

Award for On-Call Planning & Scheduling Services

DESCRIPTION: Request Board authorization to award RFP 2025-040 to Jarret Walker and Associates and negotiate contract	AGENDA NO:
ACTION REQUEST: ☒ Approval ☐ Review Comment ☐ Information Only ☐ Other	

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize Interim Chief Executive Officer to award the On-Call Planning and Scheduling services RFP to Jarret Walker and Associates LLC (JWA) and negotiate and enter into a contract for a term of three years, with the option to extend for two additional years. Work will be executed on a task-order basis with the total amount authorized under the contract not to exceed \$1,095,000 over the base three years. Each Task Order will go through RTA's requisition process for authorization in accordance with RTA's Procurement Manual and Resolution 26-025 establishing temporary procurement controls.

ISSUE/BACKGROUND:

The RTA has undertaken significant improvements to providing transit services in recent years, guided by its recently updated Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP), including the implementation of a major bus network redesign ("New Links" plan); the adoption a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for its first Bus Rapid Transit corridor; and the securing of over \$50 million for the design and construction of major transit hubs, passenger facilities and fare collection technology modernization. The agency has also secured funding for an additional 36 buses, planned to be delivered by 2028, that would bring the fleet to 144 allowing the agency to increase peak vehicles in service from 89 today to 120. Lastly, with the implementation of new software for Paratransit service, RTA will be able to introduce new types of flexible on-demand service for the general public, called "microtransit" that will allow the agency to explore ways to improve service and stretch resources even further.

The RTA has begun building on these initiatives, focusing on developing service plans and improvements aligned with the implementation of these projects and other major service recommendations from the SMP and other planning efforts.

RTA's Planning & Scheduling Department, with its full-time staff of 5, is limited in its capacity to help meet RTA's goals of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of existing transit service and expanding services to meet current and future community needs. Additionally, there are specialized or one-time activities that the staff does not have the time or expertise to effectively deliver.

Approval of this contract is needed now to ensure continuity of planning momentum as the RTA advances the New Orleans East service improvement planning process and prepares for BRT network adjustments. Without an on-call consultant in place, the system-wide Origin-Destination

survey – an FTA-recommended Civil Rights compliance deliverable – will be delayed, as will the capacity needed to support concurrent planning efforts that cannot be absorbed by current staff alone.

JWA submitted an excellent proposal highlighting their experience working with myriad large and small transit agencies around the country to effectively engage the public, develop service plans responsive to rider needs, and perform complex surveying and analysis tasks. In addition to having national expertise, their proposal demonstrated impressive knowledge of the RTA and understanding of the local context. While the team includes several nationally known firms, there are also four New Orleans-based consultant groups that help to round out and strengthen the partnership.

DISCUSSION:

Since the implementation of the New Links bus network redesign in September 2022, the Planning and Scheduling team has been focused on stabilizing the new network, monitoring performance, and identifying areas for further adjustment and growth. In 2025, the team began to plan more significant service changes with the Algiers Service Improvement Plan (ASIP). As the RTA moves towards implementation of ASIP, the team is beginning a similar but larger-scale planning process in New Orleans East. As these large-scale planning efforts expand to the East and beyond, an experienced and knowledgeable planning Consultant is desired to augment staff capacity and provide specialized expertise on an as-needed basis.

JWA will be able to offer additional resources for finite periods of time (for example when extensive in-person rider surveying is required over a short timespan) and will be able to produce specialized analyses and deliverables that require knowledge (financial modeling techniques) or expensive tools and datasets not readily available to regular RTA staff. This on-call contract will be able to leverage specialized subscription tools that JWA has access to (such as Replica) as well as models and tools that the consultant team has developed for service and cost modeling, travel demand analyses, and rider-facing communication.

The on-call contract will enable the RTA to procure planning support for the following tasks:

- A system-wide **Origin-Destination survey**, (anticipated 2026-2027, est. ~\$300,000): This is a top departmental priority, and will be the first major task order. This is a labor-intensive and technical deliverable that the FTA recommends agencies complete every 3-5 years to fulfill Civil Rights compliance (Title VI) requirements, validate transit forecasting models, and update the National Transit Database (NTD). It requires collection of detailed intercept surveys for ~10% of ridership across all routes, and statistical analysis of the results. RTA's last Origin-Destination survey was completed by consultants in 2019.
- Development of a **5-Year Service Plan** (anticipated 2027-2028, est. ~\$290,000) to prioritize future service improvements in alignment with bus fleet expansion and capital investments like BRT and transit centers. Integrate innovative alternative modes, such as microtransit zones and regional commuter service if feasible.

- **Modeling and technical analysis**, (ongoing, as needed) such as ridership forecasts, cost modeling, and scenario evaluation that require tools, and staff capacity currently beyond RTA's in-house capabilities. Subscription tools and datasets such as Replica (phone-based location data), and consultant-developed technical models will be leveraged through this contract to assist with these types of tasks.
- Support for **Title VI Policy updates** (anticipated 2027), service equity analyses, customer outreach regarding service planning and schedule changes, and other essential functions. The consultant's knowledge of peer agency policy and process will be crucial.
- Provide **NTD reporting support** (anticipated 2027) such as Streetcar APC certification (which RTA staff attempted to complete but was not successful), NTD sampling, and assistance with NTD process improvements. Again, experience brought from other parts of the country will assist with these processes and ensure they are completed successfully. The consultant has access to tools to assist with the sampling process that will allow them to do it more accurately and efficiently than RTA can do in-house.
- Support staff on project-specific **on-board rider surveying** (2026, and ongoing) where a statistically valid sample is desired. This support is anticipated for area-specific service planning efforts where several hundred rider surveys are needed over a short period of time.
- Additional **scheduling and planning** support on an as-needed basis

The not-to-exceed amount of \$1,095,000 over three years was based on estimates for major task orders, including the Origin-Destination Study, 5-year service plan and BRT network adjustments, and a Regional Express Plan. Estimated costs are supported by historical and peer agency costs for planning projects, such as the RTA's Strategic Mobility Plan, and on-call planning work for Kansas City and rider surveying in San Francisco.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funding

The work completed by the On-Call consultant will be funded by a combination of grant funds and operating budget. Each task order will be individually scoped and negotiated for a specified amount, using the rates agreed upon in the contract. Each task order will designate a funding source(s). The total amount authorized under the contract will not exceed \$1,095,000 over the base period.

Work will be partially funded by Grant LA-2019-012-02, originally awarded to the RTA for the 2019 Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) for the St. Charles Streetcar. This grant has \$132,855 remaining, which can be used only for scope eligible under the original grant agreement.

Work may also be funded by other grants awarded to RTA for projects that include budget for administration, planning, scheduling, or public engagement.

Costs not covered by grants will be funded by operating budget, budget code 01-4400-02-7070-177-13-00-00000-00000 as determined through the annual budgeting process.

Cost Controls

Costs will be controlled via the Task Order process and will follow existing standard procurement process for on-call contracts:

1. Identify specific task scope and develop budget and funding sources
2. Engage vendor to review scope and price estimate using contracted rates
3. Once task scope and prices are finalized, submit to Procurement via automated forms (Nintex "Change Order Form") for review and approval by all departments.
4. If task order price is over \$25k, submit item for Board approval per standard process. Each Board report will include current contract value of all active (previously approved) task orders, new task orders and amount remaining under the contract.
5. Submit to requisition to Finance Department - includes all approvals: Change Order Form and Board Resolution (as needed)
6. New PO generated and used as NTP for Task Order.
7. Vendor submits invoices for review and payment per usual
8. System will not allow payments to exceed approved PO amount.

NEXT STEPS:

RTA staff will negotiate and enter into a contract with the Consultant, based on the rates laid out in their proposal submission.

RTA will then develop individual Task Orders for specific work activities. The Consultant will prepare a detailed scope, schedule, and budget for RTA approval for each Task Order. Each Order will be mutually agreed upon between RTA and the Consultant and will be brought to the Board for approval if the cost exceeds the threshold for required Board approval.

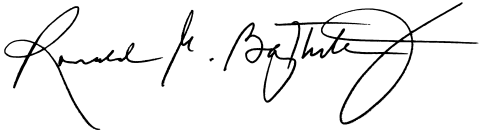
ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
2. Scope of Work
3. Jarret Walker Proposal
4. Procurement Summary
5. Administrative Review Form
6. Nintex Form

Prepared By: Elisabeth Stancioff
Title: Sr. Manager Planning & Scheduling

Reviewed By: Dwight D. Norton
Title: Chief Planning and Capital Officer

Reviewed By: Gizelle Banks
Title: Chief Financial Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald G. Baptiste", written over a horizontal line.

7/22/2026

Ronald G. Baptiste
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Date