

**PROCUREMENT SUMMARY**

**ADVERTISING AND MEDIA SERVICES/PS123964000**

1.	<b>Contract Number: PS123964000</b>	
2.	<b>Recommended Vendor:</b> GP Generate, LLC	
3.	<b>Type of Procurement (check one):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IFB <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RFP <input type="checkbox"/> RFP-A&E <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Competitive <input type="checkbox"/> Modification <input type="checkbox"/> Task Order	
4.	<b>Procurement Dates:</b>	
	<b>A. Issued:</b> September 10, 2024	
	<b>B. Advertised/Publicized:</b> September 10, 2024	
	<b>C. Pre-Proposal Conference:</b> September 17, 2024	
	<b>D. Proposals Due:</b> October 14, 2024	
	<b>E. Pre-Qualification Completed:</b> November 26, 2024	
	<b>F. Ethics Declaration Forms Submitted to Ethics:</b> October 14, 2024	
	<b>G. Protest Period End Date:</b> January 21, 2025	
5.	<b>Solicitations Downloaded:</b> 81	<b>Bids/Proposals Received:</b> 7
6.	<b>Contract Administrator:</b> Britney Kirkwood Shedrick	<b>Telephone Number:</b> (213) 418-3313
7.	<b>Project Manager:</b> Tiffany Srisook	<b>Telephone Number:</b> (213) 922-5285

**A. Procurement Background**

This Board Action is to approve Contract No. PS123964000 to provide advertising and communications services to meet Metro’s diverse communication needs and align its messaging with the expectations and interests of its wide-ranging audience in Los Angeles County. Board approval of contract award is subject to resolution of any properly submitted protest(s), if any.

On September 10, 2024, Request for Proposals (RFP) No. PS123964 was issued as a competitive procurement in accordance with Metro’s Acquisition Policy and the contract type is a firm fixed unit rate. The Diversity & Economic Opportunity Department recommended a Small Business Enterprise (SBE) goal of 3% and a Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) goal of 3%. Further, the solicitation was subject to the Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference which gives eligible proposers 5% preference bonus points added to their overall evaluation score for utilizing local small business firms.

No amendments were issued during the solicitation phase of this RFP.

A total of 81 downloads of the RFP were recorded in the planholders list. A virtual pre-proposal conference was held on September 17, 2024, and was attended by 28 participants representing 13 firms. There were 21 questions received, and responses were provided prior to the proposal due date.

A total of seven proposals were received by the proposal due date of October 14, 2024, from the following firms listed below in alphabetical order:

1. Acento Advertising, Inc.
2. Braven Agency, Inc.
3. GP Generate, LLC
4. Pastilla, Inc.
5. Pulsar Advertising, Inc.
6. Sensis, Inc.
7. Swell Creative Group, LLC

## **B. Evaluation of Proposals**

A Proposal Evaluation Team (PET) consisting of Metro staff from TAP- Systems Projects, Marketing- Special Projects, and Operations- Stations Experience Departments was convened and conducted a comprehensive technical evaluation of the proposals received.

The proposals were evaluated based on the following evaluation criteria:

Phase I: Minimum Qualifications Requirements (Pass/Fail): Proposers must meet the following minimum qualifications requirements at the time of proposal submittal:

- Prime Contractor must have an office within the County of Los Angeles.
- Prime Contractor must have at least five years of experience providing advertising and media services similar to those required in the scope of services within Los Angeles County or other counties within the United States with similar geographic location and demographics to that of Los Angeles County.
- Prime Contractor must have existing or established relationships with multiethnic, multilanguage media channels, including Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Armenian, Russian, Vietnamese, Khmer, Thai and more, with a particular emphasis on the Hispanic media market.

All seven proposals met the RFP minimum requirements and were further evaluated based on the following weighted evaluation criteria:

Phase II: Technical Evaluation

- Degree of the Team's Skills and Experience 35%
- Experience and Qualification of Proposed Personnel 25%
- Understanding of Work and Appropriateness of Approach for Implementation of Required Services 20%
- Price Proposal 20%
- Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference Program (Bonus Points) 5%

Several factors were considered when developing these weights, giving the greatest importance to the degree of the team's skills and experience.

From October 18, 2024, through November 12, 2024, the PET independently evaluated and scored the technical proposals. At the conclusion of the evaluation, the PET determined GP Generate, LLC to be the top-ranked firm.

### **Qualifications Summary of Firms:**

#### **GP Generate, LLC**

GP Generate, LLC (GP Generate), headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, was established in March 2009. With 15 years of experience providing advertising and media services, GP Generate demonstrated in detail its capability to deliver strategic media buying rich digital content and targeted communications. The firm worked on targeted campaigns in Los Angeles County and other Southern California regions and has executed multilingual and multicultural media strategies across diverse client sectors. Clients to whom it delivered multilingual and multicultural media strategies include Southern California Edison, Los Angeles County Registrar, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Molina Healthcare, CalFresh, Lexus Dealers Association, and Rising Sea Levels.

GP Generate's proposed staff are comprised of seasoned professionals with relevant expertise in media strategy, buying, campaign analytics, and content strategy and production. They are familiar with a broad range of media, design, and market research tools, including Kantar, Nielsen, and Google Analytics, which supports data-driven audience insights. GP Generate committed to dedicating key personnel to Metro assignments on a full-time basis, with flexibility to scale resources as needed.

As part of the understanding of work and appropriateness of approach for implementation of required services, GP Generate's proposal demonstrated a transparent billing process with regular updates and vendor invoice visibility, ensuring accountability throughout campaign management. In addition, GP Generate is an LSBE prime contractor and earned the LSBE preference bonus points.

#### **Swell Creative Group, LLC**

Swell Creative Group (Swell), a Metro-certified SBE firm, was established in 2012. Located in Los Angeles, the firm has experience executing complex, large-scale campaigns for public agencies, nonprofits, and mission-driven organizations. It has experience with multicultural campaigns, including transit-adjacent projects like the LeaseUp campaign, targeting underserved Los Angeles communities. Clients that it delivered campaigns for include the California Department of Cannabis Control, Lyft and United Way of Greater Los Angeles.

Swell's key personnel are experienced in public sector campaigns and targeted media strategies for hard-to-reach audiences. However, their familiarity with media, design, and market research tools appeared to be limited. Swell's proposal did not sufficiently demonstrate its billing process and provided limited discussion on reconciliation process or discrepancy management which is essential in maintaining financial oversight in large-scale media buys.

Swell is an LSBE prime contractor and earned the LSBE preference bonus points.

### **Pulsar Advertising, Inc.**

Pulsar Advertising, Inc. (Pulsar), founded in 1992, is headquartered in Los Angeles and is a full-service, customer-centric advertising and marketing agency. Pulsar has experience in transit branding, advertising, marketing and communications and media planning. Transit clients in California include Metrolink, Orange County Bus, Caltrain, AC Transit, and Bay Area Rapid Transit.

Pulsar's proposal demonstrated its key personnel's skills and qualifications in media planning and transit campaigns but did not sufficiently discuss their experience in media buying. Pulsar's proposal relied heavily on its exclusive partnership with a subcontractor to handle media planning, media recommendations and media buying.

Pulsar subcontracted 30% of the work to an LSBE subcontractor and earned the LSBE preference bonus points.

### **Sensis, Inc.**

Sensis, Inc. (Sensis), an integrated cross-cultural marketing agency was established in 2005 and is headquartered in Glendale. Its experience spans marketing, public awareness, and behavior change initiatives for both public transit and safety campaigns. Transit clients include Metrolink, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Metro, CapMetro, MARTA, Capital Metro and Foothill Transit.

Sensis's key personnel are experienced in media strategy, creative development, data analytics and are well-versed in targeting diverse demographics. Sensis's proposal relies heavily on third-party data software plug-ins for media buys and lacks discussion on content and social influencer strategies.

Sensis is an LSBE prime contractor and earned the LSBE preference bonus points. It currently provides marketing research services to Metro and performance has been satisfactory.

### **Acento Advertising, Inc.**

Acento Advertising, Inc. (Acento), located in Los Angeles, is a full-spectrum marketing and culture agency. It was established in 1983 to reach Hispanic consumers and has since expanded to all ethnic and linguistic segments. Acento has handled public sector campaigns for Metro, SoCalGas, and the California Department of Public Health.

While Acento's proposal provided a comprehensive media plan with audience segmentation, timeline and budget allocation, it did not sufficiently demonstrate its accounting and media buying billing process. In addition, Acento did not earn the LSBE preference bonus points.

Acento currently provides multicultural marketing agency support services to Metro and performance has been satisfactory.

### **Braven Agency, Inc.**

Braven Agency, Inc. (Braven), located in Long Beach was established in 2016 and offers a range of marketing services, including advertising strategy, media planning and buying, analytics and insights, and creative development.

Braven's key personnel are familiar with digital marketing tools; however, the Braven proposal did not demonstrate in detail, key personnel's familiarity with advanced industry-standard media, design and market research tools. Furthermore, the proposal lacked a detailed end-to-end breakdown of its media buying process, including reconciliation and handling discrepancies. Braven did not earn the LSBE preference bonus points.

### **Pastilla, Inc.**

Pastilla, Inc. (Pastilla), founded in 2004, is located in Pasadena and is a full-service creative agency, providing branding and marketing services in both the public and private sectors. Clients include Metrolink, Orange County Transportation Authority, City of Pasadena and Clean Power Alliance.

Pastilla's key personnel have experience in market research, leading branding initiatives, and managing marketing campaigns for transit agencies and other public sector clients. Pastilla's proposal did not sufficiently demonstrate its accounting and media billing process. In addition, Pastilla did not earn the LSBE preference bonus points.

A summary of the PET scores is provided below:

1	Firm	Average Score	Factor Weight	Weighted Average Score	Rank
2	<b>GP Generate, LLC</b>				
3	Degree of the Team's Skills and Experience	93.34	35.00%	32.67	
4	Experience and Qualification of Proposed Personnel	95.32	25.00%	23.83	
5	Understanding of Work and Appropriateness of Approach for Implementation of Required Services	82.50	20.00%	16.50	
6	Price Proposal	44.85	20.00%	8.97	
7	Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference Program (Bonus Points)	100.00	5.00%	5.00	
8	<b>Total</b>		<b>105.00%</b>	<b>86.97</b>	<b>1</b>
9	<b>Swell Creative Group, LLC</b>				
10	Degree of the Team's Skills and Experience	81.71	35.00%	28.60	
11	Experience and Qualification of Proposed Personnel	72.24	25.00%	18.06	
12	Understanding of Work and Appropriateness of Approach for Implementation of Required Services	73.35	20.00%	14.67	
13	Price Proposal	33.65	20.00%	6.73	
14	Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference Program (Bonus Points)	100.00	5.00%	5.00	
15	<b>Total</b>		<b>105.00%</b>	<b>73.06</b>	<b>2</b>
16	<b>Pulsar Advertising, Inc.</b>				
17	Degree of the Team's Skills and Experience	80.09	35.00%	28.03	
18	Experience and Qualification of Proposed Personnel	74.68	25.00%	18.67	
19	Understanding of Work and Appropriateness of Approach for Implementation of Required Services	65.85	20.00%	13.17	
20	Price Proposal	29.45	20.00%	5.89	
21	Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference Program (Bonus Points)	100.00	5.00%	5.00	
22	<b>Total</b>		<b>105.00%</b>	<b>70.76</b>	<b>3</b>
23	<b>Sensis, Inc.</b>				
24	Degree of the Team's Skills and Experience	70.09	35.00%	24.53	
25	Experience and Qualification of Proposed Personnel	71.24	25.00%	17.81	
26	Understanding of Work and Appropriateness of Approach for Implementation of Required Services	80.00	20.00%	16.00	

27	Price Proposal	27.50	20.00%	5.50	
28	Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference Program (Bonus Points)	100.00	5.00%	5.00	
29	<b>Total</b>		<b>105.00%</b>	<b>68.84</b>	<b>4</b>
30	<b>Acento Advertising, Inc.</b>				
31	Degree of the Team's Skills and Experience	80.09	35.00%	28.03	
32	Experience and Qualification of Proposed Personnel	79.12	25.00%	19.78	
33	Understanding of Work and Appropriateness of Approach for Implementation of Required Services	78.35	20.00%	15.67	
34	Price Proposal	23.05	20.00%	4.61	
35	Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference Program (Bonus Points)	0.00	5.00%	0.00	
36	<b>Total</b>		<b>105.00%</b>	<b>68.09</b>	<b>5</b>
37	<b>Braven Agency, Inc.</b>				
38	Degree of the Team's Skills and Experience	55.14	35.00%	19.30	
39	Experience and Qualification of Proposed Personnel	57.88	25.00%	14.47	
40	Understanding of Work and Appropriateness of Approach for Implementation of Required Services	64.15	20.00%	12.83	
41	Price Proposal	100.00	20.00%	20.00	
42	Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference Program (Bonus Points)	0.00	5.00%	0.00	
43	<b>Total</b>		<b>105.00%</b>	<b>66.60</b>	<b>6</b>
44	<b>Pastilla, Inc.</b>				
45	Degree of the Team's Skills and Experience	75.06	35.00%	26.27	
46	Experience and Qualification of Proposed Personnel	65.64	25.00%	16.41	
47	Understanding of Work and Appropriateness of Approach for Implementation of Required Services	67.50	20.00%	13.50	
48	Price Proposal	28.95	20.00%	5.79	
49	Local Small Business Enterprise (LSBE) Preference Program (Bonus Points)	0.00	5.00%	0.00	
50	<b>Total</b>		<b>105.00%</b>	<b>61.97</b>	<b>7</b>

### C. Price Analysis

The recommended amount has been determined to be fair and reasonable based upon price analysis, Independent Cost Estimate (ICE), fact finding, and technical analysis.

	<b>Proposer Name</b>	<b>Proposal Amount</b>	<b>Metro ICE</b>	<b>Recommended Amount</b>
1.	GP Generate, LLC	\$2,393,125	\$5,888,580	\$2,393,125
2.	Swell Creative Group, LLC	\$3,190,725		
3.	Pulsar Advertising, Inc.	\$3,645,839		
4.	Sensis, Inc.	\$3,905,550		
5.	Acento Advertising, Inc.	\$4,663,460		
6.	Braven Agency, Inc.	\$1,073,880		
7.	Pastilla Inc.	\$3,712,616		

The variance between the recommended amount and the ICE is due to key differences in cost structure and strategic approaches. The ICE was based on conservative fully burdened hourly market rates for similar contracts that included broader scope of work and premium for media buying tools (e.g. iHeart Media’s platform, which commands premium pricing etc.). The recommended amount on the other hand is based on lower hourly rates and streamlined resource allocation due to GP Generate’s tailored data-driven approach which leverages existing relationships with diverse local and multicultural media channels, focuses on digital content creation, real-time campaign optimization, cost-efficient media placements and avoids unnecessary overhead and reliance on high-cost tools or extraneous services.

### D. Background on Recommended Contractor

GP Generate, LLC is a Metro-certified small business, Los Angeles-based firm founded in 2009. It is a full-service advertising agency with expertise in media strategy and execution.

The GP Generate team includes a DVBE subcontractor that will handle video production and editing.