

**Scope of Services  
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](http://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 and Jefferson Parish. 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), Jefferson Transit (JET) and other organizations as deemed appropriate. The consultant should try to identify representative paratransit users and/or disability advocates for the PMC. 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 at least four times during the study effort at junctures identified in the project schedule.

### **Task 1b: Kick-off meeting**

The project kick-off meeting will take place within two (2) weeks of the Notice to Proceed. The meeting will include the consultant team and the RPC.

## **TASK 2: DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATION**

### **2A: Review of Existing Plans**

The Consultant will compile and review existing planning and policy documents that relate to Paratransit service and ADA mobility. A summary of these plans and a description of how they inform this work effort will be included in the final deliverable.

In your proposal, summarize the types of documents you foresee needing to review during the study.

## **2B: Data Collection**

The consultant will work with the transit agencies to collect information on current paratransit operations. At a minimum, the following will need evaluation:

- 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)

In your proposal, describe the data you anticipate needing to perform this study.

## **TASK 3: OUTREACH**

The consultants will develop an outreach methodology that will effectively gain input from key stakeholders, i.e, those that are regular users of paratransit services, organizations that advocate for regular users of paratransit service, and drivers of paratransit vehicles. The consultant will present this methodology in a Project Outreach Program, which must be pre-approved by the Project Manager before deployment.

In your proposal, summarize what you foresee as your general outreach strategy.

## **TASK 4: SERVICE PROFILE**

A service profile will also be developed for the RTA and JET paratransit services and their connections to St. Bernard Parish to show service “hotspots” in terms of geography (origins and destinations) and time of day.

## **TASK 5: EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT**

The consultant will use develop and employ a methodology that provides an evaluation of the existing paratransit system. This methodology should include quantifiable performance indicators that can be applied to individual agencies or the overall multi-parish paratransit system, and that further can be compared to peer regions and/or agencies.

These performance indicators should include at a minimum:

- 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

This evaluation should conclude with a set of findings about the system, including apparent deficiencies and opportunities for improvement.

#### **TASK 6: RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings from the previous tasks will be the basis for a series of recommendations to improve the quality and effectiveness of the demand-response services across the three parishes.

Examples of types of recommendations: service policies, modified fleet disposition, interagency coordination protocols, etc. Recommendations will be used by the agencies to make short (0-3 years) and medium (3-10) year term changes, so recommendations should be fiscally and realistically attainable within these timeframes.

**FINAL DELIVERABLE:** All task products should be aggregated into a Paratransit Plan document for review by the PMC before the project has been billed at 90%. The PMC and RPC staff may recommend changes to be addressed before a final plan is approved. The consultant will provide five hardcopies of the final plan to the RPC, as well a digital copy on a USB drive.

**TIMELINE:** The study will be completed within eight months of the notice to proceed.