

**GREATER PORTLAND TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)  
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
for  
REAL-TIME INFORMATION SIGNS AT BUS SHELTERS  
RFI #2022-002**

Greater Portland Transit District (Metro) is seeking proposals from DIGITAL HARDWARE/SOFTWARE PROVIDERS for REAL-TIME INFORMATION SIGNS AT BUS SHELTERS. Responses are requested by **Friday, April 1, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. EDT.**

**GENERAL SCOPE**

Metro is seeking product and general pricing information from established digital hardware/software providers to provide real-time arrival signage at bus stops. Real-time arrival information would utilize existing Metro General Time and Frequency Specification (GTFS) and Application Programming Interface (API) to display the estimated arrival times and/or wait times for bus routes. Metro will consider any and all products that can provide this information to the public in a clear yet unobtrusive manner.

All responses should be emailed to [mtremblay@gpmetro.org](mailto:mtremblay@gpmetro.org), or sent by mail to Greater Portland Metro Transit District, attn: Mike Tremblay, 114 Valley Street, Portland, Maine 04102 by Friday, April 1, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. All questions about the RFI should be directed to Mike Tremblay at [mtremblay@gpmetro.org](mailto:mtremblay@gpmetro.org).

**PURPOSE AND DISCLAIMER**

Greater Portland Metro is interested in gathering non-binding product and pricing information for real-time information displays at bus stops

The intent of this RFI is solely to collect company information, estimates for software and support costs, and to evaluate options for various hardware and software models for real-time information. All information gathered will aid in the future development of a realistic scope and budget for procurement of an as-yet unknown number of such displays.

This RFI is not an official solicitation for bids; no award will be made as a result of this process. The responses received to this RFI will be used in the development of future procurement procedures that may result in a contract with one or more successful vendors.

*METRO encourages participation by small, women owned, minority, and disadvantaged businesses and supports non-discriminatory, equal-opportunity employment by its contractors.*

## BACKGROUND

Greater Portland Transit District (“Metro”) is seeking information from digital hardware/software providers to supply real-time arrival signs for bus shelters, along with all components and specifications required to install them on our standard bus shelter.

Metro provides fixed-route and express bus service throughout the Greater Portland region, including the communities of Portland, Westbrook, Falmouth, Freeport, Yarmouth, Brunswick, and Gorham. Metro has approximately 50 bus shelters, with plans to expand steadily in 2022 and beyond. Metro has over 600 bus stops in its system, most of which are standalone signs at boarding platforms.

While real-time arrival information is already available online and on smartphone apps, real-time arrival information at bus stops provides this useful information to all transit users and passersby, regardless of their access to a smartphone. Real-time arrival information helps users reduce wait times at stops, allowing them to confidently make one more errand before the bus arrives, or provide certainty that the bus will be arriving. Real-time arrival information can also serve as a way to market Metro to potential new riders, as passersby may notice that a bus is coming soon that may get them to their destination more quickly than walking. Real-time information is valuable so that users do not need to read maps and schedules to use the bus.

As part of an effort to improve public visibility and ridership, Metro seeks to deploy a small number of real-time arrival signs at bus shelters in 2022. As more funding comes available and as shelters are installed and upgraded, additional real-time arrival signs will be deployed in the future. Real-time information is most desirable at bus stop locations that serve multiple routes, or where service is most frequent; this is the case along Congress Street and Washington Avenue in Portland, as well as at Metro’s hub on Elm Street in Portland. In the long term, Metro envisions real-time arrival information at most bus shelters.

Products intended to be installed on shelters should be compatible with Metro’s standard shelter, which is included as **Attachment A**. Metro also seeks signage that can be mounted to sign posts. Proposals will be considered for all product models, including signs that require grid power and solar-powered displays. Depending on the range of options and how they fit with Metro’s stop and shelter network, multiple vendors and products may be selected as part of a future bid. Real-time information displays that are overhead, mounted on a shelter post, or elsewhere on the shelter will be considered.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Metro is seeking information on signs that have the following characteristics:

1. Metro seeks options for digital signs that are powered by the grid, with alternative solar-powered options for locations where grid power is not available. Metro understands that the capabilities of solar-powered signs are limited compared to grid-powered signs; the information displayed on either sign should be displayed in a similar manner so there is no significant difference in how a user experiences each sign type.
2. Solar-powered signs that have the ability to be standalone (i.e. not mounted to a shelter) are desirable. Real-time information signs will be requested at locations that do not have space required for a bus shelter.

3. All digital signs should have appropriate brightness for legibility in direct sunlight. Dynamic dimming capability to reduce light pollution at night will be considered a positive.
4. Ability to also render images and video content is desirable; however, Metro may prefer more basic text-only signs at some or all locations due to cost.
5. Text on overhead signage should be visible to anyone in the shelter or walking past the shelter. Signage that overhangs the sidewalk or bus stop landing area shall meet ADA requirements for mounting height.
6. All digital signs shall provide for at least a 4G connection via a cellular modem.
7. Digital signs that provide for at least one method of audio equivalence shall be preferred.
8. All digital signs shall be lockable and include vandal resistant enclosures that leave no exposed access or ports.
9. All digital signs shall be appropriately rated for the region's temperatures and weather conditions.
10. Any additional information or features about vendors' products that are not discussed herein.

## **CONTENT MANAGEMENT**

Metro will control the design of the information displayed on digital signs—both visual design and how real-time data are presented to riders. Metro seeks information on the following:

- The ability to display a live URL/QR code on any digital sign, screen type permitting
- The ability to disseminate a backup file (static or video) that is displayed in the event that a sign loses connectivity for more than 60 seconds
- The ability for users at Metro, or its designated agents, to have authenticated access to the Concessionaire's CMS
- The ability to access the Concessionaire's CMS programmatically via an Application Programming Interface ("API"). If or when Metro maintains its own CMS for digital signage, Metro's CMS shall be able to send content to the Concessionaire's CMS via a secure API connection.

## **INFORMATION REQUESTED**

Vendors are encouraged to submit the following materials to support the information and cost gathering efforts of Greater Portland Metro as we move forward to issuing a future RFP:

Company Background & Experience: Briefly state your interest in and qualifications for launching a microtransit system within the Greater Portland Metro service area. Please include the following information:

- Company name, location, primary contact, and number of employees
- Products, services, and typical market
- Examples of other microtransit services similar to Metro's scope

Available Products and Services: Provide a list of products and features available. Specify how content management would work. Provide information on installation, ongoing technical support, warranty information, etc.

Pricing: Include general pricing information for all products and services available, for budgeting purposes. Discuss how pricing changes based on scale, if applicable. Include pricing for ongoing technical support and content management. Include pricing for delivery and installation, if applicable.

Lead time: Provide current lead times for delivery of products.

References and testimonials: Provide references and testimonials for products, if available.

## **PROJECT TIMELINE**

Metro hopes to deploy real-time information on bus shelters sometime in 2022, with additional deployments into 2023 and 2024.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Metro staff will review provided information and may ask vendors to provide additional information about their equipment. Metro will use information gathered in this RFI to issue a procurement for real-time information systems.

## **OWNERSHIP OF SUBMITTED MATERIALS**

All materials submitted to and accepted by Metro in response to this RFI shall be retained by and become property of Metro.