

## **1. Existing Route Type Descriptions**

1.1. Water usage is recorded thru recurring monthly and quarterly meter reading routes. DPU has the following types of routes:

### **1.1.1. Quarterly Residential Foot Routes:**

1.1.1.1. Route is completed by walking through a residential neighborhood while carrying a handheld data collector. Most of the time the reader needs to walk up to the house and read the odometer style remote mounted on the house. The reader then manually types the read into the handheld.

1.1.1.2. There are currently 522 routes comprised of 289,314 meters. For approximately 25% of those meters, DPU has installed an Itron ERT which will transmit the reading to the handheld as the reader walks by the house and the reader will not enter anything manually. The ERTs are installed sporadically throughout the routes and do not make up an entire route or subdivision.

1.1.1.3. There are an average of 9 walking routes required to be completed per day (6 min, 10 max). There is an average of 4,000 reads per day for all of the walking routes combined (1617 min, 5323 max). There is an average of 542 meters per walking route (88 min, 908 max). (See Attachment 1 for detailed route numbers)

### **1.1.2. Monthly Commercial Routes:**

1.1.2.1. Route is completed by driving to a commercial property. For the majority of these accounts, a reader will need to enter a commercial property using provided keys or will need to wait on an escort to provide access to the meter. Sometimes it may take as long as 30 minutes for an escort to arrive. The reader will need to read the actual meter register which may be digital or odometer style.

1.1.2.2. There are currently 59 routes that are comprised of 7,334 meters. Approximately, 64% of those meters have been outfitted with an Itron ERT.

### **1.1.3. Quarterly Car Routes:**

1.1.3.1. These accounts tend to be more spread out which keeps them from being included in a standard walking route. The reader will drive to either a residential or commercial property. There the reader will need to obtain the reading from either a meter box with ERT, meter vault with ERT, odometer style remote or enter a commercial property (see commercial route description above).

1.1.3.2. There are currently 58 routes that are comprised of 10,484 meters. Approximately, 41% of those meters have been outfitted with an Itron ERT.

#### 1.1.4. Monthly Pit Routes:

1.1.4.1. The majority of these meters are in a meter vault which is considered a confined space. The selected Contractor will need to follow all federal, state, and local confined space entry requirements. Once confined space entry requirements are met, the entrant will read the various meters (if more than one).

1.1.4.2. There are currently 36 routes comprised of 2,684 meters. Approximately, 34% of those meters have been outfitted with an Itron ERT.

#### 1.1.5. Quarterly Pit Routes:

1.1.5.1. The procedures for these pit routes match the Monthly pit routes listed above. There are currently 4 quarterly pit routes comprised of 358 meters. Approximately, 30% of those meters have been outfitted with an Itron ERT.

#### 1.1.6. Monthly Electric Routes:

1.1.6.1. Route is a combination of driving and walking; whereby, a reader may drive to an area, park and walk to obtain readings. There may be banks of meters at a single location which each need to be read. In addition to the usage reading, the reader may be required to also enter a demand reading for certain accounts. For those that require a demand reading, the reader must also reset the demand value on the meter and reseal the meter using a provided seal.

1.1.6.2. There are currently 39 monthly routes comprised of 18,593 meters. Approximately, 21% of those meters have remote read capabilities.

## **2. AMI Implementation**

2.1. As part of the Enhanced Meter Project, the City is anticipating 10,000 water meters will be converted per month in 2025 and continue until June 2027. Additionally, the City is anticipating 2,000 electric meters will be converted per month starting in 2025 and continue until early 2026. As meters are changed to the AMI system, meter reading routes will be consolidated as needed by DPU. While the AMI project may come to a completion in 2027, it is anticipated that the meter reading services outlined in the RFP may be needed beyond that completion date.

2.2. The AMI Contractor may be changing out upwards of 10,000 meters a month which will remove them from the list of meters that still need to be manually read by a meter reader. As DPU moves through the AMI project, existing meter reading routes will be consolidated based on the AMI schedule and project progress. It shall be the responsibility of the selected meter reading Contractor to understand these changes are going to occur and will need to be able to react appropriately to maintain read schedules. DPU will provide a 14-calendar day notice when selected routes will no longer need to be read by this Contractor.

### **3. Work Requirements**

3.1. Meter reading services include data collection through manual reads and radio reads. The Contractor will use DPU's handhelds for meter reading. DPU will download and upload handhelds for the Contractor.

#### **3.2. Meter Reading Requirements**

3.2.1. The City emails the Contractor monthly assignment sheets.

3.2.2. By 8AM each day, the Contractor emails the City the assignment sheet for the next day showing what routes are going out and which handhelds they are to be loaded in. The Contractor also gives the City a finalized schedule on routes that did not go out for that day.

3.2.3. By 2:45PM, the Contractor emails the City a route update letting the City know of any lagged routes and which handheld they would like for them to be loaded on for the next day.

3.2.4. The Contractor will drive to 3568 Indianola Ave (or current Field Services location) each morning to retrieve the handheld and in the afternoon to return the handheld. No Contractor vehicles or equipment are allowed to be stored at DPU's offices.

3.2.5. Contractor will read each meter once per month or quarter based on the parameters of the account.

3.2.6. The Contractor must read routes with at least 99.8% accuracy (i.e., no more than two (2) missed or incorrect meter reads per 1,000 meters).

3.2.7. Unfinished routes must be completed the following work day.

3.2.8. Contractor will reread all skip reads (foliage, hostile animal, gate locked, access obstructed, missed house) within 2 days of receipt of report. Rereading attempt will need to be completed by someone other than the original reader. If a read can't be obtained on the 2nd attempt Contractor will leave a notice.

3.2.8.1. If Columbus is able to obtain the reading after the Contractor's 2nd attempt, DPU will deduct \$50.00 per occurrence of a successful City read from the Contractor's invoice.

3.2.9. Contractor will need to reread error reads (high or negative usage) within 2 days of receipt of report.

3.2.10. If Contractor enters an incorrect error code which results in additional effort by DPU, DPU will deduct \$50.00 per erroneous event from the Contractor's invoice.

#### **3.2.11. Read Schedule and Normal Hours of Work**

3.2.11.1. Contractor's normal hours of operation will be between the hours of 7:00AM – 3:15PM, Monday through Friday.

3.2.11.2. Unless previously approved, all handhelds assigned to the Contractor must be back in the cradle at 3568 Indianola Ave no later than 3:15PM each day.

3.2.11.3. Exceptions to this schedule must be approved by DPU prior to any changes.

3.2.11.4. Contractor will follow the City of Columbus' Holiday schedule.

3.2.11.5. Contractor will work in all weather conditions excluding Franklin County level 3 snow emergencies.

3.2.11.5.1. The Contractor will not work if DPU closes due to weather.

3.2.11.6. Contractor will need to meet DPU's read schedule; any delays will be the responsibility of the Contractor to get back on schedule.

3.2.11.6.1. Overtime may be included in the strategy. Overtime must be approved by DPU at least 3 days prior to any planned overtime taking place.

3.2.11.6.2. Unless the need for overtime is caused by DPU, Contractor overtime reads will be paid at the normal read rate. If the need for overtime is due to DPU, the overtime reads will be paid at the overtime read rate. This determination needs to be made prior to the overtime being worked. If not, the overtime will be paid at the normal read rate.

3.2.11.6.3. Unless the need for overtime is caused by DPU, any DPU costs due to the Contractor working overtime will be billed back to the Contractor and applied against the Contractor's invoice.

3.2.11.6.4. The continued use of overtime shall not be used as a way to maintain the read schedule

3.2.11.6.5. The overtime order preference for DPU is as follows

3.2.11.6.5.1. Saturdays (1st)

3.2.11.6.5.2. Holidays (2nd)

3.2.11.6.5.3. Sundays (3rd)

3.2.11.6.5.4. Weekday Evenings (4th)

### 3.2.9. Read Routes

3.2.9.1. DPU's current meter reading schedule consists of approximately 20 read days each month. DPU may increase or decrease the number of routes read per day in order to, for example, recover days lost to holidays or improve route efficiency. Route changes requested by the Contractor must be approved by DPU.

3.2.9.2. Contractor will ensure internal control by rotating meter readers. For quality control purposes, meter readers are not to read the same routes more than two times in succession.

3.2.9.3. Upon DPU's issuance of a notice to proceed, the successful Contractor will have fourteen (14) calendar days to become familiar with City routes and operating procedures before commencing the reading of the meters. Exceptions may be granted if mutually agreed to by the Contractor and DPU.

3.2.9.4. DPU may have the Contractor read the other route types. DPU will provide at least 45 days prior notice to the Contractor if additional route types beyond the Quarterly Residential Foot Routes need to be read by the Contractor.

### 3.2.10. Meter Reading Equipment and Documents

3.2.10.1. Contractor will use DPU owned handheld computers to collect meter reading data.

3.2.10.2. DPU has a maintenance and support contract for each of its handheld collectors; however, the Contractor will be responsible for repair or replacement of handheld collectors due to the Contractor's negligence such that the damage is not covered under the maintenance and support contract.

3.2.10.3. DPU, to the best of its ability, shall provide the Contractor with route sheets, meter information, maps and any other pertinent information.

### 3.2.11. Personnel Requirements

3.2.11.1. Contractor shall perform a criminal background check on its field personnel or any personnel working on the project who could come into contact with the public and submit the results to DPU prior to the person performing work. Only personnel with background checks acceptable to the City will be approved.

3.2.11.2. Contractor will provide trained personnel to complete necessary work and will ensure that its employees have the necessary skills, knowledge, training, and experience to perform meter reading accurately and safely so as not to injure or endanger DPU, its employees, or any third party. Contractor will provide training records if requested by DPU.

3.2.11.3. Contractor will provide supervision of all Contractor personnel. Problems encountered in the field that could result in reading schedule delays will be coordinated through DPU. Contractor will provide DPU with a list of supervisory personnel assigned to this project and will provide cellular telephone numbers for contact purposes. Supervisors will respond to DPU personnel within thirty (30) minutes during normal working hours.

3.2.11.4. DPU will provide each Contractor Employee an identification badge with employee photo that is required to be worn in the field at all times. ID badges must be returned upon employee separation from employment. Employees will need to return home and retrieve the badge if forgotten. At no time can an employee read meters without a badge. All safety requirements will be followed as defined by Columbus DPU. Contractor will be responsible for fees related to lost or damaged badges. All safety requirements will be followed as defined by Columbus DPU.

3.2.11.5. Contractor is responsible for ensuring that its employees have a valid driver's license when driving a motor vehicle and performing the meter reading services.

3.2.11.6. Contractor's employees are prohibited from consumption of or being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or illegal substances during working hours. Contractor employees are also prohibited from smoking while on the property of any City customer.

3.2.11.7. Contractor must obey all local, state and federal laws and requirements.

### 3.2.12. Customer Service

3.2.12.1. Contractor is responsible for ensuring that DPU Employees and all customers and their property are treated in a courteous and professional manner.

3.2.12.2. Contractor is responsible for ensuring that all customers and their property are treated in a courteous and professional manner.

3.2.12.3. DPU reserves the right to require Contractor personnel changes due to poor performance, which includes but is not limited to, read errors and poor customer service and inappropriate behavior in the workplace including DPU facilities.

3.2.12.4. Contractor will check for "stopped/stuck" meters on all accounts that reflect no consumption by, occupant activity (visibly occupied or unoccupied).

3.2.12.5. Contractor checks for "stopped/stuck" meters on all accounts that reflect no consumption by, occupant activity (visibly occupied or unoccupied).

3.2.12.6. Contractor will report suspected malfunctioning meters to DPU for repairs.

3.2.12.7. The Contractor shall promptly notify DPU: (a) if it observes any damaged or missing meter vault lids or other conditions which might pose a safety hazard to the customers or public; (b) if it observes a leak; or (c) if it observes or has reasonable grounds to believe that theft of water service has occurred or is occurring.

### 3.2.13. Materials and Uniforms

3.2.13.1. Other than the provided handheld computers, the Contractor will furnish all materials and supplies necessary to complete the work.

3.2.13.2. Contractor Employees are required to wear a uniform subject to approval by DPU. DPU will not be responsible for providing uniforms. Meter readers must wear the approved uniform while in the field. The cleaning of uniforms will be the responsibility of the Contractor. Employees will maintain a neat and clean appearance while providing meter reading services. Torn, worn or soiled uniforms will not be worn while performing responsibilities under the Contract. DPU reserves the right to inspect uniforms and require the Contractor to replace them if soiled or damaged. Contractor is responsible for providing appropriate safety equipment based on City requirements.

### 3.2.14. Transportation

3.2.14.1. Contractor is responsible for providing transportation for its employees. Contractor vehicles will be maintained by the Contractor, have a clean appearance and be mechanically sound. Contractor vehicles should include appropriate identification approved by DPU clearly indicating their use for meter reading for DPU.

3.2.14.2. All insurance is the responsibility of the Contractor. DPU shall be held harmless for any and all claims against the Contractor and its employees.

### 3.2.15. Customer Claims for Damage

3.2.15.1. DPU will follow its claims process to determine if a claim will be paid to a customer. The cost of any claims paid by DPU as a result of the Contractor's actions will be deducted from the Contractor's next month's invoice. If the cost of the claims exceeds the invoice value, the Contractor will be required to reimburse the DPU for the amount still outstanding.

### 3.2.16. Project Meetings

3.2.16.1. The Contractor shall allocate time to attend monthly coordination/progress meetings with DPU.

#### **4. Invoicing**

4.1. Invoicing will be completed monthly

4.2. DPU will produce a report no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month which will contain the following information about the previous month's reads

4.2.1. Number of contractor reads by route type for the previous month

4.2.2. Number of skip reads by route type for the previous month

4.2.3. Number of error reads by route type for the previous month

4.2.4. Any DPU cost related deductions as outlined in this solicitation

4.3. Contractor will prepare and submit an invoice based off the reported information to DPU no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

#### **5. Escalator Clause**

5.1. No price adjustment shall be granted during the first six (6) months duration of an awarded contract. Thereafter no more than two such increases may occur within any year of the contract. In the event the supplier receives a general price increase in the cost of the finished product contracted for, due to increase in the cost of raw materials, labor, freight, etc., upon giving thirty (30) days prior notice and proper documentation as proof, said increase in addition to the unit price quoted herein, may be permitted, subject to the sole discretion of the City of Columbus Department of Public Utilities Director. In the event any such increase is granted; no price adjustment shall be permitted on orders received by supplier which are in process or filled but awaiting shipment prior to the increase. All price decreases inure to the benefit of the City of Columbus. The written notice and following documentation shall be sent to: City of Columbus DPU, 3568 Indianola Ave, Columbus, OH 43214.

5.2. The supplier shall submit the following documentation with each request for a price increase:

5.2.1. Copies of the old and the current price lists or similar documents which indicate the original base cost of the product to the supplier and the corresponding increase; and

5.2.2. Copies of correspondence sent by the supplier's supplier explaining the source of the increase in such areas of raw materials, freight, fuel or labor, etc.; and

5.2.3. Copies of excerpts from business publications, market quotations or trade journals recognized as being representative of their particular trade or industry, that indicate a trend toward an increase in the current market for the commodities under the awarded contract.

5.3.4. If at any time during the term of the contract the supplier's total request(s) for a price increase(s) are greater than fifteen percent (15%), the City of Columbus may cancel this agreement with thirty (30) days written notification.

#### **6. Quantity Estimate**

6.1. DPU read numbers provided are estimates.

#### **7. Meter Reading Rates**

7.1. Monthly Meter Reading Cost - \$173,500