

Cherokee County



Requests for Proposals (RFP) 2022-14

RFP for the Development of Transit Feasibility Study for Cherokee County

Solicitation Issue Date: 04/22/22

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Proposals Due: 05/31/22 by 12pm

Late applications not accepted.

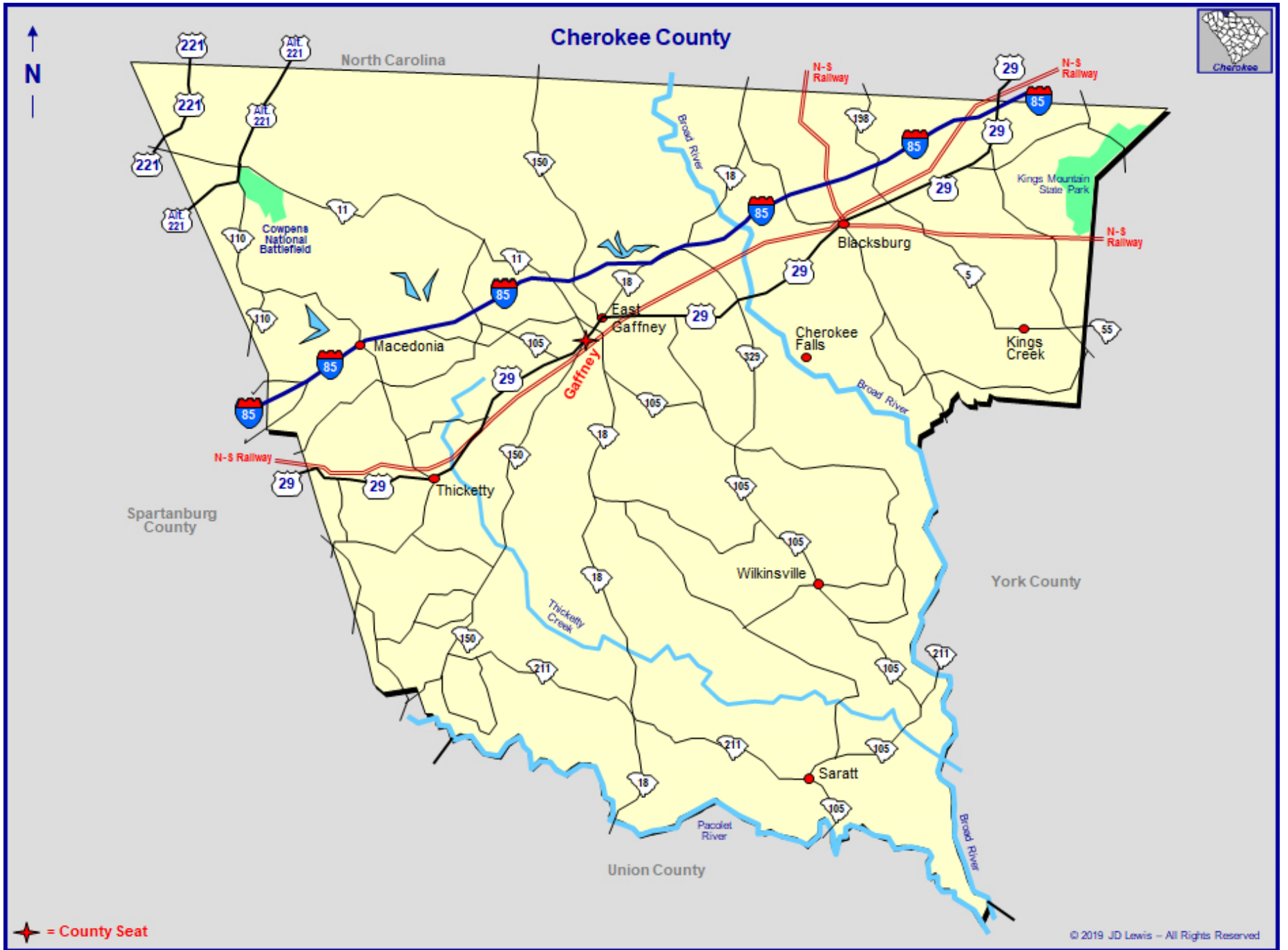
Request for Proposals: Development of a Rural Mobility Strategic Plan

Cherokee County is seeking proposals from qualified public transportation planning consultants or consulting teams to complete the development of a Transit Feasibility Study to determine need, required funding, equipment and operational resources, and how those resources can be used to address public transportation needs and identify applicable mobility strategies, which may be implemented over time. The study will be undertaken in parallel to the ongoing update of the 2040 South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan (2040 MTP).

This Request for Proposals (RFP) does not constitute a contract for services performed or to be performed. Following the selection of the consultant, Cherokee County will negotiate a contract, including a final scope of services and fee structure.

County Background

Established in 1897, the County of Cherokee is a rural county which is situated midway between Greenville, SC and Charlotte, NC on Interstate 85. The County is seeing significant growth in all aspects (industrial, residential, and commercial). Furthermore, the City of Gaffney and the Town of Blacksburg are both municipalities located within Cherokee County.



Rural Mobility - Problem Statement

Public transportation is not available within the County, limited transportation services are provided by local Senior Centers, the local hospital, and taxi companies.

The scattered population and geographically spread-out nature of the county contributes many transportation challenges for special needs residents and for those organizations attempting to serve them.

Scope of Work - Services Requested

The chosen planning consultant or consulting team will be responsible for working with **County, City, Town, and Chamber of Commerce** staff to develop a Regional Transit Feasibility Study report that encompasses the following key components and deliverables:

The Transit Feasibility Study work elements include:

- 1. Purpose and Need Statement:** The purpose and need statement will form the basis for developing goals, objectives, and the evaluation criteria used for the study. The consultant is expected to interact with **above listed entities**, SCDOT Office of Public Transit, the private transportation providers, and others as required to complete the process. Definition of need – will include the consideration of specific groups or geographic areas. Assessment of rural and under/unserved transportation needs – evaluating level of current and latent demand. Revenue/Expenditure Analysis – including current capital, operational, and maintenance needs for proposed services, such as stops, accessing unserved populations, equipment, and maintenance projections.
- 2. Public Participation:** The **County** desires to involve all stakeholders throughout the county. Currently, there is no public transit service in **Cherokee County**, and many of the residents of the County and surrounding areas will benefit from the enhanced regional connections via transit. The engagement of these residents and communities is a critical element of the Transit Feasibility Study and will require effective outreach and communication skills.

The **County** requires a consultant with a proven track record of community engagement in regards to a discussion of transit alternatives and concerns. The consultant should possess the skills to analyze transit issues and alternatives, and communicate with area residents on feasibility, funding possibilities, and financial constraints. Cherokee County will assist the consultant with the development of an effective Public Participation plan. This shall include project information provided by the consultant to be placed on the websites of Cherokee County other Government Agencies to update the projects status and opportunities for public involvement. Public participation opportunities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Steering Committee:** The consultant will develop a Steering Committee meeting schedule and Cherokee County will assist with meeting space and communications coordination.

- **Stakeholder Interviews:** In order to involve as many participants as possible, Cherokee County requests that interviews be held with an approved list of stakeholders. The consultant will be responsible for scheduling and coordinating the interviews. The Stakeholders should include the following organizations: *community organizations, businesses, town officials and elected bodies.*
 - **Focus Groups:** Public support of a new start transit system is crucial to the success of the study. The consultant should hold focus groups with area decision makers and business leaders to inform, educate, and receive feedback on the study. The purpose of the Focus Group Meetings is to assist with the formulation of unmet needs.
 - **Public Open Houses:** The consultant will coordinate with Cherokee County and hold a series of public open houses to gather input on transit needs, to inform the public on the study process, and to receive on proposed transit alternatives and community impacts related to the Transit Feasibility Study.
 - **Surveys:** The consultant will be responsible for any surveys used to obtain current information on transit needs in the County. Example survey would include: **Prospective Rider Surveys** – including questions on perception and knowledge of transit services, as well as determination of barriers to public transportation use.
3. **Development of Alternatives:** The consultant will develop a broad range of potential alternatives that address the purpose and need, provide details on the methods used to review and rank the alternatives, and conduct initial and final alternatives recommendations on the transit system for the County. Preparation of a transportation services inventory – including formal and informal providers.
 4. **Develop Transit Criteria:** The consultant will evaluate alternatives based on criteria that will determine whether an alternative is reasonable to pursue. The public transportation analysis should involve impacts on the transportation system, mobility, and travel patterns, and consider barriers to implementation of the alternatives. Additionally, taking into consideration proposed services, community needs, and individual mobility concerns to determine service needs and/or the absence of service, funding, human resources, and/or information.
 5. **Evaluate Costs, Benefits, and Impacts:** The consultant will evaluate all reasonable alternatives to provide for the development of a public transit system. The evaluation of the costs, benefits, and impacts should focus on the pros and cons between alternatives. As a part of the study, the consultant will be required to document any possible impacts that the transit program may have on minority and low-income populations. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities which receive Federal funding assistance.
 6. **Develop Ridership Forecasts:** The consultant will develop ridership forecasts based on the results of the community surveys and available data regarding land use, economic development, and population and employment growth.
 7. **Develop Organizational and Operational Plans:** The consultant shall develop organizational and operational plans for the alternatives that include standards of service, facility and stop locations, days and hours of operation, type and number of vehicles, travel times, fare structure, calculated passenger trips, net cost for service, peak load capacity, and vehicle/passenger miles and hours traveled. Identify necessary revenue to

support net cost for service to include local, potential federal (based upon required match) State Mass Transit Funds (SMTF), and other revenue sources. Organizational/Operational plan should include Information regarding sustaining service in the absence of federal funding. Will additional local match be available? Identification of operating costs to fulfill demand for service including the following: Salaries (administration, operations, maintenance), Fringe benefits, fuel, tires, etc. (dependent upon type of service), Insurance (type of vehicles and service), utilities, materials, and supplies.

- 8. Develop Operating Financial Plan:** The consultant will develop an operating financial plan which includes factors that impact financial projections. The financial plan shall include both Capital and Operations and Maintenance costs. Develop a Capital Development plan: The consultant shall develop capital requirements to meet defined needs. The type of rolling stock (30ft. bus vs. minivan), passenger facilities (shelters, transfer site), Administrative and Maintenance Facilities, Office, Operational (including communication and dispatching needs), and Maintenance Equipment.
- 9. Preparation of an executive summary and a detailed multi-year implementation plan** with strategic recommendations designed to meet rural public transportation needs. The executive summary shall provide an overview of the resources required and the potential services needs for the three year pilot program required by SCDOT Office of Public Transit.

It is important to note that for the purpose of this project, the selected consultant or consulting team shall be to focus on developing a comprehensive inventory of all transit related resources (both material and financial), identifying service gaps and opportunities to bridge those gaps, and potential strategies and best practices to improve transit accessibility to underserved and unserved Cherokee County residents.

Minimum Qualifications

A qualified consultant or consulting team will have completed several similar studies within the past five years. In general, the competence of a prospective consultant will be evaluated relative to having a project manager and supporting staff, including any and all sub-contractors, with the qualifications needed to successfully complete the project; the qualifications of the assigned professional staff will be measured by both education and experience, with particular reference to experience on similar projects. It is therefore important to note that the professional staff identified in the submitted proposal, must also be the team to work on the project. If the selected consultant or consulting team undergoes a change of key personnel, Cherokee County reserves the right to approve any substitute personnel or terminate the services at Cherokee County's sole discretion.

Resources

The following resources are available:

- [SOUTH CAROLINA STATEWIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND COORDINATION PLAN](#)
- [Intercity Bus Plan](#)
- [State Management Plan](#)
- [Human Services Coordination plan](#)
- GIS databases and maps. Please inquire.

Roles and Responsibilities

Frannie Stockwell, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, shall act as the project manager, and will be assisted by the County, City, and Town Administrators. The project manager will provide all project direction, assistance with scheduling, and access to existing data. The steering committee will work closely with the project manager and provide guidance for project related decisions.

The consultant shall be responsible for all technical work, public participation, identification of recommendations and strategies, report preparation, and presentation of findings, as agreed to in the final scope of work. All work to be performed must follow federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance; and the selected consultant shall be responsible for having knowledge of, and ensuring compliance with, all applicable requirement

Proposal Timetable

April 22, 2022	Request for Proposals is issued
May 4, 2022, 10:00 a.m.	Pre-Application Workshop, via Zoom.
May 11, 2022	Deadline for Questions
May 18, 2022	Posting of FAQ, Frequently asked Questions and Answers
May 31, 2022, 12:00 p.m.	Closing date and time for receipt of proposals
June 6, 2022	RFP's opened during Cherokee County Council meeting
June 20, 2022	Finalists contacted; interviews scheduled as needed
June 27, 2022	Final consultant selection
December 30, 2022	Desired end date of contract

Technical Assistance: Companies are encouraged to attend the pre-proposal conference. If additional assistance is needed, a phone or in-person conference is available. **The deadline for technical assistance, including submitting questions is May 11, 2022.**

- Pre-Proposal Conference: A pre-proposal conference will be held on **May 4, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.**, via Zoom. The information session will cover application requirements. Please notify the County by email if you would like to attend this meeting at rfp@cherokeecountysc.com.
- 10. Any questions and answers communicated will be made available in an FAQ posted to Cherokee County's website www.cherokeecountysc.com. **Final edits/additions** to the FAQ will be posted on the website by close of business **May 18, 2022.**
- Technical Assistance: Technical assistance is available to potential applicants through pre-application conferences. Assistance available includes answers about funding regulations and application requirements and discussing the proposed project's compliance with program regulations and eligibility for funding. If you would like to submit questions, please email them to rfp@cherokeecountysc.com.

Proposal Requirements

Limit the proposal to no more than 12 pages, not counting professional resumes, and include the following information:

1. Proposed Project Manager or Team

- a. Name and address of submitting public transportation planning consultant or consulting firm.
- b. Identify the project manager and as needed, the name of the supporting,

- professional staff who will be directly responsible for task completion.
- c. Provide a brief resume or similar description for the project manager and each team member, which details their experience and qualifications.
 - d. If different from the main address, provide the location of the office from which the assigned project manager or team members will be working.

2. Experience

- a. Provide a narrative description of the consultant’s related experience.
- b. b. If specialized resources are available (in addition to the named team) to meet unusual needs, identify such individuals and their area of expertise.
- c. Provide three references from comparable entities where consultant or consulting team has previously provided similar planning services.

3. Scope, Project Management and Quality Control

- a. Provide detailed work plan and list of key deliverables.
- b. Include task-based schedule and identify significant milestones.
- c. Outline communications strategy to facilitate ongoing coordination among the consultant project manager, potential sub-contractor(s), and the TRANSIT AGENCY.
- d. Describe quality, budget, and schedule controls to be implemented.

4. Proposed Cost

- a. Submit in a separate envelope a cost proposal, including overall cost, cost by subtask, subtask and hours assigned to proposed team members, number of trips to the project area, and number of days on site.

5. Other Documentation Required at time of award

- a. Certificate of Insurance General liability insurance certificate (\$1,000,000) (*Professional Liability, Automobile, etc.*)
- b. Completed W9

CHEROKEE COUNTY will consider the proposed compensation as “best and final offer,” although CHEROKEE COUNTY reserves the right to negotiate terms as needed to improve elements of the proposal to best meet the needs of the region, including cost. The proposal and associated cost shall be valid for a minimum of 180 days.

**Submittals must be received no later than 12:00 p.m. (EDT),
TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2022**

Late submissions will not be considered.

General Conditions

Reservation of Rights

Cherokee County reserves the right to modify the RFP schedule described above or to withdraw this RFP at any time without prior notice. Cherokee County also reserves the right at its sole discretion, and without penalty, to reject any and all proposals received. Furthermore, Cherokee County may reject proposals without providing the underlying reason(s).

This RFP does not obligate Cherokee County to contract for services described herein. Cherokee County reserves the right to not issue a contract as a result of this RFP. A failure to award a contract to the lowest bidder will not result in a cause of action against Cherokee County.

Cherokee County also reserves the right to award the contract to the proposer that best meets the needs and interests of the region, which Cherokee County will determine in its sole discretion. Cherokee County also reserves the right to waive immaterial defect or informality in any response or response procedure.

Cherokee County reserves the right to disqualify any respondent who fails to provide information requested in the RFP or who provides inaccurate or misleading information or data.

Conflict of Interest

The consultant or consulting team shall agree to ensure that they have no interest, direct or indirect, that would conflict in any way with the performance of the requested services; furthermore, the consultant or consulting team shall not employ any person, or subcontract with any entity, having such known interest.

Non-Discriminatory Practices

Consultants, by submission of a proposal, agree to not discriminate against any current or prospective employee, subcontractor, or a member of the public because of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, status as a parent, or age.

DBE Participation

The selected consultant will not be required to meet a specific Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) utilization goal. However, consultants are encouraged to use services provided by DBE firms to accomplish tasks required to complete this project.

Proprietary Material

Cherokee County assumes no liability for disclosure of proprietary material submitted by respondents. Proposal submittals are considered public documents.

Pre-contractual Expenses

Cherokee County will not be liable for any costs incurred by proposers in the preparation or submittal of a proposal in response to this RFP, in the conduct of an interview presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

Contract Requirements

Cherokee County expects all contractors to adhere to Federal contract provisions through the specific inclusion and certification of applicable clauses in the final planning services agreement as prescribed by State of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Transportation, and/or the Federal Transit Administration.

Review and Decision-Making Process

- **Staff Review and Assessment**

Cherokee County staff will review proposers for threshold criteria and completeness. Staff will also review and assess specific sections of the proposal, such as project outcomes (prior agency performance). Cherokee County requires each proposer to be registered with sam.gov and reserves the right to request additional clarifications from proposers, both in writing and in person.

- **Project Review Committee Scoring & Recommendations**

The Project Review Committee (PRC) will independently review and assess requests using a scoring matrix. Each scorer is provided a scoring matrix to ensure standardized assessment. The scoring matrix is used as a screening tool for applications and does not necessarily dictate which application is awarded. Cherokee County staff will provide final ranking based on scoring. The PRC will make recommendations to Cherokee County,

Each of the major sections of the proposal will be reviewed and weighed against criteria designed to help judge the quality of the proposal.

- **Evaluation criteria** include the following considerations, which are listed in order of relative importance:
 1. Clarity of project approach, identified key deliverables, and significant milestones – **up to 30 points**
 2. Experience related to similar rural mobility planning efforts – **up to 25 points**
 3. Qualifications of assigned professional staff – **up to 25 points**
 4. Schedule and fees – **up to 10 points**
 5. References – **up to 10 points**

If necessary, proposers may be contacted and asked for further information, and may be expected to appear for oral interviews. Cherokee County will select the preferred provider and negotiate a contractual agreement, which will be considered for approval by the County Council prior to its execution. If negotiations are unsuccessful due to unresolved issues, negotiations with the consultant will be formally terminated. Negotiations will then commence with the second-highest ranking firm.

Final Decision by CHEROKEE COUNTY

Final approval of funding decisions under this RFP are made by the Cherokee County Council.

Cherokee County does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, status as a parent, or age.

Participation by minority and women-owned firms is encouraged.