

## REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

### HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**MEETING DATE:** February 16, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Transit Service Contract Negotiation

**PRESENTER:** Janna Bianculli, Senior Planner

**ATTACHMENTS:** 1. WNCSource Evaluation  
2. Maruti Mobility Management Evaluation

#### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

Henderson County receives federal funding to provide fixed-route and paratransit transportation. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires grant recipients to re-contract their management and operations every 3 to 6 years. In 2016, the County contracted with WCCA (now DBA WNCSource) for three years with a three, one year extension. This contract will expire on June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year and a new contract must be in place at the beginning of the 2023 fiscal year.

Staff released a Request for Proposals on December 1st and advertised the listing in The Lightning and four online transit websites. Two proposals were received on January 21<sup>st</sup>. An evaluation committee consisting of Planning staff, AECOM consultants, and the City of Asheville Transit Manager scored the proposals. Both contractors displayed the ability to provide management and operations of the system at a reasonable cost. WNCSource scored higher and was selected by the committee to present to the board for approval. The evaluation is attached. Proposals may be requested for view.

#### **BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

The Board of Commissioners are requested to approve the evaluation committee's choice for the management and operations of Apple Country Public Transit and proceed with contract negotiations.

#### **Suggested Motion:**

*I move that the Board approve WNCSource for the Apple Country Public Transit contract and direct staff to begin contract negotiations.*

**Apple Country Public Transit - Management and Operations RFP**

Evaluation Committee: Janna Bianculli, Senior Planner; Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director; Mariate Echeverry, Senior Transportation Planner AECOM; Viktor Zhong, Planner AECOM; Eunice Lovi, City of Asheville Transit Manager

Date: 1/28/2022

	WNC Source	Comments - Please provide explanation for your evaluation
<p align="center"><b>Qualifications and Experience (35%)</b></p> <p>Proposer's experience in performing transit service of similar scope and complexity</p> <p>Qualifications and Experience of proposed General Manager, Maintenance Manager and other key personnel</p> <p>Financial stability of proposer</p> <p>References</p>	24%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18 years of experience operating transit service in Henderson County</li> <li>- WNC took precautions during COVID</li> <li>- WNC claimed certain requirements are new, but in fact, many of them are in the current contract and they failed to implement them</li> <li>- resumes include relevant experience with details</li> <li>- the proposed GM does not meet the minimum years of experience (8 years in transit and 5 years in supervisory position) required by the RFP</li> <li>- County observed improvement in attention to safety as the proposed GM took the position</li> <li>- provided detailed audited financial statements</li> <li>- most proposed personnel have only been with Apple Country Transit</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Approach to providing transit services and support (25%)</b></p> <p>Understanding of requirements</p> <p>Suitability of proposed services and support</p> <p>Provision of start-up plan</p>	18%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provided detailed plans and policies</li> <li>- WNC continued to use SSP instead of the more recent PTASP</li> <li>- third party to provide maintenance -- it's the Ford dealership currently. It is not clear how WNC will bid out the maintenance service.</li> <li>- as the incumbent, does not need a start-up plan</li> <li>- provided a transition plan if not selected</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Cost proposal (25%)</b></p>	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cost savings compared to current contract due to cheaper vehicle maintenance for the relatively newer CNG vehicles</li> <li>- proposed hourly rate is \$10 less than the current contract, which is not fully explained</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Ability to implement (15%)</b></p> <p>Provisions for O&amp;M facility</p> <p>Ability to meet implementation schedule</p>	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- County is providing real-time bus data; will be able to implement cheaper than what WNC proposes</li> <li>- unclear why County should pay for facility start-up cost since WNC is the incumbent; WNC uses the same facility for other operations, e.g., rural transit service</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>72%</b>	

**Apple Country Public Transit - Management and Operations RFP**

Evaluation Committee: Janna Bianculli, Senior Planner; Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director; Mariate Echeverry, Senior Transportation Planner AECOM; Viktor Zhong, Planner AECOM; Eunice Lovi, City of Asheville Transit Manager

Date: 1/28/2022

	Maruti Mobility Management	Comments - Please provide explanation for your evaluation
<p align="center"><b>Qualifications and Experience (35%)</b></p> <p>Proposer's experience in performing transit service of similar scope and complexity Qualifications and Experience of proposed General Manager, Maintenance Manager and other key personnel Financial stability of proposer References</p>	23%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- performed similar contracts in the past, including fixed-route (3-year contract), non-emergency medical transportation (11-year contract), paratransit, and trolley</li> <li>- GM's resume is confusing in the experience listed</li> <li>- resumes lack relevant details in general</li> <li>- maintenance manager seems to have relevant experience; has owned an auto repair shop; unclear if they have experience with CNG</li> <li>- did not provide audited financial statements; cannot evaluate the accuracy of the financial information; lacks details</li> <li>- Provided three references</li> <li>- is a DBE</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Approach to providing transit services and support (25%)</b></p> <p>Understanding of requirements Suitability of proposed services and support Provision of start-up plan</p>	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has not demonstrated knowledge and understanding of FTA compliance</li> <li>- paratransit methodology does not follow the County's policy, e.g., they proposed in-person interview for paratransit eligibility evaluation</li> <li>- strong quality control plan to ensure safety and on-time performance</li> <li>- in-house maintenance;</li> <li>- has not demonstrated experience with CNG vehicles; unclear the proposed facility is suitable for CNG maintenance -- the facility has to be EPA certified for CNG vehicles; mechanics also need to be EPA certified</li> <li>- the proposed facility location is a little distant from service area = additional wear and tear; the safety of the nearby roads is a concern</li> <li>- unclear how they will be able to get the ED facility</li> <li>- it is unclear how they will manage necessary improvement to the facility (e.g., security improvement) within the short timeline available; the cost proposal for O&amp;M facility improvement is only \$68K, which seems low given the amount of capital improvement required for the facility</li> <li>- the O&amp;M facility improvement cost is not broken down in the required form</li> <li>- except facility, start-up plan is good</li> <li>- customer service approach is strong</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Cost proposal (25%)</b></p>	18%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cost is lower than the current contract (for comparison, \$65/revenue hour for Buncomb County in 2020, which has a much greater service area with potential of economy of scale)</li> <li>- proposed driver hourly rate is much lower than the current rate; they may have difficulty hiring at that rate</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Ability to implement (15%)</b></p> <p>Provisions for O&amp;M facility Ability to meet implementation schedule</p>	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- same concerns with the proposed O&amp;M facility as above</li> <li>- O&amp;M cost proposal doesn't consider renovation to make it workable</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>61%</b>	