

RFP 26-014 – Dispatching and Scheduling Software

Q&A # 3

Question 1: Some vendors offer a fully bundled solution with hardware and software together. How important is it that the county has the flexibility to select best-in-class devices or update hardware without being tied to a single vendor?

Answer: The County desires a single software solution that has the flexibility for the County to integrate with future hardware devices than may be implemented in the County and Contractors.

Question 2: How important is it that staff can create ad-hoc reports, dashboards, and analytics on the fly, versus relying on vendor-defined reporting templates?

Answer: See RFP Section 24.11 Access to configurable system properties for enabling, disabling, or altering system functionalities and RFP Section 24.3.1.3 Customizable AD-HOC reporting tools. The County places a high emphasis on report customization.

Question 3: The Exhibit B Price Schedule uses a quantity one (1) for many items (i.e. scheduling software, testing, training, travel, etc.) Would you like the total cost of the item even though it may be priced based on the number of vehicles, days of travel or actual training days?

Answer: The proposal should include the unit cost for items based on a specific unit of measure, such as the number of vehicles. Additional information explaining the price can be provided in a separate document.

Question 4: What is your average number of on-demand trips per day?

Answer: The County does not currently provide same day on demand service. Our Demand Response 6 month rolling average is 424 daily trips.

Question 5: Is Fort Bend sure that they want automatic passenger counters on their demand response / paratransit vehicles (given that you will always know who you are picking up / dropping off due to the nature of the software)?

Answer: Passenger counters are only required for commuter vehicles.

Question 6: Is Fort Bend open to maintaining and working with their existing Novus software ecosystem?

Answer: The County is open to the best and most cost-effective solution provided.

Question 7: Does Fort Bend want a full stack CAD/AVL solution that allows them to do head sign integration, automatic vehicle annunciation, and other traditional fixed route services?

Answer: This is not a requirement.

Question 8: What is the County's ideal implementation timeline? What internal discussions have happened around implementation, timeline and ideal go-live date?

Answer: The County requests bidders to provide an implementation plan per Section 25.0, Tab 3 of the RFP.

Question 9: Of the 14 spare vehicles that Fort Bend has, which are demand response and which are fixed route?

Answer: There are currently 5 spares of which 4 are 16 passenger demand response.

Question 10: Are there 99 vehicles total?

Answer: There are currently 62 revenue vehicles in the fleet with plans to expand over the life of this contract with the maximum number of vehicles capped at 99.

Question 11: Can the County please confirm total vehicles available for maximum service for both demand response and fixed route?

Answer: There are currently 62 revenue vehicles in the fleet with plans to expand over the life of this contract with the maximum number of vehicles capped at 99.

Question 12: Can Fort Bend please confirm further details on what they're looking for in their public-facing technology specifically (i.e. do you want a website and application or just an application)?

Answer: The County is seeking an application per RFP Section 24.12.

Question 13: Does Fort Bend currently have a relationship with Transit App? Are you looking to export data?

Answer: The County only has a mobile ticketing application and is seeking with this RFP per 24.12 additional technology.

Question 14: When the RFP mentions a single platform that can manage the County's services all in one, are you looking for a single vendor or a single back-office system?

Answer: The county is seeking a single vendor that can provide a single platform solution for both demand response and commuter.

Question 15: Please clarify what you mean by 24.11.8. Are you looking to import polygons, or what import would give you predefined US census geographies?

Answer: The RFP requirement is to define polygons and use that data for reporting urban vs rural zones in NTD.

Question 16: Is there a defined budget range or funding cap for this procurement that vendors should be aware of?

Answer: Please provide your best offer.

Question 17: Will the County accept optional features beyond required deliverables? If yes, how will these be evaluated during scoring?

Answer: The County will consider optional features that should be identified and priced separately.

Question 18: The RFP requires submission of one original, ten paper copies, and a flash drive. Will the County also accept electronic submission (e.g., via secure portal or email) as an alternative or backup?

Answer: Addendum #1 addressed the paper copies and flash drive, revisions to Section 4.1. The County will not accept electronic submission alternatives.

Question 19: What is the minimum qualifying score required for a proposal to advance to final evaluation?

Answer: There is no minimum qualifying score. Proposals will be evaluated per Section 25.0 of the RFP. A short list of the highest evaluated firms may be developed to request additional information from, but only if the committee deems it necessary.

Question 20: Will cost proposals be evaluated based on total lifecycle cost (base + renewal years) or only the base contract term?

Answer: The County will evaluate the proposals based on the total lifecycle cost.

Question 21: Are there any bid or performance bond requirements with this project?

Answer: There are no bid or performance bond requirements for this project.

Question 22: Are there any Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goals or participation incentives associated with this procurement?

Answer: Please see Section 8.0 of Exhibit A contained in this RFP.

Question 23: What is the average number of trips (daily and annual) currently managed for Demand Response and Commuter Park & Ride services?

Answer: The daily average demand response trip count is 600 and the daily average commuter trip count is 77.

Question 24: Are there any fleet expansion plans or service growth projections vendors should consider for system scalability?

Answer: There are currently 62 revenue vehicles in the fleet with plans to expand over the life of this contract with the maximum number of vehicles capped at 99.

Question 25: Can the County share the ridership data for the past year? Also, share the annual number of trips estimated?

Answer: The 6-month average demand response ridership data is 8,900 and commuter is 25,100 with an estimated 370,500 combined total annual trips.

Question 26: Could the County provide 3 days of scheduling data so vendors can include an analysis of this data in their proposals.

Answer: The County will provide scheduling data to the winning proposal during the negotiation phase.

Question 27: For real-time vehicle tracking, will Fort Bend County provide AVL/MDT hardware, or should vendors include hardware in their proposals?

Answer: The County will provide the AVL/MDT hardware.

Question 28: What existing accounting, mapping, NTD reporting, or other backend systems must the new system integrate with?

Answer: There are no other backend systems the new software system will have to integrate with.

Question 29: Will the County require integration with an existing fare collection system, or is a new fare solution expected?

Answer: The County plans to integrate with existing fare technology applications.

Question 30: For the Mobile Driver App, are there preferred platforms (iOS, Android, both)? Should offline functionality be included?

Answer: See RFP Section 24.12.2.6

Question 31: Does the County require cloud hosting only, or will on-premises solutions also be considered?

Answer: Per RFP Section 24.5.2, the proposed system shall preferably be cloud-based; however, on premise solutions may also be proposed.

Question 32: Are there any cybersecurity standards beyond FTA requirements (e.g., NIST, SOC 2, FedRAMP) that the system must meet?

Answer: From the County IT perspective, a SOC 2 Report is preferred but not required.

Question 33: Will the County require HIPAA/PHI compliance for data storage and communications involving paratransit trips?

Answer: The County does not perform para-transit at this time.

Question 34: Will vendors be expected to migrate historical rider, trip, and performance data from legacy systems? If so, what is the volume and period (years) of data to be migrated?

Answer: See RFP Section 25.0, Tab 3 Historical Data Plan requirements. Three (3) years of data shall be migrated.

Question 35: How many staff and drivers will require training?

Answer: There will be approximately Fifty (50) County and Contractor employees that will require initial training.

Question 36: Does the County prefer on-site, remote, or hybrid training?

Answer: See RFP Section 24.16

Question 37: Will ongoing refresher training be required annually?

Answer: See RFP Section 25.0, Tab 3 for frequency.

Question 38: For the stated implementation timeline, does the County expect system acceptance testing and training to be included, or will training occur separately?

Answer: See RFP Section 25.0, Tab 3 for Acceptance Testing and Training Plan requirements. Acceptance Testing and Training shall be included in the implementation timeline provided by the bidder.

Question 39: Will milestone-based billing be allowed during implementation, or is payment only upon final acceptance?

Answer: Yes, the County will allow milestone billing.

Question 40: Should annual software licensing/subscription renewals be priced separately, or as an all-inclusive cost?

Answer: Yes, annual software renewals should be priced separately. Additional information can be provided in a separate document.

Question 41: Is there a maximum allowable percentage increase for renewal years?

Answer: Yes, the price increase is based on the applicable annual percentage in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Question 42: Who is the current software provider?

Answer: This is not relevant to the RFP.

Question 43: What challenges or issues with the incumbent system, if any, are prompting this new procurement?

Answer: This RFP defines requirements to address any current concerns.

Question 44: In the interest of environmental sustainability, would the agency consider accepting submissions via email or an online portal in place of printed and shipped submissions?

Answer: No, email or portal submissions are not accepted, see Section 4.1.

Question 45: Can you confirm whether this procurement is intended to replace the agency's existing TripSpark NOVUS system?

Answer: Yes, the intent is to replace our existing software with a state of the art dispatching and scheduling software package.

Question 46: Can you please provide the current Vehicles in Maximum Service for Demand Response and Fixed Route? E.g., at peak service, how many vehicles are on the road for each service?

Answer: At peak service, there are currently 49 vehicles on the road at any given time with 24 DR and 25 Commuter. This number is the minimum with plans to expand over the life of the contract.

Question 47: Can forms be signed electronically?

Answer: Yes, for all forms after Exhibit C. For submission requirements follow Section 4.0.

Question 48: Are there any hardware components onboard the existing fixed-route fleet that are intended to be reused? If so, what are the make and model of the components?

Answer: There are cellular tablets model Samsung Galaxy A7 Lite onboard the vehicle that are property of the service contractor.

Question 49: For hardware that needs to be procured, is Fort Bend interested in procuring it independently?

Answer: The County is not interested in procuring any hardware independently from this RFP.

Question 50: What is meant by “restart the system locally?”

Answer: In the event of software service interruption, the County shall be able to reboot the system at the County without the assistance of the supplier.

Question 51: Is the report for the Daily itinerary (or Driver’s manifest) for fixed-route service?

Answer: The report for driver manifest is for demand response and fixed route commuter service.

Question 52: For the requirement “extract complete GTFS,” is this system intended to create GTFS-static feeds?

Answer: Yes, this system is intended to create GTFS static feeds for route paths that are planned.

Question 53: For the “include or import predefined U.S. Census geographies,” is that for reporting purposes?

Answer: The RFP requirement is to define polygons and use that data for reporting urban vs rural zones in NTD.

Question 54: Are the IVR requirements for fixed-route operations?

Answer: The IVR requirements are for both Demand Response and Fixed-Route Commuter modes.

Question 55: Are Automatic Passenger Counters required, or can other passenger counting solutions be leveraged?

Answer: See RFP Section 24.13.2 for Automatic Passenger Counter Requirements. The County does not currently have this capability.

Question 56: Are there existing tablets with cellular connection onboard? If so, please provide the make/model and OS on the tablets.

Answer: There are cellular tablets model Samsung Galaxy A7 Lite onboard the vehicle that are property of the service contractor.

Question 57: Please indicated if Ft. Bend is intending to reuse or purchase new tablets for driver interface

Answer: The County plans to continue to use the service contractors Samsung Galaxy A7 Lite tablets.

Question 58: How many doors does each of Fort Bend’s vehicles have? For purposes of accurate pricing, we require the total door count.

Answer: Each of the County's vehicles have only one passenger entry door.

Question 59: For the fixed route vehicles, is the County looking for these to also be equipped with MDTs? If so, is there certain driver functionality you are looking for with fixed route MDTs? If all vehicles need MDTs, can the County please confirm the total number of vehicles is 57?

Answer: It is not a requirement for the bidder to provide MDT hardware. Per RFP Section 24.13.1 The system shall include MDT software solution.

Question 60: Can the County please confirm the total number of fixed route vehicles that need to be equipped with APCs? It was mentioned that there are 20 vehicles at peak, but are there others that also need the APC sensors?

Answer: APC's are required for all commuter buses. There are currently 29 commuter buses in our revenue fleet including spares with an additional 24 planned for service expansion over the life of the contract.

Question 61: Is the County looking for IVR/SMS to also be available for fixed route vehicle stop ETAs?

Answer: See RFP Section 24.12.1 for IVR requirements. The bidder is encouraged to propose any additional features or upgrades available priced as a separate line item.

Question 62: Can the County please confirm if it has an anticipated Go-Live for the service? It is mentioned that the first term will run through September 30, 2027, so we just want to verify if there is an expectation for the start of the project.

Answer: Contract award is expected in late December, 2025 per the schedule in Section, 8.0. The RFP requires the bidder to provide an implementation plan and schedule.

Question 63: Are your vehicles used interchangeably between fixed route and demand response?

Answer: No, the fleet is not interchangeable.

Question 64: Do your commuter routes operate on a set schedule, headways, deviated pickups, or a combination thereof?

Answer: The County's commuter routes operate on a fixed schedule.

Question 65: It is our understanding that when the RFP indicates that the system MUST perform a function, the vendor assumes that this is required functionality. When the RFP indicates that the system SHOULD perform a function, the vendor assumes that this functionality is not required but is desired. Does this align with your agency's intent with regard to your RFP?

Answer: The terms "shall" and "must" are indicative of required elements in the RFP.

Question 66: Shall all submitters include pricing for 10% spare equipment?

Answer: No, spare equipment is not required.

Question 67: How do you currently track ridership?

Answer: The County currently tracks ridership through the onboard tablet.

Question 68: Does Fort Bend County currently use any fare collection systems or desire any fare category modules for onboard passenger data collection?

Answer: Fare Collection is NOT a requirement of this RFP. The bidder is encouraged to propose any additional features or upgrades available priced as a separate line item.

Question 69: Is Fort Bend County interested in procuring other on-board technologies such as SSO with head sign integration, automatic voice announcements, integration with the interior dynamic message sign (DMS) for ADA purposes, automatic passenger counters (APCs), etc?

Answer: Other onboard technologies other than those stated within this RFP are not required.

Question 70: Please provide more information about existing components (digital signs, websites, mobile apps) in use that would require integration with the CAD /AVL solution.

Answer: Existing hardware components include Luminator ODK4 Display Keypad digital signs, Horizontal SMT Destination signs, and Luminator Voice Announcement System. Our Security camera system is Seon DH6, DVR, DH16 DVR and TH6 DVR. Our Infotainment system is by Bright Sign, FBCTransit.org is our only website. The county has one mobile ticketing app - Token Transit.

Question 71: Does the agency desire that the system be entirely browser -based, with no software installation required on local devices?

Answer: The County prefers a browser-based system but software installation on local devices may be proposed.

Question 72: How many drivers require training?

Answer: The County does not anticipate any drivers requiring training.

Question 73: How many vehicles are available for installation at any given time? a. During normal business hours b. Outside of normal business hours

Answer: Our service hours are 5:00am to 9:00pm. There is limited availability during normal business hours for commuter bus access. The majority of the work on buses would need to be scheduled after hours or weekends.

Question 74: Where will vehicle installation occur (outside parking lot, covered lot, garage, etc.)

Answer: Vehicle access will be outdoors under cover with limited availability to the maintenance bays.

Question 75: Section 24.3.1.3 – Please provide examples of the customizable ad-hoc reports that Fort Bend Transit may wish to generate regarding ridership

Answer: An example of a customizable report would include the ability to bring multiple datapoints into a single user customized report.

Question 76: Section 24.3.1.2 – Please define the term, ‘precise passenger count’. How will the precision of the passenger count be determined?

Answer: To maintain an accurate count of individuals who board and alight on that vehicle. Precision will be determined based on acceptance testing.

Question 77: When would Fort Bend Transit want the APC system to be fully operational?

Answer: The County would expect the APC system to be fully operational at the time of software installation. See RFP Section 25.0, Tab 3 for Implementation Plan requirements.

Question 78: Are Fort Bend Transit buses equipped with mobile routers? If so, would Fort Bend Transit want the APC data to be transferred via the mobile routers? If so, please provide the manufacturer and model number.

Answer: Yes, the majority of our vehicles are equipped with mobile routers and the County would prefer to have the APC data transferred through the mobile routers.

Question 79: Are drivers unionized?

Answer: Not relevant to this RFP

Question 80: How will Fort Bend County score software demonstrations?

Answer: The County will score the software demonstration as part of Section 25.0, Tab 3 bullets 5 & 6 should the County elect to request such demonstrations.

Question 81: Is Fort Bend County open to reviewing final terms with the winning bidder?

Answer: The County will review final terms during the negotiation phase with the selected bidder.

Question 82: Can Fort Bend please confirm whether it wants the costs of the following demand response features / functionalities included in vendors' core pricing proposal:

- a. Eligibility management fees
- b. Multi- and / or intermodal service fees
- c. AI IVR voice features fees
- d. Ticketing fees
- e. TNC trip brokering fees
- f. Mapping fees
- g. Google speeds / Real-time speeds fees
- h. SMS / Messaging fees

Answer: All fees outlined in the excel pricing sheet must be included as specified. Additional fees associated with the bidders proposed solution should be listed out separately if not a specific line item on the included pricing sheet.