

**FINAL**

**National Public Transportation/  
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)  
Technical Assistance  
*Ladders of Opportunity Initiative***

**Notice of Funding Opportunity  
and  
Request for Proposals**

**Federal Transit Administration**

**February 6, 2015**

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NATIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION/TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
LADDERS OF OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. *Authority*

49 U.S.C. 5314 authorizes FTA to enter into contracts, cooperative agreements and other agreements to carry out a range of technical assistance activities to improve public transportation. FTA has identified \$4,000,000 authorized under SAFETEA-LU, and will fund up to \$1,000,000 for the first year, with plans to provide up to \$3 million in additional funding for the remaining three years. The amount of funding that FTA will provide for each of the three subsequent years will be dependent upon annual performance reviews. There are no cost-sharing requirements for these funds.

B. *Background on TOD*

A central objective of TOD is to create compact, mixed-use development and high-quality walking environments near transit facilities. TOD can leverage both existing and planned transit infrastructure to promote economic development, revitalization, smart growth, and expand housing options in response to housing market demands and lifestyle preferences. TOD uses its proximity to transit stations to create high-value, mixed-land-use communities that provide increased access to employment and services for people of all travel abilities, ages, and incomes. In addition, TOD can boost transit ridership and reduce automobile congestion, providing value for both the public and private sectors, while further enhancing a sense of community and place. Transit-oriented developments are most successful when they address concerns of stakeholders, generally involving multiple cross-sector partnerships from community advocacy groups, transit providers, private sector developers, the traveling public and all levels of government.

In this solicitation, FTA seeks proposals to provide technical assistance through the development of tools, guidance, and other resources for enhancing TOD within transportation corridors and around public transportation stations, including economically distressed areas.

C. *Policies and Priorities*

The technical assistance provided pursuant to this solicitation will bolster the *Ladders of Opportunity* initiative of the President and Secretary of Transportation by supporting activities leading to improved access to public transportation, new economic opportunities, pathways to employment, and community revitalization of economically distressed communities. FTA defines “economically distressed” communities as areas with high rates of unemployment, low income per capita and/or special need circumstance, in

accordance with the criteria set forth in section 301(a) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. 3161).

FTA's priorities are to provide real-time access to resources and hands-on technical assistance and outreach at the local level. Proposals shall identify a technical assistance team with practical expertise in a range of disciplines including public transportation, transit-oriented development, land use, urban planning, public finance, affordable housing, environmental justice and community-based economic development. The technical assistance team also must coordinate with other key organizations such as philanthropic foundations and private investment firms to facilitate dialogue, connect stakeholders, and support innovative financing options. Additionally, the team must participate in events or TOD peer networks as directed by FTA.

Another priority for the technical assistance team will be to identify and leverage existing federal investment in transit corridors that have been funded with FTA Capital Investment Grants (New Starts/Small Starts/Core Capacity), FTA formula grant programs, Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER), Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), or other USDOT funding programs, as well as funding from other federal programs through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) that can support transit-oriented developments.

#### *D. Strategic Goals and Objectives*

This National Public Transportation/TOD Technical Assistance Initiative will build upon FTA's prior research, planning, technical assistance, and training efforts through the Transit Cooperative Research Program, the National Transit Institute and other outreach. The strategic goals of the initiative are: 1) Economic Development; 2) Equity and Quality of Life; and 3) Outreach, Education, and Facilitation. Each of the three goals has measurable objectives as indicated below:

##### Goal 1: Economic Development:

Objective 1: Supporting and improving local- and state-coordinated land-use and transportation planning processes for the revitalization of cities, with a focus on economically distressed communities.

Objective 2: Encouraging improved access to relevant infrastructure and industries, including but not limited to public transit, jobs, medical facilities, veterans services, and human service industries.

Objective 3: Leveraging private sector and non-profit organization participation and investment, including philanthropic organizations and foundations.

## Goal 2: Equity and Quality of Life:

Objective 1: Promoting and assisting in the development of sustainable communities that conveniently connect transportation services and affordable housing, as well as promoting the development of communities within close proximity to desired goods, services, activities, and destinations.

Objective 2: Targeting resources to areas where TOD likely would not occur without Federal support in order to improve quality of life in those communities.

Objective 3: Supporting strategies that strengthen communities and address the gentrification and displacement that sometimes can occur when transit capital projects and high-density developments are implemented.

## Goal 3: Outreach, Education and Facilitation:

Objective 1: Carrying out targeted outreach, education, technical assistance, and training to advance TOD project development with the use of analysis, tools, innovations, and application of best practices.

Objective 2: Conducting demonstration programs, including demonstration projects to economically distressed communities, as approved by FTA, and supported by existing funding availability.

Objective 3: Connecting public and private partners, convening and engaging stakeholders, building community partnerships, engaging philanthropic foundations, supporting peer-to-peer networking; and identifying financial resources and partnerships to bring the right people and resources to the table.

### *E. Stakeholders and Customers*

Assistance will be available to a wide range of local governmental entities, including stakeholders beyond FTA's traditional public transportation agency recipients. The technical assistance team may provide on-site technical assistance at locations specified by FTA. The following lists some of the key stakeholders and customers of the technical assistance team:

1. Community-level agencies (including private and non-profit sector organizations engaged in land-use planning; and development and social service agencies in areas such as housing, education, and healthcare);
2. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs);
3. Philanthropic Foundations;
4. Private Sector entities (e.g., developers, financial analysts, community investment organizations);
5. Local Governments, including those within economically distressed areas; and
6. Public and private providers of transportation services.

## F. *Eligible Proposers*

Eligible proposers are national non-profit organizations with technical expertise in public transportation, transit-oriented development, land use, urban planning, public finance, affordable housing, environmental justice and community-based economic development. Eligible proposers must demonstrate that they are the primary applicant in partnership with one or more external strategic partner(s) with a substantial interest and involvement in the project. Eligible proposers must demonstrate the ability to establish and deploy the technical assistance team within the first quarter after execution of the cooperative agreement. Eligible proposers must demonstrate the capacity to travel to specified locations throughout the United States in order to provide on-site technical assistance as specified by FTA. Eligible proposers must have existing facilities, office equipment, computers, technology networks, and telecommunications. FTA will award one (1) cooperative agreement that will be between FTA and the selected proposer, which must have a substantial interest in the project and must not simply act as a pass-through for funds. The selected proposer will be directly responsible for the delivery of all services and products.

Individuals, for-profit entities, public and Federal agencies are not eligible to apply directly for this solicitation. However, individuals, for-profit entities, public and Federal agencies are eligible to participate as third parties under the direction and leadership of eligible proposers.

## II. Proposal Preparation and Content

### A. *Statement of Qualifications*

Proposers shall submit one (1) electronic file for the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) in both Microsoft Word format and Adobe Acrobat (or compatible file) format, double-spaced using Times New Roman, 12-point font. The SOQ narrative shall not be longer than 10 pages and contain the following components:

1. Organizational Capacity – Provide a narrative that briefly describes the structure of the national non-profit organization including its history and experience in performing the activities in this solicitation. Include a narrative of the proposer’s understanding of the activities in this solicitation and its responsibility for delivery of the technical assistance team within the first quarter after execution of the cooperative agreement. Include the proposer’s organization chart.
2. Project Team Structure – Provide a narrative that briefly describes the structure and makeup of the project team. Include the name of all strategic partner organization(s) and indicate if the partner organizations are public, private, for-profit, or non-profit organizations. Include the names and functional titles of each project team member. Proposers must also provide documentation of the strategic partnership of the team,

such as a memorandum of agreement or letter of intent signed by all parties that describes the parties' roles, responsibilities and financial commitment in the proposed project. Include an organization chart for the entire project team.

3. Technical Capacity of the Project Team – Provide a detailed description of the technical capacity of the project team members and what activities each team member will perform. Include project staff qualifications, education, knowledge, and results of prior experience in public transportation, transit-oriented development, land use, urban planning, public finance, affordable housing, environmental justice and community-based economic development. Include project team members' experience in resolving issues related to the redevelopment of economically distressed communities, experience in administering demonstration projects, and prior experience providing technical assistance on transit-oriented development.
4. Biographical Sketches - In addition to the SOQ narrative (10 page maximum), include a one-page biographical sketch for each project team member including all members' roles and responsibilities in the project, as well as any related professional affiliations and memberships.

*B. Proposal Content*

Proposals shall be submitted as one (1) electronic file in both Microsoft Word format and Adobe Acrobat (or compatible file) format, double-spaced using Times New Roman, 12-point font. The proposal must contain the following components and adhere to the specified maximum page lengths:

1. Cover Sheet (not to exceed 1 page): The cover sheet shall include the entity submitting the proposal, principal name, title, and contact information (e.g., address, office and mobile phone, fax, and email). Also include name and contact information for the entity's key point of contact for all cooperative agreement administrative activities (if different from Principal).
2. Abstract (not to exceed 1 page): The Abstract shall include background, purpose, methodology, and intended outcomes.
3. Table of Contents (not to exceed 1 page): The Table of Contents shall list each section of the proposal (including Appendices) by title and page number.
4. Project Budget (not to exceed 5 pages): Include a proposed project budget for the first two years (24 months) and the corresponding budget narrative. The proposed budget shall describe and outline the total cost of all services and products including salaries and fringe benefits, supplies, travel, and all direct and indirect costs. The proposed budget shall also include an approved Indirect Cost Allocation Plan in the appendices section. Costs for construction, reconstruction or outfitting of facilities are ineligible.

5. Project Work Plan (not to exceed 20 pages total): The proposed project plan for the first two years (24 months) shall include the following:
- a. Methodology – Provide a methodology for addressing the goals and objectives described above under Section I.D; include the methodology for providing on-site technical assistance as directed by FTA that addresses the needs of economically distressed communities.
  - b. Statement of Work – Provide all proposed work tasks for the project and how the proposed work tasks will be accomplished. Include the tasks for proposed activities, assessment tools, resources, milestones, and a timeline with outcomes for deploying the technical assistance team within the first quarter of the executed cooperative agreement. Include administrative services such as day-to-day operations, information technology support, regular reporting, and technical/management interactions with FTA. Also include the following:
    - 1) Staffing Plan - Describe the approach for managing the project team, including the distribution of responsibilities among partner entities, and what activities each team member will perform.
    - 2) Performance Measures – Identify five or more performance measures and outcomes that FTA should use to assess the effectiveness of the technical assistance team. Some examples of performance measures could include the following: 1) number of areas served by the technical assistance team achieving results for improved access to public transportation stations, 2) number of areas served that achieved improved or expanded partnerships resulting in removing barriers or bridging financial gaps for TOD projects, 3) customer service satisfaction rating based on the technical assistance provided by the team (e.g., surveys, exit interviews);
    - 3) Research and Data Collection – Identify research activities and the plan for electronic collection, maintenance, storage, and dissemination of demographic, financial, and economic development data for the use by the technical assistance team, stakeholders, FTA and other customers;
    - 4) Coordination with FTA – Identify the plan for coordinating the technical assistance team’s activities and deliverables with FTA Headquarters and Regional offices, as needed; and
    - 5) Deliverables – Provide a list of proposed reports, products, services, and planned deliverables. Include quarterly reports and one synthesis report per year on the technical assistance team’s accomplishments to be submitted to FTA. (The format for the quarterly and annual reports will be provided by FTA to the successful proposer.)



- 6) Communication Plan – Provide a proposed plan for communication at the national, state and local levels. The communication plan must identify innovative communication strategies including, but not limited to the following:
  - Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
  - Text alerts, E-mail, Instant Messaging
  - Website with user interface, resources and tools
  - Toll-free telephone numbers
- 7) Outreach, Education and Facilitation Plan - Provide a proposed plan to deliver technical assistance including on-site technical assistance as directed by FTA, to educate stakeholders, facilitate partnerships, connect public and private partners, build community partnerships, engage philanthropic foundations, and support networking. Include how the technical assistance team will foster relationships and coordinate with other public, private, and non-profit stakeholders within the industry.
- 8) TOD Demonstration Program Development – Propose a plan for assisting FTA in the development of a TOD Demonstration Program that provides financial assistance to local governments with economically distressed communities. The proposed plan for assisting FTA shall include concept development activities and strategies that lead to measureable outcomes. The proposed plan shall also include the identification of potential sources of funding for the demonstration program.

6. Proposals shall adhere to the specified maximum page lengths. Supplemental materials such as letters of support can be included with the proposal in an appendices section that is beyond the page limit above (all supplemental materials not to exceed 10 pages total). Supplemental materials will not be evaluated independently.

### III. Evaluation Process

#### A. Review Criteria

FTA will assess the extent to which a proposal is clear, concise, and meets all of the proposal content requirements in this solicitation pursuant to the following factors:

##### 1. Statement of Qualifications

FTA will evaluate the technical capacity of the proposer's organization, strategic partner organizations, and all project team members (independently and collectively). Proposers must demonstrate the capacity to travel to specified locations throughout the United States in order to provide on-site technical assistance as specified by FTA.

Proposers also must demonstrate their team's technical capacity to carry-out each aspect of the project based upon the following evaluation criteria:

- a. Knowledge and expertise in public transportation, transit-oriented development, land use, urban planning, public finance, affordable housing, environmental justice and community-based economic development, including planning for economic development of economically distressed communities.
- b. Knowledge and expertise with affordable housing and community-based economic development.
- c. Knowledge and experience with federal funding sources such as FTA Capital Investment Grants (New Starts/Small Starts/Core Capacity), FTA formula grant programs, Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER), Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loans, or other USDOT funding programs, as well as funding programs through Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other relevant funding programs.
- d. Knowledge and experience with value capture mechanisms and other non-federal innovative financing strategies.
- e. Knowledge and experience with private sector investments, public-private partnerships, and joint developments.
- f. Strategic partnerships, connections and affiliations with the private sector, public sector, non-profit organizations, philanthropic foundations, and educational institutions.

## 2. Project Budget

FTA will evaluate the proposed project budget and budget narrative for accuracy and completeness of all project costs, including salaries, fringe benefits, supplies, and travel. The proposed project budget must include all direct and indirect costs, as well as the approved Indirect Cost Allocation Plan. The proposed budget must align with the proposed two-year Project Work Plan and be justified with respect to the adequacy and reasonableness of costs.

## 3. Project Work Plan

FTA will evaluate the proposed methodology and statement of work pursuant to the inclusion of a coherent two-year work plan with tasks that demonstrate the proposer's complete understanding of all activities, responsibilities, and costs required to establish and implement the prescribed technical assistance team. FTA will evaluate the reasonableness of the staffing plan's milestones and timelines to launch the team within

the first quarter of the executed cooperative agreement; as well as ensuring the viability of the team in subsequent years.

FTA will evaluate the extent to which the proposed work plan demonstrates a results-oriented approach for ensuring coordination between the technical assistance team and FTA's Headquarters and Regional offices. The proposed work plan will be evaluated based upon applicable outcomes relevant to identified performance measures, data collection, and the anticipated success or impact of the technical assistance provided. FTA will evaluate the proposed work plan based upon the identified products, services, and deliverables, including the extent to which the proposal identifies innovative and effective TOD strategies. The proposal will also be evaluated based upon the demonstrated ability to execute a technical assistance program with state-of-the-art communication and outreach strategies.

#### 4. TOD Demonstration Program Development

Evaluations will be made pursuant to the concepts, process, and measurable outcomes of assisting FTA in developing a TOD Demonstration Program. FTA will evaluate the proposer's ability to effectively develop concepts, an action plan, strategies, and identification of potential funding sources for the demonstration program.

##### *B. Proposal Selection Process*

A technical evaluation committee will review all proposals submitted by the deadline. Members of the technical evaluation committee reserve the right to screen and rate the proposals and to seek clarification from any proposer about any statement in its proposal that technical evaluation committee members finds ambiguous and/or to request additional documentation to be considered during the evaluation process to clarify information contained within the proposal.

After consideration of the findings of the technical evaluation committee, the FTA Administrator will determine the final selection and amount of funding for the award of the cooperative agreement to one (1) successful proposer.

#### IV. Proposal Submission

Complete proposals must be submitted electronically through the GRANTS.GOV web site by 11:59 EST on April 10, 2015. Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposers are encouraged to begin the process of registration on the GRANTS.GOV site well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration is a multi-step process, which may take several weeks to complete before an application can be submitted. Registered proposers may still be required to take steps to keep their registration up to date before submissions can be made successfully: (1) Registration in the Systems for Award Management (SAM) (formerly the Central Contracting Registry (CCR) system) is required; and (2) persons making

submissions on behalf of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be authorized in GRANTS.GOV by the AOR to make submissions.

Eligible entities *must* have or must secure a DUNS number for the purposes of formal application and potential entry into a cooperative agreement with FTA. The DUNS number is a unique nine-character number that identifies your organization. It is a tool of the federal government to track how federal money is distributed. Each FTA applicant's DUNS number will be maintained as part of the applicant's profile. This number can be obtained free through the Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Web site ([http://www.dnb.com/US/duns\\_update](http://www.dnb.com/US/duns_update)). In addition, each entity that applies and does not have an exemption under 2 CFR § 25.110 should: (1) Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application or plan ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)), and (2) Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by an agency.

## V. Award Information

FTA will award the project through a competitive selection process to one (1) national non-profit organization that demonstrates the technical capacity to prepare and implement all activities described in this solicitation. FTA will award the project as a cooperative agreement, and will fund the cooperative agreement over a period of up to four (4) years, with up to \$1,000,000 available per year for a total of up to \$4,000,000, subsequent to annual performance reviews. The recipient of the cooperative agreement must have final authority to ensure that all work and deliverables are completed and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. There are no cost-sharing requirements for the cooperative agreement.

FTA representatives will participate in the project by providing input to the annual statements of work, attending progress meetings, commenting on technical reports, and maintaining frequent contact with the principal project manager. FTA representatives will provide oversight of all activities, approve key decisions, activities, and redirect project activities, as needed, and provide annual performance reviews.

### A. *Notifications*

After FTA has selected the proposal to be funded, the successful proposer will be notified by email or telephone of its status. In addition, FTA will publish a notice announcing the selection in the Federal Register. FTA may withdraw its offer to provide Federal assistance if the successful proposer does not provide a formal application consistent with the proposal submission within 90 days following the date of the notification.

### B. *Execution of the Agreement*

Following notification, FTA will instruct the successful entity to submit its application through the FTA Electronic Award Management System. FTA may require the

successful proposer to modify its Statement of Work to address FTA priorities. FTA will award and manage a cooperative agreement through the FTA Electronic Award Management System.

*C. Start Date and Incurred Costs*

Absent special circumstances, costs incurred prior to FTA award are not eligible as project expenses. Absent highly unusual circumstances, FTA cannot retroactively approve a proposal. There is no pre-award authority for this project. The recipient may begin to incur project costs as of the date all parties execute the cooperative agreement. FTA expects the successful proposer to formulate the technical assistance team and be ready to start work within the first quarter following the execution of the cooperative agreement and to fully expend cooperative agreement funds during the period of performance, recognizing the full transparency and accountability are required for all expenditures.

*D. Cooperative Agreement Requirements*

The successful proposer will apply for a cooperative agreement through the Electronic Award Management System and adhere to the customary FTA cooperative agreement requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5314, National Research Program, including those of FTA Circular 6100.1D, "Transit Research and Technology Programs: Application Instructions and Program Management Guidelines" (or any superseding circular that may be in effect at the time of execution of the cooperative agreement).

**VI. Agency Contact**

For general program information, as well as proposal-specific questions, please contact Kimberly Gayle, Director of the Office of Policy Review and Development, at [Kimberly.Gayle@dot.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Gayle@dot.gov) or (202) 366-1429. TDD is available at 1-800-877-8339 (TDD/FIRS).