



**ITEM ID:** 2024-127-0

**TRANSMITTAL DATE:** March 1, 2024

**MEETING DATE:** March 8, 2024

**TO:** Contracts, Operations, Maintenance, and Safety Committee

**FROM:** Arnold Hackett, Chief Financial Officer  
Justin Fornelli, Chief, Program Delivery

**SUBJECT:** Request for Qualifications for Construction of SCORE Projects

### **Issue**

Utilization of Request for Qualifications procurement approach is required to construct SCORE projects, helping to facilitate that the contractors engaged in these efforts are qualified and capable of completing rail-related projects on an operating railroad.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee recommend the Board approve issuing a Request for Qualifications for the purpose of pre-qualifying a pool of construction contractors experienced in completing projects on an operational railroad to support the Authority's Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) program.

### **Strategic Commitment**

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitment:

- **Safety is Foundational:** We will stay on the leading edge by deploying new technologies and processes to enhance the safety and security of our riders, our fellow employees, and the communities we serve. The Authority's prequalification of contractors who have demonstrated that they have the experience and knowledge to safely perform construction in a railroad operational environment will support the Authority's demand that all work be undertaken in compliance with Authority safety practices, standards and criteria, to maintain safe and reliable operation of the railroad throughout project construction.

## **Background**

Successful construction of the SCORE Phase 1 projects is essential to serving future ridership demands, achieving the Authority's associated proposed service plans, meeting the expectations of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, and demonstrating the Authority's program delivery capabilities so as to secure funding for future projects.

The Authority wishes to ensure that all contractors who are invited to bid on the SCORE construction projects have first demonstrated their experience in successful construction in a railroad operational environment and knowledge of railroad operational safety rules and practices, through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process prior to the issuance of Invitation for Bid (IFB) packages for the projects. Only prequalified contractors in whom the Authority has assured its confidence will then be invited to bid on the major construction SCORE projects.

## **Discussion**

Public Contract Code Section allows the Authority to require licensed contractors that wish to bid for public works jobs to prequalify for the right to bid on a specific public works project, or on a public works project undertaken by the Authority during a specified period of time.

The law requires every public agency that creates a prequalification procedure to:

1. Develop and use a standardized questionnaire and financial statement,
2. Develop and use a uniform system of rating bidders on objective criteria, on the basis of the completed questionnaire and financial statements, and
3. Create an appeal procedure, by which a contractor that is denied prequalification may seek a reversal of that determination.

## **Overview of the Request for Qualification Process**

Procurements may include an initial step to determine a pool of qualified firms, through the issuance of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), which includes a standard questionnaire and financial statement forms, and evaluation criteria with a uniform numerical and passing score system for rating the answers given by the contractors. Firms will respond with Statements of Qualification (SOQ).

Upon review and evaluation of the received SOQs, the Authority may determine a pool of qualified firms that will be eligible to submit bids in response to a subsequent IFBs. Evaluation of SOQs should be in accordance with the criteria set forth in the solicitation.

If the RFQ yields a sufficient number of firms to ensure adequate competition, the Authority may issue IFBs to those firms and then awarded to the lowest bidder. The IFBs do not need to be publicly advertised.

## **Budget Impact**

There is no budget impact since this is a Prequalification only process, with no commitment to award a future contract.

### **Next Steps**

Upon Board approval, Authority staff will release the Request for Qualifications package to solicit contractors' responses and pre-qualify those with the appropriate experience and knowledge, prior to releasing the construction bid documents to these selected contractors.

Prepared by: Sharon Williams, Senior Contract and Compliance Administrator  
Andrew Althorp, Assistant Director, Construction

Approved by: Arnold Hackett, Chief Financial Officer  
Justin Fornelli, Chief, Program Delivery