



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Transit Systems Merger for Western Kentucky University Topper Transit and City of Bowling Green GoBG Transit

July 11, 2024
Bowling Green-Warren County
Metropolitan Planning Organization
City-County Planning Commission
922 State Street, Suite 200
Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

Topper Transit and GoBG Transit Systems Merger Plan

In 2019, the MPO worked with Western Kentucky University (WKU) and the City of Bowling Green on a study analyzing transit efficiencies for both systems. One of the recommendations was implementing a merger of the two systems – both management and operations. Since 2023, WKU and the City of Bowling Green have entered into a shared agreement for Topper Transit and GoBG transit management and operations services with a third party provider. The current structure has one manager overseeing both services and operates as two separate services. The next step, as outlined in the 2019 study, is to merge all services into one transit system. The MPO is seeking funds to hire a consultant who will provide recommendations, action items, and appropriate structures to merging Topper Transit and GoBG services into one transit system. This will be done in partnership with WKU and the City of Bowling Green.

Project Identification: WKU - Bowling Green Public Transit Merger

Deadline for Questions: July 25, 2024, 12:00 p.m. (CST)

Deadline for Proposals: August 14, 2024, 4:30 p.m. (CST)

PROJECT INFORMATION

Background

As Bowling Green continues to grow and expand, the need for transit becomes more demanding and both WKU and the City want to provide their services in the most effective and efficient manner possible. WKU's Topper Transit and the City's GoBG Transit systems have recently consolidated to be managed and operated as independent systems by one third-party contractor. Each has evolved over a period of time and changes related to funding and efficiency have led both organizations to look for additional efficiencies that would provide better transit services to all members of our community.

Understanding

The Consultant will evaluate both systems and provide scenarios for merging the two systems. The Study will outline the necessary next steps for university and city officials. The study should evaluate what organizational options are available and which would work best for both systems. The study should also evaluate financial models based on the organizational options.

Support

The project will be conducted under the guidance of the MPO staff and a steering committee assembled by the MPO. Western Kentucky University the City of Bowling Green will have oversight of the project as well.

Scope of Services

Task 1 – Project Administration

The Consultant will develop a Project Work Plan detailing project milestones, proposed schedule, and communication protocols. The Consultant will communicate with MPO staff regularly throughout the development of the project on upcoming milestones, data needs, questions, and other outstanding issues.

The MPO will assist with establishing a Stakeholders group to serve an advisory role to the Transit Merger Plan update process. The Consultant will provide periodic updates to the MPO committees on the progress of the Plan.

Task 2 – Goals and Objectives

The Consultant will work with the steering committee to establish goals and objectives for a combined transit system. The Consultant will consider federal and state goals, performance measures and regulations, and consider the local goals for growth of public transportation. Based on the review and input from the MPO and its stakeholders, a series of goals and objectives will be prepared to guide the development of the Transit Merger Plan.

Task 3 – Existing Conditions

The Consultant is responsible for collecting and compiling data and analysis efforts for the Transit Merger Plan. Data and analysis may include, but is not limited to, ridership trends, financing, existing assets, and any other relevant information. Past transportation studies and plans should be considered as well. The steering committee will assist with providing local-level data as well as data from past studies and plans, as needed.

Task 4 – Develop Recommendations

The Consultant is responsible for providing organizational options for a possible merger with an outline of key decision points. The Consultant should be prepared to evaluate the options and develop a recommendation based on the existing systems and structures.

Task 5 – Financial Outlook

The Consultant is responsible for providing financial projections based on different organizational options. The Consultant should evaluate current cost structures and determine what cost savings could be achieved and how a possible merger could be funded by both systems.

Task 7 – Documentation

The Consultant will assemble the content and findings from the tasks in this scope into the project documentation for the Transit Merger Plan. Project documentation should be developed for digital format and ease of viewing, but also have the ability to produce digital PDF versions. The documentation is anticipated to include the following elements:

- Executive Summary – A brief summary of the *Transit Merger* document
- Transit Merger Document – The final document
- Technical Appendix – A series of appendices providing additional detail on subjects introduced in the Plan

The Consultant will prepare a Rough Draft, Revised Draft, and Final version of the document. The BG-WC MPO will distribute the Rough Draft and Revised Draft documents as needed and gather comments for submittal back to the Consultant.

DELIVERABLES

The Consultant will submit a digital plan with interactive content that can also be produced in PDF of the Final version of each document to the BG-WC MPO. The Consultant will submit all tables, GIS files and supporting documents generated during the preparation of the project to the BG-WC MPO along with the Final version of the document.

TOTAL ESTIMATED FEE

The project shall not exceed \$120,000.

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Content

The proposal should provide sufficient detail to enable the Selection Committee to thoroughly evaluate and compare it with other proposals. Proposals shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:

1. *Letter of Transmittal.* This letter will summarize in a brief and concise manner, the Proposer's understanding of the Scope of Work. The letter must name all persons authorized to make representations for the Proposer, such as sub consultants, and include the titles, addresses and telephone numbers of such persons. An official authorized to negotiate for the Proposer must sign the Letter of Transmittal.
2. *Organizational Profile and Qualifications.* This section of the proposal must describe the Proposer, including the size and range of its activities. The proposal must identify the primary individuals responsible for supervising the work involved in the proposal. Qualification statements shall include but not be limited to: (a) firm profile, (b) relevant project experience, (c) team organization, and (d) key staff bios.
3. *Project Approach.* This section of the proposal should outline major tasks to be performed and accomplished by the Proposer. Explanation of work, activities, phases, draft and final work products, and delivery dates should be included. If utilized, a percentage of AI-generated content should be provided, in addition to a breakdown of fees.
4. *Additional Data or Information.* Any additional information, which the Proposer considers pertinent, should be included in a separate section of the proposal.
5. *References.* Minimum of three references for whom you have performed similar work, including client, address, phone number and name of contact person who can provide a reference.

Proposal Format

No specific format is required. However, proposals should provide a straightforward, concise delineation of the consultant team's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. The elements addressed in the Project Scope should be emphasized. Proposals are limited to 15 pages, not including resumes and comparable project sheets.

Proposal Submission

Submit one (1) electronic media copy in PDF format of the proposal by mail, physical delivery, or email to the contact/address listed below. Emails should not exceed a size of 10 MB. Proposals will not be accepted at any other location. Submissions must arrive no later than **4:30 p.m. (CST) on Wednesday, August 14, 2024**. Proposals must be received by the designated date and time and none will be considered thereafter.

Attn: Carroll Duckworth, MPO Coordinator
Bowling Green-Warren County MPO
City County Planning Commission
922 State Street, Suite 200
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Proposal Questions

Submit questions in writing (no phone calls) no later than **12:00 p.m. (CST)** on **Thursday, July 25, 2024** to carroll.duckworth@bgky.org or mailed/physical delivery to the MPO office at the address listed above. Answers and/or clarifications to questions submitted by the abovementioned deadline will be posted on the MPO website (<https://www.warrenpc.org/mpo/>) by **4:30 p.m. (CST)** on **Monday, July 29, 2024**.

SELECTION PROCESS & SCHEDULE

Proposal Review

The MPO will convene a Consultant Selection Committee to evaluate and rank proposals. The Selection Committee will consist of representatives from the MPO, City of Bowling Green, Western Kentucky University, and CCPC planning staff. The Selection Committee will rank the top three candidates based on qualifications of the written proposals.

Review Criteria

The Selection Committee will evaluate responses to this RFP according to the following criteria:

- Professional expertise with similar projects (25 points);
- Project approach, methodology, creativity, presentation (30 points);
- Ability to meet required timeline (20 points); and
- References and relevant qualifications (25 points)

Total possible points: 100 points

All candidates will be notified once the final candidate has been approved. The MPO may negotiate to refine the scope of services and reach agreement on details as to terms and fees for professional services. The MPO reserves the right to terminate negotiations at any time and commence negotiations with the next most qualified firm, if a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached.

Schedule

The following schedule is anticipated for the selection process:

RFP issue date	July 11, 2024
RFP questions due	July 25, 2024 (Noon CST)
RFP question answered	July 29, 2024 (by 4:30 p.m. CST)
Proposals due	August 14, 2024 (by 4:30 p.m. CST)
Consultant selection	Week of August 26, 2024
Top Consultants Presentations	Week of August 26, 2024
Approval & Contract Negotiation	Week of September 2, 2024
MPO Policy Committee Approval	Week of September 9, 2024
Anticipated Notice to Proceed	September 14, 2024
Draft Project Delivered	May 1, 2025
Final Project Delivered	June 30, 2025

Following successful negotiation and issuance of a Notice to Proceed by the MPO, the MPO Coordinator with assistance from the project steering committee, will monitor progress and review all work products for the duration of the study.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Within the Agreement for Services between MPO and the successful Consultant, the Consultant will be required to agree to all of the following terms and conditions. Each respondent should include a statement in their proposal indicating their firm's willingness to abide by the City of Bowling Green, Warren County, Commonwealth of Kentucky, and Federal standard terms and conditions.

Contract Awards

By virtue of submitting a proposal, the Proposer acknowledges that this RFP does not constitute an agreement or a contract with the Proposer. An official contract or agreement is not binding until proposals are reviewed and accepted by the MPO. The MPO reserves the right to reject all proposals, to waive any informality and to solicit and re-advertise for other proposals.

Statement of Noncommitment

Issuance of this RFP does not commit the MPO to pay any costs incurred in preparation of proposals responding to this RFP. The MPO reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to re-advertise. All proposals will become property of the MPO.

Title VI and Equal Opportunity

The Bowling Green-Warren County Metropolitan Planning Organization, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 78 Stat. 252, 42 USC 2000d, et seq., and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered pursuant to this advertisement will afford disadvantaged and minority business enterprises full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation, and will not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, sex or national origin in consideration for an award. The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 further clarified the intent of Title VI to include all programs and activities of Federal aid recipients and contractors whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. The Bowling Green-Warren County MPO assures a collaborative effort will be implemented to avert the occurrence of discrimination in all of its programs and activities.

Subsequent federal acts that extend nondiscrimination requirements include gender (Federal Aid Highway Act 1973); disability (Rehabilitation Act of 1973 & Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990); and age (Age Discrimination Act of 1975).

Nondiscrimination

During the performance of a contract, the contractor, for itself, its assignees and successors in interest (hereinafter referred to as the "Contractor") must agree to the following clauses:

- 1) **Compliance with Regulations:** The Contractor shall comply with the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination in Federally-assisted programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation (hereinafter, "USDOT") Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 21, as they may be amended from time to time, (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations), which are herein incorporated by reference and made a part of this Agreement.
- 2) **Nondiscrimination:** The Contractor, with regard to the work performed during the contract, shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion or family status in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurements of materials and leases of equipment. The Contractor shall not participate either directly or indirectly in the discrimination prohibited by section 21.5 of the Regulations, including employment practices when the contract covers a program set forth in Appendix B of the Regulations.

- 3) **Solicitations for Subcontractors, including Procurements of Materials and Equipment:** In all solicitations made by the Contractor, either by competitive bidding or negotiation for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurements of materials or leases of equipment; each potential subcontractor or supplier shall be notified by the Contractor of the subcontractor's obligations under this contract and the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion or family status.
- 4) **Information and Reports:** The Contractor shall provide all information and reports required by the Regulations or directives issued pursuant thereto, and shall permit access to its books, records, accounts, other sources of information, and its facilities as may be determined by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and/or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to be pertinent to ascertain compliance with such Regulations, orders and instructions. Where any information required of a Contractor is in the exclusive possession of another who fails or refuses to furnish this information the Contractor shall so certify to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and/or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration as appropriate, and shall set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.
- 5) **Sanctions for Noncompliance:** In the event of the Contractor's noncompliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of this contract, CCPC and the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO shall impose contract sanctions as appropriate, including, but not limited to: withholding of payments to the Contractor under the contract until the Contractor complies, and/or cancellation, termination or suspension of the contract, in whole or in part.
- 6) **Incorporation of Provisions:** The Contractor shall include the provisions of paragraphs (1) through (6) in every subcontract, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment, unless exempt by the Regulations, or directives issued pursuant thereto. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any subcontract or procurement as CCPC and the Bowling Green-Warren County MPO, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and/or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance.