METRO Blue Line Light Rail Extension

Request for Industry Feedback

08/19/2024

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1 Introduction

The Metropolitan Council (the "Council") is evaluating packaging and delivery method strategies for the METRO Blue Line Light Rail Extension Transit Project (the "Project"). This Request for Industry Feedback (RFIF) is a request for the construction industry to provide input on the potential packaging and delivery method strategies described in this RFIF and to inform the construction industry of the potential procurement opportunities with the Council in the future.

Section 2 of this RFIF provides an overview of the Project. Section 3 of this RFIF provides an overview of the potential packaging and delivery method options that the Council is considering for the Project. Section 4 of this RFIF prescribes the process by which the construction industry can provide input on the potential packaging and delivery method strategies described in this RFIF.

1.1 Disclaimers and Procedures

This RFIF does not constitute a request for qualifications (RFQ), a request for proposals (RFP), or any other procurement document, nor does it represent a commitment to issue an RFQ or an RFP in the future. This RFIF does not commit the Council to any specific form of procurement or to contract for any supply or service whatsoever.

Responding to this RFIF and/or participating in the outreach activities described herein are not prerequisites to participating in future procurement processes. A Respondent may choose not to respond to this RFIF nor participate in the outreach activities and may still participate in any subsequent RFQ or RFP processes for the Project. Respondents choosing to respond to this RFIF will not, merely by virtue of responding, be deemed to be "bidders" or "proposers" on the Project in any sense, and no such Respondent will have any preference, special designation, advantage or disadvantage whatsoever in any subsequent procurement process for the Project.

Respondents and participants will not receive payment or reimbursement from the Council for work product, time, materials, or other expenses incurred as a result of this RFIF and outreach activities described herein.

The following table provides a schedule for the RFIF and outreach activities, further described in Section 4.

Table 1 - RFIF and Outreach Activities Schedule

Activity	Date
Release RFIF to Industry	August 19, 2024
Pre-Feedback Conference (See below for meeting information)	August 29, 2024, 1:00pm CST
Written Response Due	September 27, 2024, 5:00pm CST
Request for One-On-One Meeting Due	September 27, 2024, 5:00pm CST
Industry Informational Session	October 23, 2024
One-On-One Meetings	October 24-25, 2024
Complete Industry Outreach and Finalize Packaging Strategy & Delivery Method Selection	November 2024

Entities having questions regarding this RFIF may submit such questions via ConstructionBid@metc.state.mn.us. Except for the processes prescribed within this RFIF, entities are not permitted to communicate on topics regarding this RFIF with anyone from the Council.

The Pre-Feedback Conference will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams, which can be accessed via the following link at the date and time specific in *Table 1*:

Microsoft Teams Need help?

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 283 517 167 445
Passcode: YkULL2

Dial in by phone
+1 763-600-8619,,380664373# United States, Plymouth
Find a local number
Phone conference ID: 380 664 373#
Join on a video conferencing device
Tenant key: metrocouncil@m.webex.com
Video ID: 118 906 566 2
More info

At the Pre-Feedback Conference, the Council will present an overview of the RFIF content and purpose. This will be an opportunity for interested entities to ask the project team, procurement, and Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEO) clarifying questions pertaining to this RFIF.

Communication and information shared through the RFIF activities are subject to the laws of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

2 Project Description

The Project will extend the existing Blue Line Light Rail from Target Field Station northwest to Brooklyn Park and connect communities in the corridor. The Project is 13.4-miles long, connecting downtown Minneapolis to the communities of North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. The Project is a critical connection in the highly traveled northwest area of the Twin Cities and includes connections to Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and the Mall of America.

Connecting with the existing METRO Blue Line at Target Field Station, the Project and its 12 new stations will be part of an integrated system of transitways serving the region, including connections to METRO Green Line, Northstar commuter rail line, bus rapid transit lines, existing bus service, and proposed future transitways. This Project is one of two significant ongoing METRO line expansions and a critical part of the Twin Cities' transportation future. As such, it is vital to build the Project on time, on budget and with the support of stakeholders and the public.

Additional Project information can be found here: http://bluelineext.org/ (the "Project Website").

2.1 Project Schedule

The table below outlines the anticipated schedule for the project:

Table 2 - Blue Line Light Rail Extension Schedule

Activity	Date
Complete Industry Outreach and Finalize Packaging Strategy & Delivery Method Selection	November 2024
Complete 60% Design	November 2024
Publish Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement SFEIS	Q2, 2025
Complete 90% Design	Q3, 2025
Complete 100% Design	Q1, 2026
Full Funding Grant Agreement	Q3, 2026
Construction	2027 - 2030
Anticipated Opening	2030

This schedule is subject to change.

2.2 Project Scope

In summary, the Project scope is anticipated to include 13.4 miles of new light rail infrastructure, 12 stations, six new LRT bridges and eight new roadway bridges, three park and ride facilities, an Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF), and 32 Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs). *Table 3* below describes the Project's scope elements.

Table 3 – Blue Line Light Rail Extension Scope Elements

ID	Name	Description
1	Civil	Clearing/grubbing, grading, utility relocations (public and private), drainage, retaining walls, roadway reconstruction, traffic signals, striping and signing, ground improvements, duct bank / infrastructure for future LRT systems, and subgrade for 13.4 miles of light rail alignment and roadway.
2	Structures	Six new LRT bridges and eight new roadway bridges. The structures element also includes non-bridge retaining walls and potential ground improvements due to unsuitable soils.
3	Track	Ballast, subballast, ties, fasteners, special trackwork, cast-in-place concrete (for embedded track), and rail.
4	Systems	Electrical and communications conduits, overhead contact system (foundations, poles, headgear, wire), train control signals, traction power (substations and feeders), communications (fiber backbone, station communications equipment such as variable message signs, and wayside equipment connections to traction power substations, signal houses, park-and-ride facilities, and other elements), emergency telephones, and cameras.
5	Stations	Site clearing/grubbing, grading, drainage, foundations, platforms, structural canopy and shelter, stairs, railings, fencing, and platform elements (benches, trash cans, signs and systems maps) for 12 stations.
6	Park-and-Rides	Site clearing/grubbing, grading, utility relocations (public and private), drainage, foundations, parking lots, striping, parking structures, elevators, stairs, walkways, railings, ramps, access routes (sidewalk, ADA ramps, stairs, railings, fencing), basic elements (benches, trash cans, signs & systems maps), and customer communications for three park-and-rides.
7	Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF)	Site clearing/grubbing, grading, utility relocations (public and private), drainage, foundations, LRV maintenance shop and storage/yard, track, staff offices and materials storage for one OMF at the northern end of the extension. Rail systems infrastructure for the OMF is included in the Systems element, above.
8	Vehicles	Manufacturing and delivering of 32 Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs)

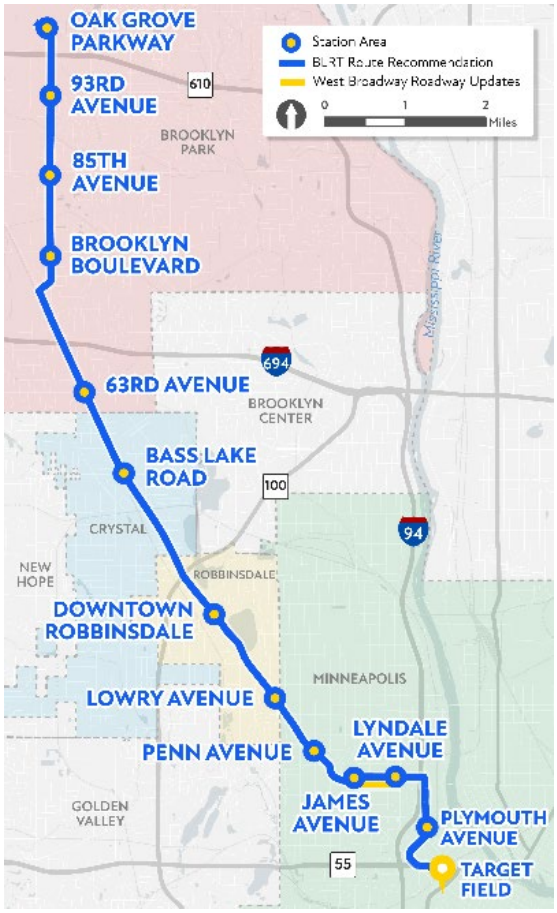

Figure 1 - Blue Line Light Rail Extension Map

As shown in *Figure 1 – Blue Line Light Rail Extension Map*, the 13.4-mile-long corridor spans four municipalities: Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. The geographical characteristics of these municipalities vary as the alignment goes from urban downtown Minneapolis to suburban areas of Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park and finally the semi-industrial areas of Brooklyn Park. Minneapolis, due to the tight right-of-way restrictions, dense utility network, and high-traffic areas, presents unique challenges that are not as significant in the other three municipalities. In addition, the Minneapolis segment will consist of embedded track while the remainder of the alignment generally uses ballasted track.

The Project's scope and geography entail challenges such as right-of-way constraints, existing utilities, long-lead time materials procurement, the need for specialty contractors, complex sequencing and phasing, contractor-defined means and methods, and potentially overlapping work zones.

Noting such complexities, the Council determined a need to develop a contract packaging strategy that would facilitate the implementation and management of the Project's construction.

2.3 Project Packaging Goals

As the first step in the packaging strategy development process, the Council identified the Project's packaging goals. The Council determined that the Project packaging strategy should:

A. Minimize interface risks (schedule, sequencing, quality, location) between packages to reduce the likelihood of one package interfering with and delaying others, ultimately completing the Project within budget by 2030.
B. Account for market conditions that may impact contractor availability, bonding capacity, and pricing and encourage competition amongst both large and small contractors.
C. Foster participation of small businesses and DBEs.
D. Support workforce development opportunities.
E. Encourage a high-quality constructed product, which includes corridor consistency from visual, rider comfort, and operations and maintenance perspectives.
F. Mitigate top project risks, which include, but are not limited to: right-of-way constraints, design and means and methods complexities, utility relocations, community impacts during construction (traffic, local business impacts, noise, dust), and approvals of jurisdictional authorities.
G. Incorporate innovative procurement strategies to enhance the above goals.

3 Project Packaging and Delivery Method Strategies

The Council further refined the Project scope elements into components, as provided in *Table 4*. As shown in *Table 4*, the civil, structures, and track scope elements were further broken down to reflect the potential to package by geography (municipality). The stations element was further broken down to reflect the civil (site preparation and foundation) work separately from the vertical facility work to allow for packaging by work activity. The station and park and ride elements were also broken down by geography (municipality).

Table 4 - Detailed Component Breakdown

Component ID	Component Name
1a	Civil - Minneapolis
1b	Civil - Robbinsdale
1c	Civil - Crystal
1d	Civil - Brooklyn Park
2a	Structures - Minneapolis
2b	Structures - Robbinsdale
2c	Structures - Crystal
2d	Structures - Brooklyn Park
3a	Track - Minneapolis
3b	Track - Robbinsdale
3c	Track - Crystal
3d	Track - Brooklyn Park
4	Systems (entire project)
5a	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Minneapolis
5b	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Robbinsdale
5c	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Crystal
5d	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Brooklyn Park
5e	Station Facilities (excl. site prep and foundations)
6a	Park & Ride Facilities - Robbinsdale
6b	Park & Ride Facilities - Brooklyn Park
7	OMF
8	Vehicles

The Council has identified three preliminary packaging strategies for the Project, as described in the following subsections.

3.1 Packaging Strategy A

Description: In this packaging strategy, the Council would package together all civil, structures, track, and station civil work together into one package. Next, the Council would package the park & ride facilities together and then have standalone packages for systems, station facilities, OMF, and vehicles. This packaging strategy is visually shown in *Figure 2*, below.

Number of packages: 6

Characteristics:

- Strategy minimizes number of packages.
- Strategy suggests a separate systems contractor.
- Dividing scope elements (stations) by work activity (civil & facilities) will result in interface points between the civil contractor and facilities contractor.
- Systems contractor work will interface with civil, track, & OMF works.

	Component	Package Number
1a	Civil - Minneapolis	1
1b	Civil - Robbinsdale	1
1c	Civil - Crystal	1
1d	Civil - Brooklyn Park	1
2a	Structures - Minneapolis	1
2b	Structures - Robbinsdale	1
2c	Structures - Crystal	1
2d	Structures - Brooklyn Park	1
3a	Track - Minneapolis	1
3b	Track - Robbinsdale	1
3c	Track - Crystal	1
3d	Track - Brooklyn Park	1
4	Systems	2
5a	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Minneapolis	1
5b	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Robbinsdale	1
5c	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Crystal	1
5d	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Brooklyn Park	1
5e	Station Facilities	3
6a	Park & Ride Facilities - Robbinsdale	4
6b	Park & Ride Facilities - Brooklyn Park	4
7	OMF	5
8	Vehicles	6

Figure 2 - Packaging Strategy A

3.2 Packaging Strategy B

Description: In this packaging strategy, the Council would divide the packages by geography to separate the Minneapolis section from the remainder of the alignment to accommodate the complexities of right-of-way, jurisdictional authorities, utility relocations, and embedded track in the Minneapolis municipality, as described in Section 2.2, Project Scope. To implement this approach, the Council would first package together the civil, structures, embedded track, and station civil work in the Minneapolis section. Next, the Council would package together the civil, structures, and station civil work for the remainder of the alignment (Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park sections). As these contracts are advanced, the Council would package together the ballasted track (Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park sections) and systems for the entire Project. Finally, the Council would package the park & ride facilities together and then have standalone packages for station facilities, OMF, and vehicles. This packaging strategy is visually shown in *Figure 3*, below.

Number of packages: 7

Characteristics:

- Strategy separates the Minneapolis segment from the remainder of the alignment.
- Dividing scope by geography will result in interfaces at tie-ins.
- Strategy increases number of packages.
- Dividing scope elements (stations) by work activity (civil and facilities) will result in interfaces between the civil contractor and facilities contractor.
- Systems contractor work will interface with civil, track, & OMF works.

	Component	Package Number
1a	Civil - Minneapolis	1
1b	Civil - Robbinsdale	2
1c	Civil - Crystal	2
1d	Civil - Brooklyn Park	2
2a	Structures - Minneapolis	1
2b	Structures - Robbinsdale	2
2c	Structures - Crystal	2
2d	Structures - Brooklyn Park	2
3a	Track - Minneapolis	1
3b	Track - Robbinsdale	3
3c	Track - Crystal	3
3d	Track - Brooklyn Park	3
4	Systems	3
5a	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Minneapolis	1
5b	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Robbinsdale	2
5c	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Crystal	2
5d	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Brooklyn Park	2
5e	Station Facilities	4
6a	Park & Ride Facilities - Robbinsdale	5
6b	Park & Ride Facilities - Brooklyn Park	5
7	OMF	6
8	Vehicles	7

Figure 3 - Packaging Strategy B

3.3 Packaging Strategy C

Description: In this packaging strategy, the Council would package together all civil, structures, track, systems, and station civil work together into one large package. Next, the Council would package the park & ride facilities together and then have standalone packages for station facilities, OMF, and vehicles. This packaging strategy is visually shown in *Figure 4*, below.

Number of packages: 5

Characteristics:

- Strategy combines all civil, track, and systems work into one package.
- Strategy minimizes number of packages.
- Dividing scope elements (stations) by work activity (civil and facilities) will result in interfaces between the first package contractor and the OMF contractor and station facilities contractor.

	Component	Package Number
1a	Civil - Minneapolis	1
1b	Civil - Robbinsdale	1
1c	Civil - Crystal	1
1d	Civil - Brooklyn Park	1
2a	Structures - Minneapolis	1
2b	Structures - Robbinsdale	1
2c	Structures - Crystal	1
2d	Structures - Brooklyn Park	1
3a	Track - Minneapolis	1
3b	Track - Robbinsdale	1
3c	Track - Crystal	1
3d	Track - Brooklyn Park	1
4	Systems	1
5a	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Minneapolis	1
5b	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Robbinsdale	1
5c	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Crystal	1
5d	Station Civil Work (Site Prep & Foundations) - Brooklyn Park	1
5e	Station Facilities	2
6a	Park & Ride Facilities - Robbinsdale	3
6b	Park & Ride Facilities - Brooklyn Park	3
7	OMF	4
8	Vehicles	5

Figure 4 - Packaging Strategy C

3.4 Delivery Methods

The Council will deliver the packages comprising the Project using Design-Bid-Build (DBB) procurements and is evaluating the traditional low-bid method and one- or two- step Best Value (BV) methods.

In a traditional low-bid DBB approach, the owner procures the designer to complete the project's design and thereafter procures a separate contract with the lowest bidding responsive responsible contractor to construct the design. The contractor selected will build to the owner's designer's plans and specifications.

The Best Value DBB procurement approach considers both price and qualitative factors in the contractor selection process. Similar to low-bid, in a BV procurement, the owner contracts with a designer to prepare the project's design. However, to select the contractor, the owner evaluates both the bid price to construct the design in addition to other factors such as the contractor's qualifications and experience, personnel qualifications and experience, technical approach to the work, among others. Contractor selection may be completed using a one (RFP) or two-step process (RFQ & RFP).

The Council is also considering obtaining contractor feedback on the owner's design during a BV procurement. Contractor feedback would occur through an Alternative Technical Concepts (ATC) process or with the

contractor providing input on issues such as constructability, sequencing, staging, third-party coordination, and risk mitigation prior to the submission of proposals.

Specific to the Blue Line Light Rail Extension, the Council is considering running a BV procurement while the project's design is ongoing. During the BV procurement, potential proposers can provide input during final design regarding constructability, costs, and project risks with the goal of de-risking the work before a construction price and schedule are established in the proposal. Proposers' input would remain confidential until after the award of the BV contract. The contractor can use their expertise to help make sure the project is designed in a smart, constructable manner with high quality and an eye towards lowering long-term maintenance and ownership costs.

4 Industry Feedback and Outreach

The Council recognizes the need to ascertain market interest and understand industry perceived risks in the potential project packages and delivery methods prior to confirming a packaging and delivery method strategy for the Project. The goals of this Project's industry outreach initiative are to:

- Spread project awareness to those in the contracting community who may be interested in working on the Project to ultimately increase competition and encourage qualified contractors;
- Seek input from the industry as it relates to Project risks, which can help prioritize the Council's pre-construction activities; and
- Seek input from the industry on the proposed packaging strategies and delivery methods for the Project, which can offer the Council insight into market interest, potential flaws in the Council's proposed strategies, identify other packaging strategies that the Council has not yet considered, or confirm which packaging strategy is most preferred.

The Council will seek industry feedback and perform industry outreach through three steps: written response to this RFIF, industry informational session, and one-on-one meetings. These steps are described below.

4.1 Written Response to RFIF

Response-Eligible Entities are those entities that are potential prime contractors and specialty subcontractors, such as, for example, systems contractors, for the potential construction packages described in Section 3. Only the Response-Eligible Entities may submit a written response to this RFIF. Entities that are not considered Response-Eligible Entities are encouraged to provide feedback verbally or in writing at the industry informational session, as described in Section 4.2, Industry Informational Session.

Response-Eligible Entities are encouraged to provide a written response to this RFIF. At a minimum, the Council requests that any written response by Response-Eligible Entities include the following information:

- Contact information of the respondent, an overview of the respondent, the potential role the respondent would have on this Project, and similar projects the respondent has worked on;
- Based on the information provided within this RFIF, would the respondent be interested in submitting proposals in response to future Project procurement opportunities? Are there any concerns that may prevent the respondent firm from engaging in the Project? How might those concerns be resolved?
- Would the respondent be interested in hosting a booth at the industry informational session, as described in Section 4.2, Industry Informational Session.
- Based on the information provided in this RFIF and the respondent's similar experience:
    - Provide feedback on the shortlisted packaging strategies described in Section 3. Are there other packaging strategies that the Council should consider?
    - Provide feedback on the potential delivery methods (low-bid DBB vs. best value DBB) being considered for the packages. Are there certain elements of the work (or certain packages) that would benefit from one delivery method versus the other?
    - Provide feedback on the design-bid-build best value procurement method, including the extent to which the Council could employ contractor involvement prior to proposal submission to mitigate risks to both the Council and the contractor.
    - Describe which packages, if any, are best suited for a best value procurement method and which, if any, are better suited for low-bid.
    - Prioritize and list what the respondent sees as major project risks that the Council should actively mitigate. Provide potential mitigation strategies for these risks, including contract packaging strategies that would mitigate risks to both the Council and the contractor.

- Describe how respondent would mitigate interface risk between packages, including the interface between multiple civil packages and/or interface between civil work, track and systems.
- It is anticipated that construction contractors will be required to provide performance bonds for 100% of the contract price. At what dollar amount does this present an issue for bonding the work? Describe any potential concerns.
- Provide strategies on how to encourage DBE participation in the future Project contracts.

Written responses must be in PDF format and limited to ten pages long. Written responses must be emailed to ConstructionBid@metc.state.mn.us by the date shown in *Table 1*.

4.2 Industry Informational Session

The Council will host a public industry informational session for potential Blue Line Light Rail Extension contractors and subcontractors (including DBEs) to learn more about the Project and meet potential teaming partners and suppliers/vendors. At the industry informational session, the Council will provide a presentation on the Project's construction schedule, constructability constraints and potential solutions, design progress, permitting status, and any recent changes from the OEEO processes.

Providing a written response to the RFIF, as described in Section 4.1, Written Response, will not be a prerequisite to attending the industry informational session. Potential attendees must pre-register via the following link: https://forms.office.com/e/LczXPYEHYC

Details regarding the time of day, location, and agenda will be circulated to registrants in advance of the industry informational session.

4.3 One-On-One Meetings

Response-Eligible Entities may request to participate in one-on-one meetings with the Council. Such meetings would provide the Response-Eligible Entities with the opportunity to present feedback on packaging and delivery strategy, perceived construction opportunities and risks, and other concerns in detail and allow the Council to ask questions or seek clarifications.

Requests for a one-on-one meeting must be submitted by the date shown in *Table 1* to ConstructionBid@metc.state.mn.us using Form A, below.

Providing a written response to the RFIF, as described in Section 4.1, Written Response, is not a prerequisite to requesting and participating in one-on-one meetings. One-on-one meetings will not be confidential; anything said or provided by the participants can be used by the Council in the future.

One-on-one meetings will be scheduled by the Council. It is anticipated that one-on-one meetings will be in-person on the dates shown in *Table 1*. Please limit one-on-one meeting attendees to six people. One-on-one meetings will be no longer than 45 minutes. The Council will provide additional information such as date, time, and location to the Response-Eligible Entities that request a one-on-one meeting.

4.4 Post-Industry Outreach

Post-industry outreach, the Council will evaluate the feedback to (i) finalize a packaging strategy, (ii) select delivery methods for each package, and (iii) finalize the procurement schedule to account for packaging and delivery methods. The Council will summarize feedback received through the industry outreach process, which may be publicized on the Project website.

METRO Blue Line Light Rail Extension

Request for Industry Feedback

Form A

One-On-One Meeting Request

Response-Eligible Entity: _____

Response-Eligible Entity Representative Name: _____

Response-Eligible Entity Representative Email Address: _____

Response-Eligible Entity Representative Phone Number: _____

Date of Form A Submittal: _____

Anticipated One-On-One Meeting attendees:

Name	Title	Affiliation / Company

Overview of Response-Eligible Entity:*

Potential role Response-Eligible Entity would have on the Project:*

Similar projects Response-Eligible Entity has worked on:*

*If requester has provided this information in a Written Response to the RFIF, requester does not need to provide the overview, potential role, or similar projects