

Q1: Please clarify the instructions for Clause F. Budget and Billing Format which state: “...The contractor should have an accounting system capable of segregating direct cost from indirect costs per the above cited regulations.” Our company cannot comply with this requirement because our accounting system does not provide this kind of cost accounting breakdown of costs into separate rates for overhead / G&A and profit. We have successfully provided similar services to Federal, state, and municipal clients without having to provide this type of cost accounting breakdown. We believe the services in this proposal are for commercial item services that need not comply with the federal cost principles. Will the Fresno Council of Governments be willing to revise and expand this clause to accept a lump sum method of payment (III.F.1) with a breakdown of rates of compensation (fully burdened) and number of hours for each personnel assigned to a task, and schedule of total estimated hours and costs to complete each task?

A1: Fresno COG is charged with the responsibility of insuring government funds, whether federal, state or local are appropriately spent and based on actual cost. Our billing format is designed to reimburse the consultant for actual time and materials periodically expended during the course of a long study. A lump sum payment can only be paid at the conclusion of the study, after the board has accepted the final project. Billing by milestone may be possible but only on projects that are clearly and logically divided into clear deliverable products. Planning studies typically don’t meet this criteria. Even if a lump sum or milestone approach is agreed to, the onus is on the consultant to have adequate accounting in place to validate the billing is based on actual cost, should an audit be called for.

Q2: How will proposals be evaluated? Is this a best value determination or LPTA? Is price more or less important than other factors? If formal presentations are permitted, how much weight will they be given?

A2: Cost is important but not the sole factor. The scoring committee will need to make some kind of determination of value that combines cost and qualifications, however the onus is on the scoring committee to justify their selection.

Q3: In relation to Task 1, does your Fresno COG have an assessment based on past studies or otherwise that describe how federal, state and local policies have been applied to Light Rail Transit (LRT) in relation to the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area (FCMA).

A3: The most relevant past study that has touched on a potential light rail/streetcar corridor in the FCMA is the Fresno Public Transportation Infrastructure Study (PTIS) completed by Fresno COG in 2010. It can be found here: https://measurec.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Fresno_PTIS_Report.pdf

Q4: Also in relation to Task 1, what are the locations of the future Fresno High Speed Rail station in relation to the Fresno Yosemite International Airport, and what is the current status of any transit (bus or rail) that exist connecting these two locations and downtown Fresno, colleges, universities, K-12 schools, commercial and retail corridors and industrial districts?

A4: Please reference this map of Fresno Area Express (FAX) current service area:

<https://www.fresno.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FAX-SYS-MAP-8-25.pdf>

Q5: In relation to Task 3, has there been an assessment of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and current ridership on your "Q" Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line? IN addition, since Fresno is so close to the tourist areas of Yosemite and Sequoia, Has there been an assessment of passenger traffic for these locations that might come in from the future Fresno High Speed Rail Station and the airport, that will need to use this new LRT line?

A5: There has not been an assessment of passenger traffic specially for those traveling to nearby national parks from the high-speed rail station or airport that would utilize a new potential LRT line.

Q6: In relation to Task 4, has your Fresno COG identified the locations at which there is a need for stations, and can the rail track for LRT be on elevated track for minimum disruption of current transportation modes? What have generally been the environmental concerns of the Fresno COG of any transit systems and the level of pollution and or greenhouse gas reductions you would like to see?

A6: Fresno COG has not identified specific station locations, but the scope of work does identify major activity centers expected to be evaluated in the study including the future Downtown Fresno High-Speed Rail Station, Fresno Yosemite International Airport, educational facilities, entertainment districts, and commercial corridors. Fresno COG is open to all potential engineering solutions, including elevated track, that support the feasibility of delivering light rail transit services in the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area.

Q7: Can Task 5 be based on a particular Light Rail Transit technology that we are familiar with and have expertise about, or do you want this to be general considering the transit technologies that are there nationally or internationally? Should the LRT technology used in these assessments involve Solar energy and battery storage to minimize pollution and Greenhouse gases, in addition to minimizing the demands on the local electric grid?

A7: Traditional light rail and streetcar technology utilizing overhead catenary systems (OCS) is the vehicle propulsion technology that Fresno COG expects to be evaluated in

this study. On-board batteries could be analyzed as well to bridge gaps in areas that are deemed potentially difficult to place OCS.

Q8: In relation to Task 6, is Fresno COG open to involving the business, real estate and electric vehicle charging communities at each of its stations to further economic development that includes considerations of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) for affordable housing?

A8: Fresno COG is open to engaging with local businesses, real estate firms, and other stakeholders to further economic development opportunities that includes consideration of TOD and affordable housing nearby potential light rail stations.

Q9: In relation to Task 7, are there ecosystems in the area that Fresno COG would like to receive special attention for minimum disruption?

A9: There are no specific ecosystems that Fresno COG believes need to receive special attention for minimum disruption.

Q10: Per the latest guidance issued by USDOT, DBE program requirements are suspended until all certified DBE firms in the California Unified Certification Program database are recertified under new certification standards. Will the COG be removing the DBE language and forms for this solicitation?

A10: Yes, per latest guidance from USDOT, DBE program requirements are suspended. Proposers do not need to fill out DBE forms or respond to DBE language in the RFP.

Q11: The Budget and Billing Format section of the RFP (p. 8) states that lump sum proposals will be paid per milestone of completed work or at the end of the contract upon acceptance of final product. Please confirm that, if lump sum payment is selected, we will be able to bill a percentage complete for each milestone on a monthly basis.

A11: Billings to government grants should reflect actual cost, whether federal, state or local. We do not accept billing on a percentage complete basis. Even if a lump sum or milestone approach is agreed to the onus is on the consultant to have adequate accounting in place to validate the billing is based on actual cost, should an audit be called for. Lump sum will be paid after the project is complete and accepted by the board. To be paid by milestone the project must be divided into logical deliverable products. Our billing format is designed to periodical reimburse for actual time and materials incurred during the course of the study.

Q12: In Task 1, second bullet, the requested deliverable is a summary memo of existing transit routes and infrastructure. However, the task description emphasizes evaluating infrastructure conditions to inform preliminary capital cost estimates in later tasks. Could

you please clarify whether the intent is for the deliverable to be (a) a summary memo only, or (b) a more detailed evaluation that provides a basis for costing in subsequent tasks? Which level of detail should be included in our proposal?

A12: Given the feasibility nature of this study, the expectation for this memo would not be overly detailed in its evaluation. Sampling certain segments of infrastructure to inform high-level cost estimation will suffice. If a LRT project were to move into an environmental analysis stage after this feasibility study, a more detailed evaluation will be necessary to inform alternative analysis, design, and construction phases.

Q13: What does Fresno COG anticipate using as their Horizon planning year for this study?

A13: Fresno COG has not yet selected a horizon planning year for this study, but we anticipate it will be between 2040 and 2050.

Q14: Does Fresno COG have a preferred emission tool to be used for this study? (e.g., CalEEMod, EMFAC, CT-EMFAC, CARB Pollution Mapping Tool, or CAL-CET)

A14: Fresno COG is open to using a variety of emissions tools for the purposes of this study. We most commonly use EMFAC in our own emissions modeling.

Q15: With 2019 being the defined Base Year, is any calibration needed for the 2025 model?

A15: The Fresno Activity-Based Model (ABM) has recently been updated and calibrated to a 2023 base year. Fresno COG does not see a need currently to calibrate the model to a 2025 base year.

Q16: Given that the Fresno ABM base year (2019) was calibrated under normal conditions without COVID impacts, do we need to adjust all horizon years including 2025 to reflect COVID-related changes in travel behavior, or can we assume normal conditions for those years?

A16: The Fresno Activity-Based Model (ABM) has recently been updated and calibrated to a 2023 base year. Fresno COG does not see a need currently to calibrate the model to a 2025 base year.

Q17: The Fresno ABM currently includes only three transit modes: local bus, express bus, and commuter rail. Should we assign LRT to the commuter rail mode, or does the model developer (RSG) need to add a separate LRT mode to properly capture LRT trip patterns and utility functions in the mode choice models?

A17: The Fresno ABM was recently updated to include LRT as a transit mode in the 2023 base year update.

Q18: Is there a small business utilization goal?

A18: There is not a small business utilization goal for this RFP.

Q19: Is there a goal or expectation for DBE participation?

A19: There is not a DBE goal or expectation of DBE participation for this RFP. Proposers can disregard all DBE language in the RFP per latest guidance from USDOT.

Q20: Can Fresno COG confirm that any firm supporting delivery of this feasibility study will not be precluded from any future engineering, environmental, or implementation work?

A20: Fresno COG can confirm that any firm participating in this feasibility study will not be precluded from any future engineering, environmental, or implementation work regarding potential future light rail service in the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area.

Q21: Is there a specific constraint (e.g. funding) that is driving the 24-month timeline, or would Fresno COG be open to a shorter timeline particularly if budget can be optimized?

A21: There is no specific constraint that is driving the 24-month timeline. If the study can be delivered sooner while completing all tasks thoroughly, Fresno COG is open to a shorter timeline that can support the optimization of the allowed budget for this study.

Q22: Does Fresno COG have a preference for payment structure?

A22: Yes! Time and materials. The billing format is prescribed in the RFP. See above discussion on billing format.

Q23: Regarding conflicts of interest (Section I, pg 12), can Fresno COG clarify what is meant by "may have an outcome on the selection"?

A23: Fresno COG doesn't give unfair advantage to firms with any kind of financial, business or other relationship with us. If you have a relationship with us, it should be disclosed.

Q24: Section J requests resumes for all staff, a statement indicating how many hours each staff will be assigned, and that the selected consultant will not substitute members of the project team without prior approval of Fresno COG. Does Fresno COG distinguish between key personnel leading tasks above a certain threshold compared with general support staff with more limited engagement?

A24: Fresno COG requires resumes for all staff and a statement indicating how many hours each member of staff will be assigned. Fresno COG allows for substitution of

members of the project team with prior notification and authorization by the agency. We do not distinguish between key personnel and general support staff.

Q25: If required, Attachment A is a paragraph explaining policy. Please clarify if Attachment A needs to be included as-is, or is some response required?

A25: Please include Attachment A as-is at the end of the proposal.

Q26: Under “Proposal Requirements,” in the RFP, under “D Detailed Work Plan, there is the following verbiage:

“The prospective contractor shall provide a schedule for completing the project, if different from the provided proposed project timeline (**Appendix B**), within the schedule set forth in this RFP. The schedule shall identify the major tasks to be undertaken and the time frame for each task.”

There is no “Appendix B” in the RFP. Please advise.

A26: Please see the attached schedule (Appendix B) at the end of this Q&A document.

Q27: Is one electronic copy of the proposal, sent by email, sufficient, or does the Agency also require one printed copy? Please clarify.

A27: Only an electronic copy, sent by email, is required.

Q28: How should we submit comments/redlines on the sample contract? Should we include them in the proposal, or as an appendix to the proposal?

A28: Changes to the contract template can be discussed after the winning proposer is notified and moves forward to the Board approval process. Please do not include contract comments/redlines in your proposal.

Q29: In Section J, Summary of Qualifications, does the Agency require resumes for ALL staff on the organization chart, or does “assigned staff” refer only to key staff?

A29: Fresno COG requires resumes for all staff that are identified in the proposal.

Q30: For **Section F, Budget and Billing Format**, of the RFP, how would the agency like responses to this Section be addressed? Much of the verbiage for the section applies to how the cost proposal is to be formulated. Would a cover sheet within the cost proposal be an appropriate method for providing our statements regarding financial systems and selection of method of payment? Would an explanation of the proposer’s financial system suffice for this section, and the rest of the section be addressed by the cost proposal? Please provide guidance.

A30: The RFP provides a detailed example of what elements should be included in the cost proposal. Note, this is an example to demonstrate required components however the cost proposal may be tailored to fit individual cost structures. Our expectations are that anyone applying to the RFP should have an accounting system and methodology capable of identifying actual cost and significant experience billing government grants.

Q:31 Should the cost proposal be submitted as part of Section F, or should it be submitted separately from the technical proposal?

A31: Either way will work as long as the information is there.

Q32: Technical Question for Task 1: For the second Summary Memo deliverable listed for Task 1 in the RFP scope of work, please clarify what is meant by "existing transit routes" in terms of how comprehensive this assessment would be.

A32: The Summary Memo should identify all existing transit (bus) routes within the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area, which can be completed with maps, and provide the most current available ridership information for the transit routes to inform the feasibility of potential light rail transit services.

