



**Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL)
RFP 2603 Request for Professional Engineering Services for the
Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Coastal Rail Trail Southern Segments Project**

January 16, 2026

Questions Submitted by Potential Proposers

1. Regarding the cost proposal component of the RFP, the core services are primarily PA/ED, and the RFT requires a separate sealed cost proposal. For the optional tasks, including final design, it is unclear. The RFP seems to indicate that the proposer should include in their proposal the scope and budget for the optional tasks, but we are not going to know the design until we complete the scoping analysis and the preliminary design. Since we don't know yet what the design will be, how can we provide costs for the optional tasks in our cost proposal. It seems like a lot of busy work now to provide a cost proposal for the optional tasks when we don't know yet what the project design will be for the optional tasks.

Response: What your proposal and cost proposal need to show is, ultimately, your understanding of the scope and process to deliver both the initial scope of work and the optional tasks as outlined in the RFP. Through your proposal and cost proposal, you should provide the RTC with your thoughts and opinions on how you will achieve the scope of work that is outlined in the RFP, along with a schedule and level of effort that matches their envisioned scope and process, and explain your logic. Please present and explain your approach that you will use to successfully complete this project, even if the approach is slightly different than the way the RTC laid out the tasks in Attachment A to the RFP.

For costs proposals, there should be a cost proposal table (“cost detail table” or “Work Plan”) that is supplemented by the Cost Proposal Form. The Cost Proposal Form will only be needed for Tasks A through D, and the optional tasks should be included on the cost proposal table. In the cost proposal table (“cost detail table” or “Work Plan”) included in your Cost Proposal, please present your costs to complete the entire project, including Tasks A through D and the Optional Tasks. We understand that the scope for the project that will proceed into the Optional Tasks, such as Final Design, is not yet known.

However, you will need to show in your proposal your understanding of the work and of

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the process required to complete these tasks, including (including subconsultants) that your team has the necessary expertise and personnel to complete the work. For the Optional Tasks in your cost proposal table, we recommend assuming a specific project that is advanced to Final Design, and showing in your cost proposal how you would deliver that project and what the associated costs would be. Be sure to explain your assumptions in your proposal, and on what basis your costs for the Optional Tasks were formulated.

Include all personnel and classifications who may work on the project in your rate sheets. Please show your logic and your project approach in putting together the scope of services that will ultimately be attached to the contract. If you are proposing something and feel that it is slightly different than the way the RTC laid it out in the RFP, please explain your reasoning and approach such that we are confident in the ability to complete the initial scope of work and the Optional Tasks.

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2. What available survey information will be provided to the successful Consultant? The RFP says that the boundary survey work that is underway for ZEPRT will be provided once available. The Consultant is to prepare ROW boundary survey and topographic survey for the project in areas where existing such data doesn't already exist. Can you clarify what will be available so that we can know which areas to scope so that we can close the survey gap(s)?

Response: The Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail (ZEPRT) Project's ROW Boundary Survey for the rail corridor for MBSST Segments 13-20 will be provided once the ZEPRT project completes this work. There is currently no additional topographic or boundary survey information that the RTC has prepared for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line south of Rio Del Mar Blvd. There are planning level assumptions regarding the width of the right of way south of Rio Del Mar Blvd that are available on the County of Santa Cruz GIS website.

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3. In the Firm Qualification section, is it required to include the summary of the work performed, total project capital cost, percentage of the work the firm was responsible for, period over which the work was completed, and the name, title, email, and phone number of the clients to be contacted for references for PM and each key personnel



project/reference? Considering the space that this will take, is it acceptable to include this information in the appendix, or not have it count towards the page count?

Response: Yes. The RFP requires that the Firm Qualifications project experience descriptions include: (1) summary of work performed, (2) total project capital cost, (3) percentage of work the firm was responsible for, (4) period of performance, and (5) client reference contact information (name/title/email/phone). In addition, proposers must include a minimum of three (3) recent and relevant projects and client references for the Project Manager and each Key Personnel.

With respect to proposal length, the RFP states that proposal content is limited to 25 pages, excluding only the following attachments: resumes, detailed scope of work, project schedule, and cover letter (and folded 11x17 pages count as one page).

Accordingly:

- The required Firm Qualifications project/reference information must be provided as part of the proposal submission.
- If provided in an appendix/attachment other than the excluded attachment types listed above, that material will count toward the 25-page limit.
- RTC recommends presenting the required project/reference information in a concise table format within the Firm Qualifications section to manage space.

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4. Under 4. Project Staffing, there is a requirement for the organizational chart to identify any Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms. Please clarify if this sentence, and all reference to DBE firms, should be removed because of the current recertification process with the federal government.

Response: Caltrans Office Bulletin #25-07 R1 explains that the October 3, 2025 Interim Final Rule immediately suspended DBE contract goal setting and DBE participation counting/reporting, and that the suspension remains in effect until CUCP DBEs have been reevaluated under the new requirements. As such, and in accordance with Caltrans guidance, the RTC's DBE goal for this solicitation is "no goal".



The Bulletin further clarifies that the suspension includes goal-based compliance monitoring and enforcement activities, including setting contract goals, counting DBE participation toward goals, CUF reviews, and Good Faith Effort evaluations.

Consistent with this guidance, for this solicitation:

- Proposers are not required to identify DBE firms on the organizational chart, and DBE identification will not be used for goal-setting or evaluation purposes during the suspension.
- Any RFP language requesting the “percentage of work performed by DBE firms” (e.g., within the work plan) shall be treated as not applicable during the suspension.

However, RTC and its contractors remain responsible for certain contract administration requirements during the suspension. The Bulletin states that (1) enforcement remains for DBE termination procedures under 49 CFR §26.53 (good cause / prior written consent), and (2) submission of LAPM Exhibit 9-P (Prompt Payment Certification) / 9-F (DBE Running Tally of payments) remains in effect.

Finally, firms may continue to use the CUCP DBE certification database as a resource for identifying micro/small/disadvantaged businesses; such participation may be described voluntarily, but will not be treated as a DBE goal commitment during the suspension.

Sincerely,

Riley Gerbrandt, PE, QSP/QSD
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