made to an existing service area and/or route structure. During the Council deliberations on this matter, there were concerns raised related to cost, community outreach strategies, and if some of the work could be performed with existing staff.

As such, the department met with representatives from VRPA and identified changes to the proposed agreement that reduced the costs from \$437,735 to \$333,367 (savings of \$104,368) by eliminating the post adoption outreach component, as well as using existing staff to help support different tasks related to community outreach (e.g., social media). The department has also solicited the support of a number community groups, including Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC), Leadership Counsel and Cultiva La Salud, to assist in this effort, as well as coordinating the locations of seven community meetings.

BACKGROUND

The City's existing fixed route bus system is simply a continuation of routes that were in place in the 1960s, which over time have been incrementally extended to provide access to new growth areas. For example, the relocation of medical services, retail, and other activity centers north of Herndon in the later 1990s required FAX to extend six key routes beyond Shaw Avenue. While these changes provided access/coverage to this area, the extension of service also increased riding times and made the use of public transportation more onerous for the customers. According to a recent Wall Street Journal article, the reduction in service levels and longer riding times has contributed to a 13 percent decline in transit ridership nationwide over the last 10 years. (See attached WSJ article).

In response to the continuing decline in ridership, the department partnered with the Fresno Council of Governments (COG) in 2015 to commission a Fresno Clovis Metropolitan Area Public Transportation Strategic Service Evaluation. The evaluation included examination of metro travel patterns through extensive origin and destination studies, transit ride checks and transfer studies, and public and stakeholder input with a goal of reducing transit travel times and improving linkages to

major trip generators. The improvement of transit travel time, reliability, and responsiveness to community needs are critically important for making transit a viable alternative in contemporary urban environments. As a result of this planning effort, the FAX Preferred System Network was developed that identified a significant number of potential service changes.

Prior to implementing any significant changes (more than 25 percent), FTA requires a Service Equity Analysis be conducted as part of its Title VI requirements. Title VI requires recipients of federal funding to determine if service changes will have a discriminatory impact based on race, color, or national origin (disparate impact). In addition, although not required, it is strongly recommended by the FTA to also evaluate whether service changes would have an impact on low-income individuals (disproportionate burden). This analysis requires extensive outreach efforts to identify any disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens on minority or low-income populations.

On November 17, 2016, FAX issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to conduct Fixed-Route System Restructure Public Involvement Services. As part of the Title VI Analysis, the consultant will develop the threshold for what determines a major service change, as well as written policies, required for Title VI compliance, defining disparate impact, and disproportionate burden unique to the population. In addition to determining the thresholds and whether FAX has impacted a protected class, the consultant will evaluate mitigation strategies, which could include additional route changes (e.g., service to Veteran's Home, Inspiration Park, El Paseo Shopping Center). These changes would also need to be evaluated under the Title VI requirement.

On February 7, 2017, proposals were received from Transportation Management & Design (TMD) of Carlsbad, CA; Jeffrey Scott Agency (JSA) of Fresno, CA; and VRPA Technologies, Inc. (VRPA) of Fresno, CA. A selection committee comprised of FAX, Fresno COG, and Clovis Transit staff selected VRPA, a registered Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), as the most qualified firm for this project. Sub-contractors of VRPA include Jarrett Walker and Associates and Mobility Planners.

VRPA was selected for this project based on the overall strength of its team and the proposed implementation plan. VRPA has over 28 years of transportation planning and engineering experience and has demonstrated a wide-range of technical and outreach skills that directly relate to this project. It has worked extensively in the Fresno area and has an excellent working knowledge of the area. Jarrett Walker & Associates has been retained as a sub-contractor on this project due to its involvement in the development of the FAX Preferred System Network. Jarrett Walker & Associates has extensive knowledge in the transit industry and has completed more than 200 public transit projects across North America, Australia, and New Zealand. The team is also supplemented by Mobility Planners (DBE), who project managed the 2014 California Association for Coordinated Transportation Title VI Technical Assistance Project.

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As such, the department met with representatives from VRPA and identified changes to the proposed agreement that reduced the costs from \$437,735 to \$333,367 (savings of \$104,368) by eliminating the post adoption outreach component, as well as using existing staff to help support different tasks related to community outreach (e.g., social media). The department has also solicited the support of

a number community groups, including Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC), Leadership Counsel and Cultiva La Salud, to assist in this effort, as well as coordinating the locations of seven community meetings. The agreement includes one briefing with the City Council Transportation Sub-Committee, and four management level briefings with FAX staff and representatives of the City Manager's Office.

It is estimated to take approximately seven months to complete the project from the award of the contract.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING

This program is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference was not considered due to requirements of federal funds for this project.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the General Fund from this action. This contract is federally funded by a FTA planning grant and has been budgeted into the Department of Transportation's approved FY18 budget.

Attachments:

- Request for Qualifications
- Scoring Summary
- Agreement with VRPA
- WSJ Article