



# **North Central Texas Council of Governments**

**NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
DENTON COUNTY TRANSIT PLANNING STUDY**

**Friday, September 3, 2021**

## **Denton County Transit Planning Study Request for Proposals**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is requesting written proposals from consultant firms for the Denton County Transit Planning Study. The purpose of this project is to develop a comprehensive approach for planning and strategic implementation of transit services focusing on internal and regional connection, increased transportation options and innovation, people movement, feasible funding options, and private sector participation in Denton County.

### **NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a voluntary association of, by, and for local governments, and was established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments as well as to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.

Since 1974, NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Metropolitan Area. NCTCOG's Transportation Department is responsible for regional transportation planning for all modes of transportation. The Department provides technical support and staff assistance to the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and its technical committees, which compose the MPO policy-making structure. In addition, the Department provides technical assistance to the local transit providers of North Central Texas in planning, programming, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions.

## **BACKGROUND**

In May 2019, Denton County requested assistance from the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) with developing a comprehensive approach to planning and implementing transit services outside of transit authority service areas. Elements to consider include: internal and regional connections, focus on strategic implementation, near-term implementation, increased transportation options and innovation, funding options, and private sector involvement. The study request came in response to the RTC approving funding for a comprehensive transit study for Tarrant, Collin, and Dallas Counties. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to develop a comprehensive, coordinated transit planning and implementation plan, which leverages existing transportation infrastructure and transit services in and around Denton County.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of this study is to ensure that transit and mobility needs are met and that all recommended transit services are warranted. NCTCOG will ensure that the transit services recommended as a result of this study meet the needs of the various market segments analyzed, including the elderly, individuals with disabilities, disadvantaged populations, commuters, and households with limited access to personal vehicles

## **PROJECT SUPPORT**

The project will be conducted under the guidance and supervision of a Project Review Committee (PRC). The responsibilities of the PRC will be to serve as the principal technical review committee for this project. NCTCOG shall serve as project manager to implement a mutually agreed upon scope of work and to monitor weekly progress. NCTCOG shall also serve as the contract manager and procurement administrator for the project.

## **WORK PROGRAM**

The work program for the Denton County Transit Planning Study is summarized in the Scope of Work below. Contractors may also propose tools to achieve outcomes (beyond those minimally required).

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The Scope of Work for the Denton County Transit Study is outlined in the following tasks and subtasks. These tasks represent anticipated responsibilities of the consultant team and will be further refined during final scope negotiations and project kick-off and will likely evolve as the project progresses. The consultant team is invited to propose modifications to these tasks and to exercise creativity in responding to the project's needs. Modifications which improve the effectiveness of this study effort, within budget constraints, are encouraged.

### **Task 1: Project Management**

Task 1 outlines the oversight and administrative tasks required to support the plan development needs, such as develop project management plan, define communication protocol, provide project deliverables and public involvement support.

After the Notice to Proceed is issued, NCTCOG, the selected consultant team (Consultant), and the Project Advisory Committee shall conduct a project kick-off meeting to refine project work plan, review project management approach, and discuss data needs and sources.

The Consultant shall conduct monthly meetings in person or via conference call with NCTCOG to review project progress and provide guidance on project development.

## **Task 1 Key Deliverables:**

- Project management plan (including budget/schedule/deliverable by task)
- Regular communication with NCTCOG
- Monthly progress reports and invoicing to include:
  - Estimated percentage of work completed and budget expended per task
  - Schedule activity report; Work activities anticipated for the following month for each task
  - Existing and anticipated issues / problems that may affect the budget, schedule or work products
  - An update of the project schedule with milestones, deliverables, and inter-dependent project elements

## **Task 2: Public and Stakeholder Involvement**

Task 2 develops and implements various coordination and engagement activities, tools, and methods to communicate with stakeholders, elected officials, and the general public. The purpose of Task 2 is to promote understanding of transit options, funding and implementation strategies, potential impacts on the community, as well as solicit feedback on the development of key project elements. Geographic representation across Denton County will be ensured throughout the public and stakeholder engagement process.

### **Task 2.1: Stakeholder Engagement**

NCTCOG will assemble a Project Advisory Committee formed by key stakeholders to ensure local and regional needs are met. The Consultant shall work with stakeholders to define a Transit Vision for the study area that is linked to DCTA and others' broader transit planning initiatives. Specific

goals and objectives will be developed that guide the transit planning process, recommendations, and implementation.

The Project Advisory Committee will be a combined technical and policy committee. The combined committee structure aims to facilitate communication between technical staff and elected officials by providing a forum for coordinated discussion of transit needs and benefits and the necessary steps required to realize the agreed-upon Transit Vision. NCTCOG reserves the option to separate the combined committee structure into two committees, if needed.

NCTCOG and the Consultant shall meet with the Project Advisory Committee regularly to review and seek input on analysis and deliverables during the plan development process. To facilitate stakeholder understanding of analyses and key findings, the Consultant is encouraged to use visualization tools to communicate the information.

Additionally, the Consultant shall attend other stakeholder engagement activities with NCTCOG, as requested, with responsibilities including but not limited to meeting facilitation, preparing meeting materials (e.g. presentations), and meeting notes.

**Task 2.1 Key Deliverables:**

- Regular committee meetings with stakeholders, with necessary meeting materials
- Meeting minutes within five working days of committee meeting
- Other stakeholder engagement activities as requested with necessary materials

## **Task 2.2: Public Engagement**

The Consultant shall develop Public Engagement Strategies designed to maximize public input throughout the planning process and build community consensus around a Transit Vision and implementation approach. Strategies shall be tailored to engage diverse community members, including business leaders, elected officials, general public, and other stakeholders. An innovative approach to strategy development is encouraged.

Additionally, the Consultant shall support NCTCOG throughout the public outreach process by facilitating discussion and preparing project and meeting materials, including but not limited to: presentations, maps and other visuals, minutes, surveys, and other material. Outreach material will be designed to facilitate understanding of current transit needs and potential transit future. This support shall include coordination with the NCTCOG Public Involvement and Transportation Education and Outreach staff.

Opportunities for public input shall be divided into at least two phases:

- Phase I promotes awareness of the project and transit options, assesses latent transit demand by market segment, and gathers preliminary input on transit concerns and interests for the overall Transit Vision, including network and service design
- Phase II presents transit scenarios and their cost estimates outlined in Task 4 and collects feedback to shape the preferred scenario and service recommendations. NCTCOG or the Consultant may propose additional outreach activities for the project as necessary

### **Task 2.2 Key Deliverables:**

- Public Engagement Strategies
- Public outreach support (facilitating discussion, preparing materials for outreach)

- Information suitable for posting on various NCTCOG public communication platforms including project website and social media
- Report summarizing public involvement process, data collected, analyses results, and project recommendations

### **Task 3: Comprehensive Transit Needs Assessment**

Task 3 provides an overview of existing transportation services and planned improvement and performs a market analysis on current and near-future transit demand. Analyses performed under this task will serve as the basis for scenario development and service recommendations in the following tasks.

#### **Task 3.1: Existing Transit Services, Planned Improvements, and Conditions**

The Consultant shall compile, review, and document data, plans, studies, policies that are relevant to existing and planned transit services in the study area, with broader understanding of the regional transit system as context. A comprehensive transit needs assessment for Denton County will be the end-product of this task. As Denton County is adjacent to other key transit service areas in neighboring Dallas and Tarrant counties, interconnections across the different transit systems will also be considered.

The Consultant shall work with NCTCOG and Project Advisory Committee to identify existing/ongoing planning studies and plans to be reviewed. NCTCOG has developed several studies and plans that include or focus on Denton County, including the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Mobility 2045. Additionally, Access North Texas, developed in 2018 outlines the needs of transit-dependent users and proposes near-term solutions, along with

implementation strategies to meet identified needs. Key findings and recommendations outlined in each of these transit studies shall inform Task 3 and subsequent tasks.

Documentation shall include (but not limited to): types of service, service boundaries, levels of service, performance, funding sources, subsidies for service provision, per-ride costs, overlapping service areas, and planned service or improvements.

### **Task 3.1 Key Deliverables:**

- Report summarizing the current state of transit services, including planned improvements that will impact the transit system in the near future (now to ten years)
- Summary of key findings and recommendations from previous studies/plans that inform the Report
- Maps of existing conditions

### **Task 3.2: Transit Service Needs and Market Analysis**

The Consultant shall conduct a market analysis based on diverse factors to understand transit demand. The Consultant will utilize travel data made available by NCTCOG to determine how people are moving within, into, and out of the study area to understand existing and near-future travel patterns.

Based on extensive data analysis on travel patterns, land use, population and employment densities, and socio-economic characteristics, the Consultant shall identify the following: existing and trending transit markets by weekday, weekend, and time of day; need or conduciveness for transit-supportive infrastructure (such as mobility hubs or transit-oriented development); service gaps or issues such as underserved corridors/areas; first/last mile service deficiencies; mismatch of service types or characteristics in the study area.

To perform this analysis, a variety of data sources will be used, including but not limited to: demographic data, land use and zoning data, economic data, NCTCOG-supplied cellphone-based travel data, and NCTCOG's travel demand model.

**Task 3.2 Key Deliverables:**

- Technical report for transit service needs and market analysis
- Maps of market conditions

**Task 4: Scenario Development and Evaluation**

Task 4 develops and evaluates multiple scenarios for transit based on findings from previous tasks and makes service recommendations for each scenario. The scenarios developed will function as a menu of options for communities to consider and decide on which scenario most closely aligns with their community's needs, desires, and available resources. The Consultant shall work with NCTCOG, Project Advisory Committee, and communities to establish multiple scenarios ranging from minimum improvement to maximum visionary to allow stakeholders and general public to understand opportunities, challenges, and trade-offs across all scenarios.

Additionally, the scenarios should be contextualized within the transit projects outlined in Mobility 2045. Stakeholders and communities will have opportunities to shape proposed scenarios to build community consensus around transit options and to facilitate understanding of key challenges related to implementing transit service.

For each scenario, the Consultant shall identify certain corridors/areas of interest and specify the service or project recommendation (e.g. mode, frequency, span of service, transit-oriented development opportunities) based on analyses performed in previous tasks, as well as input from

stakeholders and the general public. Other evaluation criteria shall include: anticipated performance (e.g. ridership), life-cycle cost, and equity considerations to be determined with NCTCOG and Project Advisory Committee. For ridership forecasting, NCTCOG will coordinate with the Consultant to determine appropriate plan of action based on the type of transit service/project recommended. Additionally, the Consultant shall evaluate emerging technologies and innovative mobility options such as ridesharing, microtransit, autonomous vehicles, and other mobility technologies appropriate for identified transit needs and markets including cost estimates.

The Consultant is encouraged to use enhanced transit planning tools provided by analytics software to develop service recommendations. For example, if an express bus route is a potential recommendation, use analytics software to develop service parameters such as operational requirements, costs, network impacts on accessibility and the transit system. Similarly, if microtransit is recommended, use analytics software to define service parameters such as zone boundaries, operational requirements, costs, and estimated performance. Leveraging the capabilities of transit analytics software, all recommendations should utilize visualization tools to facilitate understanding and evaluation of recommendations for the general public, stakeholders, and elected officials.

**Task 4 Key Deliverables:**

- Technical report for scenario development, evaluation and recommendations including cost estimates
- Scenario infographics designed for public distribution
- Supporting graphics (high-quality), such as maps and factsheets

## **Task 5: Funding Plan**

Task 5 develops a robust funding plan to identify viable, integrated revenue sources for transit and the related public infrastructure required in Denton County. It involves an audit of the full range of revenue sources, resulting in specific funding recommendations. The Denton County Funding Plan will evaluate the recommended scenarios developed in Task 4 for financial viability, financial sustainability, and near-term implementation.

In coordination with NCTCOG, stakeholders and regional leaders, the Consultant shall identify and evaluate available transit funding sources and other potential funding opportunities at the local, state, and federal levels to balance estimated costs for each transit scenario with available revenue. Funding sources to evaluate include conventional public funding sources as well as innovative sources, such as: value capture, tax increment financing, and potential local funding options. Funding sources shall be identified based on planned use: capital or operations and maintenance (O&M). If necessary, the Consultant shall identify actions or mechanisms needed for application of identified funding sources in North Texas.

The Consultant will evaluate the viability of each potential revenue source and estimate the value of revenue generated for each respective year of implementation and operation. It is anticipated that several dozen strategies will be reviewed with magnitude, timing, duration, stability, revenue viability, risk, legal foundation, and legislative foundation factors evaluated at a minimum for funding system construction, operation, and maintenance.

For each viable revenue source, the Consultant shall recommend a specific use and calculate the total value of revenue streams as each revenue source is applied. The Consultant shall recommend a phased implementation strategy for the recommended scenarios that balances expenditures as best as possible. The best-suited funding streams will be structured into

a package of revenue streams focusing on local options funding concepts designed to attract private-sector capital investments for designing, building, operating, and maintaining transit service.

Additionally, the Consultant will evaluate current and planned economic development in the study area in relation to transit demand impact; likewise, the impact of transit investments on local economic development will be evaluated. Based on this evaluation, the Consultant shall document best practices for transit-supportive economic development.

Finally, the Consultant shall coordinate with entities responsible for cost estimating to identify synergy elements that reduce cost estimates while increasing revenue (e.g. innovative fare collection system or a capital element designed to reduce operating cost). For funding sources which could be used by cities for various purposes (e.g. sales tax revenue), the Consultant shall prepare a Cost/Benefit analysis comparing the cost of diverting said funding source with the quantifiable benefits in transit services it provides. The Consultant shall also prepare a calculation of the opportunity costs of forgoing recommended Denton County transit expansion scenarios to inform future planning and policy considerations.

**Task 5 Key Deliverables:**

- Technical report that identifies and evaluates revenue sources, and recommends funding strategies for recommended scenarios
- Best practices for transit-supportive economic development
- Cost/Benefit Matrix comparing the cost of diverting funding sources with the benefit of new transit services and incorporating opportunity costs of forgoing recommended transit expansion

- Matrix that summarizes funding sources and recommended uses, designed to facilitate understanding of funding options and priorities

### **Task 6: Implementation Strategies**

Task 6 develops a phased program of implementation strategies including institutional delivery approach and governance structure for transit services and projects in the recommended scenarios, as well as a conceptual ten-year timeline outlining next steps for service/project implementation. These short-term strategies should also be contextualized within the long-range Mobility 2045 framework.

Strategies include but are not limited to: adding or amending citywide or regionwide policies, ordinances, rules, or regulations; amending current local funding statutes for transit funding, maintenance, and operations via a potential regional effort for a future legislative session.

A roadmap detailing roles and responsibilities of each relevant stakeholder will also be developed.

### **Task 6 Key Deliverables:**

- Technical report for implementation strategies, institutional delivery approach and governance structure, conceptual project implementation timeline
- Highly-illustrative factsheets designed for public and stakeholder distribution

### **Task 7: Final Report Preparation and Submittal**

The Consultant shall integrate the information produced in previous tasks into a full report, including an executive summary. The executive summary and full report should be highly illustrative and designed with the general public in mind, while remaining content-rich and

usable for public entities. NCTCOG will review the documents and provide comments for the Consultant to incorporate. The Consultant shall submit final documents to NCTCOG.

**Task 7 Key Deliverables:**

- Executive summary
- Full report
- All data components used to develop the executive summary and full report

**SCHEDULE AND BUDGET**

The anticipated project duration is expected to be 1 year. NCTCOG’s anticipated funding available for this initiative is approximately \$400,000.

**CONSULTANT SELECTION CRITERIA**

The Consultant Selection Committee (CSC) will review all proposals and select a consultant it considers qualified to undertake the project. The following criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals:

1. Project Understanding	25 percent
2. Scope of Services	25 percent
3. Project Managers/Staff Qualifications	20 percent
4. Project Cost	15 percent
5. Firm Qualifications/Consultant References	10 percent
6. Schedule	5 percent

If the CSC determines that interviews will be required before a final decision can be made, the interviews will take place the week of October 25, 2021. Proposers should be willing and able to

attend these interviews, if necessary. Interviews are expected to occur online via Microsoft Teams. Consultants who are invited to an interview will be notified by the close of business on Friday, October 22, 2021.

Costs for developing the proposal and costs attributed to interviews (and subsequent negotiations) are at the proposer's own expense and will not be reimbursed by NCTCOG.

### **PRICING PROPOSAL**

The consultant shall provide a detailed budget using the template excel file provided. The budget shall detail out separately the maximum raw salary by position, overhead, and profit. Additionally, any direct expenses shall be detailed. One tab should be completed for the Prime, which includes the total cost for each subconsultant. A separate tab should be completed showing the breakdown of cost for each subconsultant.

### **CONTRACT AWARD**

Following final negotiations of the work plan and costs satisfactory to NCTCOG, the consultant will be asked to execute a contract with NCTCOG. If applicable, a Notice to Proceed will be issued upon execution of the contract. NCTCOG reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to contract for any or all portions of the project with the selected consultant, or to hire multiple firms.

The successful responder(s) to this Request for Proposals is expected to provide qualified personnel to accomplish each portion of the work in this study. NCTCOG will maintain the right to request the removal of any personnel found, in its opinion, during the course of work on this project, to be unqualified to perform the work.

The Sample Contract, provided in this transmittal, contains federal requirements which must be included with all proposals submitted. Appendices C through J of the Sample Contract contain compliance requirements and certification forms which must accompany the proposal. **Failure to comply with these requirements may result in finding the Proposal non-responsive.**

The Texas Legislature has adopted House Bill 1295. In short, the law states that a governmental entity or state agency may not enter into certain contracts with a business entity unless the business entity submits a disclosure of interested parties (Form 1295) to our agency at the time of a signed contract. As part of contract development, the Consultant will be asked to complete the disclosure of interested parties electronically and submit through the Texas Ethics Commission website. NCTCOG will provide a specific contract number associated with the award for inclusion in the submittal. Once submitted, the Consultant will be requested to return an e mail confirmation of submittal to NCTCOG. For more information about the process, please visit the following website for Frequently Asked Questions:

[https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/resources/FAQs/FAQ\\_Form1295.php](https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/resources/FAQs/FAQ_Form1295.php)

## **DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PARTICIPATION**

The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise participation must meet the **31.3 percentage** goal identified for this type of procurement. Proposers should also include an Affirmative Action Plan is included in the proposal. Failure on the part of the majority contractor to meet this goal or show meaningful good faith efforts may be grounds for finding the proposal nonresponsive.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

All questions regarding the RFP shall be directed in writing by e-mail to [TransRFPs@nctcog.org](mailto:TransRFPs@nctcog.org) by the close of business on **Friday, September 10, 2021**. All questions and responses will be posted on the NCTCOG website at [www.nctcog.org/rfp](http://www.nctcog.org/rfp) by the close of business on **Wednesday, September 15, 2021**. NCTCOG reserves the right to respond to inquiries as it deems necessary.

## OVERALL PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

This RFP shall be used to accept, review, and score proposals based on the following schedule with the intent of awarding a Cost-Plus Fixed Fee contract. The following represents the schedule of procurement activities leading to contract award:

Issue Request for Proposals	September 3, 2021
Last Day to Submit Questions	September 10, 2021
NCTCOG Q&A Posted to Website	September 15, 2021
Proposals Due & Proposal Public Opening	October 1, 2021
Consultant Selection Committee	week of October 18, 2021
Interviews (if needed)	week of October 25, 2021
NCTCOG Committee Approval	December 16, 2021
Execute Contract(s)	December 2021

NCTCOG reserves the right to make changes to the above-mentioned schedule. All such changes shall be made by an amendment to the RFP and shall be posted on NCTCOG's website at [www.nctcog.org/rfp](http://www.nctcog.org/rfp). It is the responsibility of the consultant to frequently check this website for information concerning amendments to the RFP.

\*Public opening of the proposals will be done via Microsoft Teams on **October 1, 2021, at 5:05 p.m.** A link to the Microsoft Teams meeting is below. Microsoft Teams is integrated with audio so you will only need to use the conference call number (below) if you are unable to access the Microsoft Teams App. The Teams App is available for download [HERE](#).

## Public Opening of Proposals via Microsoft Teams:

**Join on your computer or mobile app**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Or call in (audio only)**

[+1 903-508-4574](tel:+19035084574)

Phone Conference ID: 161 836 809#