Subject: Justification for Mandatory Site Visit – ITB 26-11-214020 ARRC MP186-195 ROW Brush Clearing

To Whom It May Concern,

The ARRC MP186-195 ROW Brush Clearing project under ITB 26-11-214020 is funded in part through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and requires contractors to perform vegetation clearing, chipping, mulching, and timber removal activities within approximately 68.37 acres of Alaska Railroad right-of-way between Mileposts 186.9 and 195.0 near Willow, Alaska. The work must be performed within an active railroad operating environment and under strict railroad safety and operational requirements.

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) required a mandatory site visit to ensure all prospective bidders obtained a complete understanding of the project site, operational constraints, and associated risks before submitting bids. This requirement was implemented in alignment with FAR 52.237-1 (Site Visit) and ARRC procurement policy to safeguard project success, worker safety, and compliance with funding requirements.

The mandatory site visit was necessary for the following reasons:

Safety and Railroad Operations
The work will be performed within an active railroad right-of-way under regularly scheduled train operations. Contractors must comply with ARRC operating rules, roadway worker protection requirements, on-track safety procedures, track protection requirements, and federal railroad safety regulations. A site visit allows bidders to observe operating conditions firsthand and understand the safety requirements that will directly affect project execution.

Complex Terrain and Environmental Conditions
The project corridor includes varying terrain conditions that may be steep, heavily vegetated, and, in some locations, environmentally sensitive or wetland areas. The work involves clearing, mulching, and removal of trees, shrubs, brush, and downed timber within designated right-of-way limits. These conditions cannot be fully understood through plans, maps, or specifications alone. Physical observation was necessary for contractors to properly assess access, equipment requirements, production rates, staging locations, and operational challenges.

Restricted Access and Railroad Coordination Requirements
Project access is limited and requires coordination with ARRC personnel for daily operations, track access, outage windows, flagging, and movement within the railroad corridor. The site visit included a project safety briefing and guided tour conducted by ARRC personnel using a high-rail vehicle, providing bidders direct exposure to the project limits and operational constraints that could significantly affect means and methods of construction.

Accuracy of Bids and Stewardship of Federal Funds
Because the work involves specialized railroad operations, varying field conditions, and

coordination requirements that affect schedule, labor, equipment, and safety measures, ARRC determined that a mandatory site visit would reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings, bidder assumptions, change orders, claims, and cost overruns. Ensuring that all bidders receive the same firsthand information supports responsible stewardship of federally funded project resources.

Fairness and Transparency in Procurement
The mandatory site visit provided all interested offerors with the same opportunity to view project conditions, receive safety and operational information, and ask questions in a controlled and consistent setting. This approach promotes transparency, equal access to information, and fair competition among bidders.

For these reasons, attendance at the site visit was established as a mandatory condition of bidding, and bids submitted by firms that did not participate through an authorized representative could be considered non-responsive. The requirement was implemented to support project success, worker safety, compliance with railroad operational requirements, and proper administration of federal funding.

Sincerely,

Sarah B Wallace

Sarah Wallace
Contract Administration Specialist
Alaska Railroad Corporation

52.237-1 Site Visit.

As prescribed in 37.110(a), insert the following provision:

Site Visit (Apr 1984)

Offerors or quoters are urged and expected to inspect the site where services are to be performed and to satisfy themselves regarding all general and local conditions that *may* affect the cost of contract performance, to the extent that the information is reasonably obtainable. In no event *shall* failure to inspect the site constitute grounds for a *claim* after contract award.

(End of provision)

Parent topic: 52.237 [Reserved]