Addendum A
DASH RFP 19-01
March 1, 2019

Responses to Vendor Questions

1. **If the vendor does not include contract exceptions with its proposal, will that vendor still have the opportunity to negotiate terms later in the process?**

   No. All exceptions that a vendor may have must be stated in the proposal. However, we note that DASH does not expect vendors to meet every criterion in this RFP. DASH does expect vendors to give honest assessment of their abilities, and that includes noting any exceptions to the potential specifications that are provided.

2. **What is the Agency's annual fixed fare revenue?**

   In FY 2018, DASH's passenger fare revenue was $3,303,985. Our current projection for passenger fare revenue in FY 2019 is $3,471,505.

3. **Is there a WMATA SmartBenefits contact that the vendor can reach out to?**

   General information on the WMATA SmartBenefits program can be found at https://www.wmata.com/business/smartbenefits/, and in the response below to Question 15. Note that some technical details of how a future SmartBenefits integration would work may not be available at this time so assumptions may be made but should be noted in the proposal.

4. **Can the Agency provide a pricing rubric in addition to the content and terms sections?**

   Yes. Please see Addendum B, "Pricing Rubric".

5. **Can DASH please clarify line 1 under "K. Cash Payment" on page 10? The sentence seems to be incomplete/different than the same line in the matrix.**

   Yes. Section II, Part K, Number 1 had a typo in it. It has been corrected to read:

   "The System shall support direct use by cash-only customers, OR;"

6. **With section O being optional, is it being included as part of the evaluation criteria? If so, how is it going to be weighted compared to part 2, section B "Basic Regional Integration Requirements."**

   Section O is not optional—we have removed the three instances in the RFP that it was referred to as being optional. We apologize for this oversight. Instead, Section O, along with Section B, is a component of Part 2 of the evaluation criteria.

7. **Pricing is not included as part of the evaluation criteria. Will pricing be a determining factor?**

   Please see Addendum C to this RFP, "Updated Evaluation Criteria", which includes pricing as a criterion. Note that this addendum replaces Section VI in the RFP, which is now considered null.

8. **Are the 90 buses all fixed route or does this include paratransit vehicles?**
   Currently all DASH vehicles are fixed-route. However, we are studying the possibility of launching flexible service in the next 5 years, which may include paratransit.

9. **Is there access to ethernet on all of the vehicles?**

   Yes. All DASH buses have cellular routers with ethernet ports.

10. **Will installing the electronic validators be the Agency's responsibility or the vendor's responsibility?**

    DASH is open to proposals that call for either agency installation or vendor installation. However, if the agency is to be responsible for installation of equipment, we request a brief explanation of the work required to install such equipment (i.e. does it need a power source, cellular data, etc.).

    Additionally, we note that we have included in the Pricing Rubric (Addendum B) a section specifically for the Enhanced Regional Requirements, including electronic validation. However, this section is still subject to Section V, Part H, Number 5, which states that *"these estimates will only be used for budgetary purposes. In the event that features or expansion are pursued, the actual cost will be negotiated based on specific scope of the expansion".*

11. **Who does the Agency anticipate will cover merchant processing fees? If the Agency expects the vendor to cover these fees, will the vendor consider a revenue share instead of a fixed cost model to allow for the variable nature of merchant processing fees?**

    DASH intends to pay for all transactions up-front for the pilot year, as detailed in Section V, Part H. These up-front payments are intended to reimburse for the cost of the product, including merchant fees. After the one-year pilot, DASH is open to revenue sharing with the vendor.

12. **To whom and in what format should we submit our proposal? Is a hardcopy expected to be mailed, or can we submit via email?**

    Proposals may be submitted electronically to:

Martin Barna, DASH, Director of Planning & Scheduling
Martin.Barna@alexandriava.gov

13. **Requirement B-2 in the evaluation matrix mentions that the app shall be able to handle bifurcated "parent-and child" branding, where the app as a whole is branded for the region. Would DASH be open to utilizing a system where the overall app maintains a standard brand for agencies throughout the country? Individual agencies would still be clearly demarcated as independent agencies.**

Yes, DASH is open to reviewing such proposals.

14. **Many mobile ticketing deployments have the vendor provide all of the customer support with the goal of faster case resolutions and reduced agency overhead. Would DASH be open to such an implementation?**

Since the mobile ticketing solution will act as a "gateway" to the agency and its brand, DASH prefers to have some control over end-user support. However, DASH is open to reviewing proposals for vendor-provided customer support. If a vendor wishes to pitch this solution, we ask that they:

- List the number of staff members they employ for end-user support;
- List the names of any contractors they use for end-user support, as well as the number of support staff they have contracted to have;
- Identify what types of end-user issues the vendor would handle as opposed to DASH;
- Provide a statement on why their model will meet DASH's needs, including explaining how they will handle the inevitable customer calls dealing with non-mobile ticketing questions (e.g., bus arrival times, service complaints, etc).

This language has been added to Section II, Part H of the RFP.

15. **Requirement I-3 mentions integration with WMATA's SmartBenefits program. What type of integration does DASH envision? Do riders have commuter benefit cards distributed with SmartBenefits which pull from the monthly fund allocation? If not, does SmartBenefits provide APIs that would allow a mobile ticketing vendor to integrate?**

Explanation of Smart Benefits System
SmartBenefits is built primarily around the SmarTrip fare card system. To the best of our current understanding, it works as follows:

There are four digital purses that SmartBenefits funds can go into. Employers choose which purses their employees have access to.

- **Stored Value**: direct deposit of funds onto a SmarTrip card
- **Parking**: Direct Deposit of parking-funding onto a SmarTrip card
- **Transit Pass:** deposit of a transit pass (e.g. a monthly "DASH Pass") on a SmarTrip Card;
- **Designated Funds:** Funds put into the riders SmartBenefits account, which they can use to purchase non-SmarTrip products like MARC or VRE tickets. **This is the purse that a mobile ticketing solution would be put under.**

Since mobile ticketing falls under the last purse, Designated Funds, we'll focus only on that process.

Every month, customers have up to 20 days to re-allocate their SmartBenefits for the following month. They can split their entitled funds up however they wish among the purses their employer has elected to give them access to. In the Designated Funds purse, they can re-allocate money to different purchases (e.g., buy VRE tickets instead of MARC), change the amount they are putting into the purse, or cancel the allotment to the purse.

On the 21st of the month, SmartBenefits generates a CSV file for every agency that has fare products listed in the Designated Funds purse. Each CSV lists all the products the agency must distribute for SmartBenefits recipients. Agencies review these files, and then issue the fare products as necessary.

How DASH Envisions a Potential Integration

DASH envisions a solution where SmartBenefits customers—in addition to being able to put DASH passes or stored value on their SmarTrip cards—can put benefits in the Designated Funds purse for the purchase of either Single Ride tickets, Monthly DASH passes, or other future DASH fare products on the mobile app.

On the back-end, the app vendor would receive a CSV file every month listing all the accounts purchased fare products using Designated Funds. The vendor would then upload this CSV into a back-end system to automatically push out fare products, or they would manually push out the correct products. DASH does not care how fare products are pushed out, so long as customers have access to them. For example, the vendor could send passes directly to users' phones. Alternatively, they could provide a code to customers would use to purchase their products.

16. **Would DASH consider extending the proposals due date two weeks? The two weeks would not impact the Mobile Ticketing Launch Date of May 1st.**

Unfortunately, DASH cannot extend the proposal date by two weeks. To allow for additional response time, we will be releasing these responses on the morning of Friday, March 1 and will extend the submission deadline by five hours to 5:00 PM EST on Wednesday, March 6. DASH understands that this RFP is on a highly accelerated timeline, and we will give the compressed schedule consideration when reviewing proposals.

17. **Can DASH clarify how passengers currently receive their monthly fund allocation through the SmartBenefits program? Does DASH have resources on staff to utilize an API so tickets can be pushed to those qualified passengers?**

    See answer to question 15.

18. **How does DASH envision the WMATA's SmartBenefits integration? Could DASH provide details of how customers information and funds to be allocated are transmitted today? Will there be an API that would provide those details in the future to integrate with?**
    See answer to question 15.

19. **Can DASH identify what sorts of MoD services it is seeking integrations with?**

    Pursuant to Section II, Part M, DASH seeks integration with the following MoD services in the future: traditional bikeshare, dockless bikeshare, scooter-share, rideshare (Uber/Lyft), microtransit, and any future demand response mobility options that might become available.

20. **Would DASH be interested in deploying a branded application for ticket purchase alongside an integration within a journey planner such as Transit if such a deployment unlocked additional functionality for its riders?**

    Yes, DASH is open to reviewing such proposals.

21. **Was DASH awarded a grant for this project?**
    DASH has applied for two state grant opportunities to fund this project. Vendors should note, however, that the implementation and timing of this pilot are not contingent upon the receipt of any grant funding.

22. **Who provides the CAD/AVL for DASH?**

    Clever Devices Ltd.
    https://www.cleverdevices.com/

23. What is the timeline to phase into the regional solution?

The regional solution has an open-ended timeline that is dependent on:
- The experience with the pilot phase;
- The willingness of other regional agencies to cooperate and join.

24. Is DASH interested in visual validation for the entirety of the first phase of the deployment?

Yes. In fact, we only want visual validation for the pilot phase. Electronic validation would only be pursed after a successful one-year pilot demonstration.

25. Can you please provide instructions on how vendors are to submit their bids? There are no instructions within the body of the RFP outlining whether this is an electronic submission or if physical copies are required and the number of copies.

Yes. Bids must be submitted electronically to:

Martin Barna, Director of Planning
Martin.Barna@alexandriava.gov

26. Can the submission deadline be extended since there are only going to be 2 business days to complete the bid once the answers to the questions are released?

Unfortunately, DASH cannot extend the proposal date by two weeks. To allow for additional response time, we will be releasing these responses on the morning of Friday, March 1 and will extend the submission deadline by five hours to 5:00 PM EST on Wednesday, March 6. DASH understands that this RFP is on a highly accelerated timeline, and we will give the compressed schedule consideration when reviewing proposals.

27. Can you provide an email clarifying when the answers to the questions will be posted since there is no Feb 29th?

Answers to the questions will be posted no later than Friday, March 1, 2019. We have corrected this mistake on the updated RFP package. DASH is leaping in anticipation of receiving the proposal submissions on Wednesday, March 6.

28. **What are the expectations around the cEMV requirements? Is the expectation to have the validator do the open payments, or are you open to another device for the alternative payment options?**

    DASH is open to proposals that require two separate validators in future phases.

29. **Can you expand on the types of service model DASH envisions for mobility on demand services? Is this going to be a curb to curb service, hub to hub or some other hybrid service model?**

    Future mobility-on-demand/microtransit service parameters for DASH and the City of Alexandria are largely undefined at this point. For purposes of this process, the most likely scenarios would be a deviated route model, or a hub-to-hotspot model, where one end of the trip serves a major transit hub while the other may occur at designated stops within a predefined service zone.