



New Jersey Department of Transportation  
Bureau of Research  
**RESEARCH PROJECT**  
Request for Proposal  
2023-2025 SPR Program

**Project Title: Identifying Travel Needs for South Jersey and Shore Customers**  
**Posting No.: 2023-02**  
**Date of RFP Announcement: 06/01/2023**  
**Closing Date: 07/11/2023**

**NOTE: Due to P.L. 2019, c. 196, the New Jersey Department of Transportation cannot award research grants to PRIVATE and/or OUT OF STATE institutes of higher education.**

Proposals must be prepared in accordance with NJDOT's *Supplemental and Proposals guidelines*. Please visit <https://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/research/guidelines.shtml> for the most current version.

All proposals must also have a corresponding online PreAward Risk Assessment form completed and submitted by the Principal Investigator (PIs) prior to the RFP closing date and time. This online form can be found at:

[https://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/research/risk\\_assessment\\_forms.shtml](https://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/research/risk_assessment_forms.shtml)

## **1 - RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

The goal of this study is to better understand south Jersey and Jersey shore weekday and weekend travel both in the summer and off-season to identify transit gaps and opportunities for bus customers and help grow ridership. The study will include a literature review and interviews with key staff at other transit agencies throughout the country that also serve similar markets to learn about best practices and lessons learned about this market. The research will cover operations and scheduling techniques, marketing campaigns, customer experience enhancements, and other techniques that helped grow ridership for this type of market.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

Weekday and weekend summer and off-season travel or origin-destination surveys will be conducted on 14 NJ Transit bus routes serving this area (including routes 317, 319, 468, 501, 502, 504, 505, 507, 508, 509, 510, 552, 553, and 559) to learn about current travel patterns and unmet travel needs. The study will also look at the travel needs of employees of casinos, hotels, and other shore employers through focus groups with employees and/or interviews with large employers of regular and seasonal employees in the south Jersey and Jersey shore areas.

**Task 1: Focus Groups or Interviews with South Jersey/Jersey Shore Employees and large Employers** – Conduct focus groups with shore area employees and a separate group with large employers in the shore area to learn more about their use of NJ TRANSIT buses and any travel challenges they may experience. A discussion guide or interview guide will be developed for each of the focus groups. We recommend that the employer focus group be conducted at the beginning of the project to gain insights on employer needs and any gaps or deficiencies in transit service both for their employees and for visitors or customers to their businesses. The employer focus



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group findings may also inform some of the questions that could be included in the survey beyond the standard travel or origin-destination survey questions. The employee survey should be conducted after the bus surveys are completed. Based on findings from the bus surveys a discussion guide for the employee survey should be developed to get a deeper understanding of the survey result to better meet the needs of employees using transit to get to work. The bus survey could also be used to recruit focus group participants. NJ TRANSIT will work with the selected consultant team to identify locations in the study area to hold the focus groups. NJ TRANSIT will also cover the cost for focus group honorariums and food for the focus group participants.

**Task 2: Design Survey Questionnaire** – Work with NJ TRANSIT to identify the survey questions for the weekday and weekend summer and off-peak (spring or fall) surveys utilizing information learned from the focus groups/interview. The survey questions will include standard travel or origin destination questions along with targeted questions related to the focus group findings. Once the questions are finalized, design Business Reply Mail (BRM) paper survey that meets all the US Postal requirements and program an online version of the survey. The survey should include an incentive of a monthly bus pass or a \$100 gift card which will be provided by NJ TRANSIT.

**Task 3: Survey Preparation** – Hire and train surveyors, prepare assignment sheets, and to print and organize surveys for distribution to surveyors.

**Task 4: Conduct Onboard Bus Rider Survey** – Schedule and conduct onboard surveys to collect rider data during summer and off-peak weekdays and weekends.

**Task 5: Data Entry, Cleaning, and Weighting** – Enter the data from the paper surveys collected onboard by surveyors and received by mail into an electronic format, scan surveys and assignment sheets, clean the entered data by comparing with scanned surveys, and work with NJ TRANSIT to develop a weighting methodology to weight the data using ridership data provided by NJ TRANSIT.

**Task 6: Data Analysis** – Analyze survey data to determine rider characteristics, trip characteristics, demographics, etc. Prepare tables and cross tabulations of the data. Also develop infographic route profiles for each bus route for the four survey periods – summer weekday, summer weekend, off-peak weekday, off-peak weekend.

**Task 7: Draft and Final Report** – Prepare a draft and final report summarizing the findings of the focus groups/interviews and the survey and identifying recommendations to enhance and encourage transit usage. The report should include key charts and graphics depicting the results.

**Task 8: Project Management and Quarterly Reporting** – Management of the project, including monitoring of progress and budget as well as preparing and presenting quarterly progress to NJDOT.



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### **1.3 Type of Contract**

It is proposed that if the Issuing Office enters into a contract because of this Request for Proposal (RFP), it will be a **Cost Reimbursement, Deliverable-Based** contract containing the Standard Contract Terms and Conditions.

### **2 - BUDGET and CONTRACT TIME**

The **TOTAL** project budget shall not exceed **\$ 350,000 US Dollars**. Budgets will be evaluated separately, and only after a selection has been made as to which proposal is the most qualified based on technical merit.

The PI must provide the anticipated research study duration based on the proposed tasks. Consideration should be given to potential impediments so that adjustments are incorporated into the schedule minimizing the need for time extensions. Contract time shall include sufficient time for the procurement of subcontractors, as well as no less than three months for Final Report review and acceptance. Please be advised that going forward, new task orders having permissible justification will be allowed no more than a one-time extension with the advent of 2 CFR 200.

**A 24 month total project duration is preferred.**

Please provide a Gantt Chart schedule, by month number (e.g., 1-24), showing tasks start/end, and deliverables. List corresponding deliverables below the chart.

### **3 - Oral Presentations**

Oral online presentations may be requested as part of this RFP. If required, you will be notified by the Bureau of Research to schedule your oral presentation. They will be held at NJDOT headquarters in Trenton, NJ, attended by the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP), and be limited to no more than an hour, including time for questions and answers.

### **4 – Deadline**

Proposals (no hard copies required) are due at the NJDOT Bureau of Research no later than **4:00 p.m. on July 11, 2023**. Electronic proposal documents (preferred pdf) shall be emailed to [DOT-Research.Proposals@dot.nj.gov](mailto:DOT-Research.Proposals@dot.nj.gov) with the subject: **RFP-2023-02 University – PI's name**.

**Approximate Start Date: 09/29/2023**. The official start date is the date that the Bureau of Research obtains a signature from the Assistant Commissioner.

### **5 – CONTACTS**

Interested parties shall send all questions related to this RFP to the Research Bureau Manager by sending an e-mail to [Amanda.Gendek@dot.nj.gov](mailto:Amanda.Gendek@dot.nj.gov) or by phone (609-963-2242). Questions on this



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topic **shall not** be directed to any Research Project Manager, Research Customer, or any other NJDOT person. All questions must be received **on or before 06/11/2023 in order to be answered.**

**PROPOSAL DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS:**

**Electronic proposal documents (preferred pdf) shall be emailed to [DOT-Research.Proposals@dot.nj.gov](mailto:DOT-Research.Proposals@dot.nj.gov) with the subject: RFP-2023-02 University – PI's name.**  
A confirmation of receipt will be sent via email.