

This is the fourth article on the historical diary of the Trinidad Rapid Rail Project (TRRP). It started on October 22, 2015.

Last week we began an examination of the details of the Informational Meeting for the Trinidad Rapid Rail Project held at Crowne Plaza (now called Radisson Hotel), POS on March 14, 2006. Today we look at some more details.

Mr. Krishna N. Murthy, Senior Vice-President, Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) and overall Programme Manager explained the project scope. He stated that the Trinidad Rail Project involves: planning; design, build, operation and maintenance of the system (trains, signals, communications, and power) serving POS and surrounding communities; project management and administration; systems; fixed facilities; and, system operation and maintenance.

Mr. Murthy stated that in his 33 years of experience, as far as he knows, there has been no other project in the world *'where the DBOM contractor gets to plan the project,'* and that this was an *'exciting challenge.'* According to him, subsequent Phases of the DBOM Contract will be implemented at the sole discretion of the Government, and will involve advanced planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the System beyond the *'Initial Phase.'*

He presented a map of Trinidad which showed that the initial phase involves a total system of 110 to 129 km, and includes 21 km from Arima to Sangre, 26 km from POS to Arima, 12 km from POS to Diego Martin, 25 km from POS to Chaguanas, and 34 km from Chaguanas to San Fernando.

Mr. Kerry J. Stevenson, PB's Procurement and Contracts Specialist then explained the Qualifications Form and Instructions (QF&I) and the procurement

process. He stated that preliminary quality evaluation factors for the proposal were as follows:

- Organization and Resources
- Resources and Experience in System Technology
- Experience in Design-Build Projects, Transit Projects, and Operations and Maintenance
- Approach to Planning, Design, Construction, and Technology
- Approach to Operations and Maintenance of the System
- Approach and Experience in Qualifications Based
- Selection and Negotiating Contract Costs

He said PB was not be using *'typical Requests for Proposal (RFPs) and the QF&I approach is more robust'* and *'fairly unique.'* He advised that proposals will only be accepted from DBOM teams who *'can do it all,'* so that the following will be considered non-responsive:

- Construction firm without a designer on its team;
- Design firms without a construction contractor on its team;

He confirmed that integrated design-build firms were welcome, but they must have operations and maintenance capability.

Mr. Murthy explained that after the process of evaluation of the contractor Statement of Qualifications (SOQ), selection of the sole contractor for the entire project and award of the contract, then (i) the rapid rail system planning will be undertaken and the extent of the initial phase will be determined; (ii) final costs will be determined; (iii) revenue service will be implemented approximately 4 to 5 years after Contract award; (iv) The DBOM contractor is required to provide operations and maintenance services for at least 5 years.

He also briefly described the extensive land-space to be provided for Fixed Facilities Maintenance / Storage Facility, including:

maintenance shop and equipment; operation and administration building; maintenance of way building; maintenance of way vehicles (vehicle mover, cranes etc.); train wash and car cleaning building; other support buildings (traction power substation, site access guard house, paint shop, etc.); storage yard capacity, etc.

He said the Transport Ministry is proud that so many international contractors and consulting firms attended the briefing and continue to telephone them and show a lot of interest in the rapid rail project, and the Ministry feels that that is definitely an indication that the project is right on track.

Which contractor will not be interested in a project in which the government bears all risks? But more importantly, how can PB expect an experienced DBOM contractor who has never ever had to compete on the basis of the inclusion of planning as a major component of DBOM be comfortable with the preparation of such a proposal, and worse with the evaluation procedure, seeing that the evaluators have also never done this before?

The Minister took the time to emphasize that there will be no discussion of the feasibility of rapid rail at the briefing, neither was there any direction on where to obtain such. Further, how is the contractor expected to interpret the non-typical nature of the RFP? For example, is there a contractor in mind already? When will the acquisition of all the lands for right-of-ways, the number of buildings and maintenance yards, and other facilities be completed for possession by the contractor?

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