



February 16, 2021

To: Members of the Board of Directors

From: Donna DeMartino, Managing Director *Donna DeMartino*

Subject: Approval to Release Request for Proposals for Pacific Surfliner Social Media Marketing and Passenger Communications

Overview

The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency has developed a request for proposals to initiate a competitive procurement process to retain consultant(s) to provide social media marketing and passenger communication services. Staff is seeking Board of Directors' approval to release the request for proposals.

Recommendations

- A. Approve the proposed evaluation criteria and weightings for Request for Proposals 1-3216 to provide social media marketing and passenger communication services for the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency.
- B. Approve the release of Request for Proposals 1-3216 for social media marketing and passenger communication services for the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency for a one-year initial term with two, one-year option terms.

Discussion

The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency (Agency) is responsible for marketing the Pacific Surfliner intercity passenger rail service to enhance public awareness of the service and increase ridership and revenue. The official Pacific Surfliner social media channels (which include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and a blog) are increasingly important assets to the marketing program and help to inform the public about the service, inspiring trips, and driving traffic to PacificSurfliner.com. The LOSSAN Agency has utilized consultant resources to advance these goals and augment staff as needed.

In February 2020, the LOSSAN Agency initiated a competitive procurement process to secure consultant support services to assist staff in social media marketing of the Pacific Surfliner service, and on May 18, 2020, awarded an agreement to GoSeeTell Network, doing business as Sparkloft Media for a one-year term. This contract has helped grow and enhance the Pacific Surfliner social media program, allowing digital platforms to further support marketing program goals and position the Pacific Surfliner as a preferred transportation option. In addition to providing critical safety and service information, social media content also brings forth opportunities to enjoy the Pacific Surfliner remotely, through scenic views, train-themed art, rider stories, forward-thinking travel plans, and other uplifting content. This contract will expire in June 2021, and a new contract is needed to continue advancing the LOSSAN Agency's goals as discussed above.

The proposed new contract scope of services will build on previous successes and expand growth opportunities on digital platforms. LOSSAN Agency staff is seeking Board of Directors' (Board) approval to release the draft request for proposals (RFP) for new social media marketing and passenger communications support that includes option terms and an updated scope of work (SOW). The procurement schedule will allow the new contract in place by May 2021 to ensure a smooth transition between contracts and no lapse in coverage for important ongoing activities such as content development.

The new contract SOW includes the following:

- Managing the official Pacific Surfliner social media accounts
- Developing content, such as blog articles, social media posts, advertisements, and videos
- Interacting with individuals who post about the Pacific Surfliner online
- Strategically planning out social media campaigns to drive website traffic to PacificSurfliner.com
- Planning, producing, placing, and optimizing paid media
- Engaging with influencers (individuals on social media with large followings) and partners to increase exposure of the Pacific Surfliner
- Building reports to inform on the performance of the program and identify opportunities for growth

Procurement Approach

The LOSSAN Agency's Board-approved procurement policies and procedures require that the Board approve the release of any RFP over \$100,000, and approve the evaluation criteria and weightings. Staff requests Board approval of the draft RFP and evaluation criteria and weights, which will be used to evaluate the proposals received in response to the RFP.

The proposed evaluation criteria and weightings are as follows:

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| • Qualifications of the Firm | 25 percent |
| • Staffing and Project Organization | 25 percent |
| • Work Plan | 30 percent |
| • Cost and Price | 20 percent |

Several factors were considered in developing these weightings. Qualifications of the firm are weighted at 25 percent because the successful firm must have a proven track record for meeting similar requirements in previous projects due to the depth of the requested services. Staffing and project organization are also weighted at 25 percent as the firm's proposed project team must demonstrate familiarity with required marketing specializations in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience. Work plan is weighted the highest, at 30 percent, to emphasize the importance of the firm demonstrating its ability to provide solutions specific to the LOSSAN Agency's marketing needs and opportunities. Cost and price are weighted at 20 percent to ensure the LOSSAN Agency receives the best value for the services provided.

The contract resulting from this procurement will have a one-year initial term with two, one-year option terms. Staff will release this RFP upon Board approval of these recommendations.

Fiscal Impact

The \$200,000 anticipated cost for the initial term of this agreement is a not-to-exceed maximum obligation. The anticipated spend during fiscal year (FY) 2020-21 related to this agreement is \$25,000, which is already included in the amended FY 2020-21 marketing budget. The actual marketing expenditures programmed for this agreement for future FYs will be adjusted to be consistent with the LOSSAN Agency's Board-approved annual business plan and budget and funding amounts approved by CalSTA.

Summary

Board of Directors' approval is requested of the proposed evaluation criteria and weightings and to release Request for Proposals 1-3216 for social media marketing and passenger communication services.

Attachment

- A. Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) 1-3216, Pacific Surfliner Social Media and Passenger Communications

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