



Notice of Funding Availability

****NEW DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 6TH**

Passenger Rail Station and Surrounding Area Planning and Construction

The mission of the Southern Rail Commission (SRC) – a Congressionally established tri-state rail compact with Commissioners appointed by the governors of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama – is to promote the safe, reliable and efficient movement of people and goods to enhance economic development along rail corridors; provide transportation choices; and facilitate emergency evacuation routes.

The SRC is soliciting applications from communities within Louisiana along the proposed Baton Rouge to New Orleans passenger rail corridor that are planning for passenger rail service and have identified needs and improvements to stations and station areas that will ensure safe access and better connectivity to and from the station, improve conveniences for riders, develop new facilities, and leverage the economic opportunity that comes with station redevelopment.

The SRC has developed an alliance of local elected officials, business leaders, and civic leaders across the Gulf States that support enhanced service where it exists today and return of passenger service along the Gulf Coast. The SRC is working with their federal delegation, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), host railroads, and Amtrak in pursuing available federal funding to achieve these goals.

The cities throughout the SRC member states of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana are planning for their own intermodal and transit connections with enhanced and re-established service, and are preparing their communities to better leverage the economic opportunity presented by enhanced rail stations and service.

This grant opportunity will allow communities to effectively plan for strategic investments in existing and proposed station assets

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and surrounding area development that can improve ridership potential and expand the region's economic well being.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Through congressionally directed funding, the SRC has access up to \$1 million for improvements to the Baton Rouge to New Orleans corridor in Louisiana. The SRC is seeking applications from municipalities, metropolitan planning organizations, transit authorities, redevelopment authorities, counties, tribes, and other governmental entities that intend to improve or construct rail station facilities, and plan for station area development that supports the passenger rail service. Eligible projects include station and station area planning, design and construction, and multimodal station connections, including upgrades for disabled riders.

The rail station or planned station area must be on the federally designated HSR corridor. Station or station area planning or construction projects are both qualified uses. A 50 percent minimum match is required and must be available for obligation at the time of grant application. In-kind match will be eligible, although greater consideration will be given to applications with cash match. No federal funds can be used as matching revenue.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The SRC will review all applications with a project review committee, and share its recommendations with the Federal Railroad Administration for approval. The SRC plans to announce the award late summer or early fall 2016. The SRC would work with the award recipient to complete the necessary federal processes to receive the funding. Projects receiving awards are expected to be completed with 12-18 months of receiving the award.

The SRC will evaluate applications based on the criteria listed below. Following an initial review, SRC may contact applicants and request additional details.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Applicant must be a governmental entity in Louisiana (i.e., municipal, metropolitan planning organization, transit authority,

county, tribe, redevelopment authority, downtown development district, etc).

2. Applicant project must be located on the federally designated Gulf Coast HSR corridor and on the Baton Rouge to New Orleans proposed passenger rail corridor.

3. Applicant must identify a planner/project manager to oversee and lead the project. Applicants must specify the roles of other project consultants or staff who will work on this project.

4. Applicant must demonstrate previous experience in administering and complying with federal grant funding requirements. Demonstrative examples include but are not limited to: record of financial stability, staff or consultant support dedicated to project, property or ROW secured, etc.

5. Application must describe a specific, clearly defined project. Applicants must describe the scope of the project; timeline for construction or project completion; describe how it relates to passenger rail service on the HSR corridor; partnerships in place to help make the project succeed; and past efforts that will be built upon in proposed project. If this is a proposed planning effort, applicant must demonstrate how planning will lead to a feasible project.

6. Elected officials must demonstrate their support for this effort and their commitment to its success. This should be established through the inclusion of a letter of support from the highest elected official in the community, as well names of other elected officials - city council members, parish commissioners, parish council, etc - who support the application.

7. Applicant must detail sources of matching funds (cash and in-kind) that will be contributed towards the project. Also describe any previous public or private investment in station improvements or construction in the past 3 years.

8. Applicant must demonstrate project or plan's relevance and connectivity to the comprehensive vision for the applicant's jurisdiction.

Application Limit

Eligible applicants may only submit one application for this program.

Project and Grant Size

There is no minimum or maximum expected project cost or grant size. The Southern Rail Commission will select awards based on the evaluation criteria. Final awards will be approved by the FRA.

Timeline and Important Dates

Deadline for submission: FRIDAY, July 8th at 5:00 PM CDT

Award Notification: Early fall 2016

Submitting the Application

To be considered complete and eligible for review, all applications must include a summary cover page, project description, and a letter of support from the community's highest elected official. All parts of the application must be submitted and emailed together as one PDF file. The following format is required:

Cover page (no longer than one page)

The cover page should include the project title, contact information for the project manager, an abstract of the project, and source of match funding for the project.

Project description (no longer than 5 pages)

The grant application must describe the project clearly and specifically, must use no smaller than 10-point type, must be double spaced, and should have page margins all around of at least one inch. In reviewing the project description, reviewers will not consider any pages over the 5-page limit.

The narrative must:

- Provide a concise overview of the project, including how it ties into the larger mission for the SRC.
- The narrative must also address how the application meets each of the criteria listed above.
- The description must detail resources (e.g., staff time, consultant, cost-sharing, etc.) that the applicant will contribute to the project.
- If other project partners or funding sources are involved, their role and contribution must be clearly defined.

- Other site photos or maps may be added as additional pages to the application and should be incorporated within the pdf document.

Letter of support from elected official

Applicants must include a letter of support from the highest elected official for the government entity making the request (e.g., mayor, parish president, etc.). Also include a list of other stakeholders who support the project (letters from these supporters are not required).

Applications must be submitted via email by 5:00 PM CDT, on WEDNESDAY, July 6.

Please email a pdf of application to info@cpex.org.

For more information, go to www.southernrailcommission.org