

Our File/N/Réf. 14-8-2000
 Your File/V/Réf.

DATE: 7 September 2000

TO/DEST: Co-ordinator, Transit Services Committee

FROM/EXP. General Manager

SUBJECT/OBJET: DEMAND FOR TRANSPORTATION BY
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Transit Services Committee recommend the Commission approve a contract with the IBI Group to undertake a survey of demand for transportation by persons with disabilities and recommend demand management measures at a cost not to exceed \$74,000, exclusive of applicable taxes.

BACKGROUND

Para Transpo provides door-to-door service for people whose physical disabilities prevent them from using regular transit service. The present criteria used to determine eligibility for the service are: not being able to physically walk 175 metres and/or not being able to physically board a regular OC Transpo bus. These criteria are currently under review.

Demand for Para Transpo service is growing as the population ages and as persons with disabilities become increasingly integrated into mainstream society. The widespread introduction of fully accessible low-floor buses on regular transit routes will make it easier for people with certain disabilities to use regular transit rather than Para Transpo. However, there are many people with disabilities who, for various reasons, do not use regular transit and are not necessarily eligible to use Para Transpo. These include the growing numbers of people with Alzheimer's as well as other cognitive disabilities. Many of these persons have found alternate means of transportation while others have not.

The Comprehensive Review of OC Transpo services recommended that a broader look be taken at the transportation requirements of various disability groups to determine how they could be handled most effectively.

The recommendation was

That a mobility management framework be established within the region with a mandate for managing the mobility of the elderly and disabled community working with Para Transpo and other community transportation services.

1. The mobility management framework should identify the transportation requirements that exist within the community and develop a model for meeting them, together with realistic cost estimates and a proposal for cost sharing.
2. Para Transpo should assist in the planning process, and meet needs beyond its current mandate on a cost-recovery basis.

It is expected that the Consultant will quantify the present and future demand for accessible transit in the new City of Ottawa and recommend how to best respond to it.

The information obtained from this project will be used to update the Accessibility Plan for Transit in Ottawa-Carleton and will also provide valuable input to future eligibility criteria for Para Transpo.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

A request for proposal was made available on the MERX system to undertake a survey of demand for transportation by persons with disabilities and to develop recommendations for demand management.

Four responses were received from:

Entra Consultants Inc.	\$160,000
McCormick Rankin	\$80,000
IBI Group	\$74,000
Tech Knowledge Consulting	\$31,000

These were evaluated on the basis of:

- reasonableness of approach
- demonstrated understanding of the issues
- experience of key staff with similar projects
- expectation of project success
- cost/value

The low bid proposal from Tech Knowledge took too narrow an approach, with very little public consultation. The proposal restricted the survey to only those agencies that currently provide or fund transportation. In addition, a single consultant was proposed to do the work, with limited experience of a project of this size. In view of these factors the proposal was rated low on the expectation of project success.

The IBI Group proposal was the second lowest bid and demonstrated a thorough understanding of the issues to be addressed. The consultation program included focus group sessions that will ensure that persons with disabilities and organizations that represent them have a valid opportunity to have input.

The evaluation team recommends that the contract be awarded to the IBI Group at a cost of \$74,000 plus applicable taxes.

DISCUSSION

Briefly, the work proposed by the IBI Group is in three main parts:

- collection of background information and an inventory of existing services;
- development of user characteristics and trends, demand estimates and assessment of unmet needs; and
- development of demand management framework, analysis and recommendations.

The work is expected to take approximately six months and the products will be a final report, with recommendations for a demand management framework for the consideration of transit policy makers as well as a software model that will enable OC Transpo to determine the likely impact of future changes in policy in this area.

The work will not only provide information to be able to update OC Transpo's Accessibility Plan for Transit in Ottawa-Carleton but it will also provide valuable input to the review of Para Transpo's eligibility criteria and registration process.

Data from the multitude of agencies and organizations representing disabled persons and from focus group sessions with members of the disability community will be used to assist OC Transpo in the development of Para Transpo's eligibility criteria.

NEW CITY IMPACT

The Ottawa Transition Board will be asked to approve this report after consideration by the Commission.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Funding is available from the Para Transpo Capital Reserve fund.

*Approved by
Gordon Diamond*