

Contents

1.0 – Project Overview -----	
2.0 – Background -----	
3.0 – Scope of Services -----	
4.0 – Requirements -----	
4.1 Service Days, Hours and Schedule -----	
4.2 Routes -----	
4.3 Vehicles -----	
4.4 Staffing -----	
4.5 Safety and Compliance -----	
4.6 Contract Duration and Fleet Growth -----	
4.7 Technology Integration -----	
4.8 Insurance -----	
5.0 – Deliverables -----	
5.1 Mandatory Deliverables -----	
5.2 Preferred Deliverables -----	
6.0 – RFP Schedule -----	
6.1 Proposal Requirements -----	
6.2 Submission Details -----	
6.3 Questions & Clarifications -----	
6.4 Additional Information -----	
6.5 Scoring -----	
6.6 Postponement, Amendment & Withdrawal -----	
7.0 – Evaluation Procedure & Criteria -----	
8.0 – Contractual Rights & Statutory Provisions -----	
8.1 – Postponement, Amendment & Withdrawal -----	
8.2 – Data Practices Act -----	
8.3 – Organizational Conflict of Interest -----	
8.4 – SWT’s Rights -----	

1.0 Project Overview

SouthWest Transit (SWT) seeks proposals from qualified charter bus service providers to provide buses and drivers during the 2026, 2027, and 2028 Minnesota State Fairs.

2.0 Background

SWT serves the southwest Twin Cities suburbs and is committed to serving the needs of our customers through diverse and innovative transit solutions that build our community and connect our customers from where they are to where they want to go.

- **Our Vision:** SouthWest Transit is the leading provider of innovative transit solutions that improve livability and enhance economic opportunity in the communities we serve.
- **Our Mission:** We provide a premium experience for the southwest Twin Cities through safe, reliable and cost-effective transit that builds community and connects our customers from where they are to where they want to go.

3.0 Scope of Services

To provide SWT with eight vehicles and enough drivers to support the service levels specified in 4.1 to transport community and staff members between four park and ride locations to the Minnesota State Fair Grounds.

4.0 Requirements

4.1 Service Days, Hours, and Schedule

- **Vehicle In-Service Days:** Vehicle and Driver services are required for all 12 days of the 2026, 2027, and 2028 Minnesota State Fairs (2026 is scheduled for August 27-September 7)
- **Driver Training Days:** Buses and drivers will need to be onsite for training two days prior to the start of the fairs. (see 4.4) For 2026, this is August 25-26
- **Service/Revenue Hours:** Approximately 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM daily for 12 days
- **Platform Hours:** Approximately 15 hours/day/vehicle for a total 1440 platform hours
- **Schedule:** Buses will operate on a schedule as directed by the SWT Transit Operations team and executed through the SWT Dispatch team

4.2 Routes

- Express service to the Minnesota State Fair Transit Hub will originate from one or more park & ride stations located in Carver, Chaska, Chanhassen, and Eden Prairie. Routing may vary between inbound and outbound trips and will be determined by the SWT Transit Operations and Dispatch Teams. Detailed routing information will be provided upon contract award.
 - Carver Station, 1607 Hartwell Drive, Carver, MN 55315
 - East Creek Transit Station, 2120 N Chestnut St, Chaska, MN 55318
 - SouthWest Village, 650 SW Village Dr, Chanhassen, MN 55317
 - SouthWest Station, 13500 Technology Dr., Eden Prairie, MN 55344
 - Minnesota State Fair Transit Hub, 1370 Randall Ave, Falcon Heights, MN 55108

4.3 Vehicles

- A minimum of eight buses per day, each with a capacity of at least 50 seated passengers - or equivalent service levels
- Vehicles must have working air-conditioning, and be clean and reliable

4.4 Staffing

4.4.1 Drivers

To qualify as a driver for SWT service, all drivers provided must have the following prior to being eligible for SWT training and service:

- Possess and maintain a CDL with passenger endorsement (Commercial Driver's License) for the applicable vehicle types provided
- Possess a valid Medical Examiner's Certification
- Be trained on ADA protocol and able to provide documentation of training
- Be trained on all ADA lifts for all vehicles provided - a demonstration may be required by each operator
- Receive and pass FTA Pre-employment Testing, Drug Tests, and Background Checks

SWT provided training:

- SWT customer experience training
- Route training including unassisted trial runs to ensure route understanding

4.4.2 Company Point of Contact

- A staff person to coordinate drivers and manage Incident Reports, Vehicles, and Staff

4.5 Safety & Compliance

- Adherence to all DOT/FTA and state transportation regulations including random drug and alcohol testing and a post-accident drug and alcohol testing program
- Required insurance coverage for all vehicles provided
- Established emergency protocols and first-aid kits onboard all vehicles
- Provide SWT with Certificate of Insurance

4.6 Contract Duration and Fleet Growth

- The selected vendor will be awarded a three (3) year contract, for the 2026, 2027, and 2028 Minnesota State Fair service. SWT is projecting ridership growth of 7% year over year for this service, vendors must demonstrate in their proposals the ability to scale vehicle availability and operations accordingly.

4.7 Technology Integration

- SWT may require the integration, testing, and operational use of its proprietary technology platform as part of the service delivery. Vendors who submit proposals must collaborate with SWT's IT team to ensure compatibility and functionality prior to contract award (see 6.0 RFP Schedule). Questions regarding technology requirements may be submitted according to the 6.0 RFP Schedule.

4.8 Insurance - The selected Contractor, at its expense, shall be required to procure and maintain in force for the duration of any agreement the following minimum insurance coverages:

- A. General Liability. The Contractor shall maintain Commercial General Liability Insurance in a minimum amount of \$5,000,000 per occurrence; \$5,000,000 annual aggregate. The policy shall cover liability arising from premises, operations, products-completed operations, personal injury, advertising injury, and contractually assumed liability. The City, including its elected and appointed officials, employees, and agents, shall be endorsed as additional insured.
- B. Automobile Liability. The Contractor shall maintain Business Automobile Liability Insurance, including owned, hired, and non-owned automobiles, with a minimum combined single liability limit of \$5,000,000 per occurrence. The City, including its elected and appointed officials, employees, and agents, shall be endorsed as additional insured.

- C. Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability. The Contractor shall maintain Workers' Compensation insurance for all its employees in accordance with the statutory requirements of the State of Minnesota. The Contractor shall also carry Employers' Liability Coverage with minimum limits as follows:
- \$500,000 – Bodily Injury by Disease per employee
 - \$500,000 – Bodily Injury by Disease aggregate
 - \$500,000 – Bodily Injury by Accident
- D. Additional Insurance Conditions.
1. The Contractor shall, prior to commencing any service, deliver to SouthWest Transit a Certificate of Insurance as evidence that the above coverages are in full force and effect.
 2. The insurance requirements may be met through any combination of primary and umbrella/excess insurance. SouthWest Transit City must be named as an additional insured on any umbrella/excess policy in addition to the general liability and auto liability policies.
 3. The Contractor's policies shall be primary insurance and non-contributory to any other valid and collectible insurance available to SouthWest Transit with respect to any claim arising out of the Contractor's performance.
 4. The Contractor's policies and Certificate of Insurance shall contain a provision that coverage afforded under the policies shall not be cancelled without at least thirty (30) days' advanced written notice to SouthWest Transit, or ten (10) days' written notice for non-payment of premium.

5.0 Deliverables

5.1 Mandatory Deliverables Upon Execution of Service

- Pre-trip Inspection: Performed by drivers prior to each trip, following all DOT /FTA guidelines. All pre-trip inspection reports are documented, available upon request, and filed in accordance with accepted DOT/FTA guidelines.
- Post-trip Inspection: Performed by drivers after the completion of each trip, following all DOT/FTA guidelines. All post-trip inspection reports are documented, available upon request, and filed in accordance with accepted DOT/FTA guidelines.
- Drivers may be required to count ridership manually
- Drivers will be required to fill out Incident Reports as needed
- Drivers will be required to work directly with SWT dispatch via handheld radio
- Vehicles must have lighted stairwells when the door is open for passenger safety
- Final feedback summary for improvement
- SWT exterior branded decals (or other) that are non-damaging

5.2 Preferred Deliverables Upon Execution of Service

- Camera system record interior and exterior - video must be available to SWT. If camera systems cannot be provided, SWT may need to temporarily install
- SWT may need to temporarily install tech if not already installed on provided vehicles

6.0 RFP Schedule

- RFP Advertisement: November 25, 2025
- Deadline for questions or request for clarifications: December 5, 2025
- Response to Questions Released: December 12, 2025
- Proposal Due Date: Received by January 5, 2026 (late submissions will not be considered)
- SWT/Vendor Meetings for Clarification if needed: January 5-16, 2026
- Submitted to SWT Commission for Approval: Commission is expected to award the contract in January or February 2026
- Notice of Award: Within one week of Commission decision

6.1 Proposal Requirements

Proposals must remain valid for at least **60 days** after the deadline for submission

6.2 Submission Details

Interested vendors must submit a complete proposal that includes the following:

- Company Profile including years in business, relevant experience, and key personnel
- Fleet details including vehicle types, capacities, ADA compliance, and maintenance schedules
- Staffing Plan including driver qualifications, training programs, and availability
- Service Approach outlining how vendor will meet the service level expectations
- Pricing Proposal on a per platform hour cost basis for each year
- Experience and References from at least three clients with similar service scope

Proposals may be submitted electronically in PDF format to:

Email Address: TransitRFP@swtransit.org

Subject Line: Transit RFP

6.3 Questions & Clarifications

- Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to TransitRFP@swtransit.org according to 6.0 RFP Schedule

6.4 Additional Information

- SouthWest Transit reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, and accept the proposal deemed most advantageous
- All costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals are the responsibility of the vendor

6.5 Scoring

- Proposals will be evaluated using a weighted scoring system based on business overview, references, scope of work, cost, and overall quality. (see 7.0 Evaluation Procedure and Criteria)

6.6 Postponement, Amendment and Withdrawal

- SWT may modify the RFP Schedule (6.0) and may revise or amend the RFP at any time up to the deadline for submitting proposals. Such changes, revisions, and amendments, if any, shall be published on SWT's website and by written addenda to any vendor who submitted a proposal. Applicants are requested to contact SWT if, upon review, material errors are found. Errors must be pointed out before the deadline for submitting proposals to allow time for review and subsequent clarifications by SWT.

7.0 Evaluation Procedure and Criteria

SWT will conduct an evaluation of responses to this Solicitation.

Table 1 - Scoring Grid

Area	Possible Points	Weighting	Weighted Points
Company Profile	5	10	50
Vehicles & Staffing Plan	5	15	75
Pricing Proposal	5	30	150
Experience & References	5	10	50
Total Possible Points			325

Each proposal will be evaluated using the matrix outlined below. Reviewers will assign a score for each criterion.

Score	Quality Indicator	Description
5	Exceeding Expectations	The response is specific and comprehensive. There is complete, detailed, and clearly articulated information as to how the criteria are met. The ideas presented are innovative, well-conceived, and thoroughly developed.
4	Highly Meeting Expectations	The response is reasonably comprehensive and includes sufficient detail. It contains many characteristics of a very good response, though it may require additional specificity, support, or elaboration in certain areas.
3	Moderately Meeting Expectations	The response is non-specific, and lacks focus and detail. It addresses some of the selection criteria but not all. Some ideas presented are sound, but others do not fully align with the RFP's purpose. Additional information is needed for a comprehensive response.
2	Somewhat Meeting Expectations	The response does not meet many criteria; it provides inaccurate information or requires substantial clarification on how the criteria are met. It lacks meaningful detail, demonstrates inadequate preparation, or raises concerns about the applicant's understanding and ability to meet the requirements.
0-1	Not Meeting Expectations	The response does not address the criteria or merely restates the criteria without providing substantive information.

8.0 Contractual Rights and Statutory Provisions

8.1 Postponement, Amendment and Withdrawal

SWT may postpone the deadline for submitting proposals and the opening of proposals and may revise or amend the RFP at any time up to the deadline for submitting proposals. Such changes, revisions, and amendments, if any, shall be announced to each prospective applicant by written addenda to this RFP. Applicants are requested to contact SWT if, upon review, material errors are found. Errors must be pointed out before the deadline for submitting proposals to allow time for review and subsequent clarifications by SWT. In any case, the deadline for submitting proposals shall be at least seven (7) calendar days after the last addendum, and any addendum shall include an announcement, if applicable, of the new deadline for submitting proposals.

8.2 Data Practices Act

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act provides that the names of proposers are public on the date and time that proposals are due. With the exception of trade secret information as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 13.37, all other information submitted by a proposer in response to this RFP becomes public at the times specified in the act and is then available to any person upon request. Trade secret information is defined in section 13.37 as data, including a formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique, or process, (1) that was supplied by the proposer; (2) that is the subject of efforts by the proposer that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy; and (3) that derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use. Any information in its response to this RFP for which the proposer claims protection as trade secret information in accordance with the above provisions must be limited and set apart in the RFP response on separate pages, with a heading that identifies the information as trade secret information. SWT will make the ultimate determination whether the information meets the applicable definition. Any information submitted in response to this RFP which does not meet the legal definition will be considered public information, regardless of the proposer's identification of it as trade secret information. Proposers are advised that blanket-type identification by designating whole pages or sections as containing trade secret information will not assure protection. The specific information for which the proposer claims trade secret protection must be clearly identified. Submitted proposals shall not be copyrighted. A statement by the proposer that submitted information is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the information contained in the RFP response.

8.3 Organizational Conflict of Interest

An "organizational conflict of interest" exists when, because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons, a proposer is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to SWT, or the proposer's objectivity in performing the services is or might be otherwise impaired, or the proposer has an unfair competitive advantage. By submitting a proposal, each proposer warrants that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, and except as otherwise disclosed, there are no relevant facts or circumstances that could give rise to an organizational conflict of interest on this project with respect to the proposer. A selected proposer shall have continuing obligations to disclose to SWT organizational conflicts of interest which may be later discovered.

8.4 SWT's Rights

SWT reserves the rights to cancel this RFP, to accept or reject any or all proposals, to accept any proposal (not only the lowest-cost proposal or the highest-scoring proposal), to waive any or all informalities or irregularities in any proposals received, to investigate the qualifications and experience of any proposer, to conduct interviews with any proposer, to reject any provisions in any proposal, to negotiate the requested services and contract terms with any proposer, and to proceed to do the work by means other than as contemplated in this RFP.