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## RFP-XX-16 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### Mid-Hudson Valley Transportation Management Area (MHVTMA) Regional Transit Plan

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Orange County Transportation Council (OCTC), Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC), Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC), and North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) serve as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for the Census-defined Poughkeepsie-Newburgh NY-NJ Urbanized Area. With a combined urbanized population of almost 424,000 (2010 Census), FHWA and FTA have classified the area as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). The New York portion of the TMA is referred to as the Mid-Hudson Valley TMA (MHVTMA).

In accordance with the provisions set forth in 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303, the OCTC, PDCTC, UCTC, and NJTPA are tasked with carrying out a comprehensive, multimodal transportation planning process for their respective Metropolitan Planning Areas. This includes the development of transportation plans and programs that promote the safe, efficient, and sustainable movement of people and goods by all modes. The MPOs of the MHVTMA routinely leverage federal funds to assist communities with their local transportation planning needs. The MPOs also participate in a collaborative planning relationship that addresses regional transportation issues, while also meeting federal planning requirements for a TMA. Examples of this collaboration include completion of a joint Congestion Management Process and the annual sub-allocation of FTA funds to transit operators. The MHVTMA also undergoes an in-person Federal Certification Review every four years. During the most recent certification review, FTA recommended that the MHVTMA complete a regional transit plan.

#### 2. PROJECT PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The MHVTMA seeks proposals from qualified firms or teams of firms to complete a strategic, regional transit plan for the tri-county area of Dutchess, Orange, and Ulster counties. The regional transit plan will focus on ways to better coordinate and connect existing transit systems internally, between the three counties, and externally, between the three counties and Albany and New York City metropolitan areas. To meet these goals, the regional transit plan will identify strategies to improve transit operations within the TMA, by addressing unmet regional needs and service gaps, reducing redundant services, and improving transit efficiencies. The regional transit plan will also identify how the various transit systems can better connect major urban and employment centers (e.g. Beacon, Kingston, Middletown, Newburgh, and Poughkeepsie) to one another and to major transportation facilities such as train stations, park-and-ride lots, and Stewart International Airport – particularly through the possible expansion of express bus, commuter rail, and ferry services. For the purposes of this study, the term ‘transit’ refers to all publically operated or managed bus systems, privately operated bus systems that serve a regional transit role, commuter and interstate rail, and passenger ferries.

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## 3. PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The MHVTMA, in coordination with the Consultant, will organize an Advisory Committee to review interim products and guide the project so that it addresses issues relevant to stakeholders. The three MPOs believe that the active participation of local stakeholders is necessary for the development of a regional transit strategy that will ultimately be implemented by local and regional transit operators. The Advisory Committee will meet periodically throughout the project and provide assistance in disseminating information to the public and agency leadership. The Advisory Committee shall include representatives from the following agencies:

- a. Orange County Transportation Council (OCTC)
- b. Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC)
- c. Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC)
- d. Dutchess County Division of Public Transit
- e. Orange County Department of Planning (Transit)
- f. Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT)
- g. Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)/Metro-North Railroad (MNR)
- h. NYSDOT-Region 8
- i. NYSDOT-Public Transportation Bureau (Main Office)

The Consultant's project manager or relevant staff member will be expected to attend and organize Advisory Committee meetings, as well as provide written summaries of these meetings.

## 4. GENERAL SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Consultant shall be required to perform the following general scope of work and related support services and tasks in order to complete this project:

- a. Provide project oversight and management to ensure that the project stays on schedule and budget.
- b. Review and understand previously completed and ongoing transit studies to include long-range transportation plans, county-wide transit development plans, and related transit studies such as the West of Hudson Regional Transit Access Study. Relevant findings and recommendations from previous plans and studies should be integrated into the regional transit plan.
- c. Review and understand existing transit operations and system characteristics to include routes and schedules for both public/private bus, commuter rail, interstate passenger rail, and airports.
- d. Gather additional data and prepare reports as necessary to meet the objectives outlined in this scope of work.
- e. Produce maps and reports that convey information in a clear, comprehensive, and consistent manner.
- f. Produce maps in ESRI ArcGIS format and written reports/documents in Adobe PDF and MS Word format.
- g. Prepare for and attend all public workshops, stakeholder interviews, and Advisory Committee meetings.

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- h. Summarize recommendations in a final report that includes a clear, prioritized implementation plan with timelines and general cost estimates.

## 5. PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In addition to working with the Advisory Committee, the Consultant shall solicit feedback from stakeholders in the region, including private bus operators (e.g. Adirondack Trailways, Coach USA, Leprechaun Lines, etc.), major employers (e.g. GAP/Old Navy, IBM, regional hospitals, etc.), related transportation agencies/services (e.g. Amtrak, MetroPool, PANYNJ, Putnam County, etc.), transit customers (bus, rail, and ferry), elected officials, and the public. The Consultant shall also hold a series of public workshops throughout the region during Tasks 2, 4, and 5, culminating in a region-wide presentation to review the final regional transit plan. The workshops will have the following objectives:

- a. Gather feedback on existing regional transit services and gaps (Task 2).
- b. Evaluate potential transit improvement strategies and alternatives (Task 4).
- c. Present draft and final recommendations (Task 5).

The Consultant shall make a recommendation as to the total number of public workshops to be scheduled. The MHVTMA shall assist the Consultant in selecting meeting venues and advertising, though the Consultant will organize, lead, and document public engagement during public workshops. The Consultant shall provide a summary of each public workshop.

## 6. PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant shall provide a single project manager to manage the project, though said project manager may be supported by a team of technical experts from the Consultant. The study should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following tasks:

### **Task 1: Project Kickoff and Background Data Collection**

At the beginning of the project, the Consultant shall meet with the Advisory Committee to finalize the scope of services and review the proposed project schedule. This project kick-off meeting will include a discussion of the goals and objectives of the study, and a review of the regional transit issues to be addressed by the Consultant. The Consultant shall also identify any data requirements above and beyond those readily available from online sources (e.g. transit operator websites, National Transit Database, etc.). In coordination with local transit operators, the MHVTMA shall provide the Consultant with additional information and data related to transit services to include GIS mapping files and available background data on transit services and operations. During Task 1, the Consultant shall review previous transit plans and other related studies to identify relevant issues and recommendations that should be incorporated into the regional transit plan.

#### Meetings:

- a. Project kick-off meeting.
- b. Advisory Committee meeting(s).

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## Deliverables:

- a. Task 1 memo detailing the scope of service, proposed project schedule, number of public workshops, and data needs to complete the project.
- b. Task 1 report summarizing regional transit recommendations from previous studies and plans.
- c. Advisory Committee meeting summaries.

## **Task 2: Existing Conditions Analysis**

The Consultant shall conduct an inventory and analysis of all existing transit services and transit-related facilities in the region. This task shall include a general field reconnaissance of the region by the Consultant to acquaint themselves with existing services and operations. At a minimum, the existing conditions analysis shall include the following components:

- a. Service
  - i. Inventory of transit services offered by operators within the region, with a detailed focus on all existing services and schedules at transit hubs, train stations, intermodal centers, and major urban, employment, and cultural centers in the region, and Stewart airport.
  - ii. Comparison of existing services, routes, and timetables, identifying service gaps between the counties and greater region, and if present, any redundant services.
  - iii. Inventory and assessment of existing regional transit marketing efforts.
- b. Operations
  - i. Comparison of general operational characteristics and financial data among all transit operators in the region. For operations, data should include items such as number of passengers served, revenue vehicle miles, number of drivers, etc.; for financials, data should include items such as total expenses, revenues, net costs, etc. Identify operators not reporting NTD.
  - ii. Detailed operational and financial analysis of each inter-county and inter-regional transit route/service (note: this does not pertain to routes/services internal to each county). The analysis of passenger data should identify existing inter-county or inter-regional services that are underutilized or overcapacity, while the financial analysis should include a calculation of total expenses and revenues to operate each route. This may include information such as number of passengers per vehicle revenue hour/mile, gross and net cost per vehicle revenue hour/mile, and passenger farebox revenue.
  - iii. Comparison of fare rates charged by transit operators in the region.
  - iv. Inventory and comparison of farebox systems used by transit operators, focusing on opportunities to share fare media across systems.
  - v. Inventory and comparison of existing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) being used by transit operators, identifying opportunities to share media platforms and coordinate data sharing (e.g. mobile apps, vehicle location data, etc.).
- c. Capital
  - i. For public and private bus operators in the region, inventory all vehicles funded wholly or in part by the FTA or New York State to include a description of the item, purchase date and cost, age, current value (depreciated cost), and remaining useful life. As available, the

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Consultant shall use data from each transit operator's Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan.

- ii. Evaluation of the capacity and condition of passenger amenities at inter-county and inter-regional transit stops.
- iii. For park-and-ride lots, assess existing parking capacity and utilization during weekday and weekend peak periods; also note if already served by transit.
- iv. Analysis of parking data at train stations, to include wait lists for permits, identifying capacity issues.

## Meetings:

- a. Public workshops to gather feedback on existing conditions.
- b. Advisory Committee meetings.

## Deliverables:

- a. Task 2 report summarizing existing conditions.
- b. Advisory Committee meeting summaries.

## **Task 3. Develop and Conduct Public Survey**

The Consultant shall develop and conduct an online and paper survey of public and private bus and rail passengers (and possibly air passengers), in order to identify unmet regional transit needs and capture suggestions to improve regional transit connections. The survey should avoid questions about local transit issues. The survey should occur during Tasks 2-4, and be provided both in English, Spanish, and Chinese-simplified.

## Meetings:

- a. Advisory Committee meeting(s).

## Deliverables:

- a. Public Survey (paper and online in English, Spanish, and Chinese-simplified).
- b. Task 3 report summarizing findings from the public survey.
- c. Advisory Committee meeting summaries.

## **Task 4: Alternatives Analysis (Future Conditions)**

The Consultant shall develop and assess strategies and alternatives to improve transit operations in the MHVTMA region, addressing the project's stated goals and objectives. The Consultant shall meet with the Advisory Committee, general public, and other stakeholders to identify preferred elements of the suggested strategies and alternatives. The Consultant shall prepare and conduct a series of public workshops to gather suggestions from the public to improve transit service and assess various transit alternatives. During the development of alternatives, the Consultant shall consult with the MHVTMA to identify the projected amounts and types of growth that might increase transit demand. The Consultant will provide its suggested alternatives to the Advisory Committee prior to presenting them to the public.

## Meetings:

- a. Public workshops to evaluate potential strategies/alternatives.

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- b. Advisory Committee meetings.

## Deliverables:

- a. Task 4 report detailing potential transit strategies and alternatives, addressing the project's stated goals and objectives.
- b. Public and Advisory Committee meeting summaries.

## **Task 5: Develop and Finalize Regional Transit Plan**

The Consultant shall prepare a draft regional transit plan summarizing its findings, evaluated strategies and alternatives, and recommended actions into a comprehensive and workable implementation strategy. All recommendations should be evaluated for their financial, operational, and community impacts to public and private transit operators. The regional transit plan will propose a clear, step-by-step process with suggested timelines for implementation. The Consultant's prioritized set of recommendations shall identify what actions should occur immediately (within one-year), mid-term (2-5 years), and long-term (6-10 years). The plan must be easy to comprehend, visually engaging, and written with an understanding that it will be reviewed by a broad audience (e.g. elected officials, staff, public, etc.). The regional transit plan shall, at a minimum, address the following items:

- a. Service Improvements
  - i. Identify where transit operators can connect their services to improve regional travel options, especially at population, employment, and cultural centers within the Mid-Hudson Valley.
  - ii. Identify service and operational improvements that will facilitate regional connections to park-and-rides, rail stations, Stewart International Airport, and ferry services.
  - iii. Identify ways to improve transit services between the Mid-Hudson Valley and Albany/New York City metropolitan areas.
  - iv. Determine if regional connections can be improved if transit operators modify their schedules and better synchronize services.
  - v. Pinpoint potential express bus (e.g. bus rapid transit) connections between major centers in the Mid-Hudson Valley.
  - vi. Determine if multiple transit operators are serving the same areas and identify ways to minimize overlapping services.
- b. Operational Improvements
  - i. Assess the feasibility of creating a regional transit authority to operate and manage public bus transit in the Mid-Hudson Valley.
  - ii. Identify ways to better market and promote regional transit services, including the potential for a unified brand to advertise services.
  - iii. Assess the possibility to synchronize fares, fare policy, and fare media across systems to create a seamless transit system.
  - iv. Identify ITS improvements and data sharing possibilities between transit operators.
  - v. Identify cost-sharing measures that could reduce maintenance costs and improve fleet efficiency.
  - vi. Explore opportunities to merge local transit operations to reduce costs and improve service.

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- vii. Investigate how alternative fuel vehicles (e.g. diesel-electric hybrids) can be supported through coordinating policies and plans.
- c. Capital Improvements
  - i. Identify capital projects that will improve regional transit services, especially at inter-modal connections (e.g. train stations, transit hubs, park-and-rides, ferry docks, etc.). This should include low cost improvements such as bus shelters and signs.
  - ii. Identify additional vehicle requirements by transit operator to implement the plan's service and operational recommendations.
  - iii. Identify opportunities to consolidate transit vehicle and equipment purchases to promote more uniformity across the region.
  - iv. Identify physical improvements to increase the safety and security of the regional transit system.

## Meetings:

- a. Public workshops to present Draft Regional Transit Plan.
- b. Region-wide public presentation for the Final Regional Transit Plan.
- c. Advisory Committee meetings.

## Deliverables:

- a. Draft and Final Regional Transit Plan
- b. Public and Advisory Committee meeting summaries.

## 7. TERM OF CONTRACT

All services related to this project must be completed within two-years from the signing of the Contract. The Consultant shall prepare an initial project schedule defining the projected completion date of each major task in the scope of services, understanding that the contract term shall not exceed two-years. The Consultant shall be required to provide reports of their findings at the end of each major task and complete a final report with recommendations and cost estimates.

## 8. PROJECT FUNDING

This project is funded through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 (Urbanized Area Formula) program (80 percent), with the required 20 percent match provided by NYSDOT. Contract administration will be carried out by the Orange County Department of Planning. As an FTA funded project, this project will be managed by Orange County through the FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS).