

Sespe Creek Overflow Railroad Bridge Request for Proposals – Questions & Answers

May 5, 2023

1. *Are the reimbursement from FEMA to return the bridge to “pre-disaster conditions”?*
 - a. VCTC intends to request reimbursement for costs to replace the Sespe Creek Overflow bridge to its *pre-disaster design, capacity, and function*, consistent with FEMA guidance.
2. *Is the railroad looking to apply for FEMA funds to mitigate against future disasters?*
 - a. To ensure consistency with FEMA guidelines, the RFP includes a task to evaluate the potential for cost effective design variations to mitigate future hazards. VCTC intends to incorporate cost effective design variations to mitigate future hazards into the final design and construction as appropriate and within FEMA Sections 404 and/or 406 mitigation guidelines.
3. *Are only the “damaged portions” of the bridge eligible for reimbursement under the FEMA funds?*
 - a. Our understanding is that FEMA reimbursement is available to restore the bridge to pre-disaster design, capacity, and function. If inspections and review of the facility identify a need for repairs or improvements to other portions of the bridge, then such should be included in the planning and design.
4. *Are the “damaged portions” only considered the 3 spans that were completely washed out?*
 - a. The design and engineering contemplated by this Request for Proposals is to restore the Sespe Creek Overflow Bridge to its pre-disaster design, capacity, and function. We anticipate that the three spans that washed out form the bulk of the damage to be repaired; however, a full inspection of the bridge could not be conducted until storm waters receded. An inspection of the full railroad bridge will be conducted by a professional engineer and will be made available to the successful proposer. Should significant additional damage beyond the three known damaged spans, the scope of work and contract may be amended if/as needed.
5. *Are any activities associated with “mitigating future hazards” eligible to be reimbursed?*
 - a. The RFP includes a task to evaluate the potential for cost effective design variations to mitigate future hazards. Cost effective design variations to mitigate future hazards will be incorporated into the final design and construction as appropriate. FEMA reimbursement to VCTC may be available as Section 406 hazard mitigation. FEMA Section 404 Hazard Mitigation may also be considered, if appropriate.
6. *Has there been any coordination with the levee owner to the east?*
 - a. VCTC has an existing working relationship with the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, the owner of the levee. Coordination has not yet taken place to date regarding the bridge replacement but is anticipated to occur concurrently with the design and permitting effort.
7. *Do we know if an existing hydraulic model exists for this waterbody?*
 - a. Unknown at this time.

8. *Per page 7, section 6.22 of the RFP, "This project includes disadvantage business enterprise (DBE) requirements." In addition to the criteria listed within the RFP, are there any DBE percentage requirements? Will DBE inclusions be considered within the evaluation criteria for points?*
 - a. No specific DBE percentage goal is required nor criteria beyond those listed in the RFP (Sections 6.1.22 and 6.1.23). DBE inclusion would be incorporated into the Staffing criteria category.
9. *Is there a specific DBE goal?*
 - a. No specific DBE percentage goal is required. Please refer to the RFP, Sections 6.1.22 and 6.1.23 for further discussion of requirements.
10. *Has Hydrology and Hydraulics (H&H) been performed for this project?*
 - a. No. If the proposer determines that hydrology and hydraulics assessment is needed, please include such assessment in the proposal / work plan.
11. *Will other railroad or partnering authorities/stakeholders be involved in the review process for Environmental and Design submittals?*
 - a. Staff from a partner railroad agency or government agency, such as the County, may be involved in the selection panel as part of the review process.
12. *The RFP mentions the inclusion of brief resumes – could you elaborate? Are you wanting resumes of 1 or 2 pages?*
 - a. VCTC does not have a preference for resume length. Summary of qualifications (education and experience) or 1-2 pages resumes may be provided.
13. *Do the resumes count toward the 20 pages? Or can they be placed in the Appendix?*
 - a. Resumes may be placed in the Appendix and do not count toward the 20-page limit.
14. *Is it required that the replacement design meet E-80 loading if less than E-80 now?*
 - a. The current Bridge Load Rating is available here: <https://www.goventura.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/423.44-Bridge-Rating.pdf>. The replacement design should meet E-80 loading standards.
15. *When does VCTC anticipate receiving FEMA funds?*
 - a. FEMA reimbursement will be requested by VCTC after work to replace the bridge has been completed. Though VCTC intends to request FEMA reimbursement for costs incurred, VCTC payment to the selected contractor is not dependent on FEMA reimbursement timeframes.
16. *Is there any known site and access constraints that VCTC has been made aware of by adjacent landowners, local agencies and authorities?*
 - a. No. Access to the site is available via the railroad right-of-way and can also be secured as needed through cooperation from the Watershed Protection District, if/as needed.
17. *As-Builts for the Bridge and Emergency Inspection Report?*
 - a. The most recent annual bridge inspection report was completed in December 2022, and the final report is not yet available. The report from the December 2021 inspection was made available with the Request for Proposals. No as-builts are available from VCTC. The

bridge was constructed in 1969 prior to VCTC acquisition of ownership, and it does not appear that as-builts were transferred from the prior owner, Southern Pacific Railway. Requests for copies of as-builts from Southern Pacific's successor (Union Pacific) have not been successful to date.

18. *Is the consultant responsible for all environmental application and permitting?*

- a. Yes, the Request for Proposals seeks assistance from qualified consultants to assist VCTC with compliance with all applicable State and Federal Environmental Laws and Permitting Requirements, including preparation of permit applications and environmental consultation. Partnerships between firms that specialize in environmental permitting and compliance and design/engineering firms are welcome.

19. *Has VCTC or another consultant initiated environmental permitting applications or consultation?*

- a. No. The Request for Proposals seeks assistance from qualified consultants to assist VCTC with to comply with all applicable State and Federal Environmental Laws and Permitting Requirements, including permitting applications and/or consultation.

20. *Does VCTC anticipate design support during construction?*

- a. Yes, VCTC anticipates that there may be some need for continued design support during construction.

21. *Would it be possible to hand deliver the proposal package to VCTC?*

- a. Yes. Proposals may be delivered by hand to VCTC at 751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420, Camarillo CA 93010. Please call (805) 642-1591 to ensure availability of staff to accept the delivery.

22. *Is there going to be right-of-entry permits? If so, what kind of right-of-entry permits will be required for field observations and measurements?*

- a. The selected consultant will be expected to coordinate with the railroad lessee and operator, Sierra Northern Railway, to secure access to the site for field observations and measurements. A right-of-entry permit will be issued by VCTC, in coordination with Sierra Northern Railway, to the selected contractor and any subcontractors for this purpose.

23. *Is there any documentation on the bridge load rating?*

- a. The Bridge Load Rating is available at:
<https://www.goventura.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/423.44-Bridge-Rating.pdf>

24. *Can the VCTC provide Track Charts and Utility Maps?*

- a. Yes, Track Charts are available at:
<https://www.goventura.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SPBL-Track-Chart-MP-422-to-424.pdf>.
Utility Maps will be posted to: <https://www.goventura.org/work-with-vctc/contracts/> by COB May 5, 2023. The selected bidder is expected to conduct due diligence and records searches to verify utilities in the vicinity of the bridge as part of the design process.

25. *For projects of this type, the Funding Agency is usually listed as the Lead on the NEPA and CEQA permits. Is the expectation that VCTC/FEMA will be the Leads for the project, or are the bidders expected to be listed as the Lead?*

- a. VCTC is expected to be listed as the Lead Agency.

26. *Will access/right-of-entry rights be received from nearby landowners to accommodate construction of the bridge? Are there any known site and access constraints that VCTC has been made aware of by adjacent landowners, local agencies and authorities?*
- a. Permission to access/enter adjacent landowners will be secured, if/as needed. There are no known site and access constraints. VCTC owns the Santa Paula Branch Line railroad and its associated right-of-way, which may be used for site access, in coordination with the railroad lessee and operator, Sierra Northern Railway.
27. *Since the cost proposal is submitted under separate cover, is it included in the 20-page max? Do front and back covers count towards the 20-page limit?*
- a. No, the cost proposal and front/back covers do not count toward the 20-page maximum page limit.
28. *Will the emergency inspection report include an updated bridge load rating?*
- a. The emergency inspection report will be made available to the selected proposer and will include an updated bridge load rating if/as needed.
29. *Track charts, bridge load ratings, and emergency inspection report will be provided on May 5th. Does VCTC plan to make changes to the RFP schedule?*
- a. Track Charts, bridge load ratings, and bridge inspection reports were posted to the VCTC Contracts Page on May 3, 2023. Due to the urgent nature of the need for bridge replacement and the Commission schedule, VCTC does not intend to extend the due date for the RFP (May 12, 2023, no later than 4:00 p.m.).
30. *Our insurance coverage doesn't perfectly align with the requirements stipulated in the RFP. Would you accept a COI in the event we are selected for this project?*
- a. Insurance coverage requirements within the contract may be negotiated with the highest rated proposer during the contract negotiations period.
31. *The sample contract has indemnification requirements in two places that do not use the same language. (Article I, Item C on page 1, and Article XXVI on page 18) The language on page 1 includes "economic loss" which is an uninsurable contract requirement which very few firms would be able to agree to. However, Section 6.2 of the RFP Contract Terms & Conditions has the same language as Article XXVI of the sample contract, so I am hoping this would be the proposed language in the final contract. Can you tell me which section is proposed in the final contract and whether either one would be open for language modifications to be consistent with SB496?*
- a. Specific provisions of the contract may be negotiated with the highest rated proposer during the contract negotiations period. Per Section 6.1.11 of the RFP, proposals must include any exception to VCTC's standard insurance and/or indemnification requirements and shall include any and all of Proposer's proposed terms and conditions, including the Proposer's standard contract language.