



Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

NOACA

1299 Superior Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-3204
(216) 241-2414
www.noaca.org

Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Regional Strategic Transit Plan

Issue Date: March 8th 2019
Closing Date: April 17th 2019

This RFP includes a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
(DBE) Goal of 9%

NOACA is seeking a qualified firm to contract for consulting services to develop a Regional Transit Strategic Plan. The deadline for submittals is **Wednesday, April 17, 2019, 12:00 PM.**

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1. THE NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY (NOACA)

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is a Cleveland-based transportation and environmental planning organization that serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and designated areawide water quality management agency for the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina in Ohio.

In these capacities it:

- Works with other organizations to help address northeast Ohio's transportation, air quality, and water quality needs.
- Conducts metropolitan planning for various modes of transportation, including vehicles, freight, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, etc., while considering the transportation system's impact on the environment and land use.
- Prepares the region's long-range transportation plan and short-range transportation improvement program, which is the region's capital budget for federally funded transportation projects.
- Conducts studies that address congestion, improve safety and strengthen community livability.

The vision of NOACA is as follows: NOACA will **STRENGTHEN** regional cohesion, **PRESERVE** existing infrastructure, and **BUILD** a sustainable multimodal transportation system to **SUPPORT** economic development and **ENHANCE** quality of life in Northeast Ohio.

NOACA is directed by a 45-member Board of Directors, representing the City of Cleveland and all five NOACA counties and their communities, plus transit agencies, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS), the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).

The NOACA region is home to 2.1 million people and over 150 units of government. The region is anchored by several urban core cities with the largest being Cleveland.

More information about NOACA is available on our website at www.noaca.org

2. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

NOACA is looking to develop a Regional Strategic Transit plan that recommends how to prioritize transit investments, identify gaps in transit service regionally, and recommend how to better connect the region through transit and use of other NOACA products like the transit-oriented development and transit asset management plans. This will be done through a collaborative effort with NOACA and regional stakeholders.

Transit is an important aspect of the transportation network, and mobility choices are vital to the health and vibrancy of a region. Public transit options reduce congestion, personal transportation costs, and carbon output. Public transit is not just a form of alternative transportation, but provides options for lower-income households, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Public transit provides access to healthcare, entertainment, and educational facilities, among other daily activities and destinations.

Existing Conditions

NEO Regional Trends: Transit

The region is experiencing a phenomenon known as “sprawl without growth.” Most metropolitan areas have increased in land area, often growing across municipal and county boundaries.¹ As a consequence to this kind of “growth,” the NOACA region faces a continuous challenge associated with providing appropriate levels of public transportation and infrastructure to each geographic area.

Demand for transportation options other than the private automobile is on the rise, largely due to these trends:

- Transit ridership is on the rise in some areas.
- Older adults looking to age in place will increase transit demand.
- Younger professionals are looking to locate in places where transit is rich and accessible.
- The Millennial generation is driving less.
- Millennials tend to prefer walkable urban neighborhoods over suburbs, and prefer public transit, bicycling, and walking to driving.
- Downtown and neighborhoods adjacent to downtown are experiencing population growth and development.
- Development around transit tends to spur economic development.

Transit Services

There are five different transit agencies operating within the NOACA region: [Geauga County Transit \(GCT\)](#), the [Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority \(GCRTA\)](#), [Laketran](#), [Lorain County Transit \(LTC\)](#), and [Medina County Public Transit \(MCPT\)](#). The region’s population density is declining, and the population is expanding outward into townships and previously rural areas. NOACA and the region’s transit systems will need to plan accordingly to meet the needs of the

¹Ohio Statewide Transit Needs Study, <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/Transit/TransitNeedsStudy/Documents/OhioStatewideTransitNeedsStudyFinalReport.pdf>.

region's population, and necessary to prioritize limited transportation funding. The region must balance transit needs with demands, determining where to expand or reduce service, and where to strengthen core services.

The objectives of this project are to:

- Analyze current transit service, needs, gaps and areas of potential improvement and enhancement; analyze the projected future population and service needs(regional); determine the transit options required to effectively serve the NOACA region as well as how to best connect the region over a 10-year horizon;
- Develop a plan that supports the development of a cohesive, coordinated vision for investment in public transit on a regional scale; identifies opportunities, advantages, disadvantages, and barriers to enhancing services and/or expanding services provided;
- Improve coordination of the five current public transit agencies and examine opportunities for enhanced regional coordination with neighboring public and private transit systems and providers;
- Analyze current funding mechanisms and determine potential new sources of funding necessary to meet projected needs;
- Analyze and investigate the role of consolidating certain functions of the transit agencies in saving transit dollars, improving the passenger experience, and providing a more regional perspective of the transit system.
- Prepare a strategic plan for 10 years and steps to guide implementation; identify strategies for enhancing mobility region-wide.

Transit service will be essential as part of a comprehensive strategy for effectively managing transportation demand, and creating more economically competitive and livable communities. As transit service should continue to serve a more prominent role in the coming years, effectively addressing the need for public transit is paramount for good decision- making.

3. SCOPE AND PROJECT DETAILS

NOACA is seeking Request for Proposals (RFP) from experienced qualified consultants who have transit and transportation strategic planning experience to develop a Regional Strategic Transit plan. Requested services include but are not limited to: project management, implementing project scope, meeting coordination with staff and stakeholders, technical analysis of data and existing plans, plan preparation and editing, and implementation of the plan.

The overall goals of this plan is to (1) recommend how to prioritize transit investments within the NOACA region (analyze current funding mechanisms, current and long term funding needs, provide a baseline economic value analysis), (2) Identify gaps and needs in transit service regionally based upon the Fixed Route service networks of each of the transit agencies in the NOACA region and (3) Identify strategies on how to better connect the region through transit and use of other NOACA products like the Transit Oriented Development and Transit Asset Management plans. This will be done through a collaborative effort of NOACA and regional transit agencies and stakeholders.

The Consultant's role in the development of the Plan will address the following elements:

- 1. Existing Conditions and Demographics:** The Consultant will:
 - Provide an overview and demographic analysis of the region (NOACA has this data)
 - Provide a transit needs assessment; need for transit improvements established by previous studies
 - Identify gaps (lack of regional connections) in the existing system transit network system within the NOACA region.

- 2. Existing Plans and Projects:** The Consultant will collect, review, and synthesize NOACA's existing transit products: The Long-Range Transportation Plan, Vibrant NEO 2040, the Transit Oriented Development Scorecard and Implementation Plan, and the Transit Asset Management Plan. The Consultant will also evaluate the economic impacts of transit on population, employment, and demand by using the Economic Impacts on Transit report done by Cleveland State University and NOACA. In addition to these plans the Consultant will review plans from all five transit agencies in the NOACA region.

- 3. Implementation/Action Plan:** The Consultant will provide an up to 10-year Implementation and Action plan for NOACA. This plan will have the following elements:
 - Strategies that will focus on regional coordination and processes to enhance the coordination of transit services in the region.
 - Recommend an approach for improving the overall regional transit network
 - Propose and provide scenarios for consolidating the regions' transit agencies in saving transit dollars, improving the passenger experience, and providing a more regional perspective of the transit system including comparative examples, and identifying key elements of a consolidated system.
 - Propose strategies that will recommend an approach for prioritizing regional transit investments
 - Develop goals and objectives for public transit region wide that is consistent with the existing transit agencies plans and programs.
 - Develop next steps and tasks for NOACA moving forward

Tasks and Deliverables

Task 1 - Kickoff meeting

- The successful consultant shall hold the meeting within (10) working days of the effective date of the agreement at 1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44114. Minutes of the meeting shall be submitted to NOACA for approval within (5) working days. The kickoff meeting will include a discussion of expectations for the project. The agenda for the meeting will be developed by the NOACA project manager.

Task 2 – Project Management

- Develop project management plan
The project management plan (PMP) is the main planning document describing how the project will be managed. The PMP is a living document and should be updated throughout the project. At a minimum the plan should contain:
 - Project overview
 - Scope
 - Methodology
 - Schedule
 - Budget
 - Project team
 - Risk management
 - Communication
- The completed PMP should be submitted to NOACA within 2 months of contract execution.
- Consultant will generate monthly project reports to include, schedule, budget, expenditures to date, summary of project status and milestones for deliverables.
- NOACA and Consultant will conduct monthly check-ins by phone to track project progress
- Consultant will facilitate and provide materials for bi-monthly (every two months) working group meetings to be held at NOACA offices unless otherwise stated by NOACA Project Manager. The working group will provide guidance and input into plan development. This may include presenting and/or meeting at the Quarterly Transit Council meetings held at NOACA.
- Consultant will prepare two (2) in person presentations to show progress mid-way through and at completion of the project and will also be needed for NOACA Board and/or Committee meetings

Task 3 - Data Assembly (Existing Conditions)

- Consultant will collect, review, and synthesize the data from previous plans and any other data that is needed to produce an existing conditions and demographic report.

Task 4 – Implementation/Action Plan:

- The Consultant will provide an up to 10-year Implementation and Action plan for NOACA. This plan will encompass Tasks 3 and 4 as well as what was mentioned in number 3 on page 6.

Timeline: The proposed timeline for the project will be **12-18 months** from the date of contract signing.

4. QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of skills and experience that can successfully and effectively address the scope of services will be considered.

5. PROCUREMENT TIMELINE

NOACA's process and timeline for the selection of a consultant are as follows:

April 17, 2019. 12:00 noon - Deadline for RFP Submittals

Submittals must be received at NOACA by the above deadline. Submittals should be marked to the attention of Susanna Merlone. Digital proposals are to be submitted via email to procurement@mpo.noaca.org, but NOACA assumes no responsibility for formatting or transmission errors. Submittals received after the deadline will not be considered. Please reference "Transit Asset Management RFP" in the email subject line.

April 18 - April 26, 2019. Consideration of Submittals and Selection of Interview Candidates

An evaluation team will select candidate(s) from submittals received for interview(s). This process will include review of submittals, references and other information as necessary, as well as the rating of submittals.

April 25 and 26, 2019. Interviews with Selected Candidates (If Needed)

Interviews will provide an opportunity for NOACA and selected candidates further to gauge their fit and ability to work with each other.

Please ensure that the appropriate representative, including the designated project manager, will be available to attend an interview on April 25 and 26, 2019 if your organization is selected as a finalist.

May, 2019. NOACA Committee Review Process

June 14, 2019. Approval of Contract by NOACA Board of Directors

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Criteria	Weight %
Project Approach: Exhibit 1. Note 3	40
Demonstrated experience with similar projects: Exhibit 1. Note 2	20
Qualifications of the organization(s) & project team: Exhibit 1. Note 1	20
Cost: Exhibit 1. Note 4	20
Total	100

Exhibit 1 - Consultant Selection Rating Form Notes

1. **Qualification of Staff** - The Proposal must demonstrate that the Consultant has the organizational capability and experience to complete the project. Identify the project team members, the role of the prime consultant, and any sub consultant(s). The rankings and scores will be based on the Staff's experience on similar projects and past performance for other agencies.

Differential scoring will consider the relative importance of the Project Managers role in the success of a given project. The Project Manager's role in a simple project may be less important than for a complex project, and differential scoring will reflect this, with higher differentials assigned to projects that require a larger role for the Project Manager.

2. **Demonstrated Experience with Similar Projects** – The proposal must demonstrate each consultant's experience and established competence related to this procurement. Each consultant shall be ranked, with the highest ranked consultant and proposed sub consultants receiving the greatest number of points, and lowest ranked consultant and proposed sub consultants receiving commensurately lower scores. The rankings and scores will be based on each firm's experience on similar projects and past performance for NOACA and other appropriate agencies. The selection team will consider documented performance ratings if available, and consult other agencies as appropriate. The use of documented ratings shall place emphasis on the specific type of services requested.

3. **Project Approach** - Each consultant shall be evaluated based on the approach presented in the proposal to complete the project. Factors for evaluation shall include project schedules; demonstration of understanding for the project; methods and strategies to best accomplish the project; creativity; viability; and implementation. Proposals should clearly describe how each task or deliverable will be completed.

4. **Cost:** Total cost will be evaluated on a scale relative to the cost of all proposals received. The lowest-cost proposal shall receive the highest points possible, and each proposal thereafter will be weighted in comparison. The selection team shall review cost factors, such as billable hours, rates of pay and appropriate staff assignment relative to the complexity of each task.

7. SUBMITTALS

7.1 Instructions for Submission of Responses

All responses to this RFP shall contain the following sections in the following order:

1. Letter of interest
2. Abstract
3. Background and Experience
4. Project Staffing and Organization
5. References
6. Cost Proposal

And, optionally:

7. Supplementary and/or reference material

Submissions for items 1-6 must be made electronically by **12:00 noon on Wednesday, April 17, 2019**, using a PDF or Microsoft Office format. Proposals must be sent to procurement@mpo.noaca.org with "Regional Strategic Transit Plan" in the subject line. For items 1-6, the number of pages per section must not exceed the number detailed below. The largest file size attachment that may be emailed is 65mb. For file sizes larger than that, respondents must provide an FTP link with the file, including any necessary logins and passwords before the procurement deadline. Paper submissions will not be accepted.

Supplementary and/or reference material, may be submitted or referenced as a DVD, website, via FTP, or other media or means. Accessibility to any website or platform, including any login information and passwords must be provided. Such material or references, including authority to review such information (if client-proprietary, for example) must be made available by the procurement deadline indicated above. Any media that must be mailed shall be sent to the address below and shall be referenced in the pdf document containing Sections 1-6. (Any items mailed or sent via courier services must arrive before the procurement deadline to be considered as submission supplementary material.)

Submittals received for items 1-6, above, will be confirmed via email. Please call (216) 241-2414 if you do not receive an email response within 48 hours indicating that your submittal was received.

7.2 Submittal Details

Proposal package should include the following:

1. **Letter of interest** – Must be no more than 2 pages and include contact information and authorizing signature.
2. **Abstract** – The abstract will consist of a summary of the highlights contained in the proposal and will be a maximum of one page.
3. **Background and Experience** – This section will include background information on the applicant's organization and shall give details of experience with similar projects, placing a particular emphasis on map-based big data platforms. This may not be more than 5 pages.

4. Samples of work performed by the applicant related to previously implemented projects must be submitted (either a website or other media, or as supplementary material discussed above).
5. **Project Staffing and Organization** – Must be no more than 10 pages in length. This section should outline the qualifications and relevant experience of key staff members proposed to work on this project. It should identify these staff members' experience with similar projects, with a particular emphasis on big data and/ or map-based software query applications and these staff members' proposed roles on the project. Staff bios should be included in this section. After contract award, project staff changes must be approved by NOACA.
6. **Project Approach** – No more than 12 pages. This section shall discuss the vendor's proposed project plan and approach that will be utilized to implement the scope of work outlined in this RFP, and include specific outputs and milestones.
7. **References** – No more than 1 page listing the most recent references from similar projects that include contact information.
8. **Cost Proposal** - The cost proposal must adhere to the requirements stated in Section 8, Exhibit 1, and Note 4.
9. **Supplementary and/or reference material** - Examples of past work performed for other clients that demonstrate the capability to develop a Regional Strategic Transit Plan.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS

- A. It is the policy of NOACA, as required by the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) shall have equal opportunity to compete for this federally assisted contract and/or subcontract with another other consultant to perform the requested services.

Consequently, the requirements of Title 49 CFR Part 26 will apply to this contract. If not a DBE itself, the Consultant must use its best efforts to solicit from and to utilize DBE subcontractors with meaningful minority groups and female representation among their employees. The Consultant must ensure that the DBE subcontractor(s) is performing a "commercially useful function" as defined in [NOACA's Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

This proposal includes a **DBE Goal of 9%**. At least this percent of the agreement shall be performed by certified DBE firms. The percentage goal may be met if the awarded Contractor is DBE certified. However, in the event the Consultant is unable to meet the DBE goal placed on this project, a good faith effort must be demonstrated, which documents the effort made to secure the services of DBE subcontractors. This documentation must be included with the proposer's submittal, which is not part of the 12-page limit. The percentage goal may be met if the awarded Consultant is DBE certified. Consultant proposals that do not include the minimum percentage of DBE participation noted above, or that cannot demonstrate good faith efforts to include a DBE, **WILL be rejected**. If selected, the Consultant's price proposal shall reflect the required level of DBE participation, or provide an explanation of how the requirement will be met in later phases of the work.

Proposal must identify how DBE participation will be met at the time of submission.

Only firms certified as DBE through Ohio's Unified Certification Program (UCP) will be counted toward meeting this goal. A listing of currently certified DBEs in Ohio can be accessed on the UCP website at www.ohioucp.org. Potential DBEs may also access the website to obtain information on how to become certified. To qualify for certification as a DBE, an applicant must meet the eligibility standards established in the federal regulations at 49 CFR Part 26 and 13 CFR Part 121. DBE certification must be in place at the time of proposal submittal and throughout performance of the contract.

- B. Consultants agree not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, age, creed, sex, sexual orientation or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Consultants further agree to comply with all requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., 49 C.F.R. Part 21.
- C. The proposal, including price, shall be valid for at least nine months from the date of submission.
- D. An RFP does not constitute an offer or a contract. No contract may be awarded without a resolution by the NOACA Board of Directors.
- E. NOACA reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at anytime.

NOACA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive minor irregularities in the proposal process. NOACA may accept any proposal if such action is believed to be in the best interest of the agency.

- F. NOACA is not liable for any cost incurred by the proposer prior to execution of a contract.
- G. The contract between the successful proposer and NOACA shall include all documents mutually entered into specifically, including the contract instrument, the RFP and the response to the RFP. The contract must include, and be consistent with, the provisions stated in the RFP.
- H. The prime consultant or system provider will be required to assume the responsibility for all services offered in the proposal regardless of whether directly performed by the prime consultant. Further, the prime consultant will be the sole point of contact for NOACA with regard to contractual matters.

- I. The consultant project team shall be approved by NOACA. NOACA must approve any changes in the project team.
- J. Any award of contract will be to the consultant or contractor that provides the highest value relative to costs.
- K. Consultants must show proof of liability insurance.
- L. NOACA reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at anytime.

9. QUESTIONS

For questions regarding the RFP, please contact procurement@mpo.noaca.org. All questions must be submitted by email **by noon on April 12, 2019**. All answers will be publicly posted on www.NOACA.org.

Attachment 1- Regional Resources:

Aim Forward 2040	http://www.noaca.org/index.aspx?page=7544
Vibrant Neo 2040	http://vibrantneo.org/
ODOT Office of Transit	http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/Transit/Pages/default.aspx
Laketran	https://laketran.com/
Medina County Public Transit	http://www.medinaco.org/transit/index.html
Geauga County Transit	http://www.geaugatransit.org/
Lorain County Transit	http://www.loraincounty.us/commissioners-departments/transit
GCRTA Strategic Plan	http://www.riderta.com/strategicplan
ODOT's Statewide Transit Needs Study	http://www.dot.state.oh.us/divisions/planning/transit/transitneedsstudy/Pages/StudyHome.aspx
NOACA Service Area Map	http://www.noaca.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6625