



North Central Texas Council of Governments

**NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR THE
DALLAS-FORT WORTH METROPOLIAN AREA**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
North Central Texas Regional Transit 2.0: Planning for Year 2050

November 3, 2023

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR A NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL TRANSIT 2.0: PLANNING FOR YEAR 2050

INTRODUCTION

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is requesting written proposals from qualified firms(s) to conduct the North Central Texas Regional Transit 2.0: Planning for Year 2050 study. NCTCOG staff is working with transportation authorities and cities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region to increase communication and collaboration among agencies to address expanding transit services to areas with transit needs. The purpose of this comprehensive transportation partnership initiative, “Regional Transit 2.0,” is to develop a more aggressive transit legislative program, increase membership in transportation authorities, collaborate between transportation authority systems, as well as other efforts to better understand and address long-term transit needs in the growing Dallas-Fort Worth region.

Additional context for the need and purpose of this effort is included in Attachment 1: Regional Transit Version 2.0: Planning for the Year 2050 (Context: The Transportation Authority – Member City Paradox). This effort is being conducted at the request of several cities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region which is contained in Attachment 2.

The scope of services includes elements that require developing high-level cost estimates which may require engineering services. Thus, this RFP is being issued as a qualifications-based procurement. The most qualified firm will be selected, and then a fair and reasonable price will be negotiated. A price proposal will only be requested from the firm determined to be the most qualified.

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 and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.

Since 1974, NCTCOG in conjunction with the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Metropolitan Area. The NCTCOG Executive Board serves as the MPO's fiduciary and fiscal agent, while the RTC serves as the MPO policy body for federal transportation planning, programming, and policy decisions. The 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 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.

TRANSIT AUTHORITIES IN THE DALLAS-FORT WORTH REGION

The following are brief descriptions of the three transit authorities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)

DART is a regional transit agency connecting residents in 13 cities across more than 700 square miles. Its service area cities are Addison, Carrollton, Cockrell Hill, Dallas, Farmers Branch, Garland, Glenn Heights, Highland Park, Irving, Richardson, Rowlett, Plano, and University Park. Last year, DART moved nearly 43 million passengers across the North Texas region.

Today, DART operates a 93-mile light rail system with 65 stations, 570 buses with 14 bus transfer facilities, and the 34-mile Trinity Railway Express between Dallas and Fort Worth (in partnership with Trinity Metro). DART's other services include paratransit and GoLink, the largest microtransit operation in North America, with 31 zones and 359 square miles of coverage. DART funds these services in large part through a one-percent sales tax levied within its service area, as well as federal grants and fare revenue. Sales tax revenue comes directly to DART from the State Comptroller as approved by voters when DART was created in 1983.

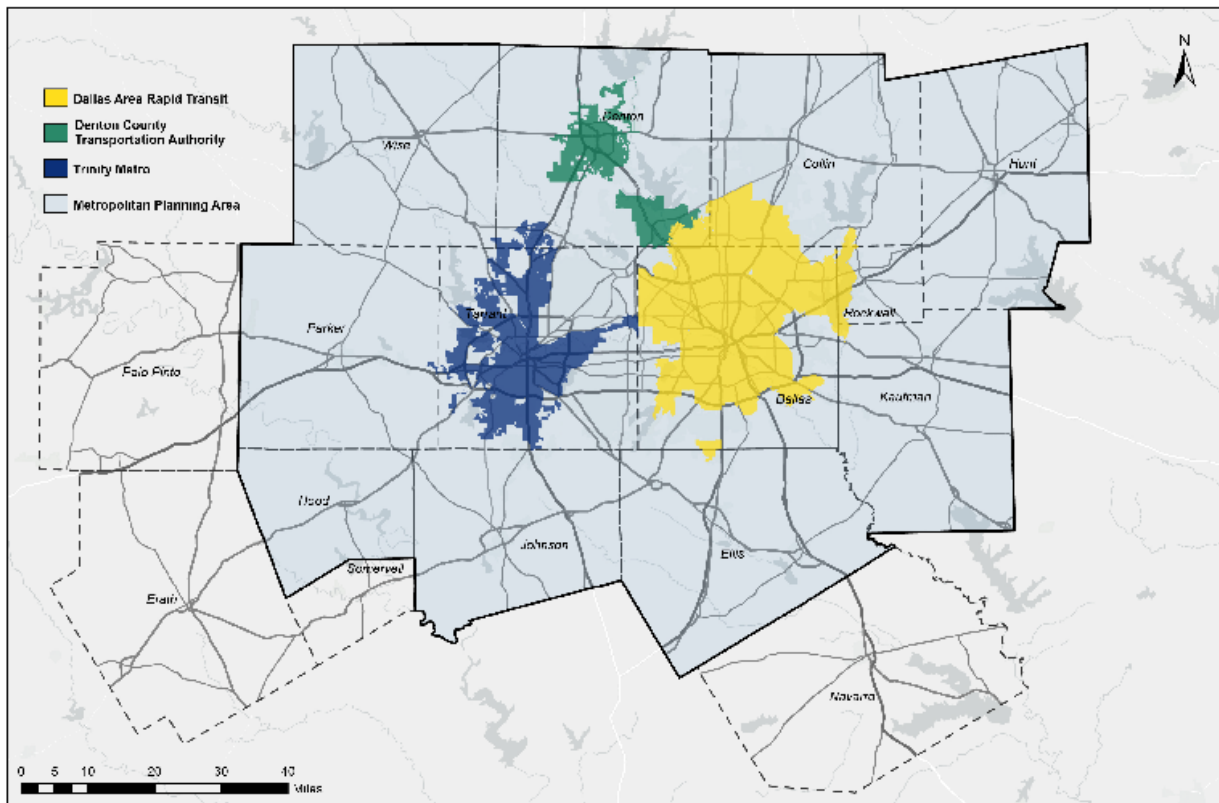
Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA)

Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) is a coordinated county transit authority authorized under Chapter 460 of the Texas Transportation Code which was established in 2002 with a half-cent local sales tax. The service area consists of the cities of Denton, Lewisville and Highland Village. DCTA had FY2022 sales tax revenue of approximately \$39 million and an

FY2022 operating budget of approximately \$53 million. DCTA's FY22 systemwide ridership across all modes was approximately 2.2 million unlinked passenger trips.

Fort Worth Transportation Authority (Trinity Metro)

Fort Worth Transportation Authority (Trinity Metro) is a regional transit agency authorized under Chapter 452 of the Texas Transportation Code which was established in 1983 and is funded with a half-cent local sales tax. The service area includes the Cities of Fort Worth and Blue Mound, with additional funding from the cities of Grapevine and North Richland Hills for TEXRail service.



Transit Authorities: Dallas-Fort Worth



In addition to the three authorities, there are districts and cities outside of the authority service boundaries that contract for micromobility and/or bus services with agencies or other providers such as STAR Transit.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex will continue unprecedented growth over the next 20 to 30 years. Current projections forecast an influx of four million new residents to the region and an addition of three million jobs. This substantial growth will compound a seemingly insatiable demand for passenger and goods movement that has already exacerbated the limited capacity of the region's streets and highways. Much of the regional growth is forecast to occur outside of transit authority boundaries, presenting challenges related to congestion, sustainable development, and lack of alternative transportation options beyond the single-occupant vehicle.

In light of this phenomenon, a study to explore Regional Transit 2.0 will be undertaken to shed light on the critical transportation investments necessary to meet anticipated population growth and support sustainable development across the region while also addressing the lost opportunities felt in non-member transit cities and in transit member cities that cannot benefit from the 4A/4B investments made by non-member transit cities. Acknowledging that optimal use of public transportation moves more people in less space, frees up roadway capacity for other users, and has the potential for benefits associated with economic development and quality of life. The study will consider the following elements:

1. Potential partnership models for public transit in the Metroplex, including operations implications and benefits
2. Potential ways to sustainably fund public transportation in the Metroplex, including member and non-member models and available funding sources at the regional, state, and federal levels
3. Potential ways to better leverage the economic development benefits of public transportation investment to create incentives for people and companies to locate where a variety of transportation modes are available
4. Policy considerations of the various governance and funding proposals:
 - a. Enabling policy
 - b. Policy barriers or changes
 - c. Inclusion of opportunity costs (e.g., tradeoffs necessitated by authorized sources and uses of funds)

This effort is not intended to create a regional rail authority or change the independent authority of each of the three current transit authority boards of directors.

PROJECT SUPPORT

The project will be conducted under the guidance and supervision of a Project Review Committee. The Project Review Committee will be composed of 1) elected officials serving on the RTC that

represent member cities of the three transportation authorities (DART, DCTA, and Trinity Metro), 2) appointed representatives of DART, DCTA, and Trinity Metro serving on the RTC; and 3) non-transit authority RTC representatives including but not limited to county-level representatives. The Project Review Committee may be further subdivided and organized specific to the seven substantive work tasks described below. The Project Review Committee will serve as the principal review committee for this project. NCTCOG shall serve as project manager to implement a mutually agreed upon scope of work, monitor the progress of consultant activities, and serve as a liaison between the consultant and other partners. The selected consultant will enter into a contract with NCTCOG for the agreed upon scope and budget. NCTCOG shall also serve as the contract manager and procurement administrator for the project. Any recommendation from this study requiring action by the transit authorities, the RTC, or other entities, is subject to approval by the governing bodies of those entities as applicable.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work is summarized by the tasks outlined below. Proposers are encouraged to exercise creativity in responding to the project needs. Modifications to the tasks and task sequencing that will improve the effectiveness of the project effort while containing costs are encouraged. There are existing and on-going studies conducted by the RTC and the transit authorities referenced herein or reviewed as part of this effort which may inform key findings and recommendations. The Consultant is expected to conduct an independent review of any such findings and recommendations that are incorporated into the work products and deliverables described below.

The Consultant will perform the following tasks and subtasks and produce a deliverables list for each task:

Task 1 – Project Management

Lead contact for Task 1 will be NCTCOG staff.

Upon contract execution, a kickoff meeting will be conducted to review the project goals, scope of work, methodology, and schedule/timeline with NCTCOG. NCTCOG anticipates the Consultant will need to attend at least three in-person meetings at the beginning, middle, and near the end of the engagement. Other in-person meetings may be required to brief the RTC and transit

authority boards. Other coordination can be via remote/hybrid meetings. In addition, the Consultant will be responsible for the following:

- Monthly conference calls with NCTCOG to discuss project progress
- Monthly billing and progress reports submitted to NCTCOG

Task 1 Deliverables:

- Project schedule
- Monthly progress reports and billings
- Stakeholder kickoff materials and meeting notes summary
- Project Review Committee management plan
- Monthly status meetings with NCTCOG

Task 2 – Develop a More Aggressive Transit Legislative Program

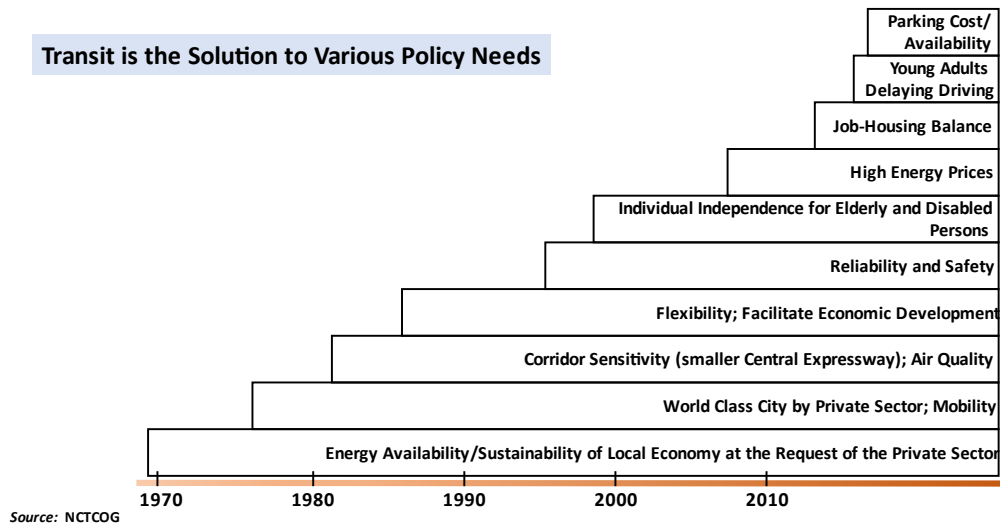
Lead contact for Task 2 will be NCTCOG staff.

The legislative review will be focused on how transit authorities can be more successful, including assessing policy barriers that prevent existing authorities from increasing service availability across the region. In addition, Task 2 will explore how transportation authority member cities could increase funding tools like those available to non-transportation authority cities and how non-transportation authority cities could participate in public transportation. This initiative will review previous transit legislative items and advance promising policy proposals.

This task will examine the first 40 years of regional public transportation success and identify any recommended legislative changes moving forward, with particular attention to the desired outcome of making public transportation more widely available and used. Figure 1 summarizes critical events requiring transit services. It is critical that any legislative change be regional in nature, not focused on a particular agency, and focus on improvements in policy outcomes and public transportation's contributions to the region's transportation system capacity.

Figure 1

Passenger Rail: 50 -Year Policy Development Within the Dallas -Fort Worth Region



The initial activities of the consultant team are to meet with NCTCOG staff. Activities will include review of prior legislative efforts and development of potential additional efforts to support solutions for regional transit based on research, analysis, and interviews. This task is the only task that has a final deliverable of approximately 6 months after contract award. This timeline will allow for local and regional leaders to draft legislation in the fall of 2024 to comply with the start of the Legislative Session in January of 2025. This task will largely be performed from experiences in the DFW region and in Texas. It is anticipated to be 15% of the overall effort.

Task 2 Deliverables:

- Produce major meeting summaries and minutes (within 5 business days of meeting)
- Prepare draft technical memorandum identifying key findings and recommendations for review by the Regional Transportation Council Transit 2.0 Review Committee.
- Prepare final technical memorandum addressing comments/feedback
- Prepare slide deck summarizing key findings and recommendations for use by NCTCOG and/or stakeholders

Task 3 – Develop Strategies to Increase Transit Authority Membership

Lead contacts for Task 3 will be transportation authority staff and board members.

This task will review the current governance structure of the three transportation authorities in North Texas. The consultant shall review the history of transportation authorities' efforts to add members through full-service members and through each authority's local government corporations. This task will also require discussions with larger cities that are not members of the authorities. The RTC has a policy of a maximum of three authorities, the current number. That policy needs to be reexamined since there have been few new memberships added over the last 40 years.

Today, many cities that are not members of a transit authority receive limited public transportation services on a contract basis from the authorities. Some authorities have determined that providing such services, even on a cost-plus-fee basis, is not beneficial to their authority or the member cities they serve. Other authorities have agreed to provide such services on a year-by-year basis. However, those authorities may question the ultimate purpose and benefit of providing those services to cities that have no intent to join a transit agency. Leaders of those authorities also question the impact of those services on their authorities' ability to add increasing value to existing members. This task should also include an examination of ways the RTC can incentivize cities to join a transit authority. This could also include consideration of mechanisms beyond a fixed rate sales tax contribution that could be utilized as part of a local government corporation to bring cities into transit agencies as members.

Engineering services are not intended in this task. Again, this task will examine the historical trend in Figure 1 (See Task 2) and match those policy initiatives supporting transit in the region and determine if potential member cities see these needs in the same way (e.g., whether there are financial and policy barriers that prevent potential member cities seeing the value of transit investment in the same fashion). This task will examine other policies that may generate more interest.

This task will flow over the 12-month timeframe and begin with initiatives in other counties and other areas of the United States. Consultants will then review current approaches and propose

new strategies. It is anticipated a lot of this task is done in region and makes up about 15% of the overall effort.

Task 3 Deliverables:

- Produce major meeting summaries and minutes (within 5 business days of meeting)
- Prepare draft technical memorandum identifying key findings and recommendations for review.
- Prepare final technical memorandum addressing comments/feedback
- Prepare slide deck summarizing key findings and recommendations use by NCTCOG and/or stakeholders

Task 4 – Develop Collaborations between Three Existing Transit Authorities

Lead contact for Task 4 will be transportation authority staff.

Our three authorities have a history of working together very well. The purpose of this item is to review, at a strategic level, those items that are common to all of them. For example, on the service side, DCTA and DART have “service meets” in Carrollton between rail. Trinity Metro and DART jointly own, operate, and maintain the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) corridor and have a TRE entity. In addition, these two authorities share “service meets” at the A and B stations at DFW International Airport. Trinity Metro and DCTA serve the vicinity of Alliance Airport with bus services with great opportunity for workforce mobility originating from Fort Worth and Denton, respectively. DART and DCTA are collaborating on the potential co-location of Silver Line equipment maintenance at the DCTA rail maintenance facility in Lewisville, while DCTA is also exploring ways to extend the A-train into Downtown Carrollton to connect with the Silver Line. The DCTA A-train’s interface with the DART Green Line is another opportunity for optimizing and integrating services. Across all three agencies, opportunities should be evaluated to enable more customer-friendly movement of paratransit customers whose origin and destination needs cross agency boundaries on a single trip. Therefore, part of this task is collaboration on services, equipment, and fare structures that could be pooled, aligned, and leveraged to more effectively serve riders.

The other half of this task is on economies of scale that could positively affect expenses or costs (e.g., pensions, operating costs, additional capital costs, capital asset replacement, etc).

Engineering services are anticipated to estimate costs related to capital assets. Recent efforts focused on insurance costs, and other opportunities may exist, like commuter rail operations contracts, surplus vehicles and parts, shared services, development of national and regional centers of excellence and shared subject matter experts. Alignment of marketing efforts is also possible. The recommendations generated in this task are focused within the service areas. This task is scheduled over the full year. It is anticipated to be 10% of this effort and is very strategic in nature. It is assumed that some substantive items will develop but it is not anticipated to significantly impact Task 8.

Task 4 Deliverables:

- Produce major meeting summaries and minutes (within 5 business days of meeting)
- Prepare draft technical memorandum identifying key findings and recommendations for review.
- Prepare final technical memorandum addressing comments/feedback
- Prepare slide deck summarizing key findings and recommendations use by NCTCOG and/or stakeholders

Task 5 – Develop Strategies to Foster Transit Authority Board Partnerships and Teamwork

Lead contact for Task 5 are the transportation authorities and cities.

DART already understands the serious nature of this Task and is currently engaged in a Strategic Planning initiative. The selected Consultant will assist, at the direction of DART, and working with member cities to augment DART’s Strategic Planning exercise as needed. DART has developed Strategic goals and a Strategic Plan is anticipated in early 2024. DART’s current efforts are anticipated to aid in this implementation of this task.

In the DART service area, this effort will review the progress being made by DART and DART consultants. This progress will be measured by communication with DART staff, suburban Board members, Dallas board members and DART cities (city managers and mayors). The purpose is to improve partnerships and create greater common agreement on purpose and approach. It is not anticipated to be a public outreach effort but a strategic business outcome

approach that will address policy issues and some bylaw questions. Common ground is important.

No engineering services are anticipated. This effort is anticipated to be performed in the region.

It is hoped that a successful action plan will solve issues in respective Boards and not impact Task 2: Legislative Program. It is critical that enough work on Task 5 be performed to meet the Task 2 schedule. Interviewing policy and staff leaders is essential for this task. This task is anticipated to be 10% of the effort. These interviews should be coordinated with meetings with the Regional Transportation Council Transit 2.0 Review Committee.

Task 5 Deliverables:

- Produce major meeting summaries and minutes (within 5 business days of meeting)
- Prepare draft technical memorandum identifying key findings and recommendations for review.
- Prepare final technical memorandum addressing comments/feedback
- Prepare slide deck summarizing key findings and recommendations use by NCTCOG and/or stakeholders

Task 6 – Develop Strategies for In-Fill Development

Lead contact for Task 6 will be the cities in the transportation authority areas with assistance from the transportation authorities. This task hopes to advance new approaches to add additional developments to underutilized stations where there is excess land. Further, this task will examine the interdependence of cities and transportation authorities in activating underutilized land near transit, with a focus on potential funding sources and financial tools available to accelerate productive development. It will also explore the appropriate roles and responsibilities of each entity in delivering the desired outcomes. The desired outcome of this task is to have more definition of roles and responsibilities for cities and transportation authorities as they relate to “joint development”. This is a strategic review and not a station-by-station level development plan.

It is not anticipated that engineering services will be needed. Consultant efforts should begin with best practices, including successful development within the DFW region at stations. City of

Dallas Mockingbird Station, City of Grapevine and City of Richardson are three successful but different examples of in-fill development. Cities often look to the authorities for answers and authorities to cities. A roadmap of options would help generate the necessary tools to help infill the center of the region, add tax base to member cities, monetize transit assets, and increase transit ridership. The task should incorporate job/housing balance and other more sophisticated strategies , as well as the identification of best practices to achieve more resilient and sustainable communities. This effort is needed at project completion and represents 15% of this effort. It may be scheduled in the second half given its priority.

Task 6 Deliverables:

- Produce major meeting summaries and minutes (within 5 business days of meeting)
- Prepare draft technical memorandum identifying key findings and recommendations for review.
- Prepare final technical memorandum addressing comments/feedback
- Prepare slide deck summarizing key findings and recommendations use by NCTCOG and/or stakeholders

Task 7 – Review of Fare Collection Strategies to Increase Ridership Without Lowering Revenue

Lead contact for Task 7 will be the transportation authorities.

Some conversations are moving toward free transit fares. Other conversations are moving toward a more comprehensive program with rewards for frequent users, a reward program. In addition, can a new fare system move transit from a trip based traditional mode choice decision, to an ubiquitous service concept like a utility or a health club membership. This task will examine the merits of a regional policy for the RTC to purchase transit passes for new employees relocating to the region along rail corridors.

Transit users in the DFW region may be challenged to navigate three different transit agencies with different fare structures, pass products, and fare collection technologies as they move across the metroplex. A review of international and national advances on views on transit fares as well as technology advances seem timely. The transportation authorities already have a very advanced technology application for transit fares. A review of the authorities' pass and fare structures and identifying opportunities for alignment and efficiency is also anticipated.

DCTA is anticipated to complete a fare study in late summer 2024. DART is expected to complete a fare study by March 2024.

No engineering services are anticipated. As all transit agencies advance post-COVID and for DFW to advance post-40 years, what advances can be identified to explore a new user-appreciated fare philosophy. This is a small effort to the overall program, accounting for 10% or less, and is only needed on contract completion. This effort could be delayed to the second half of the consultant project.

Task 7 Deliverables:

- Produce major meeting summaries and minutes (within 5 business days of meeting)
- Prepare draft technical memorandum identifying key findings and recommendations for review
- Prepare final technical memorandum addressing comments/feedback
- Prepare slide deck summarizing key findings and recommendations use by NCTCOG and/or stakeholders

Task 8 – Develop Recommendations to Address the Transit Authority – Member City Paradox

Task 8 will be led by the transportation authorities and transportation authority cities. NCTCOG is available to assist as author of the paradox white paper. All three authorities will need a review of their out-year business plans, strategic plans, and financial plans to determine the role dedicated sales tax has on anticipated expenditures. Trinity Metro and DCTA are half-cent authorities and may not be able to grow services, or more critically, maintain service and pay for rehabilitation of current assets. Although DART is a one-cent authority, it faces similar challenges because of its extensive multi-modal system. The critical question for DART is, between now and 2050, what is the one-cent implication for DART's assets? Can they pay rehabilitation costs and advance transit improvements, maintaining light rail assets and grow bus transit services?

This task will explore whether there are ways to address those challenges and perhaps even create policies or programs that could be used to benefit member cities in other ways while continuing to support and enhance the role of transit and mobility in a growing region. From a

city standpoint can savings occur creating other functions eligible for a portion of the sales tax. This task will not be completed by late summer, so the legislative program will assume no anticipated benefit is available for additional use. Proposed legislative efforts are anticipated to aid transit cities.

With transportation authorities with dedicated revenues, authority staff is frustrated that a “world class” transit system cannot be visioned by city leaders. City leaders are frustrated that authorities cannot perceive lost opportunity costs as result of transit choices. This paradox and the white paper is attached to this Request for Proposals.

Engineering services will be necessary to assist with cost estimation of maintaining assets, assuming standard design life. Service substitutions may be explored. For example, are all light rail corridors assumed to go through rehabilitation or can some substitution of other passenger rail retrofits be possible? Task 4 may produce some cost savings, but it is within the error of the forecasts in Task 8. Translating, Task 8 can be independent of Task 4 as it explores costs and revenues out to 2050. DART is anticipated to complete an Asset Inventory Analysis in March 2024.

The consultant will need to explore cost and revenues critical for this exercise, given the high-level strategic nature of this task. However, pension fund needs, capital replacement and expansion, operating costs, fare revenues, federal revenue support, sales tax revenue, bond covenants, bond interest and other significant cost and revenue centers are necessary for a complete review within the policy debate of the authority – local government funding paradox.

This task brings hope of developing an appropriate lens for all parties to see the best path forward. It is anticipated that transportation authorities will be providing policy and strategic products in the spring timeframe, so although this Task needs to begin early, details from all parties will aid consultants to maintain a high level “stress test” approach. This effort anticipates a financial model be developed and parametric testing of cost and revenue assumptions providing policy and staff leaders needed information to advance both legislative and program efforts. This task has the greatest level of effort of approximately 25%.

Task 8 Deliverables:

- Produce meeting summaries and minutes (within 5 business days of meeting)

- Prepare draft technical memorandum identifying key findings and recommendations for review.
- Prepare final technical memorandum addressing comments/feedback
- Prepare slide deck summarizing key findings and recommendations use by NCTCOG and/or stakeholders

Task 9 – Final Report

A final report will summarize the findings of all previous tasks. It is anticipated that this report is a collection of previous findings. It will also include documentation of methods in a concise summary. Revisions to the report shall be made after comments received from NCTCOG and stakeholders are considered.

Task 9 Deliverables:

The Consultant shall provide the following:

1. Executive Summary of key findings and recommendations (three hard copies) and as PDF plus all associated electronic files (images, text, etc.).
2. Final set of slide decks by Task for NCTCOG and stakeholder use.

Level of Effort by Substantive Task

The table summarizes NCTCOG’s expectations for each of the substantive tasks in terms level of effort, whether engineering services are anticipated, and expected timeframe for completion.

	Consult Tasks	Lead Local Entity	Level of Effort	Need for Engineering Services	Completion/ Duration
Task 2	Develop a More Aggressive Transit Legislative Program	RTC	15%	No	6 Months
Task 3	Develop Strategies to Increase Transit Authority Membership	Transportation Authorities (TA)	15%	No	12 Months
Task 4	Develop Collaborations between Three Existing Transit Authorities	TA	10%	Yes	12 Months
Task 5	Develop Strategies to Foster Transit Authority Board Partnerships and Teamwork	TA - Cities	10%	No	12 Months
Task 6	Develop Strategies for In-Fill Development	Cities	15%	No	12 Months

Task 7	Review of Fare Collection Strategies to Increase Ridership Without Lowering Revenue	TA	<10%	No	12 Months
Task 8	Develop Recommendations to Address the Transit Authority – Member City Paradox	TA - Cities	>25%	Yes	12 Months, Near End

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Proposers shall develop a schedule of tasks with completion deadlines and methodologies for the project. NCTCOG will select all the identified tasks or a subset of the tasks to be completed. NCTCOG and the selected firm will jointly determine a schedule for progress meetings in accordance with the final schedule for the scope of work. The timetable for completion of this project is approximately 12 months (January 2025) from the date the consultant firm is authorized to proceed. NCTCOG anticipates the contract will begin January 29, 2024.

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 30 percent
- 2. Scope of Services 25 percent
- 3. Project Manager/Staff Qualifications 20 percent
- 4. Knowledge of the Dallas/Fort Worth Area 10 percent
- 5. Firm Qualifications/Consultant References 10 percent
- 6. Project Schedule 5 percent

Interviews of short-listed firms will be conducted, which will take place in-person on December 15, 2023. Proposers should be willing and able to attend these interviews in person. Consultants who are invited to an interview will be notified by the close of business on Monday, December 11, 2023 that an interview has been scheduled. 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.

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 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.

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PARTICIPATION

NCTCOG has an overall Disadvantaged Business Enterprise participation goal of 17 percent. Proposers are encouraged to utilize good faith efforts to obtain Disadvantaged Business Enterprise participation as part of their proposal. Failure on the part of the majority contractor to show meaningful good faith efforts may be grounds for finding the proposal nonresponsive. Proposers should also include an Affirmative Action Plan in the proposal response.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

All questions regarding the RFP shall be directed in writing by e-mail to TransRFPs@nctcog.org by the close of business on **November 10, 2023**. NCTCOG reserves the right to respond to inquiries as it deems necessary. **A pre-proposal conference will be conducted at the NCTCOG offices at 616 Six Flags Drive, Centerpoint Two, in Arlington, Texas on Friday, November 17, 2023, at 1:00 pm.** Interested proposers may also participate in the pre-proposal conference via Microsoft Teams using the following link:

Pre-Proposal Conference via Microsoft Teams

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 291 129 349 147

Passcode: K5CxFT

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 903-508-4574,,30716962#](tel:+19035084574,,30716962#) United States, Tyler

Phone Conference ID: 307 169 62#

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](#).

Attendance is not mandatory at the pre-proposal conference but is strongly encouraged to benefit potential proposers from the discussion and answers provided to questions. Questions submitted in advance of the pre-proposal conference will be answered at the pre-proposal conference. All questions and responses will be posted on the NCTCOG website at www.nctcog.org/rfp by the close of business on **Monday, November 20, 2023**. The questions and answers at the pre-proposal conference will be in English; translation services will not be provided for potential proposers. 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	November 3, 2023
Last Day to Submit Questions	November 10, 2023
Pre-Proposal Conference	November 17, 2023
NCTCOG Q&A Posted to Website	November 20, 2023
Proposals Due & Proposal Public Opening	December 1, 2023
Consultant Selection Committee	December 11, 2023
Interviews	December 15, 2023
NCTCOG Executive Board Approval	January 25, 2024
Execute Contracts	January 29, 2024

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. 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 Friday, December 1, 2023 at 5:05 pm Central Standard Time. A link to the Microsoft Teams meeting is below.

Public Opening of Proposals via Microsoft Teams

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 285 716 269 182

Passcode: 6gwaoc

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 903-508-4574,,263908663#](tel:+19035084574,,263908663#) United States, Tyler

Phone Conference ID: 263 908 663#

REGIONAL TRANSIT VERSION 2.0: PLANNING FOR THE YEAR 2050

CONTEXT: The Transportation Authority – Member City Paradox

At its simplest terms the transportation authority produces a transit plan which meets its financial capacity over a fixed duration of time. Its tax rate is fixed, and it supplies transit services against that assumed forecast while managing annual fluctuations based on economic condition. It also includes revenues from other sources: State-zero funds, transit fare-small; advertising – smaller; and utility easement revenues – even smaller; and federal/Regional Transportation Council funds - significant.

While some sales tax is available to the cities, the cities also depend on variable property tax rates and annual budget requirements in state law. Any additional sales tax capacity is currently capped by state law. Cities have elected officials and transportation authorities have appointed board members, adding to paradox.

For both sides, funding limitations require hard decisions to be made annually - capital investments to be deferred, assets to be maintained and cutting of services to be considered. For cities, balancing the variety of essential services necessary with the demand of more diverse and growing community needs makes these decisions even more challenging.

Since DART collects a 1 cent sales tax, this paradox impacts DART the most. Half cent transit agencies are not immune to this pressure. The paradox occurs when city officials feel hard decisions are not made by the transit agency and going further, easy decisions on efficient service levels are not made either.

So, the problem occurs at the margin since most services are clearly needed. Could the transit authorities improve how they communicate their planning efforts to meet transit demand balanced with revenue forecasts, state of good repair requirements and debt obligations? Will this improved communication and more transparent planning result in a greater partnership between cities and authorities? In Transit Version 2.0, is it possible to better balance regional need for transit services with more localized city needs and demands?

Nationally, transit authorities that must get their budgets approved from higher sources, like legislatures and/or city councils, have significantly less revenue than those with fixed rate dedicated sources and this annual uncertainty can make long term funding of projects and services more challenging. In these cases, the paradox is adjudicated annually during the budget process as the city council or legislatures consider the funding challenges and priorities for a larger set of circumstances. This is the city budget model as well.

So recent transit policy discussions in fixed rate financial plans revolves around free fares, revenue reimbursements to cities and distribution of sometimes inefficient

services. “I’ll take empty buses over no buses”, would be an example of the current problems.

What if the process was reversed? Review all the costs into the future, re-assess needs based on future growth and desired regional outcomes, pursue revenues, and propose a sales tax rate that meets the long-term need. Maybe a transit authority should pursue state revenues, not propose free fares, not reimburse cities in an ad-hoc manner, and pursue the benefits of new members. In addition, should attention be placed on debt payments, long-term service plans, capital asset inventories, new effective services, reduction in inefficient services and a modernized fare collection program. The consideration of lost opportunity costs inside and outside of transit is essential.

Increased communication can eliminate this paradox and this study is intended to assist. Knowing transit agency needs for state of good repair is critical. Our region depends on it.

Currently there is no evidence that a lower tax rate at DART is possible. If it is possible, what are the impacts to service, debt obligations and future service commitments. Understanding these impacts balanced with the future growth needs of the region would certainly assist in local elected officials and transit authority board members working more closely in unison to achieve mutually desirable outcomes. Doing so will reduce trips to the legislature. If this project is approved, transportation authorities and cities are committing to resolve differences here at home.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex will continue unprecedented growth over the next 20 to 30 years. Current projections forecast an influx of four million new residents to the region and an addition of three million jobs. This substantial growth will compound a seemingly insatiable demand for passenger and goods movement that has already exacerbated the limited capacity of the region’s streets and highways.

In light of this phenomenon, a regional transit study to explain Transit Version 2.0 will be undertaken to shed light on the critical transportation investments necessary and lost opportunity costs for other investments. Acknowledging that optimal use of public transportation provides more people movement capacity in less space and frees up roadway capacity for all other users, the study will consider the following scope:

1. Partnership models for public transit in the Metroplex
 - a. Operations implications and benefits
2. Potential ways to fund public transportation in the Metroplex, including membership vs. non-member models
3. Available funding sources at the regional and state levels

4. Potential ways to better leverage the economic development benefits of public transportation investment to create incentives for people and companies to locate where there is a variety of transportation modes available
5. Policy considerations of the various governance and funding proposals
 - a. Enabling policy
 - b. Policy barriers or changes
 - c. Inclusion of Opportunity Costs

This effort is not intended to create a regional rail authority or change the independent authority of each of the three current transportation boards of directors.

Who:

Funded by the Regional Transportation Council. The proposed Policy Committee is RTC members from transportation authority cities and transit authority board members.

What: Seven Components of the Study

1. Legislative Categories of Study – Example Questions

Are there opportunities to get annual Texas Metropolitan Mobility Funds for regional rail operations?

Should 4A and 4B non-member cities be able to recruit employers from transportation authority cities?

2. What other legislative strategies could fund transit in new communities and create 4A/4B opportunities in transportation authority cities? How do transit authorities increase membership in transportation authorities or through their local government corporations? Is it better to change current RTC policy and increase the number of authorities?
3. Can the three transportation authorities work together more efficiently to lower transit costs and increase system ridership between systems? For example, can rail operation contracts be bundled for greater efficiency?
4. Demographic growth is higher outside transportation authorities than within. How can transportation authorities develop new tools with local governments to reverse this trend? Can more development be placed on near existing transportation stations increasing economies of scale and creating air quality benefits.
5. Improve Board teamwork to reduce bylaw issues. For example, Denton County Transportation Authority bylaws were recently brought to the Texas Legislature.

Michael Morris
Executive Director, Regional Transportation Council
North Central Texas Council of Governments

Re: Regional Transit Study

Regional Transportation Council Board Members:

With the 40th anniversary of Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the cities of Carrollton, Irving, Plano and Dallas believe this is an appropriate time for the region to revisit the strategic goals and desired outcomes of regional transit. Forty years ago, 14 area cities had a vision to develop a regional transit system and the development of the services and systems have been fulfilled to serve the needs and vision from 1983. The same year the Fort Worth area formed the Fort Worth Transportation Authority. In addition to DART, there are other transit agencies including Trinity Metro and DCTA who are also charged with providing transit services to meet the rapid growth of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Partnerships between these transit agencies such as the Trinity Railway Express, TEXRail, and A-Train, have demonstrated the importance of system connectivity and regional collaboration that enhances customer experience and drives ridership demand.

As member cities of a transit authority, we acknowledge and embrace that the growth of the region requires an efficient transit solution in order to provide predictable, cost effective, and reliable mobility for residents and businesses. We believe a comprehensive study is needed to assess the effectiveness of regional transit today and what regional transit should look like for the next 40 years. We request the study be commissioned by the Regional Transportation Council as the region's neutral transportation planner. The study must be conducted by a top tier, globally recognized consulting firm (McKinsey, Bain, Deloitte, etc.), to be completed prior to the next Legislative Session, if possible.

Specifically, we would like to request the study address:

- Needs analysis for service types
- Costs of agencies and potential efficiencies
- Membership categories and options
- Revenue commitments/contributions
- State of Texas ferry allocation
- Fares and revenue recovery philosophies
- Barriers to system growth

We member cities of a transit authority believe now is the time for this strategic look at transit solutions to ensure we are meeting the mobility needs of the Metroplex.

Sincerely,

Eric Johnson, Mayor of Dallas



Mattie Parker, Mayor of Fort Worth



John B. Muns, Mayor of Plano



Rick Stopfer, Mayor of Irving



Steve Babick, Mayor of Carrollton



Terry Lynne, Mayor of Farmers Branch



Oscar Trevino, Mayor of North Richland Hills



Blake Margolis, Mayor of Rowlett



Wes Mays, Mayor of Coppell



George Fuller, Mayor of McKinney



Bruce Arfsten, Mayor of Addison



Bob Dubey, Mayor of Richardson



Don Carroll, Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition Chair



4. Rail North Texas/Texas Local Option Transportation Act – 2008 (Regional Transportation Council)
5. Recent Regional Rail Options by DART

Transit agency plans will be sent to the winning consultant as well.

A similar effort was done of NTTA several years ago, resulting in dozens of new initiatives. It was coordinated by a consultant for the 4 county Judges.

Source: NCTCOG, September 2023, Version 2