

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

REGIONALLY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

SOUTHWEST AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT



RFP DUE DATE:

3:00 PM

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2021

The following Request for Proposal is made by the Southwest Area Regional Transit District, the Lead Agency for Regional Public Transportation Coordination in the Middle Rio Grande Region

I. INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Area Regional Transit District (SWART) is the lead agency for regional transportation planning in the Middle Rio Grande Region which covers the counties of Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Zavala. SWART was established in June 2012 under authority of the Texas Transit Commission and is a political subdivision of the state of Texas.



Public transportation is an integral component of a region's multimodal transportation system offering tangible transportation benefits, including transit service for the elderly, the disabled, and people lacking access to an automobile. Public transit also offers additional benefits to society as a whole; increased transit use promotes clean air and various other environmental initiatives. Coordination of these services will allow for greater efficiency, transportation connectivity, and increased awareness and support

for transit. Public transportation in the Southwest Texas region consists of demand-response service for rural public transportation. There is one flex route in Eagle Pass. SWART also benefits from various partnerships and sub-contracts with other regional agencies in provision of transit services to specialized populations such as veterans, those with mental health issues, elderly, disabled, children, and renal care patients.

The region comprised within the 14,212 square mile eight-county area is rural. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of the Middle Rio Grande region was approximately 167,010 persons. The 2019 estimation is 173,328. The City of Eagle Pass is estimated to surpass an urban cluster population of 50,000 after the 2020 Census which will transition their rural designation to that of a small urban designation. This will ultimately change all auspices of the provision of public transit services in Maverick County.

In efforts to cooperate with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), under the provision of Chapter 461 of House Bill (HB) 3588, in eliminating waste and ensuring efficiency and maximum coverage in the provision of public transportation services, the Southwest Texas region continues regional coordination efforts defined by the Middle Rio Grande Regional Transportation Plan.

The Southwest Area Regional Transit District (SWART) is one of two rural transit districts in the Middle Rio Grande area. The City of Del Rio is the other rural transit district. SWART (formerly Southwest Transit) became a standalone transit district on June 1, 2012 but has provided rural public transit services since 1981. Since the inception of the Regional Transportation Initiative, Southwest Transit has been the lead agency for regional planning for the Middle Rio Grande area. The Regional Stakeholder Committee for the area has been highly involved with activities of the initiative over the past eight years despite the transition in 2012.

SWART provides rural public transportation services in the counties of Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, and Zavala. We also provide non-emergency medical transportation in the above referenced counties. Over 90,000 one-way trips are provided annually. SWART additionally travels over 900,000 miles respectfully. Both local and out of area routes are provided daily with a staff of thirty-five (35) administrative and operating personnel. The City of Del Rio Transportation Department provides both local and out of area routes in Val Verde County. They provide demand

response, fixed route, and NEMT services throughout the City of Del Rio. They encompass a staff of 17. They perform 42,000 and travel 293,806 miles.

SWART continues its efforts originally set forth in its 2016 regional plan. The Middle Rio Grande region continues a dynamic metamorphosis due to the Eagle Ford Shale Petroleum movement causing the requisite for an updated needs assessment and possible service delivery changes to accommodate such needs. The region has also been affected by the influx of immigrant settlement. To update the next 5-Year Plan, a thorough and updated needs assessment remains a priority in particular pertaining to this project, along with the need to continue meeting the current goals and objectives previously set forth by the 2016 Regional Plan that deem feasible as well as the development of an updated 5-Year Plan.

Prior to becoming a standalone rural transit district, SWART developed a regional transportation plan that was submitted in 2012. Due to the implications of the Eagle Ford Shale, SWART was forced to perform an updated Needs Assessment Study in 2015 and developed a revised 5-Year Regional Plan in 2016. In July 2019, SWART developed a 5-Year Agency Strategic Plan as well. Currently the agency is in the process of working with an outside consultant to develop a service delivery route design for Eagle Pass in anticipation of transitioning to a small urban provider.

Four (4) of SWARTS counties fall within the shale region. They include Dimmit, La Salle, Maverick, and Zavala. The impact of the gas industry has also affected the counties surrounding the shale which include Uvalde, Kinney, and Val Verde.

Due to the shale, the region has seen an impact for the following:

- Increased housing costs.
- Increased pay for CDL drivers hired by the oil companies, thus hindering the ability for passenger transportation agencies to match drivers' pay.
- Increased travel time on county roads and state highways due to the traffic congestion of oil transporting companies.
- Increased damage/wear and tear of infrastructure such as county and state roads.
- Increased costs of hotels stay in the region.

In 2015 the Needs Assessment, the following factors were realized as needs and gaps in transit service delivery:

Service needs:

- Expanded weekend service,
- Regularly scheduled intercity services, particularly into Uvalde for college students and into Kerrville for veterans,
- Regularly scheduled service to San Antonio, The Lower Rio Grande Valley and Laredo,
- To provide a seamless mode of transportation services to the entire region,
- Maintain existing levels of service,
- Commuter services for Eagle Ford Shale employee,
- Service for Lucky Eagle Casino and Hotel,
- Regularly scheduled intercity service,
- Service across jurisdictional boundaries; and
- NEMT for non-Medicaid patients.

IT and equipment:

- On-board cameras,
- Electronic fare boxes,
- Maintenance software,
- Wireless capability at SWART facilities outside of Uvalde,
- New computer servers at SWART headquarters,
- To develop a vehicle replacement program and vehicle maintenance program,
- Include maintenance facility upgrades and/or new facility construction; and To develop a regional Co-Op for fuel, parts, and services.

Planning:

- Preparation for 202 Census designation change for Del Rio and possibly Eagle Pass.
- Accommodation of new transit demand due to Eagle For Shale exploration.

Coordination:

- Greyhound Intercity Coaches – SWART could coordinate services with Greyhound as ticket agents for intercity services making the travel experience for residents in the region seamless with only one transfer and one ticket purchase.
- Lucky Eagle Casino and Hotel – Public transit service can be extremely beneficial to hotel and casino sites. Not only does transit bring customers to the casino but employees of the facility can use the services for commuting.
- Eagle Ford Shale (EFS) – the massive increase in employment and economic activity in the region around Eagle Ford Shale sites has created a demand for increased transportation services. A deal between transit agencies and EFS companies to provide regularly scheduled regional service, commuter service and tripper service could greatly benefit EFS as well as public transit. There may also be potential for EFS to be a source of in-kind match to help with tire replacement due to the extra expense incurred on transit vehicles in EFS areas.
- MHMR – is often a large partner with public transit in other regions. Transportation for MHMR clients is always a need and coordination with public transit, especially in Eagle Pass, to help transport those in need is a coordination goal.
- Eagle Pass Medical Facilities – Non-emergency medical transportation was a need identified in the survey portion of this study. Coordination between medical facilities and public transit can help ensure that customers get the services they need while improving public transit productivity.
- **Area Agency on Aging (AAA)** – is a potential coordination partner that can help with senior mobility in the region. The public surveys indicated the senior transportation is an unmet need in the region. AAA can help with cost sharing, planning and travel training.
- **Various Corrections Departments and Agencies** – can be a source of in-kind match through community service workers to help maintain regional facilities.
- **Local Businesses** – can be a great source of revenue for on-board advertising and in-kind match. Since TxDOT forbids planning money to be used for food for meetings local business can donate food to help increase turnout for public processes.

- Greater coordination with the VA.

Training:

- Management, financial, supervisory, dispatching, scheduling, and vehicle maintenance for SWART staff.
- Travel Training and Travel Ambassador program.
- Local PASS training specialist in Del Rio.

Marketing and Economic Development:

- To develop regional marketing strategies that is cost effective and will generate match funds.
- To develop strategies to acquire additional and alternative funding for the region.
- To promote transit through Economic Development Initiatives.
- On-board advertising and bus wrapping.
- Travel Training and Travel Ambassador program.

The 2016 Regional Plan's goals and objectives were derived from the 2015 Needs Assessment. The regional goals are divided into three sections:

- Increase coordination.
 - Objective: Expand Weekend Service
 - Objective: Establish Regularly Scheduled Intercity Services, Especially into Uvalde for Students and into Kerrville for Veterans.
 - Objective: Improve Coordination among Transportation Providers and Human Service Agencies
 - Objective: Coordinate with Kickapoo Lucky Eagle Casino, MHDD Centers, Eagle Pass Medical Facilities, Middle Rio Grande Development Council, and EFS Companies.
- Improve training and technology.
 - Objective: Improve Travel Training and Travel

Ambassador Program.

- Objective: Update and Improve Current Bus Technology.
- Objective: Improve Financial Management and Record Keeping.
- Increase investment.
 - Objective: Increase Awareness of SWART's Services to the Public.
 - Objective: Create Partnerships with Local Area Businesses and Organizations.
 - Objective: Increase Alternative Sources of Dedicated Revenue.
 - Objective: Establish Local Financial Support from Middle Rio Grande Municipalities.
 - Objective: Establish Self-Sufficient Financial Strategies and Investments.
 - Objective: Increase Mobility Management Engagement with Transportation Providers in the Region.

SWART has met a large percentage of the objectives over the last five years. The need to update both the Needs Assessment and the 5-Year Plan will need to take the potential growth and re-organization of services in Maverick county due to the 2020 Census. This will also impact surrounding counties as they rely heavily on Maverick County for various support and assistance. Both the SWART Agency Strategic Plan and the City of Del Rio Strategic Plan must be taken into consideration as well.

The Southwest Texas Regional Transportation Planning Advisory Stakeholders Committee, provides guidance to SWART on the planning process, provide a voice for their respective agency and/or organization, and advocate for the regional transportation coordination. The members of the Steering Committee include persons from public transportation providers, interested organizations, local officials, and state agencies.

SWART maintains its leadership service by staying abreast of big-picture transportation needs and services, keeping others engaged in the planning process and facilitating discussion; and managing the development and

implementation of projects in the plan and the update of the plan.

SWART is seeking consultant services to assist in conduct a needs assessment and develop a revised 5-Year Plan.

Needs Assessment:

The needs assessment must inventory providers, transit needs, support needs, clientele needs, and regional economic development impacts and needs as per regional economic initiatives in Planning Region 24. This needs assessment shall include, but not be limited to, an assessment of transportation needs of special population groups such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, those with mental health issues, renal care patients, and senior citizens. This needs assessment shall be developed using a process that involves these special population groups, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public. In addition, it is anticipated that the requested services would be performed between **March 2021 thru May 2021. Final Needs Assessment due by June 1, 2021 to present to the steering committee and stakeholders in in Region 24.** Written format and electronic format are required.

5-Year Regional Plan:

Consultants shall provide technical assistance and facilitation services to update the Regional Coordination Plan. Activities should include but are not limited to:

Plan Development Task 1:

- Will assist SWART to complete an assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit).
- Will assist SWART to complete an assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, and veterans.
- Will provide facilitation services to assist SWART to develop new goals/objectives for the regional coordination plan.
- Will assist SWART to identify strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.
- Will assist SWART to identify priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and for activities identified.

- Will provide technical assistance in public engagement to include participation by members of the public including seniors and individual with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public.

The products for this task will be a draft updated plan to document the analysis of regional needs assessment, new goals/objectives for the plan, and timelines for the scope of work of the plan. The deliverable will be provided hard copy format and electronic file format. **The draft is due by July 5, 2021.**

Plan Development Task 2:

- Will assist SWART to present a draft updated plan to the Planning Region 24 transportation steering committee and stakeholders for review and input.

The products for this task will be materials to present the draft updated plan to the steering committee, including a presentation or discussion guide to encourage feedback from committee members.

Plan Development Task 3:

- Will prepare a final updated plan based on steering committee and stakeholder input.
- SWART will present to final updated plan to the Planning Region 24 steering committee for review and approval.
- Will provide technical assistance as required.

The product for this task will be a final updated plan due by August 5, 2021. Both written format and electronic format is required.

Proposals are being requested from qualified firms or individuals with specific experience to perform this assignment.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSALS

General Specifications. The following information describes specifications and federal requirements that are extremely important with regard to the response to this request.

1. Ten copies of the proposal are to be submitted to Sarah Hidalgo-Cook, General Manager, Southwest Area Regional Transit District, 713 East Main Street, Uvalde, Texas 78801. Proposals are to be received no later than 3:00 PM (Central Standard Time), Monday, February 5, 2021. Proposals submitted after that time will not be considered and will be returned to the proposer unopened.
2. SWART, in accordance with Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000-4 and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations Part 23, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation issued pursuant to such Act, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively assure that, in regard to any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, DBEs will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin in consideration for an award.
3. SWART is required, under Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations Part 21 to request from all contractors an Affirmative Action Plan for the contracting entity. Such a plan will be reviewed by SWART to determine compliance with federal Equal Employment Opportunity requirements. You are requested to submit a plan, which should include a policy statement and analysis of your workforce.

The number and percent of your employees, who would be classified as minorities, including women and ethnic minorities, should be provided. The number and percent of your employees in professional versus nonprofessional positions, or administrative versus clerical positions, should be provided.

4. SWART has established a goal of **10.0 Percent** of the contract amount for participation on the part of DBE in U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) -assisted projects. Failure on the part of a proposer to meet this goal or to show meaningful good faith efforts to meet this goal may be grounds for finding the proposal nonresponsive. In the event the proposer is a non-DBE firm and the above stated goal for DBE participation is not met, the proposer would be required to provide justification and documentation for not reaching the goal.

5. Joint ventures between prime contractors and DBEs are encouraged. Whenever a joint venture involves a DBE firm (s), the proposer shall submit with the proposal the name(s) of the firm(s), individual qualifications, proposed scope of work and dollar value assigned to each DBE subcontractor and/or joint venture. The Affidavit of Intended Entrepreneurship, included as Appendix D.4 of the Sample Contract, is for this purpose. Please submit an original notarized affidavit with the Proposal.
6. For the purposes of this policy, a DBE is defined as a business enterprise that is owned and controlled by one or more socially and/or economically disadvantaged persons. "Owned and controlled" is specified as a business which is: (1) a sole proprietorship legitimately owned by an individual who is a disadvantaged person or (2) a partnership or joint venture controlled by disadvantaged persons and in which at least 51 percent of the voting interest and 51 percent of the beneficial ownership interests legitimately are held by disadvantaged persons. Such persons include individuals who may be women, Black, Hispanic, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Asian-Indian Americans, or any other minority or individual(s) found to be disadvantaged as defined by the Small Business Administration pursuant to Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act. Any firm claiming to be a DBE will be required to sign an affidavit so stating, using Attachment D.2, attached. Please submit the original notarized affidavit with the proposal.
7. The contractor shall maintain for three years such records as are necessary to determine compliance with their DBE goals and shall submit regular reports to enable SWART to monitor compliance.
8. Contractor must submit the TxDOT PTN 130 form.

Proposal Contents. This section contains a general description of information to be provided within the proposal.

1. Include a brief cover letter, summarizing the key points of

the proposal and a general description of the approach to accomplishing the work. Name and address of the firm, as well as a contact person, should be included.

2. Include a description of the project organization and management plan to include project staffing and identify the personnel to be involved, their respective role and estimated percentage of time dedicated to the project. If substitutes are provided for on a contingency basis, they should be described. Joint ventures should specifically describe functions and responsibilities of the firm(s) and their staff. If more than one firm would be involved, the proposal should clearly delineate the work to be accomplished by each firm and how the work would be coordinated and managed.

3. Provide information as to the estimated number of hours each staff person would spend on the project and the number of project meetings in the local area that would be necessary for those individuals. An estimate of the amount of time everyone would spend gathering or sub-allocating data in the local area should be provided. Specify the number of proposed meetings to be held in the local area coordinating activities with SWART technical staff and the Southwest Texas Regional Transportation Planning Steering Committee members. Include resumes and work history of individuals and firms proposed to accomplish the work.
4. Provide a schedule describing how the work would be accomplished. Include a discussion of previous experience in similar work, and the result of that experience. Include a detailed description concerning quality control and how this would be established and maintained throughout the course of the project. Identify and describe the methodologies and statistical rationale proposed to accomplish the work. The successful firm will be held contractually responsible for collecting appropriate data, identifying, and correcting potential anomalies in collected data, reporting, and forecasting the data.
5. The project manager must be specified, and a clear description provided regarding their involvement in the project, the amount of time they would be in the local area managing the collection or sub-allocation of data for the study, the estimated percent of their time dedicated to the project and estimated number of proposed meetings in the local area to coordinate activities with SWART technical staff and the Southwest Texas Regional Transportation Planning Steering Committee. Substitutions for key personnel involved in this project will not be allowed without prior approval and resulting delays will be the responsibility of the Consultant.
6. Submit TxDOT PTN 130 Form.
7. Submit proposals as two documents:

- a) Scope of Services and Qualifications, along with Compliance Requirements and
- b) Project Cost Proposal - sealed.

The first document, containing the Scope of Services and Qualifications, should respond to general descriptions provided in the Proposal Contents section and specific task descriptions provided in III. Statement of Work section. Compliance Requirements should be contained in this section and include the Affirmative Action Plan described in General Specifications.

The second document shall be the consultant's cost proposal in an amount not to exceed **\$100,000**. The cost proposal is to be in a sealed envelope and clearly marked with Consultant's Firm Name and Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning Cost Proposal.

The project budget is required, including but not limited to, identifying labor rates and total costs, benefits, overhead, fees, direct expenses, travel, and equipment. The cost proposal should also identify costs associated with proposed subcontract or joint venture agreement(s).

- 8. The above items provide a general description of what is expected in the proposal. This information is not meant to limit or exclude other information from being included. Other sections in this RFP contain requirements for information, which may not be specifically mentioned in this section. Proposals should respond to all requests for information.

II. STATEMENT OF WORK

The Southwest Area Regional Transit District will utilize consultant services to assist in the completion of the Statement of Work as defined by the tasks and deliverables that follow.

Needs Assessment:

The needs assessment must inventory providers, transit needs, support needs, clientele needs, and regional economic development impacts and needs as per regional economic initiatives in Planning Region 24. This needs assessment shall include, but not be limited to, an assessment of transportation needs of special

population groups such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, those with mental health issues, renal care patients, and senior citizens. This needs assessment shall be developed using a process that involves these special population groups, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public. In addition, it is anticipated that the requested services would be performed between **March 2021 thru May 2021. Final Needs Assessment due by June 1, 2021 to present to the steering committee and stakeholders in in Region 24.** Written format and electronic format are required.

5-Year Regional Plan:

Consultants shall provide technical assistance and facilitation services to update the Regional Coordination Plan. Activities should include but are not limited to:

Plan Development Task 1:

- Will assist SWART to complete an assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit).
- Will assist SWART to complete an assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, and veterans.
- Will provide facilitation services to assist SWART to develop new goals/objectives for the regional coordination plan.
- Will assist SWART to identify strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.
- Will assist SWART to identify priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and for activities identified.
- Will provide technical assistance in public engagement to include participation by members of the public including seniors and individual with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and other members of the public.

The products for this task will be a draft updated plan to document the analysis of regional needs assessment, new goals/objectives for the plan, and timelines for the scope of work of the plan. The deliverable will be provided hard copy format and electronic file format. **The draft is due by July 5, 2021.**

Plan Development Task 2:

- Will assist SWART to present a draft updated plan to the Planning Region 24 transportation steering committee and stakeholders for review and input.

The products for this task will be materials to present the draft updated plan to the steering committee, including a presentation or discussion guide to encourage feedback from committee members.

Plan Development Task 3:

- Will prepare a final updated plan based on steering committee and stakeholder input.
- SWART will present to final updated plan to the Planning Region 24 steering committee for review and approval.
- Will provide technical assistance as required.

The product for this task will be a final updated plan due by August 5, 2021. Both written format and electronic format is required.

III. FINAL PRODUCT

The deliverables as defined in each task outlined above must be approved by the Texas Department of Transportation Public Transportation Division. Deliverables will be submitted to SWART for review as well as to the Southwest Area Regional Transportation Planning Stakeholders Committee for review and approval. The contract is deliverable-based, and reimbursement of services is provided only upon obtaining approval of the

deliverables by the TxDOT Public Transportation Division.

IV. CONSULTANT SELECTION CRITERIA

SWART consultant selection committee will consider each complete and responsive proposal and select a short list of qualified firms. Each firm selected for the short list will be notified and oral interviews will be scheduled and conducted. During oral and/or virtual interviews, the interviewer may request clarification of specific elements in the proposal. SWART consultant selection committee will then evaluate and score the short list of proposers.

Criteria for selection of proposals have been identified according to their order of importance. Elements considered will include understanding of the project, familiarity with the local area, the ability to complete the work on time, and suitability of proposed data sources.

All information that has been requested in the RFP and provided in proposals will be considered and scored during the consultant selection process.

SWART consultant selection committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. The contract will be awarded to the proposer receiving the highest score during evaluation and whose proposal is most advantageous to SWART, with cost and other factors considered. Final award of the contract is subject to approval by SWART Board of Directors and/or Executive Committee.

The criteria and weighing for all planning projects are listed below and found in the “SWART Contracting Procurement Procedures.”

Project Understanding : 25

Scope of Services: 25

Project Manager/Staff Qualifications: 20

Project Cost:15

Firm Qualifications/Consultant References: 10
Schedule: 5

For more information or clarification, Contact:

Sarah Hidalgo-Cook, CCTM

General Manager

830-278-4155 x 3009

830-900-9929

scCook@paseoswart.org