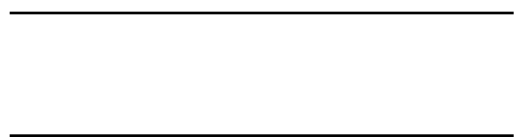




# Service Development Plan Professional Services Request for Proposals #25-Service Development Plan-002

**Due September 6, 2024, 12:00 PM EST.**



**Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority**  
75 West Commercial Street, Suite 104  
Portland, ME 04101-4361  
Phone: 207-780-1000  
Fax: 207-780-1001  
Website: [www.nnepra.com](http://www.nnepra.com)

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA), a public transportation authority that provides oversight of the Amtrak Downeaster passenger rail service between Brunswick, ME and Boston, MA, is seeking proposals for professional services to develop a service development plan (SDP) to assist with determining service goals and associated infrastructure improvements over a 10- to 15-year time period.

NNEPRA manages the budget, contracts, promotion, and customer services associated with the Amtrak Downeaster and participates in research and activities to support the growth and development of passenger rail and public transportation throughout Northern New England.

The purpose of this RFP is to seek and retain a qualified transportation planning and engineering firm to work with NNEPRA staff and its contractors to analyze current service, establish reasonable service goals, analyze potential infrastructure improvements required to achieve those goals, and outline a phased investment strategy for implementation. The Selected Firm will assist in the planning and development of key initiatives identified by NNEPRA and the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) in the Maine State Rail Plan including:

- A. Relocate Portland Station to a main line location
- B. Build a new station at Falmouth, ME
- C. Potential extension of passenger rail service on the Rockland Branch
- D. Leverage opportunities created by the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) to increase train speed and capacity
- E. Transition to Amtrak's new fleet of Airo trainsets
- F. Identify current and/or potential future infrastructure improvements necessary to maintain Downeaster service

This effort will also explore opportunities to enhance multi-modal connectivity from Boston North Station to the Northeast Corridor at Boston South Station.

It is the intent of NNEPRA to contract with one (1) transportation planning and engineering firm to provide the desired services over a period of 18 to 24 months. Proposing firms may assemble a team of subcontractors to assist in their scope of work.

NNEPRA requires a written proposal, that addresses the points detailed in this RFP, from any firm wishing to be considered. **Proposals must be submitted to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, 75 West Commercial Street, Suite 104, Portland, ME 04101, no later than 12:00 PM EST on September 6, 2024.** Proposals received later than the deadline will be rejected.

For more information about NNEPRA, please visit our website at [www.nnepra.com](http://www.nnepra.com).

### **Selection Timeline and Contract Terms:**

Please note that dates below may be adjusted in order to comply with all procedural requirements associated with the contracting process. The actual contract start date will be established by a completed and approved contract.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Phase</b>
July 29, 2024	Advertisement of RFP
<b>August 7, 2024, 5:00PM EST</b>	Deadline for agencies to submit written questions to NNEPRA
August 16, 2024	NNEPRA issues written responses to questions on <a href="http://www.nnepra.com">www.nnepra.com</a>
<b>September 6, 2024, 12:00PM EST</b>	Responses to RFP due to NNEPRA. Late submissions will not be accepted and will be returned unopened
September 16, 2024	Invitations to interview issued (if necessary)
September 23-27, 2024	Interviews (if necessary)
October 2024	Selection and award

The term of the anticipated contract resulting from the RFP is 18 to 24 months from the start date and will be based on a project schedule mutually agreed upon by NNEPRA and the Selected Firm.

NNEPRA has a budget range of \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 for completing the SDP. The actual budget will be determined based on proposals received from qualified firms based on the scope outlined in this RFP.

### **Scope**

The Selected Firm will perform all tasks described in this scope under the guidance and direction of NNEPRA staff and its contractors. Proposals should describe the anticipated level of detail of technical analyses to achieve these scope items within the 18- to 24-month schedule and the \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 budget. Proposals should also describe anticipated data inputs, data outputs, and tools of analysis. Proposers are encouraged to provide creative approaches to each technical task.

The Selected Firm will be given access to all previous reports, technical analyses, and databases that are available from past planning efforts upon Notice-to-Proceed (NTP).

#### *Task 1 - Project Administration and Management*

The Selected Firm will develop and submit a draft detailed schedule within 2 weeks of NTP. The schedule shall highlight task and subtask durations and interdependencies, project milestones, NNEPRA and FRA review (assume 2 weeks for NNEPRA review and 4 weeks for FRA review). Multiple deliverables may be bundled for concurrent review within a single review period. The schedule will be updated monthly, as needed, and submitted with monthly progress reports.

The Selected Firm will submit a monthly invoice and progress report template within 2 weeks of NTP. Monthly invoices shall track percent of scope complete by task and labor dollars expended per task. The progress report shall highlight tasks accomplished during the period, deliverables submitted, key tasks to be accomplished in the next period, and shall include an updated schedule, as needed.

The Selected Firm will prepare for and participate in weekly project management (PM) meetings with NNEPRA staff and its contractors. Regular meetings will be scheduled immediately following NTP. Each weekly PM meeting will be no longer than 30 minutes. The purpose of these meetings is for the Selected Firm to provide technical updates, identify any schedule issues, and discuss preparation for any upcoming meetings.

The Selected Firm will develop and submit a quality assurance / quality control (QA/QC) plan within 2 weeks of NTP. The plan shall describe the Selected Firm's structure imposed on itself and its subcontractors to control and assure the quality and consistency of the project.

Deliverables: Project schedule; monthly invoice and progress reports; QA/QC Plan

#### *Task 2 – Draft Purpose and Need Statement & Stakeholder Coordination*

The Selected Firm will develop a draft Purpose and Need Statement that will serve as the foundation for the analysis of the SDP and the evaluation of infrastructure improvements to be identified. In developing a draft Purpose and Need Statement, the Selected Firm should consider the broad market conditions that inform the corridor and a description of how the corridor would contribute to the development of a multi-state regional network of intercity passenger rail.

The Selected Firm will review previously prepared studies to help identify Purpose and Need information as appropriate (e.g., 2016 Downeaster SDP, Maine State Rail Plan, Greater Portland Council of Government's Connect 2045 plan). The Selected Firm will also use these previous efforts, as well as original data gathering and analysis, to prepare a Market Analysis Report. The market analysis will consider the existing and projected characteristics of the transportation market to be served, passenger travel volumes in the corridor by mode, current and future quality of transportation service, and demographic and macroeconomic trends. The market analysis is expected to draw heavily from prior planning efforts for the existing corridor between Boston, MA and

Brunswick, ME and to lean more heavily on original data collection and analysis for the potential extension of service on the Rockland Branch.

The Selected Firm will participate in railroad stakeholder, government agency, and public outreach, engagement, and coordination activities that will be led by NNEPRA staff and contractors. These activities may include, but are not limited to, public meetings, virtual engagement opportunities, consultation meetings, and existing agency coordination efforts. The Selected Firm will prepare a Stakeholder, Agency, and Public Engagement Summary Report at the conclusion of the SDP.

Deliverables: Purpose and Need Statement; Market Analysis Report; Stakeholder, Agency, and Public Engagement Summary Report

### *Task 3: Alternatives Analysis*

The Selected Firm will conduct an alternatives analysis to evaluate infrastructure investments that satisfy the Purpose and Need Statement developed under Task 2. The Selected Firm will complete Task 3 concurrently with, and supported by, the analytical outputs of Tasks 4 and 5.

The Selected Firm will first prepare a methodology report for review before commencing each area of analysis, including methods used for developing and refining options, criteria for evaluating options, means of incorporating Task 4 and 5 technical analyses, and means of incorporating stakeholder input.

Task 3 will include a service options analysis (fleet; capabilities of the signal system [PTC]; service frequency, operating speeds, and trip times; fares; existing and planned intermodal connections; stations and facilities), an investment package options analysis (component investments that achieve the service options), and a design options analysis (concept designs for component investments).

Deliverables: Alternatives Analysis Methodology Report; Service Options Analysis Report; Investment Package Options Analysis Report; Design Options Analysis Report; Preliminary Alternatives Analysis Report

### *Task 4: Transportation Planning*

The Selected Firm will conduct various transportation planning tasks to support the Task 3 alternatives analysis. The Selected Firm will first prepare a methodology report covering each area of analysis for review before commencing analysis. The Selected Firm will also prepare a final report on each area of analysis as well as a final Project Development Report that synthesizes the overall analysis.

The Task 4 areas of analysis will include operations (train performance calculators; railroad operations simulation software), travel demand and ridership forecasting, revenue evaluation, station area and access (operational requirements for stations and station access; connectivity to other modes; parking; economic development potential), conceptual engineering (converting required infrastructure into discrete capital projects accompanied by maps, diagrams, track charts, engineering drawings, and visual depictions; feasibility and constructability analysis), capital cost estimation, and operations and maintenance cost estimation.

Train operations modeling is not necessarily expected to include full network simulation (e.g., Rail Traffic Controller [RTC]) at this stage but could later become an optional additional task. For travel demand and ridership forecasting, revenue evaluation, and operations and maintenance cost estimation, this effort is anticipated to use pre-existing models rather than require the building of new models.

In some areas of analysis, the level of required detail may vary between the existing corridor between Boston, MA and Brunswick, ME and the potential extension of service on the Rockland Branch.

Deliverables: Transportation Planning Methodology Report; Operations Analysis Report; Travel Demand and Ridership Forecasting Report; Revenue Evaluation Report; Station Area and Access Report; Conceptual Engineering Report; Capital Cost Estimation Report; Operations and Maintenance Cost Estimation Report; Project Development Report

#### *Task 5: Environmental Planning*

The Selected Firm will identify key environmental considerations in the development of alternatives to support future project-level environmental analysis. Task 5 will provide a high-level qualitative socioeconomic, cultural, human environment, and natural environment resource inventory and preliminary effects analysis as part of the development and screening of options concurrently with Tasks 3 and 4. The Selected Firm will identify infrastructure- and stormwater-related climate change impacts, risks, and resiliency recommendations for the current corridor and the potential Rockland Branch extension. Task 5 will also document the anticipated benefits of the corridor's impacts as it relates to other transportation modes, energy consumption, land use, and economic development.

The Selected Firm will first prepare a methodology report for review before commencing the environmental analysis and a final report upon completion of the analysis. Where environmental documentation is not available, the Selected Firm will perform desktop analysis to inventory existing conditions and identify key social, cultural, natural, and physical project concerns.

Task 5 will also address possible approaches to completing the environmental review of proposed projects, including the potential NEPA class(es) of action for subsequent environmental document(s). This report will identify potential programmatic mitigation strategies and anticipated permits and agency clearance requirements that will be needed for the alternatives moving forward for additional consideration during NEPA.

The level of environmental analysis required may vary between the existing corridor between Boston, MA and Brunswick, ME and the potential extension of service on the Rockland Branch.

Deliverables: Environmental Concerns Analysis Methodology; Environmental Concerns Report

#### *Task 6: Financial Planning and Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA)*

The Selected Firm will identify the financial resources required to implement and operate the proposed service and compare the anticipated benefits that accrue from a project to the anticipated costs of the project over a specified period of time.

The financial analysis will describe the capital and operating dollars needed to implement and operate new services and identify potential sources of capital investment and operating financial support. The Selected Firm will first prepare a methodology report for review before commencing the financial planning analysis and a final report upon completion of the analysis.

The BCA will document the overall economic impact of proposed future services and investments. This analysis will include benefits such as operational benefits, travel time savings, air quality impacts, community and economic development, and other user and non-user economic benefits. The BCA will quantify all non-monetary benefits and combine them with the monetary costs and benefits identified under the financial plan. The Selected Firm will first prepare a methodology report for review before commencing the BCA and a final report upon completion of the analysis. The BCA will reference USDOT's Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs (January 2020) or latest edition, as appropriate.

Deliverables: Financial Planning Methodology; Financial Planning Report; BCA Methodology; BCA Report

#### *Task 7: Phased Implementation Plan*

The Selected Firm will develop a plan that identifies the implementation sequencing of capital projects to support the SDP's service outcomes. The Phased Implementation Plan will identify implementation years and desired service levels for those years based on ridership demand and availability of fleet and infrastructure. The Phased

Implementation Plan will also include consideration of phasing the project lifecycle stages for each capital project – project development (PE/NEPA), final design, and construction – and the appropriate time to initiate each lifecycle stage for a capital project. The Selected Firm will first prepare a methodology report for review before commencing the Phased Implementation Plan and a final report upon completion of the analysis.

Deliverables: Phased Implementation Plan Methodology; Phased Implementation Plan Report

*Task 8: Draft and Final Reports*

The Selected Firm will prepare a summary report of the SDP representing the culmination of all analyses and results, including an executive summary. The final report will also include a discussion of current and future governance arrangements supporting Downeaster service.

While detailed methodologies and results will be available in each of the technical reports, the final SDP report will be written for a layperson audience so that stakeholders, elected officials, and the general public can clearly understand the proposed future of the Downeaster corridor along with its anticipated benefits and costs. The report should be highly visual and graphical in nature and easily accessible for a broad range of audiences.

Deliverables: Final Service Development Plan Report

**Submittal Information**

An original copy of proposals, along with three (3) complete copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope to:

*Catherine Davidson  
Grant Program and Compliance Manager  
75 West Commercial Street, Suite 104  
Portland, ME 04101-4361*

To establish a uniform review process, all proposals shall include the following:

- I. Title Page: Include the Request for Proposal title and number, the name, address and telephone number of the proposing firm, name/title of primary firm contact person, and submission date.
- II. Table of Contents: Clearly identify the material by section and by page number.
- III. Letter of Transmittal: (limit to one or two pages)
  - a. Briefly state the firm’s understanding of the work to be performed, a positive commitment to perform the work and ability to meet defined



objectives.

- b. Provide the names of the person(s) who will be authorized to make representations for the proposal, their title(s), address(es), and telephone number(s).

IV. Proposer's Profile and Summary of Qualifications:

- a. Provide an overview of the firm and its experience in the passenger rail planning and engineering industry. Provide a list of any subcontractors, the duties they are expected to perform, and the experience those firms have providing those duties.
- b. Describe prior or present projects that substantiate your firm's qualifications to perform this work.
- c. Identify one person who will serve as Project Manager for the SDP and provide an organization chart for the full project team. Provide brief descriptions of the background and experience of key personnel as well as their projected availability over the next 18 to 24 months. Proposers should also provide resumes for key personnel in an appendix which will not count toward the proposal's page limit.
- d. Provide two references that we can contact to learn more about your firm.

V. Proposed Scope of Work:

- a. Provide a proposed scope of work that satisfies the requirements of the scope of work outlined in this RFP. Proposals should describe the anticipated level of detail of technical analyses to achieve these scope items within the proposed schedule and budget. Proposals should describe anticipated data inputs, data outputs, and tools of analysis. Proposers are encouraged to provide creative approaches to each technical task.
- b. Provide a proposed schedule that can achieve the proposed scope of work within 18 to 24 months of NTP. Provide a high-level Gantt chart showing durations of each task and their relationships to each other.

VI. Cost Proposal:

- a. Provide a proposed budget to achieve the proposed scope of work within the proposed schedule with a total cost in the range of \$750,000 to \$1,000,000. Provide a budget matrix of total hours and dollars by person and by task, with base pay, overhead, profit, and total billing rates. Provide a description of any additional expenses (e.g., travel, data, other materials) included in the budget.

Other Proposal Requirements

- VII. All proposals are limited to a total of 20 pages, exclusive of resumes and the price proposal.
- VIII. Proposals shall be valid for 90 days from the date of submission and are not subject to withdrawal.

## **Interviews**

One or more proposers may be selected for an in-depth interview before the contract is awarded.

## **Evaluation of Proposals**

Proposals received will be reviewed to assure they are responsive to the RFP requirements. Proposals deemed responsive will then be reviewed and scored by an evaluation committee in accordance with the criteria below.

- I. Completeness of proposal (10 points)**
  - Comprehensive, organized proposal that addresses all areas of the RFP
  
- II. Qualifications, experience, and availability of personnel and quality of proposal (40 points)**
  - Relevant and proven experience of the firm
  - Technical qualifications, skills, and experience of key personnel assigned to the project
  
- III. Approach and quality of proposal (40 points)**
  - Understanding of NNEPRA's needs/objectives as outlined
  - Clear, achievable scope of work
  - Creativity of defined approach
  
- IV. Cost of proposal (10 points)**
  - Both the lowest overall cost and the hourly cost per person may be considered in this category

The committee may perform preliminary scoring of proposals and choose to interview the top scoring agency(ies), after which scoring will be finalized.

**Questions regarding this proposal for services must be made in writing and submitted to the address below by 5:00 PM EST August 7, 2024:**

Catherine Davidson  
Grant Program and Compliance Manager  
75 West Commercial Street, Suite 104  
Portland, ME 04101-4361  
**Or via e-mail: [catherine@nnepra.com](mailto:catherine@nnepra.com)**

Please include "RFP#25-Service Development Plan-002" in the subject line of all e-mail questions. Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the

NNEPRA website (<http://www.nnepra.com>) no later than August 16, 2024. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to visit this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary.

**No telephone inquiries will be accepted.**

NNEPRA reserves the right to waive formalities, to accept any proposal, or to reject any and all proposals for any reason.

Any costs incurred by proposers in preparing or submitting offers are the proposer's sole responsibility; NNEPRA will not reimburse any proposer for any costs incurred prior to award.