



PROCUREMENT

3501 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903

DATE: September 22, 2026

SUBJECT: Questions and Answers for Request for Proposals (RFP) #2901 - Waste Management Strategic Planning

1. **Question:** Has the Waste Management Division worked with an external consultant on strategic planning or related organizational development work in the past?
Answer: Last year, the Division hired a consultant to support a day-long staff retreat with the goal of strengthening trust, deepening team understanding, and creating clarity around collective and individual goals. We will share the retreat summary with the selected consultant.
2. **Question:** The scope calls for expertise across strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, organizational development, communications strategy, and financial planning. Do you anticipate the selected consultant having all of these capabilities in-house, or would you be open to a lead strategic planning firm partnering with a specialist for certain components, particularly the financial planning work?
Answer: The County is open to selecting a team of consultant firms (with one lead and one or more subconsultants) that, collectively, can best achieve all the tasks outlined under the scope of work.
3. **Question:** What are the most important decisions or changes you hope this strategic planning process will help the Division make that it is not currently well-positioned to address?
Answer: An improved understanding of community needs and how the Division can best align its services to meet those needs. Additionally, enhancing transparency around the Division's current work and future plans, and ensuring that financial resources are strategically aligned with upcoming program goals.
4. **Question:** Does the County or Bid Express maintain a planholders, document holders, or interested proposers list for this solicitation? If so, would you please provide the current list or direct me to where it can be accessed?
Answer: If a vendor would like to be added to the plan holder list they can add themselves to the Plan Holders List on Bid Express or Subscribe to updates on the County's Contracting Opportunist website.

5. **Question:** Task 2 notes that services will include translation and transcreation of research tools. Beyond the required Spanish-language executive summary, should proposers assume translation or transcreation is required for surveys, outreach materials, community meeting materials, and/or the full strategic plan?
Answer: Spanish translation is required for the executive summary of the strategic plan but not the full strategic plan. We expect the consultant will also need to translate audience research tools, such as surveys, to support the County's goals of effectively gathering relevant information and feedback from Spanish-speaking community members within Marin County's service area.
6. **Question:** What role does the County expect franchise haulers to play in outreach and engagement, including distribution of research tools, participation in interviews or meetings, and coordination with customers?
Answer: Franchise haulers will support distribution of surveys (via hauler newsletters or bill inserts, etc) and other research tools when feasible and may participate in interviews or meetings as appropriate. Their role will primarily be collaborative rather than lead.
7. **Question:** For Task 5, can the County clarify the expected level of detail for the "communication workflow and internal organizational strategy"?
Answer: The County expects a high-level framework outlining roles, responsibilities, communication pathways, and recommended processes to support ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan. Detailed operational manuals are not required.
8. **Question:** The RFP identifies a preliminary budget of \$100,000-\$150,000. Given the breadth of the requested scope, including community research, multilingual outreach, financial forecasting, Board presentation support, and final plan design, does the County expect proposers to prioritize or scale any tasks to fit within this range?
Answer: The County understands consultant approaches may vary and expects proposers to submit a cost-effective plan that meets the objectives of the scope of work. Proposers may recommend scaling or prioritization if necessary, provided the rationale is clear.
9. **Question:** Does the County have a preferred level of community engagement, such as surveys only, focus groups, community meetings, or a combination? Are there minimum expectations for sample size, languages, or number of engagement activities?
Answer: We are looking for a consultant that will guide the County with recommendations for community research approach including what research tools will be most effective as well as sample size, number and type of engagement activities in order to gather the most valuable feedback from a representative group within the County's service area. The County only expects the consultant to create engagement instruments in Spanish and English.
10. **Question:** Can the County clarify the expected level of detail for the multi-year financial forecast, including whether ratepayer impact analysis, hauler cost estimates, and cost allocation across County departments should be high-level estimates or detailed financial modeling?
Answer: High-level estimates.

11. **Question:** What existing plans, retreat summaries, financial data, performance reports, community survey results, or hauler agreement materials will be made available to the selected consultant?
Answer: The County will provide a recent retreat summary, existing hauler agreements, available program performance information, and current and recent budget data. Additional data will be supplied as needed throughout the project as requested and recommended by the consultant.
12. **Question:** Beyond the half-day staff workshop and Board presentation, should proposers assume any additional in-person meetings, stakeholder interviews, or community engagement events?
Answer: Should the consultant recommend focus groups, the County is open to hosting them in-person if recommended. Otherwise, no additional in-person meetings are required beyond what is specified.
13. **Question:** Appendix B requires submission of a Cost Proposal, but the solicitation package does not appear to include a Cost Proposal form. Could you please provide the required form or specify the required pricing format, including where proposers should submit cost?
Answer: A breakdown of a cost proposal should be included within the proposal submission. The total contract price should be input in Bid Express under the Schedule of Fees. Please provide rate tables including classifications (e.g. Principal, Senior Consultant, Project Associate, etc) and hourly rate for each key staff person proposed to work on the project. In addition, provide estimated labor costs and other direct costs for each task.
14. **Question:** Does Marin County have a previous or current Waste Management Strategic Plan?
Answer: No.
15. **Question:** Under Task 2, the RFP states “Services will include translation and transcreation of research tools.” Can you please clarify whether the consultant is expected to provide all translation services, how many languages are required, and if translation is needed for written materials only or if translation services are needed at live community engagement events?
Answer: Spanish and English only are required. If the consultant recommends in-person community research, then the consultant will likely need to provide Spanish translation services.
16. **Question:** Under Task 5, there is an optional task for Division re-naming. Is the County looking for logo branding options to accompany the re-naming as well as a brand style guide?
Answer: Branding services are not required or expected; only suggested names that better reflect the work of the Division.
17. **Question:** Under Task 8, the RFP mentions “Annual reporting templates” as a deliverable. Can you clarify who will be using the annual reporting templates?
Answer: Division staff will be using the reporting templates to share updates on strategic plan implementation progress with Executive Leadership, Department Leadership, elected officials and the community.

18. **Question:** Cost Proposal Form: Appendix B lists a "Cost Proposal" as a required solicitation document, but we do not see a Cost Proposal form/template included in the posted RFP package. Could the County confirm whether a specific form exists, and if so, provide it or clarify the preferred format (e.g., fixed fee by task, hourly rate schedule, not-to-exceed budget)?
Answer: There is no specific cost template. A breakdown of a cost proposal should be included within the proposal submission. The total contract price should be input in Bid Express under the Schedule of Fees. Please provide rate tables including classifications (e.g. Principal, Senior Consultant, Project Associate, etc) and hourly rate for each key staff person proposed to work on the project. In addition, provide estimated labor costs and other direct costs for each task.
19. **Question:** Stakeholder Interviews (Task 3): Approximately how many individual interviews does the County anticipate across the listed stakeholder categories? Is there a target number of participants or interview hours the County has budgeted for in its own estimate?
Answer: The County anticipates between 6-8 individual interviews. The County will provide introductions and support with scheduling the interviews.
20. **Question:** Community/Audience Research (Task 2): Does the County have a target sample size, number of focus groups/community meetings, or specific languages (beyond Spanish) it expects the consultant to plan for?
Answer: We are looking for a consultant who can advise on and recommend a research methodology and sample size to gather representative perspectives from people across of the franchise service area. Spanish and English are the two languages the consultant should plan for.
21. **Question:** Has the County conducted any resident, business, or franchise-hauler surveys or engagement efforts in the past 2–3 years that could serve as a baseline for Task 2, or should the audience research be planned as starting from zero?
Answer: No, the County has not conducted any surveys or engagement efforts in the past 2-3 years. However, Zero Waste Marin (also known as the Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste Joint Powers Authority) did conduct surveys and focus groups in the last year. The results can be shared with the consultant, but the questions were tailored to the specific needs of Zero Waste Marin and did not specifically target County's franchise service area community.
22. **Question:** County-Provided Data (Task 1 & 6): What demographic, hauler service, and financial/cost data will the County and Accounting team provide directly, and on what timeline? Is there existing data the awarded consultant will have access to at project start?
Answer: The County will provide available demographic data, existing hauler service information, current program cost data, and other relevant financial information at the start of the project. Additional data will be provided as requested and as available.
23. **Question:** Interviews (Schedule): Will the County confirm whether interviews during the week of October 19, 2026, will be held virtually, in-person, or at the County's discretion, and how much advance notice proposers will receive of the format and schedule?
Answer: The County plans to hold the interviews virtually. Interviews are currently tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 20. Exact time of each interview is to be determined.

24. **Question:** The Evaluation Criteria table lists "Sustainability Preferences" at up to 15% of the score, but the Sustainability Preferences section only describes two preferences — Local Business (5%) and Workforce Development (5%) — totaling 10%. Is there a third preference category proposers can qualify for, or is the 15% cap simply the Marin County Code ceiling that doesn't fully apply to this solicitation?

Answer: Yes, there is a third preference category, which is 15% preference for recycled products and is not applicable in regard to this solicitation.