

**Scope of Work
Comprehensive Operations Analysis
Paratransit Study
FTA Grant No. LA-2018-013-00
RPC Task PARA21**

INTRODUCTION

In early 2021, the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), in collaboration with the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and Jefferson Parish Transit (JeT), released final recommendations for a comprehensive redesign of fixed route services as part of the New Links planning project (www.newlinksnola.com). These recommendations call for substantial changes to the fixed route services operated by both agencies to improve service quality and regional conductivity between Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

The purpose of this study will be to provide a detailed assessment of existing paratransit operations in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes. This assessment will then be used as the basis for recommendations for improving paratransit services in the context of the recommendations from the New Links network redesign.

TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Task 1a: Project Management Committee

The Consultant will assist the RPC in establishing and supporting the Project Management Committee (PMC) to oversee the work in progress, review inventory findings, and assist in the development of recommended improvements to regional paratransit service.

The PMC will include representatives from the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), Regional Transit Authority (RTA), and other organizations as deemed appropriate. The Consultant will provide all necessary agendas, handouts and exhibits in advance of the PMC's meetings for RPC review and approval and prepare summary minutes of the meetings. The PMC will meet four times during the study effort: at the kick-off meeting, to review the existing conditions analysis, to review draft recommendations, and to review final recommendations.

Task 1b: Project Timeline and Kick-off meeting

The Consultant will prepare a draft project schedule in Gantt chart format including major milestones (including, at a minimum: project initiation and conclusion dates, tasks, and subtasks as per this scope, technical meetings, site visits, draft submittal and final submittal dates). The timeline will be submitted at a project kick-off meeting that will include: the consultant team, the Project Management Committee, and other stakeholders as needed. The project kick-off meeting will take place within two (2) weeks of the Notice to Proceed.

TASK 2: DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATION

2A: Review of Existing Plans

The Consultant will compile and review existing planning and policy documents, including the final New Links recommendations and RTA and JeT strategic plans.

2B: Data Collection

The consultant will work with the transit agencies to collect the following information needed to evaluate the paratransit operation:

- System policies (e.g., customer/trip purpose eligibility, advance request periods, real-time versus delayed scheduling, pick-up window, definitions of on-time trips, late trips, no-shows, missed trips, excessively long trips, and all scheduling parameters)
- Service infrastructure (e.g., fleet and driver information, staffing by functional area, the run structure, and call volumes)
- Ridership and service performance (e.g., data on trip requests, ridership by trip dispositions, RVHs and RVMs, customer complaints, accident/incident data)

TASK 3: PUBLIC OUTREACH

The consultants will develop a public outreach plan (POP) that will clearly identify engagement strategies and target populations. The public outreach plan should include at least one public meeting during each of task 4 and 5.

TASK 4: EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

The consultant will use the data collected. These indicators will be used to assess various aspects of paratransit, with a specific emphasis placed on comparisons with peer agencies. These performance indicators include:

- Service productivity (scheduled versus actual) by day, hour, and by type of trip
- Average trip length by type of trip
- Percentage of cancellations (advance versus late)
- Percentages of on-time trips, late trips, no-shows, and missed trips
- Trip patterns
- Complaint frequency ratio and breakdown by type
- Service area and hour ADA compliance
- Accident frequency ratio (preventable accidents per 100,000 total miles)
- Appropriateness of fleet vehicle type mix
- Efficiency of vehicle deployment by time and day versus spatial and temporal demand

A service profile will also be developed for the RTA, JeT, and SBURT paratransit services to show service “hotspots” in terms of geography (origins and destinations) and time of day. The profiles will be written in a way that all stakeholders can clearly understand them, and will provide transparent information to support all conclusions and recommendations.

The findings from the paratransit analysis will be compiled into an easy-to-understand performance evaluation, which will be the basis for recommendations to improve the quality and effectiveness of the demand-response services.

TASK 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

The consultant will develop recommendations for improvements to paratransit service in Orleans and Jefferson Parish. These recommendations can pertain, but may not be limited to:

- General Service Policies
- On-Demand Fleet Disposition
- Internal and External Communications Protocols
- Interagency Coordination
- Customer Service Protocols
- Safety and Driver Training Protocols
- Coordination with other ADA initiatives (stop and stop access improvements, fixed route accessibility, etc.)

PRODUCTS AND TIMELINE

- Project Schedule
- Project Public Outreach Plan
- Paratransit Analysis
- Service Recommendations

The project should be completed and final projects delivered within six months of the notice to proceed.