



TRIANGLE J COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

World Class Region

Marketing Request for Proposal (RFP) Intercity Rail Project

Project Background:

Given the extensive work being done by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to improve the passenger rail infrastructure throughout the State of North Carolina, the Triangle, Triad and Greater Charlotte regions are working collaboratively to develop and implement a program to encourage passenger rail use along the corridor linking these regions. Specifically, this project aims to form partnerships with Chambers of Commerce, Downtown Development Associations, Transit Authorities and Convention and Visitors Bureaus to form a public education and marketing campaign targeted at increasing utilization of this existing and newly improved transportation system for accessing these metropolitan areas. The program will help to divert thousands of avoidable vehicle trips and significantly reduce the emissions generated from travel to these economic centers within the state. Working in tandem with the current update to the NCDOT's Traffic Demand Management and Public Transportation Strategic plan, along with work being done to enhance rail travel through the Piedmont with Amtrak service, this project will leverage existing and established programs and capabilities in the designated metro regions by enabling us to expand the engagement, education and outreach efforts to a broader array of businesses and travelers.

Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG), Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) and Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) will partner on the project; each organization will focus their efforts locally and build on existing relationships. The Council of Governments (COGs) bring a unique expertise with decades of experience in coordinating regional efforts.

Project Objectives:

The aim of the project is to shift travel behavior and encourage commuters and visitors to consider utilizing the train for a travel option regionally. Notably, this project will work to remove barriers on the first-mile / last-mile portion of the trip by communicating available multi-modal transportation resources and marketing these services externally. The marketing plan will be critical in helping to execute these deliverables. Staff are looking for a firm to assist with:

1. Identification of audience
2. Strategic marketing plan
3. Logo creation
4. Email and social media marketing strategy
5. Targeted outreach campaign for workshops and events (including but not limited to handout templates, etc.)

Target Audience:

There are endless audiences we could target for this campaign. In an effort to achieve the most effective results, we will work through the marketing firm selected to identify the audiences for which this promotion may be most relevant. These audiences may include:

- Hotel Visitors,
- State Employees,
- University Students,
- Business Commuters,
- Fair, Festival and Conference Attendees,
- Sporting Event Attendees, and
- Downtown Residents and Businesses.

Scope of Work:

Once the audiences have been identified, a marketing plan will be developed by the marketing firm. This plan will allow all three Piedmont Crescent COGs to use the same strategies, marketing materials, graphics and messaging. A streamlined approach will be important in order for travelers to hear consistent messaging across the regions. As identified in the Project Objectives section, the project team will be looking for a marketing firm to complete the following:

1. Identification of audience
2. Strategic marketing plan
3. Logo creation
4. Email and social media marketing strategy
5. Targeted outreach campaign for workshops and events (including handout templates, etc.)

Utilizing a range of media and outreach strategies, the three Piedmont Crescent COGs will be able to effectively and efficiently reach our target audiences. The marketing campaign developed early in the project will provide correlating materials. Some examples of project work could include:

- Billboards that catch the attention of those commuting between regions and give them the opportunity to consider rail for future travel.
- National Public Radio and Public Service Announcements as a cost effective way of reaching those who listen to radio.
- Running stories or writing editorials in local newspapers to allow additional outreach.
- Coordinating social media campaigns with the three COGs and all partner groups to reach thousands and build on and support all other aspects of project's outreach and education.
- Advertising the "NC By Train" transit pass to assist with first-mile/last-mile concerns. The transit pass will be valid for one ride and one transfer with the following transit partners:
 - GoRaleigh
 - GoCary
 - GoTriangle
 - GoDurham
 - Burlington Link Transit
 - Greensboro Transit Authority and Higher Education Area Transit
 - High Point Transit System
 - Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation
 - Rowan Transit System
 - Salisbury Transit System
 - Concord Kannapolis Area Transit
 - Charlotte Area Transit System

In addition to the examples referenced above, the project team will be looking for marketing staff to develop recommendations for advertising strategies to reach external audiences and encourage utilization of the rail for travel purposes. When reviewing marketing agency submissions, preference will be given to firms that can demonstrate past work with transportation and behavior change related content.

Timeline

The marketing component of this project will be a 3-month deployment, with dates and deliverables for the RFP and work portion identified below:

1. Notification of intention to bid and Q/A Period: starts July 30th 2018 – August 30th 2018
2. Proposals due: August 30th, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. EST
3. Notification to awardee: September 5th, 2018
4. Project start Date: September 17th, 2018
5. Timeline for project completion: January 20th, 2018

Response Requirement:

Please provide information outlined below in the response for proposals (3 page maximum per requirement):

- 1. Background of company:** Information on your organization.
- 2. Relevant experience & qualifications:** What past experience contributes to this project? Have you done work with public sector agencies? Do you have experience with transit / transportation related projects?
- 3. Project management:** Who will be project liaison from your staff? How will the project be managed? The team requests a minimum of 1-call monthly to review content, with additional calls or meetings based on program manager discretion.
- 4. Deliverables and schedule:** List and describe specific deliverables that will be produced, including the anticipated schedule for their delivery. Also describe critical inputs and involvement from the project management team necessary for successful creation of these deliverables.
- 5. Pricing and in-kind cost share:** Outlines of pricing for proposal. Please note due to the nature of our organization being a grant funded, public agency, all proposals will need to include 20% in-kind contribution from the marketing agency (total project costs * .20 = in-kind contribution rate). This can be done by providing a “non-profit” rate, etc. Please contact us directly if you have questions on this component.

Addenda

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, it will be posted to the Internet at tjcog.org. Each Respondent shall acknowledge receipt of all addenda issued under this RFP by number and date, to be included in their response. Respondent is not required to include copies of the addenda with the RFP.

Inquires and Comments

Should a Respondent have questions, observations or comments related to any section of this RFP, the Respondent shall notify the Contact listed in this section in writing (written form or electronically). The Project Team Contact will review each question/comment and formulate a response. If necessary, a written Addendum will be issued. Written inquiries (electronic is preferred) must be received no later than January 15, 2019 at the following address:

Mary Sell
Planner II
4307 Emperor Blvd, Suite 110
Durham NC 27703

Reserved Rights/Limitation on Funding

1. Triangle J COG makes no representations that a contract will be awarded as a result of this solicitation.
2. Triangle J COG reserves the right to waive any minor irregularities that may be contained in this RFP. The
3. Triangle J COG reserves the right to reject all responses and re-solicit or cancel this procurement if deemed by Triangle J COG to be in its best interest, without indicating any reasons for such action(s).

Main Point of Contact:

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