SCOPE OF WORK

Nebraska is served by a multi-modal transportation system comprising highways, rail lines, airports and bus services. The State is always alert to the possibility of new transportation opportunities. In terms of passenger transportation, opportunities include new aviation services, new highway possibilities, and new public transportation services.

Intercity Public Transportation

The opportunity to be explored in this study is rural to urban and city to city public transportation. For purposes of the study, public transportation is to include any service type that could be construed as appropriate to certain corridors in Nebraska, to include commuter rail, buses, vans, and possibly others. Not to be included are intra-urban systems (services within Lincoln or within Omaha, for example), and long-distance services such as Amtrak or Greyhound. The study should focus on opportunities that might be logical for Nebraska conditions.

Study Purpose

This is intended to be a feasibility study. It will explore several alternative city pairs (corridors), will consider alternatives in those corridors, and will determine whether or not any of the alternatives are feasible from the financial, economic, environmental, and need perspectives. The study will determine feasibility and, if one or more options in one or more corridors are considered feasible, the study will identify next steps that might be taken.

Feasibility Study Work Tasks

The State has identified 14 possible work tasks. The consultant should consider these tasks and improve upon them (add tasks, delete tasks, modify tasks, explain tasks) as necessary in its proposal.

Task 1: Statewide Relevant Travel Patterns – Identify travel demands statewide relative to passenger movements between cities and in rural to urban conditions. This overview of statewide passenger travel should be based on available data; no roadside or other surveys are desired at the statewide level. From this analysis, the consultant should identify the major interurban and rural to urban travel corridors in Nebraska.

Task 2: Statewide Corridor Possibilities – Review potential corridors statewide and select three to be subjected to the feasibility analyses. One corridor to be selected for study is Lincoln-Omaha; the other two corridors should be representative of typical Nebraska travel patterns and corridors. The rationale for selecting these three corridors to test for feasibility should be stated.

Task 3: Public Participation – Set up and implement procedures by which the general public within each of the three study corridors regions can have input into the study. Public hearings will not be necessary, although public meetings might be appropriate.

Task 4: Technology and Mode Options – Identify and describe the public transportation system types (commuter rail, buses, etc.) that would be logical options to be studied in each of the three corridors. Identify the other transport technologies that were eliminated from consideration and explain why they were eliminated.

Task 5: Alignment Options – In each of the three corridors, identify alignments upon which the technology options could operate. The alignments could include existing highways or rail lines, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, utility rights-of-way, or others. Identify the ways by which public transportation might access and use these alignments.

Task 6: Ridership Potential – In each of the three corridors and for each technology type, estimate the number of daily riders anticipated to use each option in the near and long term. Simplified spreadsheet models or other model types could be used. Roadside or other survey types in the three study corridors might also be appropriate. Revenues attributable to the users should also be forecast.

Task 7: Ridership Comparisons With Other Systems – The estimated ridership in the selected corridors should be compared with like systems already in operation elsewhere in the U.S.

Task 8: Public Transport Operations and Development Scenarios – For each option, identify the key characteristics of each potential service. The attributes could include generalized station locations, type of service, frequency of service, travel time, connecting pick-up and distribution services, number of buses or rail cars needed, etc.

Task 9: Cost – Estimate the capital costs and annual operating and maintenance costs for each option. This should include a comparison of estimated operating costs to revenues received. A life cycle cost estimate covering the forecast period is needed.

Task 10: Environmental and Social Implications – Review the environmental issues involved with each alternative. Identify any "fatal flaws" attributable to any alternative. Neither an Environmental Impact Statement nor an Environmental Assessment is expected.

Task 11: Financial Evaluation – Estimate the costs and revenues associated with each option over the forecast period, and identify short falls. Identify whether the services might be eligible for any type of federal funding.

Task 12: Economic Evaluation – Identify how each option might affect each corridor's economy, and conduct an economic benefit/cost assessment.

Task 13: Summary Evaluation and Conclusions – Present the results of all analyses of all options in a summary analysis, identify the preferred alternatives in each corridor, and develop a reasonable set of conclusions relative to each corridor and each option. Based on the results in the three study corridors, suggest how those results might apply to other corridors in Nebraska.

Task 14: Next Steps – Identify the next steps that might be followed in each corridor, to seek implementation of the preferred alternatives.