INDUSTRY WEB FORUM:
AUTOMATED VEHICLE PLANNING RESOURCE FOR NORTH TEXAS (DFW) REGION

April 24, 2020
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On Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. Central Time the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) will hold an industry forum for providers of transportation planning services. The forum will have two purposes: (i) inform the urban and transportation planning industry of NCTCOG’s plans to access private sector planning expertise, and (ii) seek industry input on a number of issues such as those described below. The forum will be Web only; no in-person attendance will be required or accepted.

I. Background

The sixteen-county, North Texas region (DFW) is emerging as a leader in transportation innovation and as a “do-tank” for applying new mobility technologies. To keep our 240+ member governments ahead of the curve, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)—the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)—has launched a three-part funding package that focuses on planning for, and initiating, connected and automated vehicle (hereinafter “AV”) use cases. This initiative, titled Automated Vehicles 2.0 (AV2.0), was approved by the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) in October 2018 and is expected to be underway by the end of calendar year 2020. A summary of AV2.0 is attached to this Notice.

The three parts of AV2.0 (from now on, described as: AV2.1, AV2.2, and AV2.3) are following three separate procurement processes with the overall aim being to level the playing field for the region so that a wide range of jurisdictions are able to plan for and implement emerging transportation technologies. AV2.1 ($1.5m) provides planning expertise to groups of local governments that have signaled their interest in preparing for AV deployments within their communities. AV2.2 ($10m) will provide funding to local governments to assist those governments in partnering with private sector AV companies to deploy AV solutions; the purpose being to ensure that cities and transit agencies are able to cover costs they incur in connection with hosting AV deployments. Finally, AV2.3 ($20m) funds strategic investments in AV services, addressing use cases and communities where the market may lag in providing AV solutions.

The goal of this industry forum is to collect expert input about what it will take to make AV2.1 a success. (The remaining two projects—AV2.2 and AV2.3—will be addressed at a later date yet to be determined.) Experienced planners, analysts, and designers understand the complexity inherent in planning for the future. As we craft our procurement process for AV2.1, we want to know what the experts believe are important qualities of a successful AV planning program for a region like DFW.

II. AV Innovation and Challenges in DFW

North Texas has emerged as a center for the development and deployment of AVs. The first AV shuttle and robotaxi deployments in Texas were hosted in North Texas cities. Multiple AV trucking firms have located facilities in North Texas or are providing AV freight delivery to the region. A major shipper is testing last mile delivery robots in North Texas. The region is a
center for the development of passenger service using aerial drones. Dallas has been a leader in the deployment of micromobility services that are both a precursor to and potential complement of AV services.

AV2.1 will help North Texas communities plan for the arrival of these and other related emerging transportation technologies. The scope of AV2.1 will include issues such as what infrastructure will be required to accommodate AVs, how to partner effectively with AV companies pursuing a deployment, changes to the design and operation of streets and curbs, ensuring that AVs will help promote bicycle and pedestrian safety, impacts on law enforcement, public health and municipal finances, and public policies that will help facilitate the safe and timely introduction of AVs in a way that improves mobility and North Texas communities generally.

The goal of AV2.1 is to deliver a regional vision, planning tools, and suggested policies that will be employed to ensure that AVs address the mobility and other needs of the region. AV2.1 will play a key role in positioning North Texas to leverage AV technology to address community needs and provide improved mobility. The region wants to avoid being reactive to new technologies or pursuing new technologies for their own sake rather than as tools to advance community goals.

III. The Industry Forum

NCTCOG intends the industry forum to be an interactive event. The forum will be an online conference only and attendees will not need to submit anything in writing and they are not expected to make a presentation, although both options are available.

NCTCOG is holding the forum to explore one basic question: How can private sector planning entities most effectively help NCTCOG and its regional partners prepare for future mobility scenarios as the transportation system becomes more highly automated?

Related issues that NCTCOG would like to explore in the industry forum include the following:

- How to best organize the planning effort? We have considered organizing groups of like cities into classes and doing the planning effort on multiple tracks with full group work on occasion, but welcome alternative ideas.
- How to craft a successful program focused on planning for new mobility futures in a large, diverse, and rapidly growing metropolitan region like DFW within a budget of $750,000 to $1,000,000?
- Whether and how to involve the larger community—e.g., the general public, key business sectors—or make this a focused effort limited to planning experts?
- What work product would come from this planning effort?
- What successful AV planning efforts can be used as models for AV2.1?
- What AV-related topics should be included/excluded in order to keep a manageable scope?

At the industry forum NCTCOG will lay out its vision for AV planning in the DFW region and take questions. The industry forum will be open to all interested parties. While all parties are
encouraged to participate, no one is required to participate. **There will be time for short (5 minutes or less) presentations by up to five parties on a first come first served basis. Please advise Emily Beckham (TransRFPs@nctcog.org) if you would like to make a presentation.** Presentations should address the focus question identified above.

**UPDATE: all five presentation slots have been filled**

Relevant Dates

**Friday, May 1, 2020:** Deadline for requests to make a presentation at the forum.

**Thursday, May 7, 2020, 1:30 p.m. Central Time:** Industry forum. The forum will be scheduled to run for an hour and half but may run longer at NCTCOG’s discretion if the discussion warrants such. In no event will the forum run for more than two hours.

**Joining the Forum - ** UPDATED INFORMATION BELOW**

To improve the audio/visual capabilities of this meeting, it is necessary that we change our meeting platform to Microsoft Teams. You will find the link to the meeting 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 Microsoft Teams. The Teams app is available for download, HERE.

**Join Microsoft Teams Meeting**

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For any other questions related to the Industry Forum, please contact TransRFPs@nctcog.org.

**Monday, May 11, 2020:** Deadline for submittal of final written questions regarding the Industry Forum and posted forum announcement materials.

**Wednesday, May 13, 2020:** Deadline for NCTCOG to provide written responses to questions.

**Friday, May 15, 2020 by 5:00 p.m. Central Time:** Final comments regarding Industry Forum due to TransRFPs@nctcog.org.