



Board Report

File #: 2023-0021, File Type: Contract

Agenda Number: 6.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE APRIL 19, 2023

SUBJECT: SYSTEM-WIDE ON-BOARD ORIGIN-DESTINATION SURVEY

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. AWARD a two-year, firm fixed price Contract No. PS91223-2000 to ETC Institute to conduct a system-wide on-board origin-destination survey, in an amount of \$1,495,180, subject to resolution of protest(s), if any; and
- B. EXECUTE a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to advance \$500,000 in local funding to complete the Los Angeles County portion of the Household Travel Survey for SCAG regional modeling validation purposes.

ISSUE

This systemwide on-board origin-destination survey (“OD Survey”) will be conducted to maintain Federal Transit Administration (FTA) compliance for the agency’s travel demand model. The FTA requires agencies in pursuit of Capital Investment Grants funding (New Starts and Small Starts) to conduct customer on-board origin-destination surveys every five years to provide accurate data for each agency’s in-house travel demand forecasting. Board approval of this professional services contract is needed to proceed with the surveying process.

During Metro’s scheduled OD Survey timeline, SCAG also plans on conducting their regional Household Travel Survey to update the information used in their activity-based model, used for their regional planning compliance with federal and state requirements. SCAG has asked Metro to provide a financial contribution for the Los Angeles County portion of their survey collection effort based on past contributions and collaboration.

BACKGROUND

Metro Travel Demand Model

Both Metro and SCAG maintain transportation models for forecasting future travel patterns, but they serve different purposes. Metro maintains a travel demand model that is specifically designed to

meet FTA requirements for evaluating current and future transit investments for purposes such as transit shares, project trips, station boardings, system connectivity, VMT reductions, cost benefit analyses, and travel times.

The OD Survey focuses on where the customers are coming from and going to, how they access/egress the system, what routes were taken throughout the trip, car ownership, income level, and purpose of the trip for transit users. Detailed geographic information about customer travel behavior is gathered as well.

SCAG Model

SCAG's model focuses on household information and all other trip types, particularly vehicles. SCAG last conducted this household survey in 2012 (with State grant funds for surveying the entire SCAG region) to determine the share of auto and non-motorized trips across purposes, time periods, and household income markets. In 2001, the household survey effort was paid for by Metro local funds. SCAG is still in the process of procuring services, so the fixed price is not yet available. Any unspent funds will be refunded to Metro.

DISCUSSION

Findings

The last system-wide on-board survey was conducted in 2011. Since the last on-board survey, Metro has restructured its service and its fare payment system, as well as experienced a pandemic. These service changes and impacts require a new origin-destination survey. Additionally, results are useful for baseline data when doing the "before" portion of the "before and after" studies mandated by FTA to evaluate New Starts funded projects as they come into service.

Considerations

Both surveys discussed in this report are needed to update the information available regarding regional transportation use trends, given the significant changes attributed to COVID. In the case of each survey, the existing data is more than a decade old. At least two years are needed to properly collect and evaluate the respective survey responses before the data can be used to recalibrate each model's assumptions for improved future forecasting.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

This action will not have any impact on the safety of our customers and/or employees because the purpose is only to gather additional data for the benefit of Metro and SCAG planning efforts.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funds are available in the current budget for the requested activities.

Impact to Budget

Funding of \$1,700,000 for professional services is included in the current fiscal year budget (FY23) in cost center 4230, project number 405542. The source of the funds is local (Prop A, C and TDA

Admin funds).

The OD Survey is a multi-year contract; it will be the responsibility of the cost center manager and the Chief Planning Officer to budget funds in subsequent years. Funding for the SCAG Household Survey is currently available in the Technical Services budget. Depending on budget availability and FY24 budget approval, SCAG funding will be advanced in two installments.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The first pillar of the Equity Platform is to define and measure. The OD Survey will provide the data that defines the various trips being taken on the Metro system (including origin and destination information beyond the system). The updated data generated from this effort will help staff more accurately evaluate Equity Focus Communities' (EFCs) access and travel, as well as the travel patterns of riders representing marginalized groups. Specifically, the Metro travel demand model, which will be updated with the OD Survey data, provides analysis of travel times in EFCs, by various modes during different periods of the day.

The second pillar of the Metro Equity Platform framework is to listen and learn. To properly do this, the OD Survey responses collected must include diverse participation, with an emphasis on engaging those most in need of equity to learn as much as possible about how they travel. The scope of work for this contract will require the following actions to be taken to ensure the data is fully representative of transit users:

- The OD Survey will be fielded on all of the rail lines and more than 70 bus lines, each carrying 1,500+ riders a day to gather at least 32,000 responses;
- The contractor will be required to engage individuals not proficient in English by maintaining a field survey team where at least 50% of the members are bilingual in Spanish, plus provide translation services for nine other enumerated languages;
- The contractor will train the surveyors for conflict avoidance with the unhoused customers and proper reach-out skills to Metro customers with disabilities.
- The contractor will be required to properly train staff and incentivize responses (including cash prizes) to ensure meaningful participation, with a focus on engaging those typically facing access to opportunity barriers, the underrepresented, or those less likely to participate based on experiences or perception of institutional biases; and
- The collection and weighting plan will be designed to ensure accurate representation of Metro ridership (including gender, income, car ownership, ethnicity, and limited English proficiency) in how the results/responses are evaluated.

The third pillar of the Equity Platform is to focus and deliver, recognizing Metro's role in delivering equitable outcomes. In support of this goal, the OD Survey contract has a Small Business Enterprise (SBE) commitment of 30.69% participation and a Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise (DVBE) commitment of 3%.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The data that will be collected in the OD Survey will help staff better evaluate mobility options in

support of Strategic Plan goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling. Collaborating with FTA and SCAG on each survey effort supports Strategic Plan goal 4: Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership. The updated data will be more reliable and therefore supports Strategic Plan goal # 5: Provide responsive, accountable, and trustworthy governance.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Compliance with the FTA requirement for an origin-destination survey every five (5) years was not recommended or feasible during the pandemic. FTA believes that resuming the survey practice this year is reasonable for model validation purposes. FTA has not been concerned about the “past due” nature of Metro’s existing origin-destination survey data because the Metro travel demand model continues to be the FTA’s national standard for evaluating modeling practices and developing innovative sensitivity tests. However, this OD Survey will help maintain Metro’s good standing.

NEXT STEPS

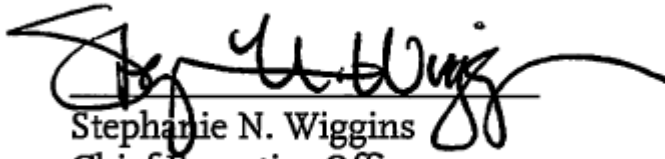
Upon Board approval, staff will execute Contract No. PS91223-2000 with ETC Institute and initiate work for the OD Survey. The work will begin during the current fiscal year and will complete within two years. Staff will also execute an MOU with SCAG to advance funding for their survey efforts, which are scheduled to commence in the fall of 2023.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Procurement Summary
Attachment B - DEOD Summary

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