Consultant Questions and Answers

The following questions have been presented to the Wausau MPO in response to Request for Proposals (RFP) submitted May 17, 2021. All questions and answers will be posted in the Procurement section of the Metro Ride Transit website.

1. How did COVID-19 impact Metro Ride operations?
   Main-line routes were unchanged. School Tripper routes were discontinued while classes were conducted virtually. Fares collection was suspended and passengers were loaded through the back door.

2. Have pre-pandemic service levels resumed?
   Service levels are back to normal.

3. When was the last onboard survey conducted?
   Last Survey was for the 2018 TDP, conducted in fall of 2017.

4. What ridership data will be available?
   Ridership data is collected daily (actual count by fare category). We can provide it in Excel or write it to PDF. Fare collection has been suspended since March 2020, so pandemic ridership data is merely a count of daily boardings.

5. Do you have passenger boarding/alighting counts by route, by stop, by day/time?
   We have not conducted boarding and alighting counts for a number of years and ridership has decline rather significantly since then. The data may not be useful at this point.

6. Will transfer data be available?
   Passenger fare collection remains suspended and transfers are not being issued currently. Transfer counts (issued/collected) are available for the period prior to March 2020. If you are looking for data regarding transfer patterns, we do not regularly gather that information. We have prepared a transfer matrix for prior TDPs, but the data may not be relevant today.

7. In Task #4 it says improvement options will "consider fixed-route alternatives, demand responsive alternatives, combinations of fixed-route/demand responsive alternatives." Are Metro Ride and the Wausau MPO interested in exploring alternate service delivery modes, like microtransit?
   Yes, we are looking for all cost effective options that provide sufficient capacity to meet demand.

8. Is the MPO asking for a hard copy of the proposal to be submitted in addition to the emailed PDF?
   Email PDF will be enough

9. As this TDP is predicated on prior TDPs, is the Wausau MPO interested in supporting mixed-use concentrated development patterns?
   Each municipality creates their own development and land use plans in the metro area. One concerted effort has not been utilized.
   a. Revising mobility offerings to target specific needs?
      Yes, we are interested.
   b. Developing new funding options?
      Yes, definitely.

10. What are the current revenue hours and average weekday/Saturday ridership?
    - Fixed-route and paratransit service is available Monday-Friday, from 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.
    - 2019 revenue hours for fixed-route were 26,407, with average daily ridership of 1,837
    - 2019 revenue hours for paratransit were 1,507, with average daily ridership of 15

11. Can this data be segregated by route using farebox or other data?
    Yes, it is available by route. Totals are calculated daily.

12. Do you wish for paratransit service to be included?
    Yes.

13. Is an onboard passenger survey required? If not, are you open to other approaches to surveying current riders?
    Yes, we are requiring one, but we are open to different approaches.

14. Are the NAOMI volunteer surveyors potentially still available for the study?
    No, they are not.

15. Would the transit system be able to assist with identifying and recruiting surveyors?
    Possibly, we can discuss this further with the chosen applicant.

16. Will the MPO supply GIS map overlay files such as the locations of major employers, healthcare facilities, industrial parks, and housing within the MPO boundaries?
    MPO will supply GIS data sets that are available. There may not be sets specific to the employers, healthcare, or housing, but may have the industrial park locations.

17. What were the revenue impacts of not collecting fares during COVID?
    - 2019 passenger revenue was $374,536.
    - 2020 budgeted revenue was $363,575 and actual revenue was $121,330.

18. Where there cost savings (administrative or otherwise) of not collecting fares during COVID?
    Staff time dedicated to fare media distribution and revenue processing was reduced. However, there was no real cost savings.
    a. If so, did you consider it to be significant savings?
       NA

19. Is the study limited to the current service area or will the study be allowed to look at an expanded service area and related expanded funding sources?
    The Study should incorporate the entire metro area and all potential funding sources.

20. Has the MPO taken any steps to create the RTA or BID described in the prior TDP?
Wisconsin statutes do not permit the creation of RTAs. We can partner with surrounding municipalities (and have in the past) if they are willing to share in the cost, but there is no mechanism to create a regional revenue source as would be the case with an RTA.

BID proposals were presented in 2009 and 2015 in one neighboring municipality. Neither effort was successful.

21. Has the workforce investment board or chamber investigated commuter routes?
No commuter routes have been explored.

22. What modes have you considered implementing outside of fixed route?
We considered demand-responsive service on Saturdays.

23. What TDM strategies have been investigated?
No TDM strategies have been explored, but we are open to all mode options.

24. What scheduling and dispatching software is currently used?
Simpli-Transport (TripSpark) is used for paratransit.

25. What fare collection system is used?
GFI fareboxes. Monthly bus passes, student tickets and adult tokens are sold at various outlets.

26. Are you satisfied with this or interested in changing the program?
We are very much interested in alternatives to current fare collection. Current fareboxes were manufactured in the mid-1990s and are in need of replacement. We are also interested in real-time information systems for passengers and system management. This is part of Task #5 of the RFP, looking at Technology Recommendations.