

Request for Proposals (RFP)

SUBJECT: Regional Goods Movement Plan for the Houston-Galveston MPO

CLOSING DATE: October 12, 2009

FORMAT: Hard copy, bound/stapled and signed

NUMBER OF COPIES: Twelve (12)

SUBMIT TO: Alan C. Clark, MPO Director
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Phone: 713-627-3200
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PROGRAM MANAGER: Jerry Bobo
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Those responding to this solicitation may elect to either mail or personally deliver their proposals to H-GAC offices. Failure to submit the required number of copies as stated above may result in disqualification from the proposal process. H-GAC will not accept any proposals delivered by telephonic, electronic or facsimile means.

The deadline for the submittal of proposals is no later than 3:30 PM on October 12, 2009. H-GAC shall date and time stamp all proposals upon receipt. Proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted. Respondents may submit proposals to the H-GAC office any time prior to the deadline.

Submission of a proposal will constitute acknowledgement and acceptance of all the terms and conditions contained in this RFP. Proposers, their authorized representatives, and their agents are responsible for obtaining, and will be deemed to have, full knowledge of the conditions, requirements, and specifications of this Request for Proposal at the time a proposal is submitted to H-GAC.

PRE-PROPOSAL COMMUNICATIONS

A Pre-Proposal Meeting is to be held on Monday, September 14, 2009, from 9:00-10:00 a.m. in the (H-GAC) 2nd Floor Conference Room A. Please notify Chandra Carrasco no later than Thursday, 3:30 p.m., September 10, 2009, if you plan to attend the meeting.

It will be assumed that potential Proposers attending this meeting have reviewed the RFP in detail and are prepared to raise any substantive questions which have not already been addressed

by H-GAC. H-GAC requests that, as much as is practical, Proposers submit all questions in advance in writing, via email or fax, prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference. No additional questions regarding the RFP will be accepted after 5:00 PM on September 21, 2009. Questions submitted in advance should be sent to Chandra Carrasco, H-GAC Transportation Planner, via email at chandra.carrasco@h-gac.com or via fax at 713-993-4508. All questions and answers from the Pre-Proposal meeting will be compiled and provided to participating Proposers, as well as posted on the H-GAC web site.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SPECIFICATIONS

Requests for additional information and questions should be addressed to Chandra Carrasco, Transportation Department, Houston-Galveston Area Council, telephone – 713.993.2443 fax - 713.993.4508, or e-mail – chandra.carrasco@h-gac.com, no later than September 21, 2009 at 5:00 PM local time. H-GAC will provide written responses to all questions received in writing on or before the written question submittal deadline (see Procurement Schedule). Questions received from all respondents, including those raised at the Pre-Proposal Meeting, shall be answered and sent to all respondents who are listed as having obtained Requests for Proposal, as well as posted on the H-GAC web site. Proposers shall be notified in writing (via email) of any changes in the specifications contained in this Request for Proposal, and any changes will also be posted on the H-GAC web site.

Purpose and Need

Safe and efficient goods movement is critical to the economic well-being of the Houston-Galveston region. The study area's ports, airports, rail lines, inter-modal terminals, and logistic distributors have existing capacity constraints that undermine the efficiency and productivity of the system as a whole. Highway congestion, limited and outdated freight facilities impact the efficiency of the goods movement system and can pose a safety risk to all transportation system users. Additionally, the goods movement system directly affects this region's quality of life. This includes truck intrusion into neighborhoods, safety, land use compatibility, poor air quality and related health impacts, restricted mobility and delay at rail crossings, noise and visual impacts. Projected growth in freight volumes, rail cargo and truck traffic over the next thirty years will only exacerbate existing problems. The purpose of the plan is to describe the movement of goods through the Houston-Galveston MPO region (Waller, Chambers, Montgomery, Fort Bend, Brazoria, Harris, Liberty, Galveston), identify possible hindrances to the safe and efficient flow of goods in the region, and to propose innovative strategies to create and grow an economical, safe, and efficient goods movement system that will enhance regional mobility.

Goals and Objectives

The plan will involve a comprehensive evaluation of the multi-modal goods movement system, and will address system needs and issues in order to increase mobility and access for both commuters and freight. The regional goods movement plan will also provide strategies to grow goods movement capacity, increase regional economic competitiveness and increase goods movement employment opportunities. Innovation will assume a high priority in addressing these issues as well as feasibility and cost-effectiveness. The central goals of the plan are to enhance regional freight mobility, develop a safe and efficient goods movement system and mitigate goods movement system impacts where possible. In order to achieve these goals, specific objectives have been identified, but should not be limited to:

- Provide recommendations concerning freight system improvements, strategies, and innovative funding collaborations
- Identify key freight infrastructure, generators, and consumers in the region
- Investigate truck safety concerns
- Investigate the possible need for intermodal connections, including along the I-69 corridor
- Analyze and supplement if necessary freight data, truck traffic information, commercial vehicle accident locations, and freight flows in and out of the region by commodity and mode
- Model future freight flows and identify current and future goods movement system issues and needs
- Identify specific long-term and short-term freight system strategies for improvement and/or mitigation
- Identify performance measures and optimal service standards
- Identify costs and benefits associated with strategies for improvement and/or mitigation

Process

This plan will be conducted by the HGAC in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT). Agency staff will work with a policy and a technical committee composed of representatives from area ports, rail representatives, trucking and logistics interests, goods movement stakeholder organizations, and others as appropriate to complete the plan tasks. The plan will build upon previous studies and plans for the Houston-Galveston region, as well as studies that may run concurrently with this work. H-GAC will be providing information regarding past freight related studies:

- Intermodal Facilities Inventory, August 1995
- Special Generator Report, February 1996
- Strategic Freight Corridor Workshop, July 1999
- Strategic Freight Corridor Study – Intermodal Facility Access Needs & Recommendations, January 2000
- Freight Workshop Summary Report, May 2003
- US 90A Corridor Rail Feasibility Study, August 2003
- Regional Commuter Rail Connectivity Study, August 2007
- Houston Regional Freight Rail Study 2007

Additionally, the consultant will work in collaboration with the concurrently running CubeCargo model development study, currently underway.

The plan will be conducted in 24 months. Milestone products and results will be required during the analysis process. The desired end product is the Houston-Galveston regional goods movement plan, project and policy recommendations, a realistic funding plan, and freight system performance measures. The recommended plan will be developed through an open, interactive public process and should be supported by a broad cross section of the public, stakeholders and policy officials.

This plan is supported with the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds and additional reporting and budgeting efforts will be required in order to meet federal standards.

Procurement Schedule

Solicitation Date:	August 28, 2009
Pre-Proposal Meeting:	September 14, 2009
Deadline for Submissions of Written Inquires:	September 21, 2009
Response to Inquires Posted:	September 23, 2009
Deadline for Submission for Proposals:	October 12, 2009
Consultant Candidate Interviews:	November 9, 2009
H-GAC Board Consultant Contract Award:	December 15, 2009

SCOPE OF WORK

Overview

The consultant will be responsible for developing this plan under the guidance of the Goods Movement Steering Committee. These entities will be formed in consultation and collaboration with H-GAC staff and the freight stakeholder community. The plan will proceed through four work phases:

- Research and model development
- Identify and evaluate freight system needs and impacts
- Propose solutions to enhance freight system mobility and address impacts
- Develop a detailed path to implementation for solutions and mitigation strategies

Work Tasks and Products

1. *Project Management and Administration*

Anticipated Deliverables: **Project Management Plan**

Within thirty days from the notice to proceed, the Consultant will submit a Draft Project Management Plan for review, which will include:

- A detailed project schedule, showing a timeline for completion of work with appropriate milestones.
- A comprehensive quality control and assurance program. Subcontractors will be required to implement and maintain similar quality control procedures.
- Progress reports will be prepared and submitted monthly and will be accompanied with a narrative describing the work accomplished during the reporting period, summary of meetings held and discussion of outstanding issues and action items. The progress reports will also summarize tasks to be accomplished during the next period.

2. *Public Participation and Outreach*

Anticipated Deliverables: **Public Participation and Stakeholder Outreach Plan**

It will include:

- A public involvement plan and schedule, showing a timeline for public meetings, directed by the Consultant. The consultant will work with H-GAC advisory committees and staff to facilitate these meetings, but will assume a primary role throughout the project for public interaction and community outreach.

- The Consultant will work with private stakeholders (trucking, rail, ports, etc.) and with H-GAC staff to integrate their input, issues, and concerns into the project in consultation with the H-GAC project manager. It is crucial that the consultant develop and cultivate private stakeholders as well as public entities in order to create, when feasible, public-private partnerships and funding opportunities.
- The Consultant will be responsible for working closely with political officials at all levels of governance within the MPO area as well as with the media.
- The Consultant will contribute to the formation of the Goods Movement Steering Committee (GMSC).
- The Consultant will also recommend individuals from the freight community to engage in peer review of all received project documents and reports.

3. *Research and Data Collection*

Anticipated Deliverables: **Research and Data Collection Report**

The Consultant will engage and identify key freight community stakeholders in order to collect qualitative data. The Consultant will be responsible for outreach activities to this community, including innovative strategies as well as standard survey collection techniques.

Key steps:

- Collection of pertinent and relevant data and goods movement information
- Outreach to freight stakeholders in order to gather information concerning freight issues and impacts
- Report on research and data collection efforts and evaluation of goods movement data needs and issues

4. *Model Development*

Anticipated Deliverables: **Modeled Goods Movement System Performance Report**

The Consultant will deliver a report on modeled goods movement system performance as well as include the identification of system needs and issues, currently and in the future.

Key Steps:

- The consultant will research and obtain available pertinent information and data applicable to the modeling effort.
- Using the compiled and collected data, the Consultant will evaluate the information and determine the existing baseline goods movement system performance as well as for the forecast year.
- Using the compiled data, the Consultant will identify the need for any further data collection and propose strategies to obtain that information.
- The Consultant will prepare a report that thoroughly describes baseline and forecast conditions and evaluates performance.

The consultant will collect and review freight rail/trucking related reports and studies and identify potential relevance to, and integration into, the plan. A particular emphasis should be on collecting goods movement information as it is related to mobility and congestion that will affect truck routes and rail line construction. HGAC will provide pertinent data and information related to the plan including

freight flow modeling data, GIS data, and previous freight studies. The consultant will be tasked with contacting and obtaining relevant information from other agencies.

5. *Identification and Evaluation of Freight System Needs and Impacts*

Anticipated Deliverables: **Houston-Galveston Regional Freight System Plan: Evaluation and Recommendations**

The Consultant will produce a report on the Houston-Galveston regional freight system, detailing all work thus far. In addition such a report will evaluate the freight system, identify system needs and propose strategies (short and long term) to enhance mobility and system safety.

Key Steps:

- Evaluate system findings and needs gathered from work Tasks #3 and #4
- Identify possible strategies for impact mitigation and for enhancement of freight system mobility
- Develop performance measures for evaluation
- Develop funding strategies for possible strategies

The strategies to improve system functionality will be feasible in the short-term, address long-term system needs and reflect the high level of involvement with all interested parties, including the rail and trucking industries. Each proposed solution will require a cost/benefit matrix, as well as innovative funding strategies for implementation. Funding strategies for short and long-term solutions should include, where possible, public-private partnerships. Additionally, costs to the system for a no-build or no-improvement option should be included.

6. *Strategic Development and Project Refinement*

Anticipated Deliverables: **Regional Goods Movement Plan: Projects and Programs**

The Consultant will identify specific projects to be considered for inclusion in the H-GAC Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and produce a goods movement chapter for the RTP 2040. The Consultant will include further direction regarding the establishment of H-GAC goods movement programs.

The final task in this plan will be to develop policy and project recommendations that are accompanied by realistic funding strategies. In addition, the Consultant will develop, collect and disseminate plan information and public comments on potential air quality, economic development, safety, security, noise, quiet zones, commuter and freight rail and other impacts related to the overall initiative. The Consultant will communicate overall results and funding strategies to stakeholders, the public, elected officials, and potential implementation partners. The final report will provide short, medium, and long term implementation plans as well as recommendations of needed topics for further study. Short and long-term solutions will be presented to the policy committee for comment and approval. The committee will determine which long-term and short-term solutions need further refinement and pursuit.

PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Proposals should, at a minimum, include the information described in Sections A-G below:

A. Cover Letter

This letter should include a brief summary of key aspects of the consultant's (team's) qualifications and approach to achieving project within the available budget and time frame. The letter should also include the primary contact name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address for each firm in the proposed team. (Maximum 2 pages)

B. Project Work Program and Schedule

The consultant (team) should detail their approach to undertaking the tasks listed in this RFP. A recommended methodology for performance of each task identified in the scope of work should be included, along with a timeline for completion. The timeline should illustrate key milestones and anticipate necessary meetings with H-GAC staff, the project steering committee, and with the freight community. This contract will be completed within 24 months of execution. (Maximum 5 pages)

C. Project Organization and Management

A project organization and management plan should be developed. The plan should include project staffing with an indication of the personnel to be involved, their respective roles, and person-hours by task dedicated to the project. A general summary of the approach to be used in accomplishing the work should be given. The consultant (team) should describe functions and responsibilities of the firms and staff involved. Proposals should clearly delineate all individuals, by names and titles that will be working on this plan and their areas of responsibility. If substitutes or back-up personnel are planned on a contingency basis, they should be indicated in the plan. H-GAC requests the prime contract signatory be specified, with title, to facilitate the preparation of the contract. (Maximum 5 pages)

D. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Goal

For projects funded by grants from the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT), H-GAC has established a goal of 24 percent DBE participation in its total annual third party consulting opportunities. Each respondent is encouraged to take affirmative action and make every effort possible to use DBE firms in the performance of work under this contract. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to require the utilization of any DBE firm that is either unqualified or unavailable.

E. Title VI Requirements, EEO and Conflict of Interests/Debarment

Successful respondents will be required to demonstrate compliance with all requirements imposed by Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 (49 U.S.C. Section 2000d), the Regulations of DOT issued hereunder (49 C.F.R. part 21), and the assurances by H-GAC thereto.

Equal Employment Opportunity – Successful respondents will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations. Proposals should state whether there is a potential conflict of interest and be cognizant of the requirement for executing a debarment certification stating that they have not been barred from doing work involving federal

funds. A signed Debarment Certification will be required for each of the consultant team members prior to contract execution.

F. Conflict of Interest Questionnaire

Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code requires vendors and consultants contracting or seeking to contract with H-GAC to file a conflict of interest questionnaire (CIQ) if they have an employment or other business relationship with an H-GAC officer or an officer's close family member. The required questionnaire is located at the Texas Ethics Commission website <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/>. H-GAC officers include its Board of Directors and Executive Director, who are listed on this website. The CIQ must be completed and filed with a bid/proposal response if an employment or business relationship defined in the law exists.

G. Budget

Funding for this contract, estimated at \$2.0 million, is dependent upon the successful execution of an interagency agreement between H-GAC and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). H-GAC reserves the right to expand the total budget and scope of the contract. Respondents are not required to submit a budget of categorical costs in their proposals, but should indicate the approximate percentage of the available funding that will be required for each task. Respondents should be prepared to provide a detailed budget in a timely fashion should they be selected. (Maximum 3 pages)

H. Responsibility and Qualifications

The project manager and other key staff members must be specified and a clear indication given as to their involvement in the project, the amount of time they will be on-site and the percent of their time dedicated to this project. Brief resumes of staff members should be included. The successful respondent to this RFP must understand they are expected to provide qualified personnel to accomplish each portion of the work in this planning study. Substitutions for essential personnel involved in the study will not be allowed without H-GAC's prior approval and resulting delays will be the responsibility of the consultant. H-GAC retains the right to request the removal of any personnel found, in H-GAC's opinion, to be unqualified to perform the work. (Maximum 10 pages)

IN SUMMARY

While the above items provide a general description of what sections and information are expected in the proposal, they are not meant to limit or exclude other pertinent information.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A Selection Committee consisting of selected staff from H-GAC, the Port of Houston, the Gulf Coast Freight Rail District, TxDOT, and the Port of Freeport will review the responses to the RFP received by the designated closing date (**October 12, 2009 at 3:30 pm**), using the Evaluation Criteria described in the following section. The Selection Committee reserves the right to contact respondents for clarification of information submitted and to contact references to obtain information regarding past performance, reliability, and integrity.

Consortiums, joint ventures, or teams submitting proposals will not be considered responsive to this RFP unless they have demonstrated in a "management plan" that all contractual

responsibility rests solely with one “prime” contractor or legal entity of the “team”. A duly authorized official of the prime respondent must sign the cover letter and other pertinent certifications.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The proposal evaluation criteria for the ranking (and possible short-listing) of the consultant will include:

Capabilities (30 percent)

Consultant (team) must have demonstrated capabilities in freight planning, freight and rail modeling, freight stakeholder outreach and creating a multi-modal transportation environment. Consultant (team) must be able to analyze data from a variety of sources, including databases, GIS, travel surveys, traffic counts and plan documents. Consultant (team) must possess knowledge of “best practices” for regional goods movement systems and an understanding of the types of projects that are eligible for federal funding.

Approach (30 percent)

The proposal must delineate an effective approach to achieving project objectives within available time frame and budget. Consultant (team) should provide a project schedule and timeline for achieving key milestones, such as project meetings with H-GAC staff and the contract policy and technical committees. An estimated budget for achieving major project tasks should also be provided.

Project Management, Organizational Structure and Key Personnel (20 percent)

The Consultant (team) must have a qualified Project Manager. Proposal must demonstrate an effective organizational structure. Key personnel assigned to the project must possess necessary qualifications and be available to perform the work within the project time frame.

Past Performance (10 percent)

The Consultant (team) must have a demonstrated track record of timely performance, quality and integrity, as evidenced by a list of client references. **Contact information for client references, including email addresses is required to be included.**

Other Elements (10 percent)

H-GAC’s Proposal Evaluation Team may also evaluate other elements in the proposal that it deems pertinent to the Consultant’s (team) capability to perform the required tasks.

CONTRACT AWARD

Evaluation team scores for each RFP respondent will be averaged using a methodology of H-GAC’s choosing. The ranked respondents may be reduced to a shortlist of no less than two and no more than four by score. H-GAC reserves the right to NOT conduct interviews with the short-listed respondents.

H-GAC will provide short-listed respondents with instructions as to how the final Consultant (team) ranking will be determined. These questions will not be limited to questions about elements of the proposal submitted, specific scope of work questions and/or interviews. A

recommendation will be presented to the Budget and Finance Committee of the H-GAC Board of Directors for approval to negotiate, and execute, a contract with the ranked Consultants (teams) in descending order. The targeted date for Board approval is **December 15, 2009**. H-GAC reserves the right to delay that date as needed and to reject any and all proposals as deemed in its interest.

COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Respondent's attention is called to the fact that any contract between H-GAC and the selected respondent(s) will be subject to financial assistance contracts between the H-GAC and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The contract to be awarded, therefore, is subject to the terms of these agreements and will not proceed without these agreements having been duly executed. The successful respondent will be required to comply with, in addition to other provisions of the agreement, the conditions required by applicable federal regulations, including those regulations which must be documented in the proposal, as indicated in sections E, F, & G of the Proposal Contents section of this RFP.

RESOLUTION OF PROTESTED SOLICITATIONS AND AWARDS

Any Proposer who is aggrieved in connection with a purchase transaction may file a grievance. The grievance may be filed at any phase of the procurement, up to 10 working days after first action by H-GAC Board of Directors to authorized negotiation with top-ranked Proposers. Grievances filed more than 10 days after action by H-GAC Board of Directors will not be deemed timely and will not be considered. In order for a Proposer to enter the grievance process, a written complaint must be sent to the Chief Financial Officer of H GAC by certified mail which includes the following:

1. Name, mailing address and business phone number of the complainant.
2. Appropriate identification of the procurement being questioned.
3. A precise statement of the reasons for the protest.
4. Supporting exhibits, evidence or documents to substantiate any claims.

The grievance must be based on an alleged violation of H-GAC's Procurement Procedures, a violation of State or Federal Law (if applicable), or a violation of applicable grant or contract agreements to which H-GAC is a party. Failure to receive a procurement award from H-GAC in and of itself does not constitute valid grievance. Upon receipt of grievance, the Chief Financial Officer will initiate the informal resolution process.

The Procurement Officer or Departmental Director responsible for the solicitation shall contact the complainant and all interested parties and attempt to resolve the allegations informally within ten (10) working days from the date of complaint. If the allegations are successfully resolved by mutual agreement, documentation will be forwarded to the Office Services Manager of the resolution with specifics on each point addressed in the original complaint.

If the Procurement Officer or Departmental Director is not successful in resolving the allegations, the complaint along with the comments will be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer immediately. The Chief Financial Officer will review all documentation. All interested

parties will be given written notice of the date, time, and place of hearing and an opportunity to present evidence. A written decision will be issued within five (5) working days after the hearing along with notice of appeal rights. The complainant may appeal the Chief Financial Officer's decision by submitting a written appeal, within five (5) working days, to the Executive Director of H-GAC. The Executive Director, upon receipt of a written notice of appeal, shall contact the complainant and schedule a hearing within ten (10) working days. The Executive Director of H-GAC has the option of appointing a Hearing Officer to preside over the hearing. If appointed, the Hearing Officer shall conduct a hearing and forward a summary and recommended resolution to the Executive Director.

The decision reached by the Executive Director or his designee shall be final and conclusive. This decision will be forwarded to the complainant in writing within thirty (30) working days.

The Proposer may, if it elects to do so, appeal the final and conclusive decision of the Executive Director to a Court of competent jurisdiction.

H-GAC RESPONSIBILITIES

H-GAC is responsible for project administration and final decisions on all contractual matters. All responses to inquiries about the RFP and attachments will be posted on the H-GAC website as often as possible:

<http://www.H-GAC.com> to access the RFP page

No inquiries about the Scope of Work, specifically, will be answered prior to the pre-proposal meeting on **September 14, 2009**. Inquiries about the Scope of Work or other sections of this RFP should be directed to:

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P.O. Box 22777
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Main number: (713) 627-3200
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