REGIONAL FEASIBILITY STUDY

General Scope of Work

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation Division

2009

SCOPE OF WORK – REGIONAL FEASIBILITY STUDY

The following Scope of Work identifies minimum project requirements and consultant responsibilities for a Regional Feasibility Study. The consultant is encouraged to view these steps as minimum project guidelines and to develop each step and product in an innovative manner.

Purpose

The purpose of this Regional Feasibility Study is to assess the existing transit services being provided and to determine if it is necessary for multiple single county transit services to be regionalized within a specific transit service area. This will be accomplished by identifying areas within the service area in need of transit services and determine the most efficient and effective method of meeting these needs. The range of organizational structures considered range from every system operating independently to regionalization of all services under a unified organization. This Regional Feasibility Study must be developed through a public education and involvement process that includes the general public, private and non-profit transportation providers, human service providers and targeted populations that include individuals with disabilities, low incomes and limited English proficiency (LEP).

Upon completion of this Regional Feasibility Study and final adoption by a governing board, the transit systems agree to move forward to the next step of initiating a Five Year Community Transportation Service Plan to assess the current performance and organizational direction of the transit system and to recommend strategies of operating or managing that increase mobility options for passengers and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and transportation services.

Project Schedule and Reports

The consultant will be expected to complete this study in four (4) months. The selected consultant shall prepare a draft Project Schedule to establish schedules and completion dates for all project deliverables within fourteen (14) days of the Notice to Proceed.

The consultant shall submit progress reports to NCDOT-PTD and Transit System on a monthly basis. Progress reports will indicate percent of tasks completed and achievements towards steps. The consultant will prepare and provide minutes of all meetings to assigned project staff of the NCDOT-PTD and Transit System. The consultant will submit invoices to NCDOT-PTD.

Public Participation

The consultant will work closely with officials and staff to identify needs and opportunities for receiving public input. The Public Participation should reflect an understanding of who the customers are, what the customers' needs are, and how to communicate findings and receive/integrate feedback from the customers. Public Participation shall identify how the public (including minority, women, elderly, disabled, Limited English Proficiency, and low income individuals) will participate in the planning process when assessing needs, strategies, and service alternatives, and the resulting final report shall document the efforts made in order to comply with Title VI requirements.

Stakeholder Interviews

Within thirty (30) days of the Notice to Proceed, the consultant will organize and schedule meetings and interviews with key stakeholders in accordance with the following:

A. Interview a sample of human service agencies that are not currently contracting with the transit system and determine reasons they are not utilizing the coordinated transportation services.
B. Receive meaningful input from a sample of human service agency directors or contacts that purchase transportation services;
C. Ensure that persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) have the means of sharing meaningful input.
D. Actively seek out and consider the viewpoints of minority, low-income, and LEP populations in the course of conducting public outreach and activities

Stakeholders shall include the following but may include other stakeholder interviews identified by the consultant that may be beneficial to the study process.

County officials:	County Manager, Chairman of the County Commissioners, and Community Transportation Advisory Board Chairman, other.
City officials:	City Manager, City Mayor, and Chairman of the Transit Commission, other.
Town officials:	Town Managers of the participating municipalities, other.
Other:	Transportation Advisory Board representative, Representative from Chamber of Commerce, Director of Regional Council, MPO Coordinator, RPO Coordinator, and contracting agencies, community leaders, other.

Public Satisfaction and Community Needs Survey

The Consultant shall develop and distribute a Public Satisfaction and Community Needs Survey to the general public in accordance with the following:

A. Receive meaningful input from at least twenty (20) human service agency passengers that represent at least *three* different agencies;
B. Receive meaningful input from at least ten (10) general public riders;
C. Receive meaningful input from a sample of human service agency directors or contacts that purchase transportation services;
D. Ensure that persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) have the means of sharing meaningful input.

E. Actively seek out and consider the viewpoints of minority, low-income, and LEP populations in the course of conducting public outreach and involvement activities
F. Describe any locally developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan approved in the service areas.

The consultant will prepare a Summary Report of interviews and surveys for inclusion in Technical Memorandum 1.

First Steering Committee Meeting: Within thirty (30) days of the Notice to Proceed, the consultant will meet with the Steering Committee to present their approach to the planning study and solicit input from the committee on concerns and issues that will be addressed. NCDOT PTD will assist local transportation systems in forming this committee.

Step 1.

Analyze each system's services, functions, positions, and personnel.

A. Identify and map each system's service area.
B. Describe each system's services and functions.
C. Summarize organizational structure and administrative functions of each system, including contractual relationships.
D. Identify the type (position, FT/PT), number/duties of positions within each system that provide the services and functions, including vacant positions.
E. Describe personnel practices, procedures and benefits of the positions.
F. Describe operating policies and procedures. Summarize operational findings resulting from staff interviews and observations, as well as the review of the current Community Transportation Services Plan, Capital Transportation Improvement Plan (CTIP), Long Range Transportation Improvement Plan (LRTP) and other system, MPO, and/or RPO documents/information.
G. Identify the source and amount of existing federal/state/local funding.
H. Identify capital resources used to provide services and functions.
I. Evaluate the effectiveness in utilization of capital resources.
J. Conduct an analysis of existing routes to determine effectiveness of meeting need.
K. Evaluate the current scheduling and dispatching techniques utilized by the systems
L. Assess each transportation system's performance (operations and financial).
M. Identify and the roles and responsibilities of existing transportation boards.
N. Evaluate the role of local governance in operation of the systems.
O. Identify any current or emerging issues related to administrative, operating, or capital funding that are applicable to or that affect regionalization.
P. Describe contracts and operating policies.
Q. Prepare a Step 1 completion report and present it to the steering committee.

Step 2.

Assess opportunities for Regionalization of services, including but not limited to the following items.

A. Main destination areas such as regional medical centers, employment centers, shopping centers, social service centers.
B. Non-emergency medical transportation.
C. Employment transportation patterns.
D. Housing and development patterns that can be addressed via transit.
E. Coordination of existing transit services
F. Rural/community transportation services, including demand response, subscription, and deviated route/feeder services.
G. Urban fixed-route transit services, including intercity services.
H. Rail/aviation/intercity bus connections and regional transit connections/coordination.
I. Available local private transportation services, such as taxis, paratransit providers, etc.
J. Examination of local and regional travel patterns based on census data.
K. Administrative, capital, operational areas where there is a clear duplication of services/functions and/or that present opportunities for coordination and/or consolidation.
L. Develop service design alternatives to improve intermodal connections in the area, including needs or opportunities for regional connections.
M. Complete "SWOT" (strengths/weaknesses, opportunities/threats) analysis for service coordination and/or consolidation.
N. Prepare a Step 2 completion report and present it to the steering committee.

Technical Memorandum #1

Technical Memorandum #1 shall detail findings and recommendations from Steps 1 and 2 concerning services, functions, positions and personnel and opportunities for regionalization, as well as the Summary Report of stakeholder interviews and needs survey. The report shall include illustrations (maps and charts) of services/functions, including comparative information relative to any duplication of service or service opportunities. The consultant will distribute Technical Memorandum #1 to all Steering Committee members at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the second meeting of the Steering Committee.

Second Steering Committee Meeting: The consultant will discuss information included in Summary Report of interviews and surveys and Technical Memorandum #1 and will facilitate discussion to ensure that all information is accurate. The consultant will make changes to Technical Memorandum #1 as needed.

Step 3.

Identify new lead transportation agency alternatives (to include organizational

charts) and staffing options and location alternatives for regionalized administrative and/or operations office.

A. Identify services, functions and positions to be regionalized under the new lead transportation agency.
B. Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of transferring services and functions (including call center issues and software issues; i.e. Types of software/cost of software) to new lead transportation organization.
C. Assess when services, functions and positions could be transferred to lead transportation organization. Provide recommendations regarding retention of vested permanent employees of transit systems.
D. Identify and evaluate organizational alternatives for service regionalization.
E. Analyze and document advantages/disadvantages and costs/savings/benefits of each alternative. Evaluate anticipated costs, revenues, and cost allocation and billing methodology.
F. Provide recommendations on a public education campaign to ensure a smooth transition from several existing systems to a single entity. The consultant will provide options on regional system name based on input from the steering committee.
G. Identify existing grants and analyze and document impacts of options upon local, state and federal funding.
H. Identify any impacts or implication of federal regulations and requirements (e.g., drug and alcohol testing, ADA, labor protection, Clean Air Act, etc.).
I. Identify administrative and operating impacts (financial, customer service, safety, quality of service, enhanced mobility) to existing passengers and contracting human service agencies (by comparing fully allocated cost rates of each alternative with single-system rate). Include impact on out-of-county, non-emergency medical trip expenses.
J. Identify impacts of alternatives on staffing in existing systems.
K. Identify impacts on combining existing vehicle fleets and provide recommendation on existing insurance and liability issues.
L. Identify impacts on capital needs (vehicles, equipment, technology and facilities), including impacts (financial, customer service, safety) to existing passengers contracting agencies, and local governments (compare new regionalized fully allocated cost rate with single-system rate). Include impact on out-of-county, non-emergency medical trip expenses.
M. Provide a recommendation on the preferred organizational alternative.
N. Prepare a Step 3 completion report and present it to the steering committee.

Step 4.

Assess Governance and Funding

A. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the existing Transportation Advisory Boards.
B. Assess and identify the current political support regarding regionalization and the creation of a lead transportation agency.

C. Identify the appropriate roles and responsibilities for local Transportation Advisory Boards to insure input into the decision making process of a new lead transportation agency.
D. Analyze and provide a recommendation for the organizational structure of the regionalized system. Include organizational charts, staffing options, and location/facility alternatives for administrative and operational functions.
E. Identify appropriate roles and responsibilities for a new lead transportation entity.
F. Identify the governance of a new lead transportation agency and provide recommendations on how its members would be appointed.
G. Provide a recommendation on the designation of a lead transportation organization (e.g., city department, county department, non-profit organization, consortium, authority, etc.).
H. Describe standardized regional fully allocated billing rate and fare policy
I. Describe cost allocation plans.
J. Identify active grants.
K. Describe federal and state grant requirements.
L. Evaluate the process for a new lead transportation agency becoming the single grant recipient.
M. Assess options for establishing levels of service in the future.
N. Identify funding options to support the continuation of services under a new lead transportation agency.
O. Identify region wide funding sources to support the services and functions regionalized under a new lead transportation agency.
P. Address revenue opportunities with "authority" status.
Q. Prepare a Step 4 completion report and present it to the steering committee.

Technical Memorandum #2

Technical Memorandum #2 will detail the findings and recommendations from Steps 3-4 that address a new lead transportation agencies alternatives, governance and funding. The consultant shall distribute Technical Memorandum #2 to all Steering Committee members at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the third meeting of the Steering Committee documenting impacts, advantages, and disadvantages of regionalization alternatives and recommend a preferred option as determined from Step 3.
A meeting will be held at this point with elected officials, transportation system directors and advisory board representatives to discuss the findings and opportunities for regionalization.

Third Steering Committee Meeting: The consultant will present information included in Technical Memorandum #2 and facilitate discussion ensure that all information is accurate. The consultant will make changes to Technical Memorandum #2 as needed. In association with the NCDOT/PTD, the Steering Committee will review the decision-making process to be undertaken regarding participation in a consolidated system.

Step 5.

Determination of Participation

The consultant will prepare an Executive Summary of information derived through stakeholder interviews, surveys and Technical Memorandums #1 and #2. The consultant will distribute a copy of the Executive Summary via established mechanisms (e.g., through county managers, clerks, etc.) to all elected officials, NCDOT/PTD, to City and County managers, to transportation system directors/planners, to members of advisory commissions and boards, as well as to managers of towns that may be impacted by the study recommendations, and other key stakeholders as applicable or appropriate.

Informational Meeting: An informational meeting will be scheduled and held for elected officials, transportation system directors, commission and board members, and other stakeholders to discuss the findings of the study and address any questions on the report. After the informational meeting, directors, commission and board members, and stakeholders shall be provided at least two weeks to provide input to their respective governing bodies regarding the study and its recommendations.

Local staff will work with the consultant and the NCDOT/PTD to schedule the meeting for discussion and action at an official meeting of each local governing body. Each local governing body shall decide whether or not the services, functions, organization, and governance of its respective transportation system will be united as one regional transportation system. Based on the meeting schedule of the governing bodies, it may take up to four (4) weeks to schedule this item on official meeting agendas.

The decisions of or feedback from the governing bodies will determine the direction of the study:

- If either governing body needs additional information prior to making their decision regarding participation in the regionalized system, the Scope of Work will be revised, and the consultant will be asked to provide a revised cost proposal for the additional work. Upon approval of the NCDOT/PTD, the consultant will undertake the additional work and will repeat the above process for determining participation.

- If both governing bodies decide to participate in a regionalized public transportation system, each governing body will be asked to submit a Letter of Intent to the NCDOT/PTD to initiate the Five Year Community Transportation Service Plan process.

FINAL MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

A presentation of the Draft Plan will be made for the Steering Committee, TAB members, authorized official, county manager, county finance manager, members of the public governing body, and/or other interested groups. Comments will be solicited and considered in the Final Plan.

Step 6.

Provide final project deliverables to NCDOT/PTD and the public governing body.

DRAFT PLAN TO FINAL PLAN

A. Send Draft Plan to public governing body and NCDOT/PTD for final review who will return comments if necessary within ten working days.
B. The consultant will revise the Draft Plan if necessary and return it for comment. This process will continue until there are no more comments and the plan becomes the Final Draft Plan.
C. The Final Draft Plan should be approved within 30 days of receipt. When approved, the public governing body will send a letter to the NCDOT/PTD stating acceptance of the plan.
D. NCDOT/PTD will notify the consultant when the plan is accepted.

FINAL PROJECT DELIVERABLES

A. The consultant will present one copy of all information contained in the Final Plan in electronic format. This information should be easily convertible to HTML or web-based format.
B. The consultant shall provide one (1) camera-ready original copy and 10 reproduced copies.
C. The consultant will complete the following Summary of Recommendations and send to NCDOT/PTD.