



STAFF REPORT/RESOLUTION

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director 
DATE: September 24, 2019
SUBJECT: **Smart Communities Assessment: Professional Services Consulting Agreement, Resolution 10-19-22**

AT A GLANCE - ACTION

This resolution describes the consultant selection process, summarizes the tasks for the Smart Communities Assessment process and asks the RTC Board to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a consulting services agreement for implementation of the Study.

INTRODUCTION

The Smart Communities Assessment process is the next logical step for the Vancouver Area Smart Trek (VAST) Program. The program was established 2001 and is a coalition of state, regional and local agencies which actively work together to implement intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and transportation operations solutions to address the region's transportation needs. RTC manages the program in coordination with the: City of Vancouver, Clark County, C-TRAN, and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

The VAST program has three key elements: intelligent transportation systems, transportation related communications infrastructure, and transportation operations and planning. The VAST partnership has been an effective way for the agencies to coordinate on project delivery, joint project funding, monitoring project development, and project integration to improve transportation operations.

RTC and the VAST agency partners have been exploring ways to advance the integration of transportation mobility and high technology in the Vancouver region. The Smart Communities Assessment (SCA) process is intended to build upon the initiatives and projects that have already been developed under the Vancouver Area Smart Trek Program.

The VAST team has been developing thoughts and ideas to advance to the next step of smart communities planning and implementation. This includes creating a plan to engage with internal departments, city councils and key outside partners, as well as articulating a strategic plan that can be communicated to these stakeholders.

All of this requires creative thinking, potentially new policies or ordinances, and close work with agency staff and policy makers' engagement to embrace and understand new ideas and determine budget priorities.

RTC worked closely with the VAST partners to develop a scope of work for the SCA Study and completed a selection process to provide consultant technical services for the study.

This resolution is to request that the RTC Board authorize the Executive Director to enter into a consulting services agreement with IDC Research Inc. (IDC) for technical services for the SCA Study.

CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS

A Request for Qualifications for the SCA process was issued on August 30, 2019, and was advertised in the media including the Daily Journal of Commerce of Oregon, the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce, and RTC's website. In response to the RFQ, submittals were received from two firms, IDC and Arup North America Ltd. by the September 13, 2019 closing date. A review and selection panel with representatives from the Washington State Department of Transportation, Clark County, C-TRAN, City of Vancouver, and RTC reviewed the consultant proposals to determine the qualifications of the technical team.

Very few firms provide the type of smart community readiness assessment and stakeholder engagement requested in this RFQ, and after evaluating and scoring the proposals, selection team representatives unanimously agreed that IDC was clearly the most qualified firm, had a well-considered project approach, and could provide excellent technical expertise for the Study. After identifying IDC as the preferred firm, RTC contacted references for the desired team who gave very high marks to IDC and confirmed the decision of the selection team.

IDC has established smart cities assessment procedures that provide a structured approach to evaluate how a region compares to other areas of the country, provides benchmarks for measurement, and guidance to regions for advancing unified smart technology investments. It is a very specialized discipline, and IDC has extensive experience in conducting these assessments for cities, counties, and other public agencies.

AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RTC will be the project lead for the overall study and the management of work tasks, with support from the partner agencies. The existing VAST Steering Committee will conduct oversight and assistance to IDC during the study and will meet periodically to provide input. They will actively assist the consultant team in agency introductions, to provide contact information for all Smart Community stakeholders, and to internal agency staff for interviews and other stakeholder engagement.

RTC will provide updates to the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee and the RTC Board and other groups as needed.

SMART COMMUNITIES ASSESSMENT SCOPE OF WORK (*Summarized*)

This scope of work requires that the consultant have expert knowledge of comprehensive Smart Communities research that can be applied to areas of cities, communities, regions, and states from policy to implementation of a wide variety of initiatives and technologies. This includes research on improving services delivery city-wide, as well as at the department level such as in public safety, transportation, and public works; in fostering innovation and civic engagement; and in building successful business models for the evolution of a Smart Community.

Task 1: A Forum to Align Stakeholders and Build Support

Provide a forum to create excitement and find champions for Smart Community development by bringing together community stakeholders.

Process

A full day workshop with up to 30 IT and non-IT executives from agencies, departments, and other stakeholder groups focused on the topics of Smart Communities and Transportation. The workshop will be designed to provide:

- A two-hour session with elected officials focused on smart cities and transportation.
- A four-hour session to discuss technology advances and issues with more technical or operations staff.
- A one-hour debrief to review feedback and discussions with regional policy makers as represented by the RTC Board.

The sessions will include consultant experts sharing their understanding of Smart Communities and transportation trends, the data and analysis that supports these trends, the impact and examples of other initiatives in the US and worldwide. The consultant should be aware that the Smart Cities Council has already presented on the concept of Smart Cities; this session will be in the context of transportation specifically and designed for the local audience.

Consultant team experts will guide discussion and group exercises to help align stakeholders around a common mission and identify need areas and areas for transformation for more efficient and effective services.

Task 2: Measure and Assess Current Competencies and Need Areas

The consultant will conduct a focused readiness assessment / maturity assessment for mobility and transportation in the region. This would include participation by 7- 8 agencies such as WSDOT, Clark County, City of Vancouver, C-TRAN, and RTC.

The purpose of the maturity assessment should be to guide the successful implementation of emerging technologies for mobility and transportation. The assessment should look at all aspects of key performance areas for digital transformation including Vision, Culture, Process, Key Technologies, and Data. It should incorporate areas such as open data and data sharing, data analytics, procurement processes, leadership, organizational structure, community engagement, and supplier relationship models that are essential for effective smart and digital city implementation. It should include wireless communications, the Internet of Things (IoT), citizen

data architecture and other ICT categories, as well as Digital Inclusion and Accessibility as part of a relationship with the G3ict organization.

While a smart cities assessment approach can be used by a city or community as a whole, or by department, it should allow customization to meet the needs of the VAST partners with a particular focus on transportation and mobility, while keeping its core framework in place. This will provide an assessment of the current capabilities and readiness of the VAST member communities on different evaluation dimensions across various capabilities specific to transportation and mobility.

The Process

- Data should be collected via a 20-30 minute online survey which is then scored and weighted to provide a benchmark score by the different dimensions. This is a key element of the model which rests on a self-assessment scoring of participant organizations. A key goal of the survey is to get a statistically significant response rate.
- Scores are compared to benchmark data set of US cities.
- Gap analysis results are provided to determine strengths, areas for improvement, and to inform the strategic action plan.

The maturity model is a city self-assessment tool that, when combined with feedback from the community and other stakeholders such as key suppliers or businesses, provides a full view of a community's current state. The Vancouver region should be evaluated alongside assessments from cities, states, and other public agencies around the country, allowing the region to be benchmarked against their peers. This provides the baseline to develop and project a roadmap.

(Note: a copy of the detailed SCA Study scope of work is available upon request.)

POLICY IMPLICATION

The Smart Communities Assessment is an element of the Vancouver Area Smart Trek Program and is contained in the 2019-2022 TIP and supports the federal Congestion Management Process requirement that agencies collaborate to utilize operational management, demand management, transit, and ITS technology to address travel demand before adding roadway capacity. Adoption of the resolution is also consistent with the framework for integrating transportation technology and emerging issues identified in the Regional Transportation Plan, TIP, and the Unified Planning Work Program.

BUDGET IMPLICATION

Funding for this study is shared equally between the VAST partner agencies as shown in the table below:

Agency	Amount
WSDOT	\$11,000
Clark County	\$11,000
Vancouver	\$11,000
C-TRAN	\$11,000
RTC	\$11,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$55,000</i>

Funding for the consulting services agreement and RTC project management services is comprised of funds previously authorized by the RTC Board for the VAST Program and through the FY2020 Unified Planning Work Program. In addition, other agency funds are provided through work order agreements with WSDOT, Clark County, Vancouver, and C-TRAN.

Action on this resolution would allow RTC’s Executive Director to commit budgeted funds and enter into a contract with IDC for the Smart Communities Assessment not to exceed \$55,000.

ACTION REQUESTED

Adoption of Resolution 10-19-22 “Smart Communities Assessment: Professional Services Consulting Agreement.”

ADOPTED this 1st day of October 2019, by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

ATTEST:

Anne McEnery-Ogle
Chair of the Board

Matt Ransom
Executive Director