

n-catt



**National Center
for Applied Transit
Technology**

Request for Quotations:

Title: Route Level Zero Emission Bus Tool

Issue Date: January 16, 2024

Deadline for Submissions: February 6, 2024

Zero Emission Bus Planning Tool Request for Quotations RFQ Number: 387153-008

What This Is

The Community Transportation Association of America, through its National Center for Applied Transit Technology (N-CATT), is soliciting bids from consultants to support N-CATT to develop a tool to help transit managers explore what routes would be best for switching to zero emission buses. The tool will help the target audience explore what routes in their system could be converted to zero emission vehicles.

Interested parties must follow the instructions and format set forth in this Request for Quotations, for which responses are due no later than 11:59pm Eastern Time on February 6, 2024

About N-CATT

The National Center for Applied Transit Technology's (N-CATT) goal is to improve and make more efficient small-urban, rural and tribal transit service by assisting local transit agencies in understanding, selecting, and otherwise planning to incorporate new technology into service. N-CATT helps transportation agencies, managers, and decision-makers, such as board members or public officials, identify promising technologies, practices, and opportunities that accomplish agencies' goals or resolve particular challenges.

The recent burst of technology-based innovations in transportation has largely focused on dense urban areas. N-CATT seeks to spread the benefits of these developments to smaller transportation agencies that lack the resources and capacities of large-urban systems to research, analyze, and test new products that could enhance their services. This includes educating system managers and helping them to encourage influential stakeholders to support needed technological advancements.

Among its activities, N-CATT hosts resources such as guidebooks, podcasts, and webinars on its website for interested agencies to engage with as it relates to them. In addition, N-CATT provides technical assistance in various formats: hands-on workshops, Technology Summits for priority-setting at the state or regional level, and Strategic Technology Technical Assistance Teams for one-on-one technical assistance with N-CATT, consultants, and recipient transit agencies.

Overview of Services Required

The contract for the route level zero emission bus tool design services will be held between the consultant and the Community Transportation Association of America, which operates N-CATT.

General Framework

Target Audience: General managers, operations managers, fleet managers, who are interested in adopting zero-emission buses (ZEBs) into their fleets, but are uncertain which parts of their system can accommodate the new vehicle type(s).

CTAA will select one consultant for this tool based on vendors' qualifications relative to the project's needs. It is possible that CTAA may elect to choose no vendor.

For this tool, the selected consultant will work with CTAA to develop a web-based tool for transit agency managers to determine on a route-by-route basis what parts of their network can be converted to ZEBs. In addition, the tool should help agencies consider how much, if any, of their demand-response fleet could be converted. The outputs of the tool could include, but are not limited to: cost, cost per passenger, infrastructure needed, and number of runs per charge. We encourage responses to include suggested inputs, outputs, end-product visuals, or other components that will help inform transit managers on this subject.

Consultants will participate in the following tasks:

1. An initial conference call between the N-CATT team to discuss project goals and process.
2. Develop a research synthesis to provide justification for calculations used in the tool.
3. Virtual follow-up meetings as established between CTAA and consultants.
4. A beta launch of the tool with an invited group of users.
5. Review and refine tool based on feedback from CTAA and other stakeholders.
6. Provide draft final product for review by CTAA and other stakeholders.
7. Provide final product in a format that is 508 compliant and accessible via N-CATT's website.
8. Develop training materials, such as a step-by-step guide or webinar on how to use the tool.
9. Provide a limited amount of follow-up support for troubleshooting.

Desired Outcomes

1. Creation of a 508 compliant and web-accessible tool for transit agency managers or planning staff to understand where zero emission vehicles are most effective in their service area.
2. Development of training materials to assist the intended audience to use the tool for better decision-making when service planning.

Scope of Work

CTAA anticipates the selected consultant will perform the following steps:

1. Task 1: Research and discovery.
 - a. Conduct an initial conference call with CTAA to establish project goals and discuss development process.
 - b. Work with N-CATT to identify information needed to work towards final product.
 - c. Develop work plan for the tool development process.
 - d. Conduct a research synthesis of factors that determine route level factors that could lead use of zero emission vehicles for fixed route and microtransit.

- e. **Deliverables:** Work plan, research synthesis.
2. Task 2: Interim Work and Beta Launch.
 - a. Collect data and information relevant to work plan and final product.
 - b. Hold monthly check-in calls to discuss progress and identify informational or logistical needs.
 - c. Coordinate reviewing opportunities for N-CATT staff and other stakeholders to allow for course correction throughout the process.
 - d. Provide a beta version of the tool in a 508 compliant, and web accessible format for a soft launch with a group of invited beta testers (advisory council).
 - e. Incorporate feedback from N-CATT, stakeholders, and beta users into tool development
 - f. **Deliverables:** Draft final product for review by N-CATT and stakeholders; Beta launch of tool, monthly check-ins with N-CATT staff.
3. Task 3: Final Product and Training.
 - a. Incorporate N-CATT and stakeholder feedback from draft tool.
 - b. Develop report documenting underlying research and development process for key stakeholders.
 - c. Develop training materials for the intended audience of transit agency managers.
 - d. Consult with the FTA, when requested, regarding tool development for N-CATT
 - e. Provide limited troubleshooting support for two months after final tool launch.
 - f. **Deliverables:** Final report for N-CATT and stakeholders; monthly meetings with NCATT staff to discuss product; training materials to accompany tool launch; limited post-launch support to troubleshoot.

The timeline for each deliverable will be worked out with CTAA and consultants. However, all work will be finished by September 30, 2024.

Price

CTAA intends to execute a fixed-price contract with the selected consultant. Unless negotiated differently to both parties' satisfaction, the term of this contract would be for milestone payments based on the above scope of work, to be made to the consultant upon completion and acceptance of all work and work products under each task.

Term of the Agreement

The consultant's contract with CTAA will end upon accepted completion of Task 3.

Bid Requirements

CTAA will accept and review bids that contain the following information:

- 1) A 1-page cover sheet with:
 - a. Bidder's name / Firm Name
 - b. telephone number,
 - c. email address,
 - d. physical and mailing address, and

- e. A one-paragraph summary abstract of the bid that states (i) qualifications to perform the indicated work (one sentence), (ii) how the bidder intends to approach the indicated work (maximum of three sentences), (iii) the names, titles, corporate affiliations and pertinent experience of all individuals the bidder intends to have conduct the indicated work (one sentence per individual), and (iv) the fixed price, exclusive of travel, for which the bidder is prepared to perform this work, for each workshop for which the bidder indicates interest. Please indicate a separate price for the Option Task 4.
- 2) A narrative of no more than three pages in length that explains – in sufficient detail – how the bidder would carry out the tasks detailed above and the bidder’s understanding of how rural, small-urban, and tribal transit systems can utilize the skills in the workshop topic(s) the consultant wishes to be considered for. CTAA will look for demonstrations that the bidder is able to create content that target audience can relate to and apply to their situations, and; the bidder’s experience and qualifications in a manner that demonstrates their ability to conduct work similar in nature and scope to what is requested.
- 3) A staffing plan that includes:
 - a. A narrative of no more than two pages in length that names the individuals who will carry out this work, briefly explaining each person’s role(s) in the project and identifying which individual will be CTAA’s principal point of contact concerning the work to be performed,
 - b. For each individual being proposed by this consultant, a one-page resume or CV that describes that individual’s qualifications and experience and summarizes previous work performed by the individual that is relevant to this solicitation, and
 - c. the price for which the bidder is prepared to perform this work, **for each workshop topic for which the bidder indicates interest**. Please indicate a separate price for the Option Task 5.
- 4) Statement that the consultant has legal authority to work in the United States. This statement shall include a Unique Entity ID (UEI) number; all consultants and subcontractors must have no exclusions in SAM
- 5) Statement that the consultant is not debarred or suspended from contracting with the federal government
- 6) CTAA does not anticipate bids from teams of more than one consulting firm or entity. However, if any of the individuals being proposed are not employees of the firm submitting this bid, an acceptable bid must include a letter or other signed statement from the submitter’s proposed partner(s) agreeing to be included in this bid, and the bid must include items (3) through (5) from the above list for every proposed subcontractor or other external partner that is included in this bid. If the bidder has roles for which some portion of the staffing is “to be determined,” the above staffing plan must include a convincing explanation for how the bidder will address that staffing need without jeopardizing timely and satisfactory completion of the work being proposed. All subcontractors must also have no exclusions in SAM.

- 7) Three work samples that highlight consultants’ ability to perform the work outlined above, preferably that are similar in type or topic to that described in this RFQ. The samples should reflect the work of the individuals in the staffing plan so that CTAA can directly gauge consultants’ work quality.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Participation

If more than 50 percent of the staff-hours proposed to be spent by employees of a certified DBE, that bid will receive additional consideration, as detailed under “Selection Criteria,” below.

Selection Criteria and Process

CTAA staff will review the submitted bids that are received at or prior to 11:59pm (Eastern Time) on February 6, 2024. Staff will not engage in any communication with the bidder or their employees or proposed partners prior to making its decision.

In reviewing consultants’ submissions to this RFQ, CTAA will apply the following selection criteria:

Understanding of work to be done	5 points 1 = Does not meet expectations 3 = Meets expectations 5 = Far outperforms expectations
How the consultant proposes to carry out the described work to CTAA’s satisfaction within the indicated time frame and within the consultant’s proposed budget.	5 points
Proposed staffing plan, in terms of its reasonableness and in terms of the skills and qualifications of proposed staff.	5 points
Work samples, in terms of topic coverage, types of documents, and quality of the writing to explain whatever topics are discussed.	5 points
Cost, exclusive of travel	2 points Scored relative to other bids

DBE status: if at least 50% of the staff-hours proposed on this project will be performed by employees of an entity that is a certified DBE in one or more states where it currently does business, the bid will receive 1 additional point	0 or 1 points
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Bidders should be aware that this is part of a research project funded through a cooperative agreement between CTAA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and they must be experienced and able to carry out work that must comply with applicable FTA regulations, policies and guidelines. Bidders without prior experience working with FTA or its grantees will need to be sure their submissions demonstrate a capacity to carry out FTA-funded work.

The selected bidder and subcontractors may not have exclusions when searched in SAM.gov and must remain in good standing.

CTAA reserves the right to request additional information before making an award. CTAA also reserves the right to seek clarification from any bidder or offeror about any statement in its bid that CTAA finds ambiguous.

Selection will be made based on best value.

Submission Instructions

Please submit your bid as a single document, in PDF format, to carpenter@ctaa.org no later than 11:59pm Eastern Time on February 6, 2024. No hard copy submissions will be accepted.

CTAA reserves the right to reject any and all bids in response to this RFQ, and may terminate this solicitation without notice at any time prior to entering into a contract for the indicated work to be performed.