



Request for Information (RFI) 15217

**Contracted Interregional Express Bus Service**

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Office of Finance, Purchasing Section

Information must be received no later than

**October 28, 2015**

1 p.m. Central Time

*For information about the notice  
Interested persons shall contact only:*

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## Section 1.0 Purpose

### 1.1 Purpose for the RFI

The Iowa DOT is seeking information for a contracted interregional express bus service (IRXBS) that consists of a limited stop public transit service between the greater Cedar Rapids and Iowa City metropolitan areas. The service will be bi-directional and primarily oriented to commuters. The proposed service will run during the peak travel periods of 5 am-9 am and 3 pm-7 pm Monday through Friday. The service will provide 30 minute headways, and will have an approximate run time of 45-60 minutes depending on the final route. An exact schedule for the route will be determined at a later date. The target market consists of daily commuters in the Iowa City and Cedar Rapids metropolitan areas that primarily travel along the I-380 Corridor. The maximum fare recommended by the Iowa Commuter Transportation Study for an IRXBS operating between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City is a round-trip fare of \$7.00. Daily ridership estimates range from 230 to 410 daily trips.

**This is not a Request for Proposal (RFP) where *bidders* respond with a specific solution to Iowa DOT specifications. An RFP process is a separate process with further defined requirements.**

*If cost is requested in an RFI, it will be for budget purposes only.*

### 1.2 Relevant Dates

Issuance of RFI – September 28, 2015

Submittal of questions by vendors (no later than) – October 12, 2015.

Iowa DOT responses to vendor questions deadline (no later than) –October 19, 2015

Questions asked and responses will be shared with all vendors.

RFI response by vendor deadline – October 28, 2015.

### 1.3 Overview

On May 31st 2014, the Iowa legislature directed the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) "to conduct a study to identify administrative needs, projected demand, necessary capital and operating costs, and public transit service structures including park and ride lots, employer or public vanpool programs, and traditional fixed-route transit." To meet this requirement, the Iowa DOT commissioned the Iowa Commuter Transportation Study (ICTS) to identify the existing and future commuter needs in the Interstate 380 (I-380) corridor and determine the viability of various commuter transportation improvements to address those needs.

This study resulted in a series of recommendations for commuter improvements along the corridor. These recommendations include a public IRXBS, subscription bus service, and a public vanpooling and carpooling program. To implement these recommendations, a steering committee was formed to carry forward these recommendations and seek out strategies for establishing these services. Out of this committee, three separate sub-committees were formed to work on each of the recommendations.

This RFI is prepared by the subcommittee working on the recommendations for IRXBS and incorporates its findings into this request for information.

The proposed route alternatives may have stops at or near three major connection and transfer points in the region (Cedar Rapids Ground Transportation Center, Coralville Intermodal Facility, Old Capital Town Center in Iowa City), in addition to other locations.

## Section 2.0 Definitions

Iowa DOT: The Iowa Department of Transportation

RFI: Request for Information

ICTS: Iowa Commuter Transportation Study

IRXBS: Interregional Express Bus Service

## Section 3.0 RFI Responses

### 3.1 Response

Vendors are requested to submit a response to this request for information as described herein.

Responses to this RFI may qualify Vendors to participate in any formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process if the Iowa DOT issues a bid opportunity for this request.

### 3.2 Submittal instructions

Vendors shall submit responses to the following information in order.

**All RFI's shall be submitted electronically.** A signed transmittal letter on the Vendor's letterhead shall be in the electronic document including all company and contact information.

Vendors are requested to submit general price ranges with their cost information, where applicable, to be used for reference only. No formal quotations shall be received or awarded in the RFI process.

No awarded contract shall be issued from the RFI process. Submitting a response to this RFI is optional. Submitted RFIs shall in no way bind the Iowa DOT or any other agency to any purchase for any reason. The RFI is for information gathering purposes only. All information provided by Vendors shall be at no cost and without obligation to the Iowa DOT.

### 3.3 Questions and Requests for Clarification

Vendors interested in responding to this RFI may submit questions or requests for clarification. All questions or requests must be submitted by E-mail to Zach Gillen listed on the RFI cover page.

The Iowa DOT will respond to the vendor questions as timely and as appropriately as possible and in accordance to the outlined timeline in Section 1.2.

### 3.4 Review of RFI responses

RFI responses will be reviewed by the requesting Iowa DOT business unit and Purchasing Section. Review of submitted responses to the RFI will assist in the potential bid opportunity to procure of the goods and/or services sought by the agency.

### **3.5 Copyright**

By submitting a response, the Vendor agrees that the Iowa DOT may copy the response for purposes of facilitating the evaluation or to respond to requests for public records. The Vendor represents that such copying will not violate any copyrights in the materials submitted.

### **3.6 RFI ownership**

Once received, submitted Vendor responses become the property of the State of Iowa.

### **3.7 Vendor Responsibilities**

Vendor shall submit information pertaining to a Contracted Interregional Express Bus Service.

### **3.8 DOT Responsibilities**

The Iowa DOT will review all RFI documents submitted.

## **Section 4.0 Specifications**

Iowa Department of Transportation is seeking the following information.

1. What are the contracted public transportation operating rates for an IRXBS as described above?
2. What are the recommended features and services to incorporate in an IRXBS in order to encourage choice commuters to use the service, including but not limited to facilities, smartphone application, fare payment, marketing and outreach?
3. What are the recommended vehicle types (light-duty, medium duty, heavy-duty, over-the-road motor coach) and vehicle capacities for an IRXBS as described above?
4. What are the typical rates for leasing those vehicle types?
5. For an IRXBS pilot project, would you recommend purchasing buses by a public transit agency, leasing busses from a third party, or leasing the busses from the selected vendor, and why?
6. How are overhead costs (storage, maintenance, insurance, and administration) typically accounted for in the contract? If these costs are accounted for separately from the operating rates and/or leasing rates, please provide the typical contracted rates for these costs.
7. What type of fare technology would you recommend based on cost, ease of use, and ability to integrate with separate systems?
8. What approach would you recommend for streamlining transfers between the IRXBS and local transit systems, and what would be the financial implications of establishing this type of system?
9. Considering the proposed service hours, how would you manage staffing, equipment and facility needs for an IRXBS as described above?
10. As it relates to customer service administration, what approach would you recommend: direct administration by the transit agency, pursuing a separate contract with a vendor that specialized in customer service, including this service within the selected vendor's contract, or a separate approach?

11. How would you respond to a service disruption, such as a vehicle breakdown? What is the typical spare ratio you would operate the proposed service with?