



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Transit Service & County Assessment Study

Issue Date: March 22, 2014

Proposal Due Date: April 22, 2014

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. BACKGROUND

The Benzie Transportation Authority (BTA), a Benzie County Authority established in 2006 and operational since January 2, 2007 is in a process of institutional and operational assessment. BTA's planning process involves the development of a strategic plan and organizational assessment. With the assistance of a private consulting firm, BTA seeks to complete a thorough survey of our county residents to research gathered perceptions of service and quality, ridership habits and desires, including destination and frequency of service. The BTA seeks to identify future transportation services and techniques to promote enhanced connectivity with transit agencies in the surrounding four counties of Manistee, Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Wexford.

The BTA FY 2014 Service Development and New Technology grant application to conduct the transit services and county assessment study has been approved by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The intent is to commence the study immediately upon receipt of federal approval. The BTA seeks to retain a transportation consultant. Please note: The consultant selected through this Request for Proposals, will begin paid work **contingent upon** MDOT approval of a 3rd party subcontract between BTA and the consultant.

The BTA Executive Director will be responsible for providing guidance and oversight to the selected transportation consultant. The BTA Board of Directors will provide input in how the study results are disseminated to the public.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to hire a private consulting firm so that BTA may complete a thorough study of our county residents and visitors to research and gather perceptions of service and quality, ridership habits and desires, including destination and frequency of service. The BTA seeks to identify future transportation services and techniques to promote enhanced connectivity with transit agencies in the surrounding four counties of Manistee, Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Wexford.

C. RESPONSES TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The procedure for submittal of questions regarding the RFP is provided in Section II. Proposals are due no later than 4 p.m. EST on Friday, April 18, 2014. Information about the required proposal content is provided in Section V.

D. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

March 22, 2014	RFP Issued
April 22, 2014	Proposals Due (no later than 4pm)
May 5, 2014	Notification of final candidate(s)
Week of May 12, 2014	Interviews (if needed) & candidate selected

The selected Consultant shall complete the study within nine months after MDOT approves the 3rd party subcontract between the Consultant and the BTA. The awarded subcontract serves as the Notice To Proceed. A final draft of the study shall be submitted to the Executive Director of the BTA during month ten. *For example*, if a contract for services was entered on May 1, 2014, then the final study draft would be submitted by January 1, 2015, and the final study report would be submitted by February 1, 2015.

II. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. ISSUING OFFICE

This RFP is issued by the BTA.

B. CANCELLATION AND MODIFICATION

The Issuing Office reserves the right to cancel or modify this RFP as needed, as long as the modification does not constitute a cardinal change. Modifications to the RFP will be

posted on the BTA website, www.BenzieBus.com. Any firm mailed an RFP or who has contacted the BTA about the project will be notified of the modifications.

C. INQUIRIES

Inquiries concerning this RFP must be directed to:

Bill Kennis, Benzie Transportation Authority

14150 US Highway 31, Beulah, MI 49617

Bill@BenzieBus.net

231-227-1040

Verbal communication from the BTA Executive Director is not binding and shall not alter a specification, term or condition of this RFP. Responses to inquiries will be made in writing. Answers to frequently asked questions will be posted on the Benzie Bus website: www.BenzieBus.com. Any firm mailed an RFP or who has contacted the BTA about the project will be sent the answers to frequently asked questions.

Inquiries or requests for information shall not be made to anyone other than the BTA Executive Director. Any attempt on the part of any Consultant or any of its employees, agents or representatives to contact anyone other than the BTA Executive Director, will lead to disqualification.

Respondents are strongly encouraged to identify concerns, issues, or questions that should be considered by the BTA.

D. DUE DATE

Proposals are due by Friday, April 18, 2014. Proposals must be submitted by mail or hand delivery to:

Bill Kennis, Benzie Transportation Authority

14150 US Highway 31, Beulah, MI 49617

E. PREPARATION COST

The cost of developing a proposal is each Consultant's responsibility. The BTA is not liable for any cost associated with proposal preparation or any other costs incurred by any Consultant prior to contract execution.

F. ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL CONTENT

The successful Consultant's proposal contents shall become contractual obligations if a contract ensues. Failure of the successful bidder to accept these obligations may result in cancellation of the award. The proposal must remain valid for 90 days from the submission due date.

G. INDEPENDENT PRICE DETERMINATION (Appendix C)

A proposal will not be considered for award if the proposed price was not arrived at independently without collusion, consultation, communication, or agreement as to any matter relating to such prices with any other Consultant or with any other competitor.

The Consultant must include a certified statement in the proposal certifying that the price was arrived at without any conflict of interest as described in the paragraph above. Should a conflict of interest be detected any time during the contract, the contract shall be null and void and the Consultant shall assume all costs of this project until such time as a new Consultant is selected.

H. CONTRACT TERMS (Appendix A and B)

This project is funded by FTA and MDOT grants and is subject to federal and state rules and guidelines including the federal requirements in the *Michigan Department of Transportation 3169 (07/12) Research and Development for Less Than \$100,000* (Appendix B) and state requirements in the *Appendix A, Prohibition Of Discrimination In State Contracts* as attached.

I. SIGNATURE REQUIRED (Appendix D)

The proposal must be signed by an authorized agent to bind the Contractor to its provisions. The proposal must remain valid for a period of at least 90 days from the due date of submission.

III. BACKGROUND

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT/HISTORY

The BTA, Benzie Transportation Authority was established in 2006 and operational in January 2007. The BTA is a county authority, serving Benzie County with connecting service to Grand Traverse, Wexford, Manistee, Leelanau and Antrim via our Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA) connection in Interlochen, Monday through Friday providing access to employment, education, services and retailing. The BTA is funded through state and federal transportation programs, an authority-wide millage, and fare box revenues. Governance is by a nine-person Board of Directors composed of appointees from various other Government Agencies and Citizens.

BTA's FY 2014 operating budget is \$1.5M. BTA employs approximately 38 employees and maintains a fleet of 22 vehicles. Ridership in 2013 was 89,387; ridership by type is documented below. The total population of the county service area is 17,465 (2010 Census).

	2013 Ridership
Disabled	23,404
Elderly	22,081
Elderly w/ Disability	16,003
Regular Fare	42,299
Total Ridership	89,387

The BTA last evaluated the needs of Benzie County residents through a strategic planning process lead by Corradino Group in 2002 in anticipation of developing the first public transit service in Benzie County. The BTA now offers connections to Thompsonville, Interlochen, and an in-county Flex Route that operates simultaneously between the City of Frankfort and the Benzie Bus Station every hour with stops in Beulah, Honor, and Benzonia.

Now that the system has been operational for over 6 years and approaching an election in 2015/16, the county wide assessment is needed to make informed decisions about future investments in this critical economic infrastructure.

B. AVAILABLE DATA AND INFORMATION NETWORKS

The following data and information networks are available through the BTA and its partner organizations. This list is not necessarily exhaustive.

- Demographic and economic data, including forecast data, from the North West Michigan Council Of Governments (NWMCOG).
- BTA Survey & Final Report conducted by the Corradino Group.
- The Transit Directors' Network, staffed by NWMCOG.
- The Grand Vision (www.thegrandvision.org) Transit Committee, staffed by the Michigan Land Use Institute.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK/DELIVERABLES

Bidders who submit proposals for completing this transit study and county wide assessment study must demonstrate their capacity to address the following scope of work and deliverables as well as other needs relevant to this study.

A. SCOPE OF WORK (Percentages are for general guidance)

- **Engage the Public:**

About 50 percent of the work should engage the public (current riders, non-riders, residents, and visitors) in a comprehensive assessment of their public transit needs within Benzie County, their need for transit connections to neighboring counties, and their perception of BTA's current services. Methods should include at a minimum a telephone survey, a written survey (for use at public meetings and also possibly to be distributed through key stakeholders), focus group sessions, interviews with key stakeholders (social service agencies, major employers, schools, etc.), and other means proposed by the Consultant. This is the main project deliverable.

- **Recommend and prioritize new BTA routes and services:**

About 25 percent of the Consultant's work will analyze the public's input during the comprehensive assessment of their public transit needs within Benzie County (see "Engage the Public" above). Based on that analysis, the Consultant will recommend and prioritize new BTA routes, services, and facilities within Benzie County and connections to neighboring counties, including the potential for new commuter service. These recommendations must maintain the current level of service for disabled paratransit riders, and provide operational and capital cost estimates for the recommended routes, services, and facilities.

- **Assess the BTA's existing transit services:**

About 15 percent of the work will assess how well existing transit services align with and meet the public's transit needs (based on the comprehensive assessment), and the BTA's capacity with current resources to meet those needs.

- **Develop a profile of Benzie County:**

About 5 percent of the work will develop a profile of Benzie County, including – but not limited to – demographics, disability characteristics, employment, income level, auto ownership, technology needs, commuting and other travel patterns, existing transportation resources among public and private entities, etc., and identify any seasonal variations in these measures.

- **Inventory and identify gaps:**

About 5 percent of the work will inventory and identify gaps in services, infrastructure, and policies related to the BTA's connection to other public and private carriers, park-n-ride facilities, transit stops, passenger shelters, sidewalks, bicycling and walking trails, etc.

B. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION DELIVERABLES

At the direction of the BTA Executive Director, the successful Contractor will meet with representatives of Board of Directors at least once a month during the project. The Consultant will develop and provide to the Executive Director a timeline of draft and final deliverables based on a Consultant-proposed/BTA-approved transit service and county wide assessment study Table of Contents, to be included in the contract for services.

V. INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM BIDDER

A. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

1. Business Organization

State the full name and address of your organization and, if applicable, the branch office or subordinate element that will perform or assist in performing the work.

2. Key Personnel Qualifications and Prior Experience

Include as a part of your proposal a brief statement concerning the persons from your firm who will be actively engaged in the proposed effort and their recent experience. Do not include corporate experience unless persons who will work on this project participated in that experience. Include references and samples of work with similar scope and budget to the study proposed in this RFP.

3. Study Methodology and Design

The Consultant shall provide a brief study methodology and design that describes the tasks necessary to complete each item in the Scope of Work/Deliverables and optional items as deemed necessary by the consultant. Include a brief discussion of the techniques that will be used and an explanation of how the study will be completed in the given time frame.

4. Authorized Negotiators

Identify and include the names and telephone numbers of the Consultant's personnel authorized to negotiate the proposed contract with the BTA.

5. Certification of Independent Price Determination (Appendix C)

The Consultant must include a certified statement certifying that the proposed price was arrived at without any conflict of interest. Should a conflict of interest be detected any time during the contract, the contract shall be null and void and the Consultant shall assume all costs of this project until such time as a new Consultant is selected.

6. Certification of Authorized Signature (Appendix D)

The bidder must include a certified statement in the proposal certifying who the Authorized Signer(s) are for the bidder.

VI. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Consultants' technical proposals will be evaluated using the selection criteria below. All proposals received shall be subject to an evaluation by the Board of Directors Communication and External Relations Committee, (members are: Josh Stoltz, Committee Chair, Kelly Thayer, and Joann Worden-Morrell). Representatives from the firm(s) achieving the highest scoring proposal(s) in a competitive range will be invited to be interviewed in person by the Board before final selection is made. Proposers will

be awarded up to an additional 20 points based on the interview. The interview evaluation criteria will be explained in the letter inviting proposers for an interview. The BTA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part if in the judgment of the Board, the best interest of all parties will be served, and to award to other than the lowest price proposal. The criteria ranked in order of importance in making the selection are:

- **Method of approach: 30 Percent**
This refers to the technical soundness of the Consultant's stated approach to the project, the comprehensiveness of the proposed approach, and the techniques to be used. The bidder's proposal should describe the approach and techniques to be used to achieve each item in the Scope of Work.
- **Price: 30 percent**
Price will be scored on a formula of the lowest proposal price, divided by the vendor's proposal price times total possible points (lowest price/proposal price x 30).
- **Capability and qualifications: 20 Percent**
The ability of a Consultant will be evaluated under the terms of the RFP, relative to having a staff with the qualifications needed to successfully complete the project. Qualifications of professional personnel assigned to the project will be measured by experience with particular reference to experience on projects similar to that described in the Scope of Work. The bidder's professional and project staff that work on the project must be the same staff that is identified in the proposal.
- **Understanding the Purpose: 10 Percent**
A determination will be made of the Consultant's understanding of the project purpose and goals as presented in the RFP. Evaluation will be based on the data presented in the consultant's proposal. Consultants should feel free to suggest other requirements and problems that may have been overlooked.
- **Schedule: 5 Percent**
The prospective Consultant will be evaluated on their ability to follow a schedule that will successfully complete the project within the required time frame.
- **Originality or innovativeness: 5 Percent**
This RFP generally outlines the expected work activities and deliverables. A key factor in the selection of the firm, in addition the items above, is any innovative approach that helps achieve the Scope of Work. Consultants must demonstrate how the technique has been tested/proven and/or why it is

justified. In addition, the Consultant must explain how innovative approaches will be accomplished within the time frame and budget.

APPENDIX C



Certificate of Independent Price Determination

(A) By submission of this offer, the bidder certifies and in the case of a joint offer, each party thereto certifies as to its own organization, that in connection with this procurement:

(1) The prices in this offer have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement, for the purpose of restricting completion, as to any matter relating to such prices with any other bidder or with any competitor;

(2) Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in this offer have not been knowingly disclosed by the bidder and will not knowingly be disclosed by the bidder prior to bid opening in the case of an advertised procurement or prior to award in the case of a negotiated procurement, directly or indirectly to any other bidder or to any competitor; and

(3) No attempt has been made or will be made by the bidder to induce any person or firm to submit or not to submit, an offer for the purpose of restricting competition.

(B) Each person signing this offer on behalf of _____ certifies that:
(Bidder Name)

(1) He or she is the person in the bidder's organization responsible within the organization for the decision as to the prices being offered herein and has not participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to (A)(1) through (A)(3) above; or

(2) He or she is not the person in other bidder's organization responsible within the organization for the decision as to the prices being offered herein, but that he or she has been authorized in writing to act as agent for the persons responsible for such decision in certifying that such persons have not participated and will not participate, in any action contrary to (A)(1) through (A)(3) above, and as their agent does hereby so certify; and he or she has not participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to (A)(1) through (A)(3) above.

To the best of my knowledge, _____,
(Bidder Name)

its affiliates, subsidiaries, officers, directors, and employees are not currently under investigation by any governmental agency and have not in the last three years been convicted or found liable for any act prohibited by State or Federal law in any jurisdiction, involving conspiracy or collusion with respect to bidding on any public contract, except as follows:

Authorized Signer Name (please print)

Authorized Signer Signature

Authorized Signer Title

Date

In accepting this offer, the Bidder certifies that no representative of the Bidder has taken any action which may have jeopardized the independence of the offer referred to above.

Authorized Signer Name (please print)

Authorized Signer Signature

Authorized Signer Title

Date

APPENDIX D



Certificate of Authorization Form

This completed form must accompany any written proposal submitted to the Benzie Transportation Authority. The following individual(s): **PLEASE PRINT**

Name #1 _____ Title _____

Company Name and Address _____

Office Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Name #2 _____ Title _____

Company Name and Address _____

Office Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Is (are) duly authorized by resolution or otherwise to act to bind the Bidder to its provisions. The proposal must remain valid for a period of at least 90 days from the due date of submission. Telephone

and written transaction instructions, including e-mail by any one of the designated authorized persons will be accepted.

If the undersigned is the only person authorized to act on behalf of the Bidder, the undersigned certifies that he/she is the sole director and officer of the Organization and that the Organizations Charter and By-Laws provide that he/she is the only person authorized to so act.

Authorized Signer #1 Name (**please print**)

Authorized Signer #2 Name (**please print**)

Authorized Signer #1 Signature Date

Authorized Signer #2 Signature Date