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Transit projects offer opportunities for public sector

Premium content from Dallas Business Journal by Mary Scott Nabers

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As long as cities have traffic congestion, a need to move people and serious funding shortages, there will be an abundance of contracting opportunities with public transit agencies. In Texas, bus routes and rail lines are expanding and diversifying services. Timing could not be better for firms offering transportation solutions to approach public officials.

VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA) in San Antonio and the Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority (CapMetro) in Austin are both currently working on developing bus rapid transit (BRT) lines, which reduce travel time through the use of sleeker, modern buses, fewer stops and traffic signal technology. Other transportation districts, such as Dallas Area Rapid Transit, are working to implement circulator streetcar systems in downtown areas and business districts.

Many transportation projects are currently under way. Examples include:

DART

- DART's proposed South Oak Cliff Corridor Blue Line Extension would add approximately three miles from Ledbetter Station to the University of North Texas-Dallas campus and add two stations. The project's total cost is estimated at about \$240 million.
- DART is moving forward with plans to create an urban streetcar circulator rail system in the central business district.

VIA

- VIA Primo, the San Antonio region's first BRT line, is slated to begin services in late 2012 along the Fredericksburg Corridor.
- VIA is also developing the region's first multimodal transit center. Phase I of the Westside Multimodal Transit Center will renovate the existing depot and add on-street

bus amenities. Phase II will create a new transit facility on adjacent properties to accommodate access to regular bus service, BRT, intercity bus service, taxis, Amtrak and the proposed Lone Star Rail commuter line between Austin and San Antonio.

CapMetro

- CapMetro plans to develop two BRT lines with service planned for 2014.
- CapMetro has a proposed project to add 16.5 miles of urban rail service including the University of Texas, the State Capitol and downtown areas.

Metro (Houston)

- Metro is expected to expand the Magnolia Transit Center as well as construct a new transit center at Burnett Plaza.
- METRO has plans to extend rail service along the U.S. 90A/Southwest Rail Corridor, which would connect Houston to Missouri City. The preliminary project cost estimate ranges from \$200 million to \$250 million.

Upcoming opportunities

- DART will soon seek a contractor to develop, implement, support, operate and maintain a secure, end-to-end mobile-phone ticketing system to support the requirements of DART's comprehensive fare payment system strategy and initiatives. Solicitation documents are expected within the next month or two.
- DART has an upcoming contracting opportunity for construction of the Dallas Urban Circulator Streetcar System. The system will operate on 0.65 mile of existing streets in the Dallas central business district.
- VIA has an immediate opportunity for a contract to provide bus patron waiting shelters. The selected contractor will be responsible for setup and installation, including an optional solar lighting system.
- CapMetro will select a contractor to provide services related to the Positive Train Control (PTC) project. The plan is to provide system controls for shared passenger and freight rail tracks. PTC systems integrate command and control, communications and information systems for controlling train movements. This project is estimated to cost \$33 million.
- CapMetro has an upcoming contracting opportunity for the construction of MetroRapid Route 1, which is the first of two planned BRT lines. MetroRapid will feature limited stops, unique stations with shelters, lighting, real-time bus arrival information and buses equipped with signal priority technology. Route 1 is currently in the design phase with a solicitation for construction services planned for this spring. Both routes are currently scheduled to start service in 2014.
- Metro is planning to design and construct two new Park and Ride facilities: Clear Lake/El Dorado and State Highway 288/Brazoria County. Both facilities will feature parking spaces, bus bays and passenger amenities. Requests for qualifications will be advertised in the near future. Both facilities are anticipated to be operational in 2013.

Contracting opportunities surrounding these projects will be diverse and numerous.

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