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FY11 Request for Preliminary Proposals (RFPP) Submission Deadline: Monday, September 20, 2010

The University Transportation Center for Mobility (UTCM) invites researchers from the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) and academic groups to submit Preliminary Proposals as the first step in the approval process for projects to be awarded in FY11.

UTCM Background

UTCM was designated as one of up to 60 University Transportation Centers nationwide by the passage of SAFETEA-LU in August, 2005. As such, UTCM is part of The University Transportation Centers Program (UTCP), which is administered by the Research and Innovative Technology Administration within USDOT. The mission of the UTCP is "To advance U.S. technology and expertise in the many disciplines comprising transportation through the mechanisms of education, research, and technology transfer at university-based centers of excellence." More information on the UTCP can be found at <http://utc.dot.gov/>. The UTCM operates under a UTCP grant of \$1.5 million/year for 4 years and is currently operating under an extension for a fifth year.

UTCM Theme

The theme of the UTCM is "Improving the Quality of Life by Enhancing Mobility." Preliminary Proposals should present ways to accomplish this objective through projects or programs in research, education and technology transfer.

Research Projects

Research projects shall encompass one or more of the Center's four Research Focus Areas:

- Coast-to-coast, border-to-border mobility
- Rural public transportation
- Congestion management and mitigation
- Innovative financing

Coast-to-coast, border-to-border mobility. This Research Focus Area is intended to address all modes and the linkages between them from a regional and national viewpoint. A breakdown in the transportation system in one area of the country may affect the entire system and the country as a whole. The ability to analyze and mitigate this type of situation, and identify "chokepoints" and how they affect the nationwide transportation system, would be greatly beneficial. UTCM seeks to develop a national model to predict the impact of such a failure and to aid in analyzing proposed mitigation measures, and welcomes other research that would positively impact this area.

Rural public transportation. This Research Focus Area represents an opportunity for UTCM to make a difference in the quality of life for rural people. Research topics could include better routing methods, the use of technology in rural transit systems, safety issues, and more. In Texas and contiguous states, many areas of opportunity exist for such studies, including the Colonias (a series of economically disadvantaged small communities along the Texas/Mexico Rio Grande border), the Mississippi Delta, and the Four Corners area of the American Southwest, among others.

Congestion management and mitigation. UTCM seeks to expand TTI's current efforts in congestion management and mitigation, provide support for expanding the estimates of benefits from mobility improvement programs and projects, and set the stage for a major, long-term research initiative in this area.

Innovative financing. The transportation infrastructure system continues to be adversely impacted from the double-edged sword of ever-increasing vehicle miles traveled combined with decreasing resources available for both new construction and the improvement of existing facilities. Alternative sources of funding for transportation improvements and new construction should be considered. In addition, Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) have the potential to generate revenue that can be used to support other infrastructure needs, such as transit systems. UTCM encourages proposals for projects that would result in a better understanding of the policy implications and implementation issues involved with innovative financing options.

All research projects sponsored by UTCM shall have significant student involvement and a technology transfer component, which may include plans for publication.

Education Projects

UTCM's education activities are intended to increase the quantity and, more importantly, the quality of graduates prepared to enter the professional transportation workforce. Some of the activities UTCM will support include:

Course Development. Awards may be made to develop new transportation courses to enrich student curricula as well as for professional development. A course should be proposed by faculty and/or professional staff and should have the support (evidenced by a letter of recommendation) of the appropriate department or professional group that would likely host the course for implementation. It is expected that academic course materials will be developed for replication in transportation programs at other universities. A professional development course should include appropriate plans and support for implementation.

Program Development. UTCM will support awards for the development of new transportation programs. These could be within a department or interdisciplinary in nature. The grant would support the activities necessary for the development and approval of a new degree or program, including curriculum development and support for those shepherding the proposal through the process. The development of other types of education activities, such as short courses, outreach programs, or curriculum analysis and enhancement may also be supported. A program should be proposed by faculty and/or professional staff and should have the support (evidenced by a letter of recommendation) of the appropriate department or professional group who would likely host the program.

More information on UTCM Education goals and programs may be found on the UTCM web site under "Education" (<http://utcm.tamu.edu/education/index.stm>).

Technology Transfer (T2) Projects

Some of the T2 activities that will be considered for UTCM sponsorship include local, state and/or national conferences; professional development activities, including short courses, webinars, and online education; outreach programs for K-12 and higher education; diversity initiatives; informational web sites; and activities that enhance communications and opportunities for collaboration between transportation-related programs at TAMU.

More information on UTCM T2 goals and programs may be found on the UTCM web site under “Technology Transfer” (http://utcm.tamu.edu/technology_transfer/index.stm).

Selection Process

Preliminary Proposals (PPs) will be used to determine which projects will be invited to submit a Formal Proposal. After the PP submission deadline, the [UTCM Executive Committee](#) and [Advisory Board](#) will rank PPs based on their relevance to the center’s theme and objectives, merit and overall quality of the submittals. After results are compiled, the Executive Committee will select which PIs to invite to submit Formal Proposals, taking into consideration:

- rankings
- UTCM program balance
- support for existing and new faculty and staff
- timeliness of topic
- potential for seeding long-term initiatives
- potential for sustainable long-term impact
- potential for leveraged funding
- collaborative efforts
- other considerations
- PI’s records of quality and timeliness of deliverables/reports


With respect to the last criterion, UTCM recognizes that on-time, quality project deliverables and reports are intrinsic to the success and reputation of DOT’s UTC program. Accordingly, in the project evaluation and selection process, funding may be denied to prospective PIs with a record of overdue or poor quality deliverables or reports. PIs with overdue final technical reports on existing UTCM projects may be ineligible for additional UTCM funding until outstanding deliverables are received and approved by the UTCM office.

Helpful Hints

- UTCM seeks to provide lasting partnerships between TTI and the academic community. Therefore, proposals that provide opportunities for collaboration between TTI and the academic community are strongly encouraged.
- UTCM seeks to foster collaboration between academic departments and programs on the Texas A&M campus with an interest in transportation issues. Therefore, proposals that create partnerships between different departments and programs are strongly encouraged.


- UTCM encourages researchers to seek opportunities for leveraging funds. While matching is not required by the terms of the UTCM grant, proposals that leverage additional funding sources, especially those with long-term potential, are strongly encouraged.
- UTCM seeks to have a lasting impact on transportation. Accordingly, projects with deliverables that will continue to provide benefits beyond the life of the grant are strongly encouraged.
- If the Preliminary Proposal is for a research project, a clear link to one or more of UTCM's [Research Focus Areas](#) should be demonstrated in the proposal.
- All research projects sponsored by UTCM must have meaningful student involvement.
- All research projects sponsored by UTCM must have a technology transfer component.
- Review all materials, especially FAQs and instructions, prior to submission.
- The UTCM strongly encourages anyone interested in submitting a Preliminary Proposal to attend the September 1st Mobility Colloquium (or view the streaming video afterwards) entitled "[Secrets to Success: How to Compete for UTCM Funding](#)".

Preliminary Proposal Form

 [Word](#), 117K (revised 08.04.10)


Click the link above to access a Microsoft Word (.doc format) file of the Preliminary Proposal form for research, education, and technology transfer projects. **Preliminary Proposals are limited to two pages.** Proposals exceeding two pages will not be considered. Note: UTCM can accept up to **two** Preliminary Proposals from one PI. Beyond that, you can participate in other Preliminary Proposals as long as you are not the PI (co-PI or other participant is ok).

Optional Budget Worksheet

 [Excel](#), 238K (revised 08.03.10)

While not required for Preliminary Proposals, we encourage use of this budget form to help you accurately define your budget needs at the Preliminary Proposal stage. Help with completing the form is available from TTI Research Development Office ([RDO](#)). (If your unit is not listed in the [TTI RDO Division Representative Directory](#), your contact is Susan Adams.) Do NOT submit this form with your Preliminary Proposal. If your project is selected for a Formal Proposal, you will submit it with the Formal Proposal.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

 [PDF](#), 168K (revised 08.04.10)

Click on the link above to access FAQs for preparing Preliminary Proposals. All FAQs should be reviewed prior to submitting a Preliminary Proposal.