



## MEMO

04/11/2018

To: CRA Board  
From: Jason Zogg, Program Manager  
RE: Annual Transportation Data Report RFP

## BACKGROUND

As part of a 1994 update of the original 1977 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) covering development within the MXD portion of the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan KSURP, the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office of the Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs, required the CRA to conduct an annual traffic study and analysis. This CRA *KSURP Annual Traffic Report* (Annual Traffic Report) has been published on an annual basis from 1994-2014. In 2015, traffic and tenant survey data were collected but not analyzed and no report was published. In 2016 and 2017 only tenant survey data was collected, but no traffic data was collected and no report was published due to the anomalies created by the Main Street reconstruction project, the Longfellow Bridge closure, and the closure of several streets due to the ongoing MIT “NoMA and SoMA” development construction project.

In the 2016 approved EIR Notice of Project Change (NPC) (EEA#1891), the CRA committed to continue to conduct the annual traffic study and analysis of the KSURP area by building on the 20 years of vehicle traffic data collected in compliance with the original 1994 requirement, but to update the scope of the monitoring program to reflect the evolution of Cambridge’s transportation priorities for the multi-modal urban environment of Kendall Square. The CRA committed to improving what had been called the *Annual Traffic Report* by re-naming it the *Annual Transportation Report*, and by better utilizing the most up to date development square footage and traffic projections as well as more holistically considering additional data on bicycles, pedestrians, travel behavior, and transit service as it becomes available. Having a consistent longitudinal 20-year data set for a fast-growing urban district such as Kendall Square is invaluable, and upgrades to the data gathering and reporting must preserve the value and continuity of that historic data set into the future years of data collection.

Cambridge is consistently rated one of the most walkable, transit-rich, and bicycle-friendly cities in North America and has one of the nation’s highest bike and walk to work rates. The City has been on the forefront of using progressive street design principles and national best practices to continuously improve the comfort of the pedestrian and bicycle experience as well as the quality, coverage, capacity and speed of public transit service. This project is intended to be an extension of that progressive transportation planning philosophy, as this can only continue with good data and data reporting.

The CRA has been a participant in the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force (KSMTF), which issued a final report of recommended transportation capacity improvements in August 2017. The CRA has also established the Kendall Square Transit Enhancement Program (KSTEP), which is a fund designed to take contributions from real estate development and use it to increase the capacity of transit serving Kendall Square.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

*To maintain and expand a longitudinal data set to monitor the transportation patterns within the fast-growing urban district of Kendall Square and provide clear data reports for a broad civic audience.*

### PROJECT GOALS

- Tell intuitive data stories about the state of the transportation network in Kendall Square, increase awareness of transportation issues, and the accuracy of the district-wide conversation about transportation
- Create a flexible encyclopedic transportation data reference to be used by a variety of stakeholders/user groups, in order to work from a common trusted independent longitudinal data set
- Maintain comparability and historic continuity with existing 20-year data set, extending the value of that historic data set into the future
- Establish a comprehensive baseline of transportation in Kendall Square as the capacity of public transit and roadways begins to approach their respective limits of capacity and performance during peak hours

### TARGET STAKEHOLDERS / USER GROUPS

- CRA Staff and Board
- City transportation and traffic planning staff (CDD, TPT, DPW)
- State transportation and environmental agencies
- Kendall Square Association (KSA)
- Regional Planning Agencies / Metropolitan Planning Organization (RPA/MPO)
- General public
- Developers
- Transportation planning consultants working for the City or developers
- Prospective new/existing employers looking to locate/expand an office or business in Kendall Square
- Local/state elected officials
- Transportation advocacy organizations
- Graduate students and researchers
- Local media

### RFP PROCESS

On 2/26/2018, CRA staff issued a new Annual Transportation Data Report RFP. CRA issued answers to questions on 3/9/2018 and 3/16/2018 as well as an addendum with a copy of the CRA standard consultant services contract on 3/22/2018. On 3/26/2018, CRA received eight proposals from transportation engineering and planning consulting firms which represent the majority of this type of consulting firm currently operating in the Boston market:

- Alta Planning + Design
- ARUP
- Cambridge Systematics (w/ McMahon)
- Howard Stein Hudson
- KCUS
- Stantec (w/ Over/Under & Supernormal)
- Utile (w/ IBI Group & MAPC)
- VHB

Interviews were conducted with five of these firms on 4/3/2018 (Cambridge Systematics, Howard Stein Hudson, Stantec, Utile, and VHB). CRA Staff members Jason Zogg, Tom Evans and Alex Levering were at all of the interviews.

## SELECTION RECOMMENDATION

CRA staff considered the selection carefully for a full week, contacted references for the top three interviewees, and contacted the top two interviewees with clarifying follow up questions. It was a difficult decision as the top firms clearly stood out for having high quality teams with highly relevant experience at a reasonable price. CRA staff cited the following among reasons for choosing VHB:

- VHB wrote a strong technical proposal that demonstrated a high level of project understanding, was polished, well organized, thorough and thoughtful.
- The VHB team has significant proven experience with creating and delivering reports very similar to what we are asking for including some annual reports VHB has been continuously improving and publishing for public agencies for decades.
- VHB also has a broad range of experience working on the neighborhood and municipal scale of analysis, as well as state and regional level of analysis for reports of this type.
- VHB's quality of previous work samples for very similar projects was impressive.
- VHB has a fully integrated team of transportation planners, traffic engineers, data analysts, IT, graphic, marketing/communications specialists inside the umbrella of a single consulting firm that allows for a particularly lean and efficient project management structure, as well as long-term continuity for the future years of the report.
- VHB has deep transportation data experience in Kendall Square, with access to existing data sources derived from their direct involvement in dozens of planning projects (EIRs, TISs, Special Permits) as well as managing on-going PTDM requirements for a large number of garage owners in Kendall Square. This allows for more easily expanding the geography of the report, maximizing existing data sources, avoiding unnecessarily re-creating or duplicating datasets, and pursuing new data sources only when they will clearly add new value. VHB also has significant public transit data experience related to the Kendall Square Red Line station subway and buses.
- VHB started to do high quality preliminary work for this project and presented some of it in the interview.
- VHB showed proven graphic representation capabilities in print, electronic, and video that were among the best of the proposals.
- VHB demonstrated a high level of in-house competency in IT, and marketing/communications capabilities that will be important in communicating and disseminating the work of this project as well as understanding of the latest in transportation data gathering technologies.
- Of those firms interviewed, VHB had the lowest price in the first year, and among the lowest cost estimate ranges for the ongoing cost of producing this report annually in the future years.
- VHB's references talked specifically about the VHB Project Manager's ability to work independently with minimal direction and minimal client supervision, which helps maximize CRA staff time and capacity. References talked about how their experience as a client was effortless and "turnkey."
- VHB's references talked specifically about the VHB Project Manager's unique multidisciplinary experience in marketing, IT and transportation planning as a unique asset in this project.

All references were extremely positive when asked about schedule adherence, cost control, project management competency, creativity, data visualization, graphic talent, and more. All references expressed that they would like to work with VHB and the VHB Project Manager again in the future and most have used VHB for multiple projects over multiple years.

Overall, VHB showed that they have a proven core competency in executing on our project purpose and goals that was superior to other firms.

The proposal submitted by VHB is attached as a separate document for your reference.

## SCHEDULE & BUDGET

The first year of this project may take up to 9 months to fully complete. The subsequent years will be shorter periods in the middle of each calendar year and involve significantly less CRA staff time. CRA Staff will keep the Board up to date on the project and present the reports at CRA Board meetings annually in the future.

In 1994 a significant effort was made to frame the contents, data, methodology, and format of the original *Traffic Report* and that investment lasted 20 years. The intention of this project is to make a significant up-front investment in 2018 to re-invent this report for today's needs, increasing its value to the CRA, Kendall Square and Cambridge, and to develop something that will last another 20 years.

All of the five interviewed firms had first year budgets in the low-mid six figures. The scope and tasks in the RFP were very specific for the first year. However, because the first year is about setting the scope, schedule, content and format of all of the future years, the budget estimates for years 2 and 3 were broad ranges. Consultant teams did their best to estimate the cost of executing an annual report like this in the future without knowing the precise scope of it. We expect that the budget for years 2 and 3 will be finalized during the last task of year 1 and CRA Staff will bring that back to the CRA Board at the appropriate time for consultation. In the CRA Board motion below, the highest end of the range given by this consultant for years 2 and 3 is inserted, with an expectation that a refined number will be developed at the end of the work in year 1.

## CRA BOARD MOTION

*Authorizing the Chair and the Executive Director to enter into a 3-year contract with a 1-year extension option with VHB, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$130,000 in year 1 and \$70,000 for each subsequent year, for the purpose of collecting and reporting multi-modal transportation in Kendall Square data in satisfaction of the Section 61 findings of the August 6, 2016 MEPA certificate for the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan Amendment #10.*

## EXHIBITS

VHB Proposal