ART Operations and Maintenance Services RFP and New Contract

March 17, 2026

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Key Takeaways

- The current Asheville Rides Transit (ART) fixed-route Operations and Maintenance contract ends June 30, 2026.
- An RFP process to select a vendor for the next contract was conducted and a vendor has been selected.
  - There were 4 proposals received.
  - A selection committee comprised of 7 individuals evaluated the proposals.
  - The selected vendor is RATPDev.
- Staff will bring the contract forward for Council consideration at the March 24, 2026 meeting.
- The new contract term begins July 1, 2026.

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ART Contract Background

- Asheville Rides Transit (ART) is operated under a turn-key Operations and Maintenance Contract.
- The current contract, which began in 2017, was awarded to RATPDev.
- Current contract term:
  - Contract length originally set at four base years and two 2-year option years for a total of eight years.
  - Contract was extended to a ninth year in FY 2026 due to staffing resources and impacts from Helene.
  - Contract term ends on June 30, 2026.

ART RFP/Contract Development

- In October 2024, the Transportation Department contracted with Kimley-Horn and Associates (KHA) to support staff with the procurement process for the next ART Operations and Maintenance Contract.
- KHA assisted with developing the Request for Proposals, reviewing adjustments to contractual requirements, and facilitating the vendor selection process
- A 7-member RFP Evaluation Committee was formed, comprised of:
  - One external evaluator (outside transit expert)
  - A representative from the French Broad River MPO
  - Representatives from the Finance Department, the City Attorney's Office, and the Transportation Department.

ART RFP/Contract Development

- Transit staff incorporated new requirements and standards into the RFP (that are also included in the contract) which are meant to:
    - Address current and/or ongoing issues that have not been remedied under the current contract
    - Provide clarity or definition around responsibilities of the contractor vs. the City
    - Improve and/or strengthen accountability and reporting by the contractor to the City
    - Increase corporate support for local needs, including project management of special projects to aid City staff, shared use of software, etc.

ART RFP/Contract Development

- New and strengthened contract performance measures include:
  - Higher goals for monthly on-time performance (80%, was 72%)
  - New Liquidated Damages:
    - For early departures (in addition to missed trips)
    - If supervisors/dispatchers are used to operate routes due to driver shortages
    - If a customer complaint is not responded to within 24 hours
  - Increase in Liquidated Damages for improper appearance and cleanliness of all ART facilities and bus stops

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ART RFP/Contract Development

- New full-time staffing positions:
  - Crisis Counselor
    - will primarily work at Transit Center
    - work with the customer service manager and team, as well as security team to assist riders and de-escalate situations
    - connect riders in need with resources in the community
  - Customer Service Manager
    - oversees the customer service team
  - Human Resources Manager/Recruiter
    - on-site recruiter to ensure a steady flow of applicants for all ART positions
    - collaborate and engage with the community

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ART RFP/Contract Development

- New software and technology for reporting and contract compliance and oversight, including
    - allowing City use of a route scheduling and service planning software called Optibus
    - allowing City use of service performance and project management software
    - new onboard safety tracking technology and camera system

ART RFP Evaluation Criteria

Proposals received a rating between 0 - 5 for each item falling under the following categories:

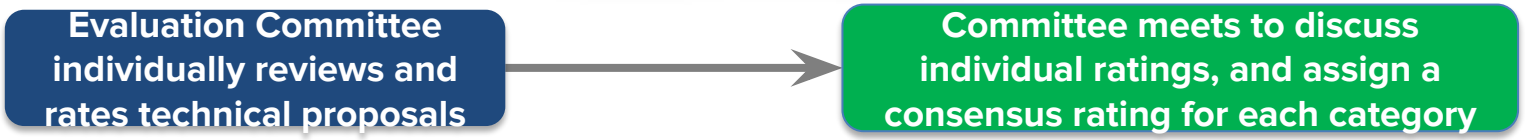
- Key Personnel and Organizational Structure
- Management of Operations
- Safety
- Asset Management
- Customer Service and Marketing
- Transition Plan
- Qualifications and Experience

Score	Description
0	Non-Responsive
1	Does not meet most requirements
2	Meets most, but not all requirements
3	Fully meets requirements
4	Fully meets requirements and exceeds some requirements
5	Exceeds most or all requirements

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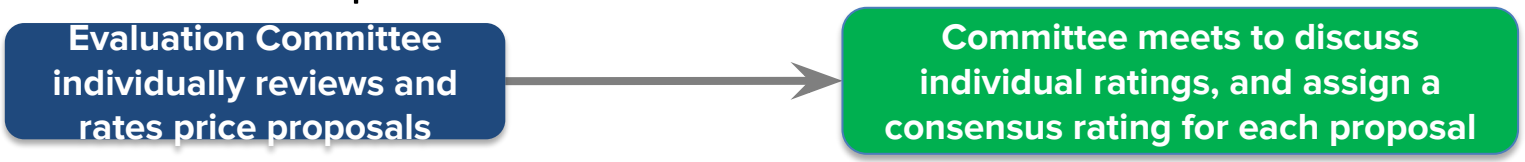
ART RFP Evaluation Process

Phase 1. Technical Evaluation



Note: Only proposals that receive 70 points or more move into Phase 2

Phase 2. Price Proposal Evaluation



Phase 3. Oral Interviews with Shortlisted Offerors

Phase 4. Selection of Preferred Offer

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Vendor Selection

- Received 4 proposals by the December 31 deadline.
- Only 1 offeror received a technical proposal rating above the 70 point threshold required to advance to Phase 2 of the evaluation process.
- Offeror Scores:
    - Vendor 1: 74 points Proposed Cost: $120,317,257
    - Vendor 2: 67 points Proposed Cost: $134,579,138
    - Vendor 3: 49 points Proposed Cost: $124,706,170
    - Vendor 4: 49 points Proposed Cost: $113,111,200
- After review of the proposals, the evaluation committee came to a consensus in inviting the the vendor with the highest evaluation score to interview

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Vendor Selection

- The evaluation committee conducted oral interviews with the qualified offeror(s) to discuss contractual obligations and address committee questions related to the proposal.
- Staff then entered into negotiations with the selected offeror to finalize the contract details.

New Contract

- The selected vendor is RATP Dev.
- Total four-year contract amount is $54,899,943. If both two-year options are executed, the total contract amount would be $120,317,257.
- Annual contract amount:
  - Year 1: $12,671,301
  - Year 2: $13,309,046
  - Year 3: $14,102,049
  - Year 4: $14,817,546
  - Option Year 1: $15,370,405
  - Option Year 2: $15,948,574
  - Option Year 3: $16,657,664
  - Option Year 4: $17,440,670

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Next Steps

- March 17: PEDE receives presentation and considers recommendation to forward contract to City Council
- March 19: Council Agenda Briefing regarding contract (New Business)
- March 24: City Council considers authorizing City Manager to execute contract with RATPDev to operate and maintain the ART transit system.
- July 1: Contract goes into effect

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Motion

Motion to recommend the item move forward to City Council to authorize the City Manager to execute a four-year contract with RATP Dev in the amount of $54,899,943 for the Operations and Maintenance of the Asheville Rides Transit fixed-route transit system.

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Questions?

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