

Request For Information (RFI)

US 90A/Southwest Corridor

RFI1700001

12-5-16

Project Scope

Given stakeholder interest, the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) is conducting a Request for Information (RFI) from interested parties for possible private investment to facilitate a commuter line along US 90A and, as feasible, possibly other unfinished projects named in the 2003 Referendum, herein after referred to as the Project or Projects. We are open to all concepts to include design or build or operate or maintain or finance. The 2003 Referendum is available upon request.

As presented in the approved 2003 voter-approved Referendum, the proposed Project on the Southwest Corridor (SWC) would be approximately eight miles long in the METRO service area. The proposed commuter line should link Harris County with Fort Bend County. A map showing the general project scope area is provided below in Figure 1. Existing METRO light rail lines are also shown by line color.

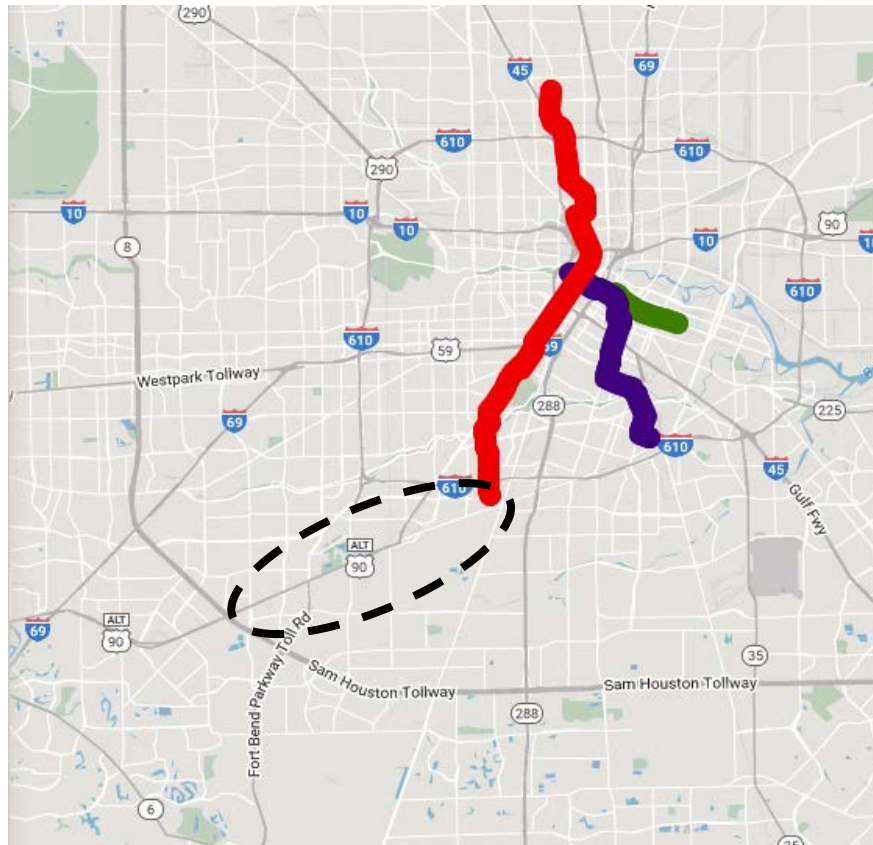


Figure 1.

The purpose of the proposed Project is to improve mobility, accessibility, and system linkage between major residential areas in the Missouri City and southwest Houston areas and major employment centers, such as downtown Houston and the Texas Medical Center (TMC). The proposed Project would provide a high capacity transit alternative to help reduce traffic congestion in the corridor and further the implementation of regional transit connectivity.

Vehicle Technology Evaluation

Different commuter modes and corresponding vehicles are capable of providing the commuter service under consideration. The proposed service is intended to serve commuters with fast trips and few stops. The current METRORail technology is light rail, which runs on a track with an overhead electric power source. Light rail can be either in the street or in its own right-of-way and run as multi-car trains. Other technologies may be considered. The ability of each of vehicle type to interline or serve the existing METRORail line is not required but should be examined. Required operations and maintenance facilities and vehicle purchase should also be included in Project evaluation.

RFI Response Instructions

METRO is issuing this RFI to obtain information from firms that will assist METRO in the refinement of assumptions and will support further definition of the Project and methodologies for potential procurement and delivery. As part of the RFI process, METRO will host a Forum for potential respondents to answer questions. The Forum is voluntary. Attendance at the forum is not a requirement for responding to this RFI, nor is responding to this RFI a requirement for future participation in this Project. METRO may request informational sessions with the respondents.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS RFI DOES NOT CONSTITUTE THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANY SOLICITATION PROCESS FOR THE PROJECT OR PROJECTS AND THE RFI DOES NOT REPRESENT A COMMITMENT TO PROCEED WITH ANY SUCH SOLICITATION IN THE FUTURE. THEREFORE, THOSE CHOOSING TO RESPOND TO THIS RFI WILL NOT, MERELY BY VIRTUE OF SUBMITTING SUCH A RESPONSE, BE DEEMED TO BE "PROPOSERS" OR "BIDDERS" ON THIS PROJECT OR PROJECTS IN ANY SENSE, AND NO SUCH RESPONDENT WILL HAVE ANY PREFERENCE, SPECIAL DESIGNATION, ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE WHATSOEVER IN ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCUREMENT PROCESS RELATED TO THE PROJECT. SUBMITTING A RESPONSE TO THIS RFI IS NOT A PREREQUISITE TO PARTICIPATING IN ANY FUTURE SOLICITATION.

METRO encourages responses from a variety of firms and organizations such as, but not limited to:

- Lead transportation infrastructure contractors or major systems integrators on transit systems of similar size, complexity and scale;
- Vehicle suppliers/manufacturers;
- Transit operators and/or maintainers for systems of similar size, complexity and scale;
- Financiers and/or equity investors with a substantial development and investment track record in new-build transportation projects;
- Industry organizations representing any of the above or related firms; and
- Industry organizations of local, small and/or disadvantaged businesses whose member firms might seek to participate on a team or consortium of project proposers.

Anticipated RFI Key Dates:

December 5, 2016	RFI available to the potential respondents
January 10, 2017	METRO Forum - 1900 Main Street
January 16, 2017	Deadline for submitting questions
February 7, 2017	Responses due

All questions related to this RFI should be directed in writing (email) to:

Michael Kyme
Chief Procurement Officer
MK15@ridemetro.org

Vendors must ensure that your response is delivered to the following address on or before **February 7, 2017 CST** with an electronic copy to: MK15@ridemetro.org

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS
1900 Main Street, P.O. Box 61429, Houston, Texas 77002
Attn: Prinscilla Abbs
Houston, Texas 77208-1429

[REQUEST FOR INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE](#)

Please note it is not necessary to answer every question. Respondents are strongly encouraged to respond to those questions that are within their experience.

- 1) What is your firm's background in delivering major transit infrastructure projects? Please submit materials about your firm.
- 2) What are the factors that would most influence your decision to participate in a private investment delivery method for this Project or Projects?
- 3) Do you have any experience with alternative procurement delivery methods and, if so, please provide any general "lessons learned" you have to share about that experience?
- 4) Are there strategies that may help mitigate any technical and/or financial challenges that might arise during the Project?
- 5) What are your views and experience in managing stakeholder expectations?
- 6) Is this Project supportable by the private financial and surety markets? What are the potential actions and/or policies that could be adopted by METRO to facilitate such support? In your experience what type of financing has been the most successful in supporting such projects?
- 7) What, if any, major risks do you foresee with the design and construction of the Project or Projects? What, if any, major risks do you foresee with the lifecycle costs?
- 8) Are there any other key risks and potential mitigation strategies you would like to discuss at this stage that METRO should be aware of and take actions to mitigate in the procurement?
- 9) What is the optimal term for a concession agreement, if applicable?
- 10) Other than US 90A, which other commuter line or lines would your firm be interested in designing or building or operating or maintaining or financing?
- 11) Does your firm have any experience with applying for alternative funding such as Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) or Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF)?
- 12) What, in your opinion, are the indicators that would make this a successful project?
- 13) From your firm's perspective, what are the advantages of entering into an agreement in which operations and maintenance and lifecycle responsibility are placed with the private partner? What are the disadvantages?
- 14) From your firm's perspective, what are the advantages of entering into an agreement that includes transit oriented development (TOD) and/or other capital investments or opportunities as a project component?

- 15) What performance metrics should be considered for measuring operations and maintenance and lifecycle activities?
- 16) METRO may specify Small Business Enterprises (SBEs) goals for the Project. What types of work would you most likely seek participation for, as well as for SBE and DBE participation?
- 17) Looking ahead over the next several years, are there any particular risks or factors which would give your firm concern about potentially entering into possible private investment to facilitate a commuter line on the US 90A corridor and any other possible corridors included in METRO's 2003 Referendum. We are open to all concepts to include design or build or operate or maintain or finance. How might those risks be mitigated?
- 18) What are the benefits of using milestone payments in combination with an availability payment structure? How would you anticipate such a payment affecting costs, financing, and completion of a project? What are appropriate milestones to which payment should be linked?
- 19) This project may or may not be eligible for federal New Starts funding. If required, it will be incumbent upon the proposer to present a plan to comply with the New Starts process. As such, please describe your experience with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and funding from the New Starts program. Please also describe any lessons learned.
- 20) METRO is interested in reducing any unnecessary expense associated with preparing or responding to solicitations. Please provide specific examples of requirements or specifications in other design-build or possible private solicitations that your firm believes could have been modified to reduce proposal costs, without adversely affecting METRO's ability to review, the solicitation?
- 21) Please comment on any other pertinent issues that should be considered with regard to alternative project delivery methods suitable for this Project.
- 22) Do you have any innovative ideas that would assist METRO with possible private investment utilizing alternative delivery methods for this project?

Submittal Requirements

- 1) Vendor Information:
 - a) Name of person responsible for the information contained in this RFI
 - b) Title
 - c) Company Name
 - d) Date of incorporation
 - e) Mailing address

- f) Telephone number
- g) Email address
- h) Web Site
- i) Number of employees

- 2) Request For Information Questionnaire – Please note it is not necessary to answer every question. Respondents are strongly encouraged to respond to those questions that are within their experience.

Disclaimer

METRO does not intend to award a contract on the basis of this Request or otherwise pay for the information solicited. This Request does not constitute a solicitation for proposals for METRO to enter into negotiations to award a contract. This Request is for planning purposes only and shall not be considered as a request for proposal or as an obligation on the part of METRO to acquire any products or services. No entitlement to payment of direct or indirect costs or charges by METRO will arise as a result of contractor submission of responses to this Request or METRO's use of such information. Responses to this Request will not be returned. Whatever information is provided in response to this Request may be used to access tradeoffs and alternatives available for determining how to proceed with the acquisition. Any proprietary information that is submitted may be used in establishing requirements but specific contractor submitted information will be safeguarded as proprietary, subject, however, to mandated disclosure under applicable Texas law, discussed below.

METRO is a governmental entity subject to the public information laws of the state of Texas, subpoena from courts of law and other governmental proceedings ("public laws"). If METRO receives a request for confidential information related to the services provided under this RFI, METRO shall immediately notify the firm/vendor that such confidential information has been requested pursuant to the public laws. Upon notification to the firm/vendor by METRO of the request to make such confidential information public, firm/vendor shall, at its own expense, take all action available to firm/vendor to prevent disclosure of such information. However, METRO shall comply with all such public laws, and specifically, if the Texas Attorney General determines that such confidential information is public, METRO shall release such confidential information to the public. In the event that information is required to be released, METRO shall have no liability or any indemnification obligation to the firm/vendor for any damages or claims associated with the release of such information.