



ADDENDUM #5

February 5, 2021

RFP #7610814

TITLE: Rhode Island Statewide Travel Demand Model Contract - DOA

Submission Deadline: February 19, 2021 10:00 AM (Eastern Time)

ATTACHED ARE UPDATED VENDOR QUESTIONS WITH STATE RESPONSES, NO FURTHER QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED.

Interested Parties should monitor this website on a regular basis, for any additional information that may be posted.

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Senior Buyer

The following are the updated vendor questions with State responses for RFP 7610814 Rhode Island Statewide Travel Demand Model Contract:

Vendor A

1. Would you consider accepting an all-electronic submittal with the evolving situation around the Covid-19 outbreak, rather than the required hard copy documents and CD? This would reduce the need for people to travel and/or congregate to print, assemble, and deliver the submittal package. Also, at this time, delivery services cannot guarantee all shipments as work and travel restrictions may affect shipments to and from impacted areas, as well as shipments moving within those areas.

Yes, the State will allow submissions emailed per the instructions on Addendum #2.

2. If you require hardcopies, would you allow for the use of electronic/scanned signatures for the original document?

Yes, electronic/scanned signatures are allowed.

3. The current version of TransCAD is 8. Does the client intend to move only to TransCad 8? How many updates should be considered in the cost proposal?

We currently are running TransCAD 7. Given the short duration of the contract, the vendor should just plan on one update.

4. In the scope, the contractor is required to “conduct validation and calibration of the model to passenger survey data from RIPTA, RIDOT’s MBTA service, and other similar data sources as they become available,” how many rounds for validation and calibration should be expected during the project? Would all these data be compiled together, or each will require a separate validation effort?

RIPTA and RIDOT conduct separate surveys every few years. The ideal would be to get one from each during the contract period and deliver them to the vendor at the same time, such that the validation and calibration process can have as comprehensive a view as possible. The surveys should include some origin, destination, and transfer information.

5. The duration of the contract is (2) years. The as need basis section of the scope says, “The Contractor shall plan for approximately two (2) such occurrence per year, for a total of eight (8) such analysis over the duration of the contract,” based on the duration of the contract (2) runs per year will be (4) runs. Should we consider a total of (4) or (8) run?

The vendor should consider a total of four (4) runs.

6. What are the means (in-person or web-based) and durations of the annual educational presentations?

Due to COVID and the short duration of this contract, the specifics are undetermined. The intent was for an in-person training of ten individuals on the basics of TransCAD lasting three days and then two days on the model specifically. The trainings would be co led by the vendor and the RISM project manager. If this can be done for staff working from home, that would be very good, but it is unclear how to work out the logistics with Caliper.

7. The technical support and assistance section is vague in how many meetings, on-call technical support, and telephone support are required?

As technical assistance events are entirely random, some uncertainty should be built into the vendor's plans. That said, the project manager and the vendor should expect to have a phone meeting every week. Historically, a tech support issue of some kind has come up at least every quarter, and the severity of the issues have varied wildly from situations resolved by an hour of conversation to problems requiring the reconstruction of the model in a new user interface due to a problem upgrading from TransCAD 6 to TransCAD 7.

8. How will optional tasks be considered in the calculation of technical and cost scores?

As there is only one optional task it will be wrapped up into the work plan and methodology categories. The review committee will holistically consider the optional task in terms of whether the methodology shows an understanding of the technical aspects of the task and whether the suggested work plan seems realistic. Vendors are encouraged to tell us what time frame they consider minimally necessary to finish the task in the context of a short contract.

Vendor B

1. Page 10 of the RFP discusses the possibility of as needed model analyses and states: "The Contractor shall plan for approximately two (2) such occurrence per year, for a total of eight (8) such analysis over the duration of the contract." Since this is a two-year contract, two occurrences per year would total four over the duration of the contract. For budgeting purposes, should we plan for two per year or for eight in total? Please clarify.

Two per year.

2. Page 16 of the RFP states that "Two (2) completed original copy versions, signed and sealed Appendix A. MBE, WBE, and/or Disability Enterprise Participation Plan" forms be included in our proposal submission. Please confirm if that means one original and one copy, or two originals and two copies.

Yes, this means one (1) original and one (1) copy.

3. Please confirm if the 30 page limit to the technical proposal includes proposal cover, cover letter, and table of contents.

The 30-page limit does not include the proposal covers, cover letter and table of contents.

4. Please confirm if the size 12 font requirement is applicable to any tables and figures included in the proposal. Additionally, please confirm if a font size larger than size 12 is allowed for headings, etc.

The size 12 font is not applicable to tables, figures or headings.

5. In Section 4, part A, Number 2, proposers are asked to include “figures for your company’s employee retention rate”. Is there formal documentation desired for this requirement, or is a brief statement sufficient? Additional guidance on this requirement would be appreciated.

We have no template for what we expect, but moderately rigorous reporting of statistics will be rewarded. Understanding the general rate at which vendor project leads see contracts through would be of particular interest.

6. Due to the COVID-19 and widespread remote work in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, would RIDOA consider an electronic-only proposal submission for this effort?

Yes, the State will allow submissions emailed per the instructions on Addendum #2.

Vendor C

1. Page 5 indicates that the contract period is anticipated to be April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023 (24 months) with up to one additional 12-month period, which is consistent with Appendix B-2. However, page 10 states that: “The Contractor shall plan for approximately two (2) such occurrence per year, for a total of eight (8) such analysis over the duration of the contract.”. We are looking for confirmation that we should plan for 8 analyses over 3 years rather than 6 analyses over 3 years.

Plan for 4 analyses over two years with an optional extension.

2. The Travel Demand Model Purpose/Platform Analysis task does not appear in Appendix B-2. Which line item should this be incorporated under? Similarly, is line 4. New Model Applications/Tasks intended to capture only the household survey data task?

Platform Analysis: Include under model documentation.

New Model Applications: Yes

Vendor D

1. Has the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (“RIDSP”) identified any specific areas of Travel Demand Model or the system in which it is hosted that are not working as defined? Please clarify.

By and large the model currently does exactly what it was designed to do and not much more. Even so, model accuracy is not up to the desired standard on a number of levels. Though this is largely due to a lack of data, architectural issues exist. The rail mode in particular is somewhat problematic.

2. Are there specific areas of the model, system, or IT infrastructure that need to be improved upon? If so, can RIDSP elaborate on those improvements sought?

This contract is mainly intended as a maintenance and technical support contract. While some minor tweaks are needed to allow some basic modeling queries (the use of the travel bands tool in TransCAD can be difficult, especially on the transit system), major upgrades to the model are not envisioned. Indeed, one of the main tasks of this contract period will be identifying problems for use in developing future contracts.

3. Can the RIDSP elaborate on the computing environment that the model is run on and if there are any known performance issues in data processing or data storage? Please describe.

The model runs in TransCAD7 on a standard desktop office machine. An upgrade to TransCAD 8 will be required as part of routine maintenance. This should be a simple task but has been unexpectedly traumatic in the past.

4. Has RIDSP or its stakeholders identified any new data sources that it would like to incorporate in the Travel Demand Model or future related models? If so, can those sources be identified and described?

There are a number of data sources that could be utilized if an upgrade to the model was envisioned. But it is not at this time. If funding for an update becomes available RIDSP would work with the vendor to scope out a contract amendment and data would be part of that discussion. In terms of routine maintenance, RIDOT roadway updates the HPMS data every year, data from RIPTA regarding bus ridership is now regularly available, and we are hoping to be able to redo information in the model regarding walk accessibility for the transit modes. New information from INRIX regarding truck volumes may be available during the contract period that would allow a review of the truck sub model

5. In its present state, how would RIDSP and its stakeholders characterize the following areas of the Travel Demand Model and its tools:
 - a. User Interface

Relatively good, more intuitive than it has been in the past. Could always be better at helping the user find data.

- b. Administrator interface

There is no Administrator interface. There are only two official copies of the model, the version on the desktop of the project lead at RIDSP, and the copy held by the vendor. As the vendor makes changes, the two are periodically synched via email.

- c. Ease of Use

Significantly improved.

- d. Complexity

The model is very complex, but it is a travel demand model. The biggest issue has been identifying clear purposes for the model and focusing on providing clear deliverables, otherwise the model is just a pile of spreadsheets. The model has moved in that direction, but more work is needed.

e. Ability to generate reports and dashboards

The RISM does not produce dashboards. The RISM is setup to produce a number of reports easily and these are very satisfactory. If a new kind of report is needed, it does end up being necessary for the vendor to add that functionality to the model.

6. How does RIDSP capture change requests associated with the model today? Is there a list of pending requests?

We are unclear what is meant by change requests. There is only one direct model user at RIDSP. When the Division of Statewide Planning receives an email requesting data, we are usually able to satisfy the request internally. Sometimes we need to ask for help from the vendor in finding the data. In instances where scenarios are needed to satisfy a data request, we work with the vendor to build the scenario if needed.

7. Regarding maintenance and support of the data model: what resources are presently performing these tasks. Can you provide a rough order of magnitude and describe the level of effort in terms of man-hours, personnel, and specialized skill sets that are leveraged today?

There are roughly three people involved in model maintenance. The project lead at RIDSP gathers data from around state government as needed. The vendor project lead and one other employee work on incorporating data into the model as needed. There are weekly meetings to discuss ongoing business. On an average week this seems to be about 40-80 hours of work per week across all three parties, though it varies quite a bit. The two employees of the current vendor have PhDs and are specialists in modeling. The Division of Statewide Planning's staff work revolves around gathering and preprocessing the data, fielding requests, and doing postprocessing and analysis of model outputs.

8. Are there advanced features or capabilities that the model or its supporting systems (Business Intelligence Tools, Dashboards, Data Presentation, etc.) that have been identified as new needs or enhancements that should be considered now or for future iterations of the model and its supporting system(s)?

A clearer way to catalogue the model data sets and explain them to potential end users would be appreciated. Ensuring the model data will work smoothly with the basic TransCAD tool sets would be a very good thing. The real needs for the model are principally in the form of better input data. There are some clear architectural updates that will be needed eventually to come in line with industry best practices, namely adding trip purposes, adding periodization, and probably instituting a Dynamic Assignment Model. We would like the ability to add additional mode choices and move more easily from macro to meso and micro scales, but right now there doesn't seem to be even the remotest chance of getting the data needed for that kind of change.