



**City of Tacoma  
Department of Public Utilities – Customer Services**

**Remote Location Payment Solution  
RFI Specification No. CS16-0334F**

**QUESTIONS and ANSWERS**

All interested parties had the opportunity to submit questions in writing by August 1, 2016. The answers to the questions received are provided below and posted to the City's website at [www.TacomaPurchasing.org](http://www.TacomaPurchasing.org). This information is not considered an addendum. Respondents should consider this information when submitting their proposals.

**Question 1: Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)**

Answer 1: This is an open solicitation.

**Question 2: Whether we need to come over there for meetings?**

Answer 2: This is a Request for Information only. There will be no award from this solicitation.

**Question 3: Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)**

Answer 3: See the response to question 2.

**Question 4: Can we submit the proposals via email?**

Answer 4: No. Submittals must be provided as detailed in the RFI.

**Question 5: Has TPU identified a funding source for the system? If not, what funding source(s) are been considered?**

Answer 5: Funding for this project is secured.

**Question 6: Does TPU havean estimated cost for the system?**

Answer 6: TPU is interested in receiving information on a wide variety of solutions and no estimated cost has been identified.

**Question 7: Will TPU release an RFP to procure the system? Or will an award be made from the RFI?**

Answer 7: An award will not be made from this RFI. It is anticipated, though not guaranteed, there may be a future Request for Proposals to procure a system. Refer to Section 3 – Disclaimer of the RFI document.

**Question 8: Is there a time frame for the advancement of this project?**

Answer 8: Once a solution has been identified TPU would like to start this project sometime in 2017. Specific timing will depend on what TPU learns during this process.

**Question 9: The RFI reflects that TPU's current fleet of kiosks are reaching the end of life. Will TPU acquire kiosks as part of the Remote Location Payment Solution effort or will a separate solicitation be released?**

Answer 9: Responses to this RFI will help TPU evaluate options.

**Question 10: What payment channels do you use today for your customers?**

Answer 10: TPU offers customers authorized payment channels that include IVR, website, kiosks, walk-in office and mail.

**Question 11: In addition to the current kiosks installed, how many other payment locations are there for your customers to make payments?**

Answer 11: Physical locations provided to customers for payments beyond the kiosks include the TPU main administration building and the Finance department of the City of Tacoma.

**Question 12: For each payment channel, what is the quantity of monthly payments for each by tender type (IE. cash, check, debit & credit card)?**

Answer 12: Average monthly amount based on 2015 totals:

Kiosks	Credit/debit cards - 3,447
	Cash - 5,938
	Checks - 8
	<i>Note: Only one kiosk accepts checks at this time.</i>
IVR	Credit/debit cards - 11,066
Website	Credit/debit cards - 21,447
	Bank account - 6,576
Agents	Credit/debit cards - 8,295
	Cash - 4,452
	Checks - 3,052

**Question 13: Who is your merchant agreement with today for the acceptance of debit/credit cards?**

Answer 13: TPU currently partners with Trust Commerce for credit/debit card processing.

**Question 14: Which is preferred, real-time or batch post?**

Answer 14: TPU prefers real-time or close to real-time payment process.

**Question 15: Which department payments will be supported on Kiosk?**

Answer 15: Currently, all utility services are supported, TPU and Click! Network.

**Question 16: For existing kiosk, can you provide a break down on the total monthly payments accepted on each for each department including each tender type?**

Answer 16: Average monthly payment transactions based on 2015 totals:

<b>TPU Payment Transactions Average/month/kiosk</b>	<b>Credit/ debit</b>	<b>Cash</b>	<b>Check</b>	<b>Average pmt amt per transaction</b>
Kiosk 1	316	411		198
Kiosk 2	115	311		171
Kiosk 3	1,106	1,424		197
Kiosk 4	117	254		191
Kiosk 5	558	1,363		200
Kiosk 6	170	175		211
Kiosk 7	134	246		192
Kiosk 8	140	418		126
Kiosk 9	111	159		219
Kiosk 10	304	675		187
Kiosk 11	176	341		140
Kiosk 12	199	160	89	224
Average monthly transaction total	3,446	5,937	89	187

<b>Click! Payment Transactions Average/month</b>	<b>Credit/ debit</b>	<b>Cash</b>	<b>Check</b>	<b>Average pmt amt per transaction</b>
All kiosks combined	132	184	0	80

**Question 17: How many Kiosks does Tacoma have installed today?**

Answer 17: TPU currently has 12 remote payment locations and an additional kiosk used for testing purposes.

**Question 18: What improvement or features would you like to have that is not supported today by your current Kiosk equipment?**

Answer 18: TPU is interested in expanding credit card acceptance to include Discover and EMV chip enabled cards. Also see section 1.01 functions of ancillary interest.

**Question 19: How many transaction types does TPU have?**

Answer 19: Over 1.5 million/annually.

**Question 20: What is the monthly transaction volumes and average \$\$ per transaction?**

Answer 20: See the response to question 17.

**Question 21: How many cashiers does TPU currently staff?**

Answer 21: TPU currently has five full-time cashiering representatives who take payments as well as perform other contact center duties. At peak times, TPU has seven cashiers.

**Question 22: How many payment sites does TPU currently have?**

Answer 22: See the response to questions 12 and 18.

**Question 23: What is the ratio of Cash to other transactions on monthly basis**

Answer 23: Using 2015 data and all payment channels (including RLB-mail):

Cash payments	11%
Electronic transfer	20%
Debit/credit cards	25%
Check payments	44%

**Question 24: How many kiosk is TPU interested in.**

Answer 24: TPU would like to consider expanding from the existing twelve (12) remote payment locations.

**Question 25: Do you have certain areas TPU has identified and wish to have a kiosk placed? If so how, many and what are those area volumes?**

Answer 25: Current locations include inside the TPU main administration building, outside the main administration building, and various grocery stores in our service territory. See the response to question 17. TPU plans to add an additional remote payment location inside the Tacoma Municipal building in downtown Tacoma.

**Question 26: Do you wish to place kiosk in TPU property or 3rd party locations?**

Answer 26: Yes to TPU property. Yes to 3<sup>rd</sup> party locations.

**Question 27: If kiosks are placed in 3rd party locations can a service fee be charged to customer to pay for site location?**

Answer 27: TPU currently does not asses a service fee for payments.

**Question 28: Will kiosks placed in TPU lobby be the exclusive payment channel for TPU or will TPU continue to take TPU payments.**

Answer 28: It is not TPU's intent to stop collecting payments at their full-service counter at this time.

**Question 29: Does the kiosk have to make change to the dollar? Would you entertain pricing for both models?**

Answer 29: TPU would be open to pricing on both models.

**Question 30: Is an outdoor kiosk a requirement?**

Answer 30: Currently, TPU has one (1) kiosk that is located outside in an enclosed space. The back of the kiosk is temperature controlled.

**Question 31: How long is the contract?**

Answer 31: This solicitation is a Request for Information only. An award will not be made nor will a contract be issued from this solicitation.

**Question 32: Is it possible to submit multiple responses based on different scenarios?**

Answer 32: Yes. TPU is interested in learning about all available options.

**Question 33: Is E-Check acceptable? That is, is it acceptable to convert the check to ACH or will you require the physical check to be deposited?**

Answer 33: At this time, TPU requires a physical check.

**Question 34: Is TPU absorbing the credit/debit card fee?**

Answer 34: Currently, TPU absorbs the credit/debit card fee.

**Question 35: Can 2 pricing models be proposed. One as a lease to the TPU when on TPU property and one with a service fee charging the customer at 3rd party locations.**

Answer 35: See the response to question 33.

**Question 36: Will we be receiving a real time interface so we can provide bill presentment to the customer? Or will this be a batch process?**

Answer 36: The scope of this project will not include bill presentment. The real-time interface will provide customer name, address, account balance and include any restrictions. Completed payment transactions are also expected to be real-time or close to real-time.

**Question 37: Do you have a scan line on the customers bill, if so, what is the format?**

Answer 37: Yes, TPU has an intelligent scan line.

**Question 38: Can TPU's customer service reps at the walk-in payment center scan a customer's bill for account information?**

Answer 38: No.

**Question 39: How many customer accounts does Tacoma Public Utilities have?**

Answer 39: TPU currently has approximately 200,000 customers.

**Question 40: What is the frequency of your billing? Are consumers billed monthly or quarterly?**

Answer 40: TPU bills both monthly and bi-monthly.

**Question 41: Are bills required to be paid in full or is partial payment accepted?**

Answer 41: Partial payments are accepted.

**Question 42: What is the maximum and minimum payment amount accepted?**

Answer 42: There are no minimum or maximum payment amounts other than what SAP's billing system allows.

**Question 43: How many Visa Card payments are accepted monthly via kiosk and via web? Can you provide 12 month data?**

Answer 43: Average monthly payment card transactions, based on 2015 data (no breakdown between Visa and MC)

Kiosks 3,447  
Web 21,447

**Question 44: How many MasterCard payments are accepted monthly via kiosk and via web? Can you provide 12 month data?**

Answer 44: See the response to question 44.

**Question 45: How many Discover Card payments are accepted monthly via kiosk and via web? Can you provide 12 month data?**

Answer 45: Currently, TPU does not currently accept Discover cards at the kiosk locations but is open to exploring this option.

**Question 46: Are the existing kiosks using dial up or DSL Communication?**

Answer 46: A combination of cable internet and DSL is used for the existing kiosks, depending on location.

**Question 47: Does TPU pay for Dial Up or DSL Communications for kiosks today?**

Answer 47: Yes, TPU pays for cable connection and DSL communications.

**Question 48: Do you provide your current vendor a file with account data for account validation purposes? What data is provided?**

Answer 48: Utility billing and payments utilize a real-time interface. A file is provided to the current vendor for Click! billing and payments.

**Question 49: Page 2 item section 1.01 Ancillary Services(E). Can you define what is acceptable as Close to Near Real Time payment posting?**

Answer 49: TPU is interested in learning what options are available in the market place. TPU is not interested in daily batch processing.

**Question 50: How much is the average credit card payment?**

Answer 50: Using 2015 totals and all payment channels, the average credit card payment was \$160.

**Question 51: How much is the average cash payment?**

Answer 51: Using 2015 totals and all payment channels, the average cash payment was \$154.

**Question 52: Does TCU pay for kiosk space rental and telecommunication line costs?**

Answer 52: Yes, TPU pays for rental space and communications.

**Question 53: Will the selected vendor be the sole source provider (Exclusive)?**

Answer 53: At this time, TPU has made no decisions and is open to learning more about alternatives.

**Question 54: Is intent to replace the existing TCU Kiosk Network with exactly the same number of Kiosks in the exact same locations? Please define number of kiosk required?**

Answer 54: See the response to questions 25 and 26.

**Question 55: Page 2 Ancillary Services. Can you please provide more definition for "Ability to intake payments beyond utility payments (Click! Cable TV, traffic tickets, court fees, etc.) Does TCU accept payments for these billers today? Does payment file for these billers go direct to TCU or to the individual billers?**

Answer 55: See the response to question 49. If TPU expands to include other areas such as traffic tickets and court fees, a new file and/or interfaces would need to be developed.

**Question 56: Can a Word version of the RFI be provided? Or a PDF version where we can copy/paste text? When we respond we like to include the question/request as the header to our response for each section and providing in one of these formats allows us to easily copy over your question/request to our response.**

Answer 56: The solicitation document posted on the City's website is in PDF format. [www.tacomapurchasing.org](http://www.tacomapurchasing.org): Navigate to *Contracting Opportunities / Services Solicitations*, scroll to this RFI and click the word *Specification*.

**Question 57: Section 1.01 – Can the City please specify when the current fleet of kiosks will reach its end of life cycle?**

Answer 57: TPU has identified replacement as part of our lifecycle management.

**Question 58: Section 1.05 B – Can the City please clarify how many it is looking for?**

Answer 58: TPU is interested in 14 physical boxes and/or a minimum of 14 remote payment locations (kiosk or non-kiosk) for utility and Click! payments.

**Question 59: Section 1.05 H – Can the City please specify which model is currently used with the kiosks?**

Answer 59: The current model is Dell Optiplex 690, and utilizes a cash acceptor, check acceptor, credit/debit card acceptor, single-point touch screen and thermal printer for providing receipts.

**Question 60: Additionally, what models are used for other payment options available to customers, are fees charged to customers for any particular payment option today and which option?**

Answer 60: See the response to questions 11 and 28.

**Question 61: Section 1.05 J – The City is asking for specific examples of implementation at another public utility, how many examples are required?**

Answer 61: There is no required number of examples. As an RFI, TPU is seeking as much information as may be available.