



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

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To: Miguel Beltran, WMBE and Contract Compliance Manager, Finance and Administrative Services

From: Greg Spotts, Director

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Subject: 2023 WMBE Goals and Strategic Outreach Plan

Introduction

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) shares the commitment demonstrated by the City of Seattle and Mayor Harrell to contracting equity and to the women- and minority-owned business (WMBE) program. We are pleased that in 2022, we spent 25% of purchasing dollars and 35% of consulting dollars on WMBE firms. The following is a summary of SDOT's WMBE purchasing and consulting goals for 2023, along with our outreach plan to achieve these goals.

SDOT Mission, Vision, and Values

SDOT's vision, mission, and values set the foundation and direction for its WMBE program, goal setting, community outreach, and internal practices.

Vision: Seattle is a thriving, equitable community powered by dependable transportation.

Mission: Our mission is to deliver a transportation system that provides safe and affordable access to places and opportunities.

Values: SDOT is committed to: Equity | Safety | Mobility | Sustainability | Livability | Excellence

SDOT also uses the Transportation Equity Framework (TEF) to achieve the department's mission, vision, and core values. We believe transportation must meet the needs of communities of color and those of all incomes, abilities, and ages. Adhering to Title VI compliance obligations as well as implementing TEF tactics, is critical to SDOT's WMBE program, and this is reflected in our outreach plan.

1. 2023 Department Representative

SDOT's Contracting Equity Advisor, Christina Guros, holds the role of WMBE advisor under the supervision of Salma Siddick, SDOT's Compliance Manager, and with guidance from Michele Domingo, Director of Equity and Economic Inclusion. Christina can be reached at Christina.Guros@Seattle.gov.

2. 2023 Goal Setting

In 2022, SDOT spent 25% of purchasing dollars and 35% of consulting dollars on WMBE firms. Together this totals more than \$21.5 million to WMBE firms. SDOT exceeded our 2022 purchasing goal of 19% but fell short of our contracting goal of 38%. SDOT has met all WMBE goals since 2018, and while the percentage spend

was less than our goal, our consulting spend increased by half a million dollars, and our combined contracting and purchasing (C&P) spend increased by 33% from 2021.

For 2023, SDOT will maintain our consultant goal at 38% and increase our purchasing goal to 20%. Both goals correlate with our overall WMBE utilization over the past five years while still being aspirational. We anticipate our total C&P spend for the year will be \$80M, which will significantly increase the total dollar amount going to WMBE firms. SDOT will work toward these goals in 2023 as we update and maintain our sub-consultant reporting and incorporate WMBE spend planning and tracking into our department procedures and practices as outlined in our outreach plan below.

2023 SDOT WMBE Use Goals		
2023	Purchasing Goals	Consulting Goals
Percentage	20%	38%
WMBE Spend	\$6,000,000	\$19,000,000
Total Spend	\$30,000,000	\$50,000,000

In addition to our annual department-wide goals, SDOT has a WMBE utilization goal of 23% for all contracts for the Levy to Move Seattle, a 9-year funding program to improve safety, maintain assets and provide affordable travel options.

3. 2023 Outreach Plan

SDOT recognizes our role as stewards of public funds and the city’s history of discriminatory policies and practices toward communities of color that largely limited access to City funds. Our commitment to prioritize WMBE utilization and build WMBE capacity is central to our efforts toward equitable contracting and distribution of SDOT resources. In this section, we describe our planned external and internal engagement strategies to support and promote WMBE use.

External Engagement

Our external outreach and engagement focus on three key areas, described below:

1. **Timely, Consistent Information Sharing** – WMBE firms face challenges finding information and guidance when attempting to work with the City of Seattle. SDOT will implement the following actions to increase transparency and provide WMBE firms ample time and information to access funding opportunities.
 - **Consistent outreach information.** With the volume, diversity, and complexity of SDOT contracting opportunities, the WMBE program has struggled to publish quarterly information sheets reflective of all upcoming projects. In 2022 we began using a Contract Outreach Form for each new anticipated RFP and RFQ with key details of the upcoming opportunity. We use this form to search for qualifying WMBE firms, then contact these firms in advance of the procurement publishing date. In 2023 we will publish these forms on our webpage.
 - **Update the SDOT WMBE website.** The SDOT WMBE website will be updated to include current and past WMBE inclusion goals, outreach forms, annual reports, and upcoming contracting opportunities, as well as links to monthly outreach and education events available through City Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) and Tabor 100, as well as guides to contracting with SDOT.

Transportation Equity Framework

Tactic 17.1: Engage continuously with communities to make them aware of existing and new SDOT resources available to support BIPOC small businesses; provide accessible and culturally relevant information on SDOT services.

Tactic 17.2: Identify informational materials related to SDOT resources available for businesses and allocate funding for translation to ensure consistency with our language access plan.

- As part of SDOT’s Transportation Equity Framework tactics 17.1 and 17.2 (see call out box), we will review SDOT contracting outreach and engagement materials, including those available in Seattle’s top-tier languages. We will add resources relevant to WMBE firms to the WMBE webpage and consider the value of translating SDOT contracting resources not currently available in top-tier languages.
- Work with FAS, the WMBE IDT, individual City of Seattle WMBE advisors and contracting equity stakeholders, and the City’s technical assistance services consultant to ensure timely responses to technical assistance requests from WMBE firms; advocate for easily navigable City websites, systems, resources, and forms; and share best practices in WMBE engagement, contracting, capacity-building, and long-term relationship-building. We will continue partnering with FAS to ensure WMBE firms are alerted to blanket contract opportunities, focusing on contracts our department uses the most and supporting WMBE firms seeking blanket contracts.

2. **Networking and Relationship Building** – the Contracting Equity Advisor will work with program and project managers to cover outreach events and activities to lay the foundation for long-term relationships with WMBE firms, and with non-WMBE primes interested in supporting WMBE capacity-building.
 - **Working with SDOT events.** In the spring and late summer, we will host “Working with SDOT” events, during which leadership and project managers will present about upcoming projects and network with WMBE firms and prime contractors. The spring event will be hosted virtually, and we may return to in-person for the late summer one.
 - **Attendance at local events.** The Contracting Equity Advisor, Compliance Manager, and potentially SDOT project managers will attend events to network and share information about upcoming opportunities.
 - **Maintain and build relationships with community organizations.** We will continue partnering with Tabor 100, the National Association of Minority Contractors Washington Chapter, WTS – Seattle/Puget Sound, and the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials Washington Chapter. We will explore TEF tactics promoting partnership with these community organizations with a focus on increasing MBE participation.
3. **Learning from WMBE Feedback** – the SDOT Contracting Equity program will collaborate with FAS, the WMBE IDT, and the Office of Economic Development to strategize on a survey to WMBE firms to understand better their experiences working with SDOT. We hope to build on similar studies completed by other departments and work groups while focusing specifically on firms’ experiences with us. This effort is to learn from BIPOC-owned businesses about their concerns related to SDOT work and contracting practices, as well as their preferred feedback loops for accountable engagement and relationship-building.

Internal Engagement, Policies, and Practice

In 2023, SDOT will build on past initiatives to strengthen WMBE policies and record-keeping to shift the culture around contracting equity. The two areas of focus for this internal work are as follows:

1. **Use Technology to Improve WMBE Utilization Tracking** – There is ample opportunity to streamline WMBE utilization tracking internally at SDOT and Citywide.
 - **Incorporating WMBE into the SDOT spend plan process.** In 2023, SDOT incorporated WMBE utilization planning into the larger department-wide spend plan process to track 2023 WMBE actuals against planned spend by division. We will assess the success of this effort and hope to incorporate WMBE into the SDOT spend plan management tool for 2024 and future years.
 - **Examine SDOT data tracking related to budget, spending plan, and project management.** As we wrap up the Move Seattle Levy in 2024 and plan for the next transportation funding package, we will advocate for data integration to streamline WMBE utilization. The WMBE program will advocate for opportunities to integrate WMBE utilization data into SDOT spend and project tracking systems.
 - **Access Power BI for B2G Now.** To reduce the substantial staff resources and resulting lengthy timelines required to manually review WMBE sub-spend through the B2G Now system, we will advocate with FAS Purchasing and Contracts for access to Power BI for B2G Now and automate our analysis.

2. **Integrate More Fully into the Contracting Process** – SDOT’s WMBE program will build off work done in 2022 to incorporate planning and tracking into all aspects of the procurement process.
 - **WMBE inclusion plans and Contract Outreach Forms.** SDOT requires a WMBE inclusion plan as part of all competitive bid contracting processes (RFP/RFQ), no matter the funding source. In 2023 we will require all competitive bids to include a Contract Outreach Form to send to qualified WMBE firms at least 30 days in advance of the procurement publishing date. We will continue to work with SDOT’s Contracts & Procurement team to experiment with creative approaches to contract language and processes, such as scoring the inclusion plans at 15% of the overall bid submission scoring instead of the traditional 10%.
 - **WMBE advisor approval on all amendments.** In 2022, we worked with SDOT’s contracting team to update the Consultant Contract Request Form to require evaluation of WMBE availability and potential barriers. In 2023, we will require Contracting Equity Advisor approval of all contract and work authorization amendments. This allows us to track and direct any potential changes needed to the contract inclusion plan while ensuring that project managers consider inclusion plans at every stage of the contract process.
 - **Inclusion Plan Scoring Guide and Project Manager Manual.** In 2023, the Contracting Equity Advisor will roll out an Inclusion Plan Scoring Guide as a tool for all contract evaluation panel participants to assess WMBE inclusion plans. Additionally, we will support the SDOT contracts team in a review of their checklists, process documents, and plans to release an SDOT WMBE Manual for Program Managers by the end of the year.

4. Prompt Pay

SDOT fully supports the Prompt Pay Initiative and strives to pay all consultant invoices within 30 days. The City set a performance standard for payment of accepted and properly prepared invoices of a 95% compliance rate on prompt pay. In 2022, SDOT achieved an 85% prompt payment rate out of over 1,300 invoices processed to consultants. We will continue to work with Project Managers and our Contracts and Procurement team to achieve a 95% compliance rate in 2023.