



New Orleans Regional Transit Authority

**Request for Technical Proposals (RTP)**

**RTP #:** 2025-03

**Project Name:** All Stations Accessibility Program – St. Charles Streetcar

**Project #:** 2023-FL-04

**Project Type:** Architect/Engineering Services

**To:** All firms pre-qualified through RTA RFQ #2020-035

**RTP SUBMISSION TIMELINE**

RTP Release Date: April 10, 2025

**RTP Proposals Due: May 5, 2025**

Advance Questions Deadline: April 21, 2025

Responses to All Questions Posted Online: April 25, 2025

Contract Intent Award Notification: May 16, 2025

**INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority is soliciting proposals from experienced and qualified architectural and engineering firms for the RTA's All Stations Accessibility Program for the St. Charles Avenue Streetcar, funded by the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) FY24 All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP). This project aims to complete accessibility improvements to 40 transit stop pairs (inbound and outbound) along the historic St. Charles Streetcar line which, along with stop consolidation, would result in a fully wheelchair accessible St. Charles streetcar line by 2028. This project also will fulfill a critical commitment that the RTA made in a January 2025 Settlement Agreement to improve accessibility along the St. Charles Avenue line.

The scope of services for this project includes the design of a variety of accessibility requirements including improved streetcar stop geometry and paths of travel for wheelchair passengers, adjusted station platform heights to facilitate boarding and alighting, installation of curb ramps, and improvements to crosswalks and other pedestrian amenities. The scope also includes examining opportunities to consolidate/re-balance stop locations and to relocate stops from near-side to far-side locations.

This design phase of the project includes public outreach, assessment of the St. Charles line, surveying, traffic study, and design and engineering through the completion of 100% construction documents. The scope also includes a subsequent construction administration phase through construction completion and project acceptance. The selected contractor must demonstrate expertise in and understanding of relevant sections of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal, state, and local regulations; recent relevant experience in applying these regulations to transit rail systems; accessible design generally; the infrastructure and operations of streetcar and other rail transit systems; experience

retrofitting historic streets for accessibility; and design features that optimize rail transit accessibility, efficiency, and performance.

This design initiative will be undertaken at the same time as a planning study to modernize the RTA streetcar system, both on the St. Charles line and the other lines that comprise the RTA's streetcar network. The goal of this parallel planning effort is to improve the speed, efficiency, customer appeal, and accessibility of the entire system. The RTA is in the process of selecting a consultant for the streetcar system modernization master plan (Modernization Consultant). The design team selected under this RTP will be expected to work closely with the Modernization Consultant to ensure that these two initiatives complement each other, both in terms of overall objectives and the specific design features of this RTP.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

**Total Project Budget** (including construction): \$6,800,000

**Desired Start Date:** June 12, 2025

**Estimated Task Order Length:** 12 months for design phase, 4 months for bid phase and contractor selection, 12 months for construction administration phase – 28 months in total. Note: this timeline is subject to adjustments based on project needs.

The objective of this project is to develop 100% construction documents to construct comprehensive accessibility improvements for the historic St. Charles streetcar and to provide construction administration services during the construction phase to ensure conformance with the construction documents.

### **Task 1: Assist in Outreach Strategy and Implementation of Outreach Efforts**

RTA Communications staff, in conjunction with the Modernization Consultant, shall lead the effort to develop a comprehensive community engagement strategy. This strategy and subsequent outreach activities will include community conversations about accessibility and stop consolidation, among other topics. The firm selected under this RTP will play a support, rather than a lead, role in community outreach efforts.

The consultant will be expected to provide meaningful input into the development of the outreach strategy, including identifying potential controversies, critical issues, opportunities, and preferred techniques for engagement. The consultant will also be expected to provide staff at outreach events to answer technical questions and to provide supporting graphics, maps, and other illustrative materials for the public.

***Deliverables:*** Staffing, strategic input, and graphical materials to support outreach efforts

### **Task 2: Current Conditions Assessment**

The selected consultant shall conduct a thorough yet concise, data-driven evaluation of all 107 existing transit stops (51 stop pairs, 2 end-of-line stops, 3 additional single stops) along the St. Charles streetcar line, utilizing available records, field surveys, and technology to document baseline conditions including:

- Location of existing stops
- Accessibility features and ADA compliance evaluation of existing stops
- Structural condition of pavement, platforms, and curb ramps
- Location of existing above ground and below ground utilities
- Ridership data analysis for potential stop consolidation/rebalancing

- Identification of safety hazards and transit stop accessibility barriers
- Inventory of traffic control elements impacting transit access
- Aesthetic/walkability assessment of stop environments
- Documentation of existing transit stop features, including streetcar stop and platform geometry
- Documentation of right-of-way features including right-of-way geometry, pedestrian facilities, traffic signals, constraints affecting accessibility of streetcar stops and path to/from stop
- Any other information on the current conditions of the corridor that is necessary to inform design documents up to and including 100% construction documents

Note that the selected firm shall complete further, more detailed assessments of site conditions to inform their design deliverables (see Tasks 5-8 below). As preliminary design concepts are developed and as determinations are made regarding stop consolidation/rebalancing, the selected firm will complete further site analysis of the locations that are slated for accessibility improvements, such as site surveys, geotechnical reports, verifying the location of subsurface utilities as appropriate, traffic analyses, and on-street parking analyses.

Note also that the selected firm will be able to avail themselves of all publicly available data for this Task, including an RTA project that is recently underway to inventory numerous features of RTA bus and streetcar stops. This separate transit stops inventory study is expected to deliver its preliminary results in September, 2025.

***Deliverables:*** *Inventory and catalog of current conditions data in a cloud storage platform. Provide data in the inventory in .pdf, CAD, GIS, and other formats as appropriate. Concise (5 pages or fewer) draft and final Current Conditions Assessment describing key findings and preliminary conclusions, data gaps, and data to be collected during the design phase*

### **Task 3: Assist RTA Planning and Scheduling Staff in Stop Consolidation Evaluation**

Informed by a thorough operational analysis and community engagement, RTA Planning and Scheduling staff shall evaluate potential stop consolidations and relocations (i.e. near-side vs. far-side) along the St. Charles Streetcar line, with the goal of improving system efficiency and accommodating accessibility improvements at stops while maintaining equitable, convenient streetcar access. Key factors that RTA Planning and Scheduling Staff will evaluate include:

- Assimilating the results from Task 2 into this Task
- Analyzing boarding/alighting patterns using automated passenger count data
- Modeling potential travel time savings
- Calculating potential savings in operating costs and/or reductions in headways
- Assessing impacts on schedule adherence and reliability
- Evaluating the impacts of stop consolidation on seniors and persons with disabilities, low income populations, and on major trip generators

While RTA Staff will lead this analysis, the selected consultant will play a critical supporting role, providing input into the RTA's analysis and reviewing and commenting on their recommendations. The consultant will play an especially significant role in connecting the recommendations of the RTA's stop consolidation analysis to the physical characteristics and geometry of stop locations—i.e. determining the physical and spatial feasibility of stop consolidation. The final recommendations coming out of this stop consolidation analysis will greatly inform the schematic design of the project.

***Deliverables:*** *Technical input into RTA's stop consolidation analysis*

#### **Task 4: Project Management and Coordination**

The selected consultant shall be responsible for a variety of project management tasks throughout the term of the task order. The purpose of these project management tasks is to mitigate risk, manage project schedule and budget, address obstacles as they arise, and maintain clear communication with the RTA throughout.

Specific project management and coordination responsibilities include the following.

- Creating and maintaining a detailed project schedule leading up to the completion of 100% construction documents
- Integrating key milestones, dependencies, and critical path items into the schedule to ensure timely progression
- Completing an overall project schedule through construction completion, including community outreach, issuing bid documents and procuring a general contractor, and securing all necessary permits and approvals
- Conducting weekly meetings with the RTA capital projects team to monitor progress, identify impediments, and review/forecast project schedule
- Coordination of design reviews and permit approvals with external agencies such as the City of New Orleans's Department of Public Works (DPW)
- Assisting the RTA team in the development and continuous refinement of the project risk register
- Implementing risk mitigation strategies to preemptively address potential project delays or cost escalations
- Providing timely updates and technical documentation required for submission to the FTA to fulfill its project oversight role
- Providing monthly progress reports, including a one-month look ahead and updated design schedule and project schedule
- Maintaining comprehensive records of meeting agendas, minutes, and action items from biweekly project status meetings

***Deliverables:*** 100% design schedule, comprehensive project schedule, risk register updates, meeting agendas and notes for biweekly status meetings, and FTA reporting.

#### **Task 5: 30% Schematic Design**

Building on the information collected in Tasks 1-3, the selected consultant shall prepare a 30% schematic design (SD) set of drawings. This task will provide recommended design treatments for each stop along the St. Charles Streetcar line so that the RTA will fulfill its obligations under the ASAP grant—i.e. that every stop along the route be fully wheelchair accessible upon construction completion.

Please note the design parameters and limits of this project. From Howard Avenue to the terminus of the streetcar line at S. Carrollton Avenue and S. Claiborne Avenue (Segment 1), the selected consultant will be responsible only for designing accessibility improvements within the neutral ground as well as associated adjustments to the roadway (crosswalks, traffic lanes, bike lanes, roadway striping, parking) to accommodate the changes to the neutral ground. All other accessibility features outside of the neutral ground, such as traffic signal modifications, curb ramps on the sidewalk side of the street, and sidewalk

improvements are not in the scope of this project and will be undertaken separately by the City of New Orleans.

From Howard Avenue to the streetcar's downtown Canal Street terminus (Segment 2), the selected consultant will be responsible for sidewalk improvements, sidewalk extensions as necessary, and any other accessibility features in the immediate vicinity of streetcar stops. This is due to the fact that streetcar stops along Segment 2 are on the sidewalk rather than the neutral ground. In Segment 2 as in Segment 1, the selected consultant will not be responsible for traffic signal modifications and sidewalk improvements beyond the immediate vicinity of the streetcar stops.

Key components of this design stage include the following:

- Stop locations that reflect the findings and recommendations of Task 3.
- Preliminary site plans for each stop including stop and platform geometry, signage, curb ramps, other accessibility features such as detectable warning surfaces, and other stop amenities as applicable (shelters, benches, trash cans, landscaping, stormwater management, etc.).
- Dimensioned roadway and right of way configurations including crosswalks, vehicular lane alignments, treatment of on-street parking and loading areas, and bicycle facilities
- Existing and proposed cross sections of roadway
- Platform heights that are compatible with the existing streetcar fleet, that facilitate easier boarding and alighting with the present streetcar fleet, but that are also compatible with possible future low-floor rolling stock where level boarding would be possible
- Bollards and guardrails as appropriate to ensure passenger safety from passing cars and from trip and fall incidents while passengers are waiting, boarding, and alighting
- Designs that are future proofed for possible further improvements under a forthcoming streetcar modernization effort, including allotting adequate platform space for longer streetcars, shelters with real time displays, ticket vending machines, and any other modernization features that the streetcar stops would need to accommodate at a future date. This effort will require close coordination throughout the design process with the consultant team working on the Streetcar Modernization Study.
- Utility relocations, as necessary, to address conflicts with the proposed improvements.
- Treatment of pavement deficiencies to facilitate accessibility (e.g. patch vs. reconstruction of deficient street pavement, neutral ground pavement for Segment 1, and sidewalk pavement in the immediate vicinity of stops for Segment 2)
- Verifying compliance with ADA, Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), and other applicable local, state, and federal regulatory requirements

While Task 2 will provide a substantial foundation for assessing the current conditions of stop locations, the consultant team will be expected to complete a more in-depth examination of site conditions for the selected stop locations as part of this Task. This due diligence will include, as necessary, task field surveys including topographic surveys, geotechnical analyses, and the use of technology and other field assessment techniques to determine the location of below ground utilities to minimize the risk of unexpected utility conflicts during construction.

As part of this task, the consultant must prepare up to five conceptual renderings showing what the proposed improvements will look like. In tandem with consultant and RTA staff work completed in Task 3, the consultant must update transit service and traffic impact scenarios to determine the impact of the SD set on streetcar rider travel times and on vehicular traffic and levels of service.

At the conclusion of this task, the consultant shall complete up to three page-turn reviews of the SD set with RTA staff, City staff, and other technical stakeholders as appropriate. The consultant team shall be responsible for creating a running log of design questions and suggestions arising at these reviews and will be responsible for updating this log as future design deliverables are completed.

***Deliverables:*** 30% design drawings, up to five conceptual renderings, design issue log. Electronic deliverables shall be in pdf and CAD format. Consultant shall also furnish one full size printed copy of 30% set.

#### **Task 6: 60% Design Development**

Based on feedback from RTA staff, DPW, other technical stakeholders and partner agencies, and the community, the selected consultant shall prepare a 60% design development (DD) set of project drawings and specifications. These drawings shall include all of the information outlined above in Task 5 but at a more detailed, DD level of design. The DD set shall include any other information and a level of detail typical and appropriate for the 60% stage of design.

For this task, the consultant shall update the five renderings completed in Task 5 but only if there are substantive changes in the design that would materially change the representation of the stop features in the renderings.

Similar to Task 5, the consultant shall at the conclusion of this Task complete up to three page-turn reviews of the DD set with RTA staff, DPW, and other technical stakeholders as appropriate. Furthermore, the DD set shall be considered the “plan-in-hand” plans for the project, facilitating an in-field review and walk through with RTA, DPW, and other staff that will be in addition to the page-turn reviews. The consultant team shall be responsible for updating its log of design questions and suggestions based on the page turn reviews and plan-in-hand field review at this stage.

***Deliverables:*** 60% design development drawings, updated conceptual renderings as necessary, updated design issue log. Electronic deliverables shall be in pdf and CAD format. Consultant shall also furnish one full size printed copy of 60% set

#### **Task 7: 90% Permit Set and Permit Approvals**

Based on feedback from RTA staff, technical stakeholders and partner agencies, and the community, the selected consultant shall prepare a 90% permit set of project drawings. These drawings shall be at a near-100% construction documents stage. Preparing a 90% set will allow for final QA/QC and a final page turn review by the RTA and technical stakeholders before the consultant finalizes construction documents. The 90% set shall include a level of detail typical and appropriate for a 100% set of construction documents.

The consultant shall include in this Task a construction phasing plan with a proposed approach to minimize impacts to streetcar operations and minimize pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile impacts within the right of way. The phasing plan shall also cover:

- Alternate pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular routes
- Temporary stop relocations
- Business/resident notification protocols
- Construction noise/dust control measures

For this task, the consultant shall further update the five renderings completed in Task 6 but only if there are substantive changes in the design that would materially change the representation of the stop features in the renderings.

At conclusion of this Task, the consultant shall complete up to three page-turn reviews of the permit set with RTA staff, City staff, and other technical stakeholders as appropriate. The consultant team shall be responsible for updating its log of design questions and suggestions.

In this Task, the consultant shall submit the 90% set to the City of New Orleans for formal permit review in order to secure City permits and any other associated permits necessary for construction of the project. The consultant shall be responsible for securing all permits associated with the project, some of which may precede completion of the 90% set of drawings. Permit approvals include but are not limited to the Historic Districts Landmarks Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, and utility providers such as Entergy and the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans. Well in advance of completing the 90% set, the consultant shall prepare and regularly update a permit tracker matrix, documenting the various reviews and permits necessary to proceed to construction.

***Deliverables:*** 90% permit set drawings, construction phasing plan, updated conceptual renderings as necessary, updated design issue log, permit tracker, secured approvals necessary to proceed to construction. Electronic deliverables shall be in pdf and CAD format. Consultant shall also furnish one full size printed copy of 90% set

#### **Task 8: 100% Construction Documents, Bid Package, and Bid Preparation Assistance**

Based on final QA/QC of the 90% drawings, final comments from the 90% page turn review, and any comments from permitting authorities on the 90% set, the consultant shall prepare a 100% construction documents set of project drawings. In this task, the consultant shall prepare an accompanying specifications book and shall assist RTA Procurement in the preparation of the final bid package, including bid alternates and any ancillary materials and forms to accompany the 100% set and specifications book.

During the bid process, the consultant shall attend any pre-bid meetings with prospective general contractors in order to answer questions. The consultant shall also assist RTA staff in responding to technical questions submitted in writing during the bid period.

***Deliverables:*** 100% construction documents including final drawing set and specifications book, close out of design issue log. Electronic deliverables shall be in pdf and CAD format. Consultant shall also furnish one full size printed copy of 100% set

### **Task 9: Cost Estimates and Management of Project Budget**

At the 30%, 60%, and 90% stage, the consultant shall complete a detailed and comprehensive cost estimate of the project including appropriate design contingency and year of expenditure. The consultant shall maintain a running value engineering (VE) log to document potential VE solutions and appropriate savings. The consultant shall work with the RTA to identify appropriate VE solutions and/or modify project scope in order to keep the estimated cost within the project budget and to maintain a robust construction contingency as the project moves into the construction phase.

If bid prices come in substantially higher than the final project cost estimates completed in this Task, the consultant shall work with the RTA to make revisions to the project scope, construction documents, and bid package to achieve a lower bid price in line with the cost estimates and project budget. Changes to the project design to respond to bid overruns shall not be an additional service and shall be subsumed within the consultant's cost proposal herein.

***Deliverables:*** Cost estimates at the 30%, 60%, and 90% stage, Value Engineering log.

### **Task 10: Safety and Hazards Analysis**

Incorporating both RTA and FTA practices and protocols and with the input of RTA Safety staff, the consultant shall complete a comprehensive preliminary hazard analysis of the 30% design. This report shall document potential safety hazards and risk mitigation measures and shall note safety considerations that will have to be addressed as the design advances to 100% construction documents. The consultant shall track safety concerns in a hazards log that will be continually updated as the design progresses.

The Consultant shall prepare a second iteration of the hazard analysis at the 60% design stage. The results of this analysis and the accompanying updated hazards log will be incorporated into the 90% and 100% drawing sets with the goal of minimizing safety issues upon project completion.

***Deliverables:*** Safety and Hazard Analysis at the 30% design stage, updated at the 60% design stage. Running hazards log to track safety questions, concerns, and outstanding issues.

### **Task 11: NEPA Assistance**

The RTA anticipates that given the limited scope of this project and the successful completion of similar ADA-improvements at four stop pairs in 2019, the project should achieve NEPA clearance from the FTA via categorical exclusion. Regardless, the various reviews entailed in the path to NEPA clearance may require technical assistance from the consultant. Given that the St. Charles streetcar is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and give that the route goes through multiple National Register Historic Districts, historic preservation and aesthetic considerations will likely be a significant topic in the NEPA review process.

Specific consultant responsibilities during this process may include:

- Preparing conceptual design-related materials, technical reports, and documentation to facilitate the environmental review process under NEPA
- Collaborating with the RTA to address design-related issues that may arise during the environmental review process and incorporate NEPA considerations into design Tasks as appropriate
- Assisting the RTA in responding to inquiries from relevant agencies and the public regarding design aspects that impact environmental compliance
- Assisting the RTA with completing all forms, checklists, and technical reports necessary to complete environmental review
- Completing Section 106 historic review
- Consulting with the HDLC and SHPO as necessary



- Attending meetings as necessary with FTA, SHPO, and any other entities involved in the review process
- In coordination with RTA communications team, staffing and supporting any public meetings specifically related to environmental review

***Deliverables:*** *As-needed NEPA technical assistance as described above.*

### **Task 12: Construction Administration**

As the project progresses from the bid to the construction stage, the consultant shall be responsible for performing standard construction administration tasks for a design/bid/build method of project delivery.

These tasks shall include but not be limited to:

- Attending regular construction meetings with the RTA and selected contractor
- Responding to Requests for Information (RFI)
- Reviewing and approving submittals
- Providing architect's supplemental instruction (ASI) as needed
- Completing regular site inspections to verify the quality of work and conformance to the drawings and specifications
- Reviewing change order requests for reasonableness
- Providing construction close out services including punch list review, certifying substantial and final completion, and reviewing and approving the final close out package from the contractor (as-built drawings, manuals, warranties)

***Deliverables:*** *Standard construction administration services as described above.*

## **PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

Interested applicants must provide RTA with the following information and responses to questions stated below. RTA reserves the right to accept other than the lowest price offer and to reject all quotes. If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated in a reasonable time with the selected Respondent, then RTA, in its sole discretion, may terminate negotiations and reissue a Request for Quote, a Request for Qualifications, Request for Technical Proposals, or a Request for Proposals or it may determine that no project will be pursued.

### **Contractor Information (1 page)**

- Contractor Name
- Contractor Address
- Name of Contact Person
- Contact Phone Number
- Contact Email Address
- Date Submitted to RTA

### **Project Understanding (maximum of 4 pages)**

Outline objectives of the project, significant opportunities and constraints and key issues.

### **Experience (maximum of 4 pages)**

- Reference projects that demonstrate expertise and experience with the Americans with Disabilities Act and accessibility generally, streetcar and rail infrastructure and operations, right of way design and engineering, and community-informed design processes.
- List any additional projects considered relevant to this scope of work.
- Include client references for each project cited in this section.

**Project Team (maximum of 4 pages)**

- Describe the proposed staffing structure, including team organization and how the various staff and team members align with the myriad technical skills that this RTP calls for.
- Provide narrative information on the proposed project roles and responsibilities and qualifications of project principals and key staff members, including subcontractor staff.
- You may propose team members not listed in the prequalification application. Changes to the staffing should be reflected in the current proposal document. For staff not included in the prequalification application, please also include:
  - A written assurance that all individuals not listed in the pre-qualification application and identified on the current RTP will be performing the work and will not be substituted with other personnel or reassigned to another project without RTA's prior approval.
  - A resume for each new staff person not included in original RFQ submission (page limit of 2 pages per staff person. These pages do not count towards the 4-page section limit).
- Please note that subcontractors must be part of the team originally submitted in contractor's proposal for RFQ #2020-035, unless the RTA has previously approved in writing changes to the contractor's team.

**Proposed Project Plan (maximum of 10 pages)**

Using the Background, Scope of Services and Project Deliverables above as a guide, propose a project plan, which details your proposed project approach. Include what provisions are identified for dealing with potential impacts, impediments, or conflicts. Provide a thoughtful, nuanced project plan that demonstrates your appreciation of project risks and opportunities and that highlights any unique technical skills and approaches that you will bring to the project. Include estimated timeframes for the identified project activities.

**Hourly Billing Rates**

Firms should also submit:

- Hourly billing rates for permanent staff by project role (e.g. Project Manager, Analyst)
- For subcontractors, name of subcontractor and/or subcontractor firm, hourly billing rates by project role (e.g. Project Manager, Analyst)

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Submitted proposals will be evaluated based on the following weighted criteria:

- **Technical Approach & Project Understanding (45%)** – Demonstrated comprehension of project requirements and sound execution plan.

- **Relevant Technical Experience & Past Performance (45%)** – Experience with similar transit infrastructure and accessibility projects and references from past clients.
- **Community Engagement Experience (10%)** – Demonstrated experience successfully incorporating community input into a project’s design.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR RTP QUESTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

In lieu of a pre-proposal conference and to ensure fair and equal access to information about this RTP, questions may be emailed to [dszilagi@rfaforward.org](mailto:dszilagi@rfaforward.org). Questions must be received by the time and date listed in RTP Timeline Submission section above. No questions will be accepted after the deadline. A summary of all questions and responses pertaining to this RTP will be emailed to all pre-qualified firms by date listed in the RTP Timeline Submission section above.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR RTP SUBMISSION**

Firms should email their proposals to [dszilagi@rtaforward.org](mailto:dszilagi@rtaforward.org). All proposals must be received by the time and date RTP Timeline Submission section. Upon receipt of proposals, applicants will receive an email indicating that the submission has been received.

**Exhibits**

Exhibit A – ASAP Grant Application Appendix