

Silicon Valley Workforce Investment Network

SVWIN '05
Workforce Development Geo-Mapping System RFP
Technical Assistance Conference
Questions & Answers
March 10, 2005
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Question: The RFP talks about 3D mapping a lot, and most of the GIS technologies that are in use on web-based mapping systems are 2D in my experience; what is the importance of 3D mapping relative to what you want?

Answer: Regarding 3D: while most GIS systems plot an X and a Y coordinate, we want to show data in the X, Y, and Z-axes. If we are looking at a site such as 60 S. Market Street, and we find we have five records with this same address, and you're asked to display the data, we want to be able to aggregate the total employment for those five records; therefore, the spike at 60 S. Market would be many times higher than the spike at 50 S. Market Street with only one small employer. There are plug-ins available that allow this layering of the data to represent the aggregation on a specific site. We want to be able to display both the aggregate and individual records for each address through the graphical interface. We want to represent schematic data in the Z dimension.

Question: Can you give a summary view of the four different developmental phases described in the RFP?

Answer: We structured the project into phases based upon the City's experience with development of other web-based projects in the past. Generally, you start from what you want it to look like, and then work backwards regarding the architecture. Phase 1 would be the opportunity for the selected contractor to sit down with the Silicon Valley Workforce Investment Network (SVWIN) and discuss what we would like to see outputted as the general view. The goal of Phase 1, Art and Structure, would be to agree upon the general look of the Graphic User Interface (GUI), expectations regarding the output, and what we want the output to do.

Question: Do you already have an idea or a vision or are you starting with a clean slate?

Answer: There are ideas floating among the workforce group, but nothing has been set in stone. In our experience with development, something may look very good on paper but the logistics and the coding behind it is another story. Whether it's practical or not, you want it to look this way and do this thing. Some approaches may not be feasible or might be very expensive for just one aspect. In discussing options with the workforce group, they may ask you to suggest alternative approaches to provide a given aspect of the project.

Question: Is the art navigation too? Or are they looking through all the pages they are navigating?

Answer: The art should be similar; navigation is obviously going to be built into and around that. As an example, the Census web site. It is working through a menu of selections. You start with a very broad selection and you drill down to your eventual output. The general expectation is a query you that starts broad and is narrow down to get some output. so to some degree yes navigation is going to be built into that hardware construction.

Question: When you say the general look, it is not going to change? Who is going to sign off on the final end product.

Answer: That's going to be an iterative process that can be handled through the contract, the expectation is that the workforce group will suggest to the prospective contractor, this is what we would like to see, come back with some schematics or diagrams saying yes, we can do this. The contractor provides a schematic, the workforce group then reviews and possibly changes, a final review will occur and once a design is agreed upon it should not change. A base will be needed to start work with and it would not behoove the workforce program to make changes after the fact.

Question: Your budget talks about covering the four developmental phases, but will there be funding for maintenance and ongoing support?

Answer: In the evaluation section we requested that proposers describe the anticipated ongoing monthly system maintenance requirements for the system designed in Phases 1 through 4. We appreciate that the more time that passes from the initiation of a project, the less precision the budget numbers will have, but we are interested in the list of requirements and approximate associated costs to provide ongoing monthly system maintenance for two years after the geo-mapping system has been developed. These anticipated costs for staff training and system maintenance will be in addition to the maximum \$200,000 available for Phases 1-4, but will be itemized on the Phase 4 budget.

SVWIN is exceptionally interested in this project, and while there are no guarantees that funding will be available beyond the four phases specified in the RFP, we do expect to use the system as a tool to provide improved services to our customers.

Question: I'm also asking about hardware, bandwidth, and the infrastructure cost after the thing is live. Do you have any idea what size of audience you are expecting, anticipated frequency of use, and amount of data to be accommodated? This would assist proposers in addressing the production hardware and bandwidth requirements.

Answer: This system has the potential to be used as a model for other workforce areas, so we expect to need more bandwidth in the future. This is a pilot project involving the State of California EDD; we want to demonstrate the use and relevance of this technology in providing quality workforce services. Once we show a functional

system to other potential users, we would expect many more hits to it in the future. It is difficult to be more precise at this point because it has never been done.

Question: Are you saying that there's not a site elsewhere in California or across the country that you think is a basic model for what you want, or would this system really be breaking new ground, as far as you know?

Answer: As far as the underlying data, the way the system is supposed to crunch the numbers, and the output that it is supposed to be providing, there is nothing in use by workforce programs currently.

Question: Is EDD going to supply that data?

Answer: The data would be coming from the Employment Development Department as part of their ES202 program, which is confidential company-level data. There are some confidentiality issues associated with this data.

A sample confidentiality statement is can be found at:

<http://www.sjeconomy.com/businessassistance/pdfs/sample.confidentiality.agreement.pdf>

Question: That is a common issue if you are awarded the contract?

Answer: Yes

Question: That's not all of the data that will be required, right? You are talking about space map data, employer data, and transit data?

Answer: Correct, the aforementioned data from those sources does not pose a confidentiality issue. The confidentiality issue pertains to the employer-level data supplied by EDD.

Question: Is the company level data formatted, linked to parcels or address?

Answer: The State of California provided data comes with an X coordinate and a Y coordinate so we can provide centerline data, the mapping. We should have no problem providing you most of the GIS layers. It comes straight from the City GIS team. The City is also working on an agreement with the County of Santa Clara to get a broader brush of data that would be necessary for this tool.

Question: What are the levels of aggregation that you want to be able to do? In terms of thematic mapping, you talk about aggregating many business at one address into a single bar, for example, or color or whatever; what about aggregating a block or a neighborhood like Willow Glen within San Jose? Are there expectations of being able to do analysis at geographic levels other than just points and the entire region, and what levels would those be?

Answer: The main utility for this tool is to understand workforce trends. It's likely that we'll want to focus on areas with high concentrations of employment, so you may be

looking at a map of Santa Clara County, but the display should automatically draw your eye to a particular area on the map to this or that employment cluster, so you'd say, "There is a lot of employment here; what is going on?" As an example, you'd find out that there are five law firms that comprise the mix that makes up that point.

Another utility of this tool is for the management and staff of the Workforce program to see employment trends. We might see a cluster of employment here today, but there was nothing there when we ran this report the first time, but the next year there was one employer, and the following year, there were four, then seven, and so on. From a workforce perspective, the question is raised, "What is going on in this area?" This tool has shown employment growth in the area.

The primary utility of the tool is to identify industry trends and workforce trends, so we expect to be able to focus on either the point or a predefined area.

Question: Is the detailed confidential information supposed to be available through the tool? If I click on that point you talked about, am I supposed to see that there are five law firms, and here are the names of them, and here are the employment numbers that they provided to you?

Answer: That is correct. The RFP mentions there would be some access or security level issues associated with data usage. There will be individuals who need to see company-level data. As part of the confidentiality statement, it will be necessary to identify user access rights: shared, public, semi, and system administrator privileges.

If this were a strictly public site, information would be rolled up in an aggregate form.

Question: Are you doing this kind of analysis right now? Do you any kind of data as of now?

Answer: We do. The idea behind this RFP is to create a tool that would allow any user regardless of skill the ability to get information easily and quickly.

Question: The hardware, the server, everything--would it be hosted here at the San Jose One-Stop?

Answer: We are leaving that up to the proposer; we are not requiring that it be hosted here. If you assume that, I think you would also have to assume that there would be a cost involved to do that. We are pretty much putting that back on you to figure out where would be the best place for this and incorporate into your budget the cost for doing so.

Question: Then comes the data access, how is the proposer going to get data from EDD, is it batch format, real time through the internet?

Answer: The data from the EDD comes on a quarterly basis. EDD will only release the data in a CD format. The data comes to the Workforce program via a disc format that would have to be uploaded. The RFP asks about the development of a front-end and a back end GUI. The back end GUI comes into play when, once the system is developed,

to allow a user of the workforce program the ability to load data into the system and make it run.

Question: So that is just tabular data that needs to be geo-coded, so every time you get the quarterly data you need to geo-code it or scrub it, if necessary, so it can be geo-coded?

Answer: Right. The desire is that, as this moves forward and we are finding issues with the data, especially during the development of this pilot tool with EDD data, we'll be able to have a dialog with EDD regarding the quality of the ES202 data.

Question: You could use this as a way to get them to improve their data so it is better for you and everybody else?

Answer: That is a possible upside, or byproduct, of the development of the geo-mapping system, so the people involved in creating this tool will be dealing with those types of issues. We may need to circle back to EDD and inform them of the issues we're running into. We expect that they'll be interested in dealing with these issues because the State has already identified the desirability of using GIS for visual analysis of workforce data. They will want to assist us in supporting their priorities as they relate to providing a pilot tool to ensure the most timely, relevant information about changing workforce needs and investment opportunities.

Question: Getting back to hosting questions, it seems like the options are: having it hosted here, have it hosted at the City of San Jose, or having it hosted externally by the company, or team, or companies, and it sounds like you don't have a preference at this point. I guess my bigger question is, is there any capacity already internally for that? I would assume the answer is no here at the One-Stop; I know the answer is yes for the City--and if so, what are the systems available within the City and are they available for purposes of this project?

Answer: Please do not consider the City as a hosting option.

Question: So as far as the resources here, are there are there any systems in place, data, servers, GIS software--or do you think that all of that is going to be provided as part of this?

Answer: There are no resources in place at the San Jose One stop that will be provided as part of the geomapping tool development.

Also, on the front page of the RFP you will notice on the bottom right box that there is a request to provide inquiries in written form only; this is essentially to ensure that the playing field is level and that everyone has access to every question and every answer just as everyone else got it as opposed to calling individuals on the phone. Regarding the submittal of the proposal on March 25, 2005, the doors will close promptly at 5:00 p.m.; proposals will not be accepted past the time indicated. Follow-up regarding the Technical Assistance questions will be provided on the websites shown on the front of the RFP.

Question: Have you worked with any of the vendors present, or prospective vendors before, on any projects or in development of the RFP or anything like that?

Answer: Regarding the development of the RFP, no. Have we worked with any vendors on any type of applications who are currently sitting at this table? Yes,

Question: Can you say who?

Answer: CMTI does the case management database system we use, and from another perspective there may or may not be a bidder, currently not present, that I have provided data to on a planning topic that was GIS-related but not related to this project.

Question: During these four phases, the proposer--one proposer--is going to go through all four phases, or after one phase would you bring on other proposers?

Answer: We anticipate bringing enough care to the selection process that the person or entity that is selected to perform on Phase 1 will follow through with phase 2, 3 and 4; however, we are sufficiently agile that if there is a problem with particular vendor, we will go out for another RFP for Phases 2, 3, and 4. We don't expect to have that problem, owing to the quality of proposals that we anticipate receiving. We expect that we will be able to make a well-informed choice as to the best vendor for this specific project.

Question: Could there be two proposers working on the same Phase?

Answer: While we have the ability to accommodate that situation, it is very difficult, given the scope of services, to see how that would actually play out in practice, so the chances of that occurring are extremely small.

Question: Is there some structure to the free-form query, like if you have 30 attributes, and you are going to do free form queries on all those, there is no way you can program an interface to do that, so I would assume for these 10 attributes you might want to be able to do this and this one and so on that is what you are describing.

Answer: Right

Question: What type of command drive are you looking for?

Answer: We are really leaving that to you. Approaching the question from a user's standpoint, what would be easier for the user? If you are developing a GUI, you should assume the user level is closer to entry-level versus a more skilled level. Part of that will be flushed out in Art and Structure, which is, "What do you want it to look like?" The expectation is it probably would not be command-like; something more like drop-down menus might be more in order.

Question: Is there technology preference with respect to the software to be used within the City, and also, if there is a technology preference, is there a licensing issue--software request for licensing--would that be an extra cost?

Answer: Getting back to the City question, the City does have standards but were intentionally left out. Remember please don't assume access to City hardware software resources for this project. The idea was to be market-driven and allow you as proposers to develop the tool with whatever technology you have knowledge in or feel best with. Then you are going to know what hardware will work best, and as part of your proposal you will say, "This is the hardware I am going to need." If there are licensing issues, you'll need to incorporate the costs associated with the software you plan to use on the project and move forward in that fashion.

Question: I hear that you're technology-agnostic with respect to what we propose here. Just by way of curiosity, because I suspect you know something regarding the City standards, are there hardware or software platforms that the City prefers?

Answer: Enterprise level hardware is Oracle; the City has not standardized on particular GIS software. ESRI software is often used in the City. Our office uses MapInfo for GIS. From the hardware side, the database structure is Oracle, and the boxes are Unix-based.

Question: Are there any similar standards from the State?

Answer: We have not been able to identify any standards at the State level.

Question: Does that mean the software and the hardware are part of the \$200,000 budget? Or is that going to be additional money?

Answer: We are assuming that whatever hardware and/or software you need to make this run is part of the budget.

Question: So if you have certain hardware and you just need one chunk of it so now instead of getting a whole box is this something you can look at with the City's own system, so say we do not need the hardware, software.

Answer: As state earlier, the City's hardware/software resources are not available. You have to look at your expertise, the cost of this is X dollars--I am going to need hardware, or maybe I need to upgrade my hardware--I don't need a full box so I will need to add into the cost additional monies for that upgrade. We did not want to require a certain standard or type or hardware/software.

We could have written in a standard, the intent however, was not to do that. If you are familiar with a product, then use what is comfortable to you. You have to build this on what you know as far as your own company is concerned.

Question: Is there a similar workforce organization in another part of the county?

Answer: Yes, in the North Valley--Nova. Basically there are 50 Workforce Investment Boards in California. They have the same goals, objectives, and benchmarks regarding the provision of workforce services, but they way they go about doing it is different for each.

Question: Would we be allowed to give alternate solutions in the proposal?

Answer: If you can propose alternative approaches within the 7 pages, then you can do so.

Question: What happens if, in reading through your RFP, our organization comes up with additional ideas that go beyond the scope of this that we think would be great add-ons but that would cost more money beyond your budget? Would you want to hear about those ideas as part of our proposal? Optional add-ons might increase the budget beyond the maximum. Would that be acceptable?

Answer: Please provide a proposal for the specific approach that you are going to suggest. In terms of proposal evaluation, we would prefer to compare apples to apples, rather than to apples with sugar coating. In order to make everything equal and even in terms of the playing field, we request that you address the requirements of the scope of services in your proposal. We suggest that you provide what you think is the best possible approach; there may be options that branch off from your proposed approach, but the exploration of these options is more appropriate in the context of contract negotiations than it would be in offering a proposal, since what we are asking for is a response specifically to address the scope of services issues. Please respond directly to what you see here in the scope section of the RFP. You only have 7 pages.

Question: You say that you want 12 pt. type, including in the tables, if we include graphics or figures from other work we have done. I assume that 12 pt. type for all readable type is not required?

Answer: We require 12 pt. type for all readable type in all narratives. We are not looking for a portfolio. One of our methods for evaluating your organization's approach, as it relates to the development of prior projects, will be to contact the references that you give us to get an idea of the quality and integrity your organization brings to the table.

Question: Do you already have systems and software in place here? Is it just safe to assume that you are a basic Microsoft office shop, you don't have Oracle, or you don't have Unix, you don't have a big IT staff, a license for ESRI, and/or a license for web mapping already?

Answer: Regarding ESRI licensing under the workforce program, No. There are not hardware software resources here at the One-Stop, I am going to hold off on answering that. IT support in general is pretty small at the One-Stop.

Related, the San Jose One-Stop as well as the other two locations, from the desktop standpoint all workstations are standardized on Microsoft product.

Question: Are you standardized on IE (Internet Explorer)?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Do you have an idea of the amount of data that will have to be accommodated through this system? A rough estimate?

Answer: It is not nearly as much data as you may think. For instance, the EDD information, Currently resides in an Access database and has data from 1993 to 2003. It currently has 777,000 records spread over 20 columns.

Question: But things like the field, the firm--knowing it is a bioscience firm, that's part of the data?

Answer: That's true to a degree, yes. Some of the other tables you would need include a NAICS crosswalk for industry classification codes; we have those. Those are relatively small Excel tables. There are staffing patterns tables; it is about a one megabyte Excel table. As far as the layers, the GIS layers that you need, most of those files are not big at all.

Most of it can be manipulated on Access or Excel, but there are limitations to it.

Question: So you use either SIC or NAICS codes as far as your industry types?

Answer: Yes, and we have crosswalks to bring them either way.

Question: At any point in time will you be incorporating other major data elements?

Answer: The base data elements are exactly what were just described to you

Question: Why did you specify that it is a web application?

Answer: Primarily because, from a user's standpoint, we have people in multiple locations. Additionally, there is a level of comfort with the users working through the browser. The other idea is, if this goes the way it is envisioned, this could be a lot broader to the State level or beyond.

There is going to be a security piece. From the public standpoint, you can click on a query and it is already done for you, given some type of login script. That gets you in and gives you more features; at least, that is a reasonable expectation.

From a development point of view, there will need to be discussions with the successful proposer about thresholds; if it meets a certain threshold you can't display the data, and that is something that can be worked out. EDD says that if there are less than 3 records you can't do this--you have to go another level in order to mask the company-specific data.

Question: You focused on EDD data almost exclusively; do you also have CalWORKS data? Or is it pretty much the EDD data and the base map data?

Answer: Those are going to be the two primary components (EDD ES202 and base map data).

Question: Is there data about job openings that would be part of this too? Or is it just about actual hiring.

Answer: It is not necessarily about hiring, it's understanding what industries are growing and from that, inferring what those jobs are and what kind of training would be required to get an entry level person prepared for a position. From the workforce standpoint, "What industry should we be targeting?" We will be looking at staffing patterns.

Question: I have a question about in terms of the people that would be doing the work and the hourly billing rate, are you going to prefer a proposal that has a small number of highly paid people over a proposal that has a large number of low-paid people, are you going to prefer a proposal that has workers based within your coverage area as opposed to workers in India or other parts of the United States? Are there any things about the evaluation criteria that would potentially affect our proposals?

Answer: Generally speaking, we don't specifically concern ourselves with that aspect of your approach provided it makes sense in terms of how you intend to execute your work plan. Your staffing patterns need to relate to what it is you are setting out to accomplish.

Question: Is the billing on a project phase basis or is it hourly/people-based rate. Are they going to reap the benefit if they get stuff done faster with less labor, or are they not going to reap that benefit?

Answer: Generally speaking, what we do here at the City is a cost reimbursement contract; so generally, we pay our invoices on a monthly basis. As we have a limited framework for assessing how much time each of the phases will require, it is difficult to know whether a process is moving more quickly than it would have with another contractor providing the same developmental services. Please note that we will be contacting your references regarding how your organization deals with speed/quality tradeoffs. From our perspective, no incentive will be necessary due to the high visibility and eventual impact of the project.

The list of the attendees will be published on the designated websites as shown at the bottom of the cover page of the RFP.

Questions submitted via email will be posted on our website for public dissemination. We will be posting any and all relevant questions on these sites.