



## Board Report

File #: 2021-0716, File Type: Contract

Agenda Number: 2.

### LA SAFE BOARD MEETING JANUARY 27, 2022

**SUBJECT: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA 511 INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE SERVICE**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to:

- A. AWARD a four-year, firm fixed price, Contract No. PS79419000, to IBI Group Inc., in an amount not-to-exceed \$3,204,875.80 for the enhancement, deployment and operation of the Southern California 511 (SoCal 511) Interactive Voice Response (IVR) services, effective on March 1, 2022, subject to the resolution of properly submitted protest(s), if any; and
- B. APPROVE and DELEGATE Contract Modification Authority (CMA) in the amount of \$1,000,000 (31.2%) specific to Contract No. PS79419000 and authorize staff to negotiate and execute modifications for Contract No. PS79419000 to support unforeseen issues that may arise during the term of the Contract.

#### **ISSUE**

The contract for the current IVR for the SoCal 511 system is scheduled to expire in February 2022. The IVR is a core component of the overall SoCal 511 system and enables users to dial 5-1-1 on their phone to request traveler information or motorist assistance. A successor contract is required to ensure that SoCal 511 is able to continue to provide traveler information services through the IVR.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In July 2000, the Federal Communications Commission designated 511 as the national traveler information number. The purpose of 511 is to provide travelers with easy access to a variety of transportation related information. In 2005, the Federal government enacted the Federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which contained a mandate to deploy 511 systems nationwide.

In response, LA SAFE partnered with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to develop and deploy the SoCal 511 Traveler Information system. The

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current SoCal 511 IVR contract has been in place since July 2016 and the IVR has responded to over 4 million requests. The IVR has been improved to include the addition of real-time transit information and the deployment of Spanish language services to its offerings. In addition to providing traveler information services, the IVR provides mobile call box support by allowing motorists to dial 5-1-1 and request motorist assistance consistent with the services provided at roadside call boxes.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **SoCal 511 IVR Services**

The recommended contractor, IBI Group, Inc., supports sixteen (16) 511 IVR systems in North America, these include New York, Massachusetts, Arizona, Kern County, Florida, Georgia, Yukon, Alberta, Ontario, and Los Angeles. Under the new IVR contract, IBI will provide and manage their latest hosted IVR service to LA SAFE in support of SoCal 511. The IVR will provide services to not only Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties but will also expand services to include Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The award of this contract will ensure that LA SAFE is able to provide the SoCal 511 IVR in a seamless manner to all partners and users. The next IVR will utilize current and expandable technologies and has the ability to automatically scale the size of its service to accommodate growth. The new IVR will be more agile, responsive, user-friendly, and easier to maintain.

Some specific improvements to be realized with the new IVR include:

- Integration of Inland Empire 511 services (Riverside and San Bernardino counties) into the SoCal 511;
- Improved user experience with the deployment of the latest natural speech language engine to ensure a more natural versus robotic service;
- Improved performance with the deployment of the latest speech recognition platform to reduce the number of errors given in both Spanish and English;
- Improved alert and emergency management capabilities to enable the system to support any manmade or natural emergencies/disasters;
- The ability to adjust the monthly rate on a quarterly basis dependent upon usage trends;

LA SAFE has worked with and will continue to work with partner agencies in the development, deployment, management, and operation of the new SoCal 511 IVR system. Partner agencies consist of Metro, Caltrans, CHP, OCTA, VCTC, RCTC and SBCTA.

Additionally, this contract award has an SBE goal of 22% and a DBVE goal of 3% for a total goal of 25%.

### **Contract Modification Authority**

The increase of the delegated CMA from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 is requested to enable staff to respond to new and unforeseen developments during the term of this contract. Prior experiences with

the operation of the SoCal 511 program demonstrate that over the course of the term of the contract any number of issues may arise such as contract extensions, deployment of additional (Spanish) language services, integration of the Inland Empire 511, improvements to flow of information and interactions with callers, deployment of new data sources such as new transit arrival predictions from agencies not currently supported within SoCal 511 and/or other new traveler and transportation information such as bikeshare. The availability of the increased CMA in prior contracts enabled SoCal 511 to address such issues more efficiently. The CMA for this contract will enable agile development and integration of new incident management and integrated corridor management advance traveler information practices, additional languages, services to support the upcoming 2028 Olympics as well as other regional special events and an improved ability to provide support for regional emergencies.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

A critical role of effectively managing freeway incidents is the prompt and accurate dissemination of information to the public. This action will enable SoCal 511 to improve its operations and provide enhanced and more actionable information to the public thereby reducing congestion and associated safety impacts.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Funding in the amount of \$525,000 in cost center 3351, project 300209, has been included in SAFE's FY22 budget from dedicated State funding for SAFE.

Please note that this new contract term not-to-exceed amount reflects a 21% cost savings when compared to the existing contract. This is mainly due to the competitive bidding process, updated contract terms, advancements in technologies and shared development costs with other 511 systems throughout the contractor's other properties.

Since this is a multi-year contract, the cost center Manager and Deputy Chief of Operations for Shared Mobility (Acting) will be responsible for budgeting funds in future years.

### **Impact to Budget**

The funding source for this project comes from dedicated State funding for SAFE, which is not eligible for bus & rail operations and capital projects.

### **EQUITY PLATFORM**

The SoCal 511 program is a congestion mitigation program that assists commuters and the general traveling public with their traveling needs. This program helps travelers navigate the SoCal region in an expeditious and cost-effective way. Since this is a true regional program, this service helps less serviced communities who have less transit access, active transportation services and less funds available for these services within the five different counties.

Additionally, this contract award has a requirement for the contractor to achieve an SBE goal of 22% and a DBVE goal of 3% for a total goal of 25%. Currently this service is offered in Spanish and

English. However, we are exploring additional languages to bridge the gap with other marginalized communities by working with other 511 programs across the country that have implemented different languages, such as the Bay Area which has Cantonese as an added language. The goal of identifying languages spoken by communities within the project area of the five counties can expand the reach of the SoCal 511 program to non-English speaking communities.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

SoCal 511 Interactive Voice Response Services aligns with Strategic **Goal 1: Provide high quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling.**

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board may elect not to approve these recommendations. This option is not recommended as it would result in a gap in service.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval by the Board, staff will execute Contract No. PS79419000 with IBI Group, Inc. to begin development and implementation of the new Southern California 511 (511) Interactive Voice Response (IVR) services.

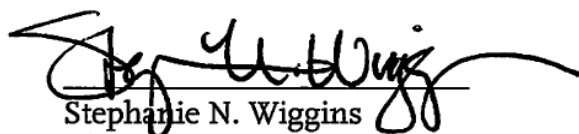
### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Procurement Summary

Attachment B - DEOD Summary

Prepared by: Iain Fairweather, Sr. Manager, Los Angeles County Service  
Authority for Freeway Emergencies, (213) 418-3377  
Kenneth Coleman, DEO, Highway Operations/Shared Mobility, (213) 922-2951

Reviewed by: Debra Avila, Deputy Chief Vendor/Contract Management Officer,  
(213) 418 3051  
Shahrazad Amiri, Acting Deputy Chief Operations Officer, Shared Mobility (213) 922-3061  
Conan Cheung, Acting Chief Operations Officer, Bus (213) 418-3034



Stephanie N. Wiggins  
Chief Executive Officer