



Request for Proposals

Multi-Modal Downtown Transit Hub Study

Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design | Public Works Department

Item	Detail
RFP issued	[Jan. 4, 2027]
Proposals due	[Feb. 5, 2027], 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Funding	\$500,000 U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Rural and Tribal Assistance (RTA) Pilot Program grant, award number 69A6212650036
Selection method	Qualifications-based selection; fee negotiated with the top-ranked firm [confirm with Purchasing]
Project site	City-owned parking lots behind Main Street, between Kellogg Avenue and Clark Avenue, Downtown Ames
Consultant work	Notice to proceed May 2027; final report May 2029
City contact	[Project manager name, title], Public Works Department

1. Introduction

The City of Ames invites qualified consulting firms and teams to submit proposals for a feasibility study and conceptual design of a Multi-Modal Downtown Transit Hub. The hub would combine a transit center, a parking structure, and a visitor welcome center in Downtown Ames. Firms may propose alone or as a team with subconsultants.

A U.S. Department of Transportation grant funds this study. The selected consultant must meet the federal requirements in Section 9 and Attachment C.

2. Background

Downtown Ames is an active business, civic, and cultural district. Redevelopment is planned in Downtown and along the Lincoln Way Corridor to the south. CyRide, the local transit system, carried nearly 5 million passengers in fiscal year 2025, but service in Downtown is lower than in other busy parts of the city.

In 2019, the City completed a Downtown Parking Study. It found that parking near the proposed site is close to 100 percent full at midday. Recent plans support better access and parking in Downtown, including the Downtown Ames Guiding Vision (2025), the Lincoln Way Corridor Plan, the Ames Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2024).

Proposed facility

The City's grant application describes these elements. The study will test each one and recommend what to carry forward:

- A mobility hub and transit center with covered rider connections, ticketing, and transit information
- A multi-level parking structure (the application estimated 500 spaces; the needs evaluation will set the size)
- A welcome center for Downtown visitors with wayfinding and public restrooms
- A pedestrian bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad to The Linc, a redevelopment on the Lincoln Way Corridor
- An extension of Tom Evans Plaza and a pedestrian-friendly Clark Avenue frontage
- Bicycle parking and repair stations

How the study is organized

The study has two parallel paths that both start from a shared needs evaluation.

- **Needs evaluation:** How large should the parking structure be? This considers current and future demand and the parking the project would remove. The needs evaluations will consider the current and 20-year parking demand. The grant application estimated 500 spaces, but the study will set the final size. The evaluation would look at parking usage and turnover in parking stalls to understand utilization rates. The needs evaluation will consider times when Iowa State University is in session. The evaluation will also consider how people reach Downtown by transit, walking and biking, so that the structure supports safe access to the area.

- **Path 1 – Conceptual design:** A design that the public and City Council can react to, with enough technical study to confirm nothing prevents the project from moving forward. This would include sizing a parking structure based off the needs evaluation and public input, including tying into the existing area surrounding Tom Evans Plaza, a potential railroad pedestrian bridge crossing to the Linc development, safe pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle and transit circulation, multimodal integration, and minor design alternatives. This would be a high level conceptual design and is intended to provide illustrative solutions to the needs evaluation.

Additionally the conceptual design would include enough technical study to confirm to identify impediments to the project from moving forward. This covers geotechnical work, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, and coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad.

Included in this path would be time for public input on the conceptual design. Additionally staff would seek input directly from adjacent businesses and property owners. Following the public input, the results would be reported back to the City Council for their input and further direction before finalizing the conceptual design.

- **Path 2 – Rates and finances:** How the Downtown parking system would pay for the structure and for ongoing surface-lot costs. The parking rates would be evaluated on costs to maintain the system over the long term, including directing funding that would cover future resurfacing and reconstruction. There would be several rate options developed and presented depending upon how future replacement of surface lots and future maintenance of the parking structure would be financed. The proposed parking rates would include the necessary funding to construct and operate and maintain the parking ramp.

Rates will be presented that will be intended to shift users into the structure. This would also free surface lots and curb space to improve transit, pedestrian and bicycle access. The rates evaluation will also look at other options such as paid parking later into the evening hours and time of use variable rates that can fluctuation based upon demand. The intent is to provide flexibility in the design of rates to best fit the needs of the City.

Proposed parking rates would be included in the public input during review of the conceptual design. Staff would again engage adjacent businesses and property owners. Following the public input, the results would be reported back to the City Council along side the input from the conceptual design.

The 2019 study is available at [\[link\]](#). Firms are encouraged to review it and City Council discussion of this project at [\[link\]](#).

3. Project Goals

- Set the right size and program for the parking structure and transit hub.
- Produce a conceptual design the community and City Council can respond to, supported by geotechnical and environmental findings.
- Recommend Downtown parking rates that are clear, fair, and financially sustainable, with and without the structure.
- Involve Downtown businesses, Ames Main Street organization, CyRide, and the public at the needs and design stages.
- Provide a cost estimate, funding strategy, and implementation plan to position the project for future capital funding, such as BUILD and TIFIA.

4. Scope of Services

The tasks below are the City's minimum expectations. Firms may recommend changes based on best practice and their knowledge of Downtown Ames. The final scope will be set during negotiation. Task and subtask numbers match the City's grant Project Management Plan. The consultant will report progress and invoice by task.

Task 1 – Project Management

- 1.1 Monthly progress meetings with City staff, monthly progress reports, and invoices organized by task that meet the documentation rules in Section 9.
- Keep the schedule, budget, and risk register current, and provide information for the City's quarterly and annual reports to DOT.

Task 2 – Data Collection and Existing Conditions

- 2.1 Kickoff meeting and data request.
- 2.2 Inventory of on-street and off-street parking in the Downtown study area (public lots and private lots over five stalls), including rates, time limits, and rules.
- 2.3 Occupancy counts on two weekdays and one Saturday, at three times of day, plus a turnover and length-of-stay survey. Counts must take place while Iowa State University is in session (target: September–October 2027). Avoid home football Saturdays and fall break, or count them as separate event days.

- 2.4 Existing Conditions Memorandum with block-level maps and tables, compared with 2019 results.

Task 3 – Needs Evaluation and Structure Sizing

- 3.1 Count the stalls the project would remove from the site.
- 3.2 Parking demand model for today and 20 years out, using known and planned development.
- 3.3 Recommended structure size and facility program: parking, transit center and bus bays, welcome center and restrooms, bicycle parking, electric vehicle readiness, and accessibility. Deliverable: Needs Evaluation Memorandum.
- 3.5 Engage with the Public in an online survey asking questions how they interact with the parking system downtown, their needs and experiences, and ask probing questions such as, how far are you willing to walk for parking, how can multimodal priorities improve your use of the downtown area, etc. The evaluation would also target adjacent business and property owners to gather their input on the downtown parking system and needs that their customers experience.
- 3.6 Present the needs evaluation to City Council (Checkpoint #1).

Task 4 – Site Alternatives and Conceptual Design

- 4.1 Up to three layout alternatives on the City-owned site, with an evaluation matrix.
- 4.2 Conceptual design of the preferred layout: site plan, number of levels and spaces, transit center, welcome center and restrooms, vehicle access and circulation, building mass, and renderings.
- 4.3 Concept for the pedestrian bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad to The Linc.
- 4.4 Refine the concept based on public feedback and City Council direction.

Task 5 – Technical Due Diligence

- 5.1 Coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad on right-of-way, clearances, and the pedestrian bridge.
- 5.2 Property, title, easement, and utility research.
- 5.3 Geotechnical borings, lab testing, and a preliminary foundation report.
- 5.4 Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) following ASTM E1527-21.

Task 6 – Transit and Multimodal Integration

- 6.1 With CyRide staff, evaluate bus circulation, bus bays, layover, and route effects.
- 6.2 Extension of Tom Evans Plaza and the Clark Avenue frontage.
- 6.3 Bicycle parking and repair stations, pedestrian connections, and wayfinding. Deliverable: Multimodal Integration Memorandum.

Task 7 – Parking Rate and System Financial Analysis

- 7.1 No-build baseline: review five years of parking revenue, expenses, and citation data, and recommend rate changes without the structure.
- 7.2 Rate scenarios for the whole Downtown parking system (Campustown is not included) with the structure: pricing that moves parkers into the structure, paid hours later into the evening, and time-of-use rates.
- 7.3 Surface-lot capital program: the long-term cost to resurface and replace City lots.
- 7.4 Two fee options: (a) one that covers all operating and maintenance costs, and (b) one that also funds structure and surface-lot capital costs. Provide plain-language examples of what parkers would pay.
- 7.5 Update the rates after public feedback. Deliverables: Financial Analysis Memorandum and a working Excel model the City can maintain, with one training session.

Task 8 – Capital Cost, Funding, and Implementation Strategy

- 8.1 Conceptual cost estimate for construction and long-term operation.
- 8.2 Funding and financing strategy, including BUILD, TIFIA, and other programs, with eligibility shown by facility element.
- 8.3 Phasing and implementation plan, including environmental review, design, and procurement steps.

Task 9 – Public and Stakeholder Engagement

- 9.1 Provide content for the City's project webpage and update it at each milestone.
- 9.2 Engage the public, adjacent property owners, businesses, and stakeholders groups at least twice with a survey. Once during the needs evaluation and once during presentation of the conceptual design and fee option.
- 9.3 Work with the Ames Main Street organization to form a Downtown stakeholder group and hold meetings at four key point: kickoff, needs

evaluation, design and fees, and draft final report. Include progress meetings at least quarterly during the time of the study.

- 9.4 Prepare open house and survey materials for 2 public open houses. One during needs evaluation and one that shows the conceptual design and fee options together.
- 9.5 Run an online survey for about four weeks while Iowa State University is in session. Offer paper copies on request.
- 9.6 Hold two public open houses at an accessible location alongside City staff (needs assessment and conceptual design/fee structure).
- 9.7 Engagement summary and a comment-response table showing how input shaped the recommendations.

Task 10 – City Council Checkpoints and Final Report

- 10.1 Present public feedback on the design and fees to City Council (Checkpoint #2).
- 10.2 Draft final report.
- 10.3 Respond to one combined round of City and DOT comments.
- 10.4 Present the final report to City Council (Checkpoint #3) and deliver the final report.

Requirements for all deliverables

- **Accessibility.** Documents and web content intended for the public must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA and Section 508. This includes built-in heading styles, alternative text for images, tables with header rows, readable color contrast, and tagged PDFs. Do not use color alone to show meaning in charts or maps.
- **Plain language.** Public materials should be written at a 6th to 8th grade reading level. Spell out acronyms on first use.
- **City brand.** Public materials must follow the City of Ames Visual Brand Standards. The City will provide logos and templates.
- **Accessible engagement.** Meetings must be held in accessible locations. Materials must be available in alternative formats and, as needed, other languages on request.
- **Native files.** Deliver editable files (Word, Excel, CAD, GIS) along with accessible PDFs.

Information the City will provide

- 2019 Downtown Parking Study and data
- GIS data, aerial photos, and available survey and utility records

- Parking fund financial statements, meter and permit data, and citation data
- Development pipeline and zoning information
- CyRide route, ridership, and operations data (through CyRide)
- Meeting space for City-hosted meetings, and public notices

5. Project Schedule

Proposals should include a schedule that meets these key dates. City Council dates are targets.

Milestone	Target date
Notice to proceed	May 3, 2027
Parking counts complete	Oct. 29, 2027
Existing Conditions Memorandum	Nov. 30, 2027
City Council Checkpoint #1: needs evaluation	Feb. 22, 2028
Geotechnical report and Phase I ESA complete	June 30, 2028
Open house and online survey	Sept. 18 – Oct. 13, 2028
City Council Checkpoint #2: design and fees	Nov. 14, 2028
Draft final report	Feb. 28, 2029
City Council Checkpoint #3: final report	Apr. 24, 2029
Final report delivered	May 2029

6. Project Budget

The City has \$500,000 in federal grant funds for all services under this contract, including subconsultants and expenses. The fee will be negotiated with the top-ranked firm as a not-to-exceed amount, invoiced by task. Do not include fee information in your proposal **[confirm with Purchasing]**.

7. Proposal Contents

Proposals may not exceed 20 single-sided pages. The cover letter, resumes, and required federal forms do not count toward the limit. Submit an accessible PDF with selectable text and bookmarks. Organize your proposal as follows:

- **Cover letter** signed by an authorized officer, naming the project manager and main contact.
- **Project understanding and approach**, including suggested changes to the scope, how the two paths will be coordinated, and how fee information will be presented to the public.
- **Relevant experience**: at least three similar projects completed in the last 10 years, such as parking structure feasibility or conceptual design, transit centers, and parking rate or financial studies, with client contacts.
- **Team and key personnel**: organization chart, role and availability of each key person, and subconsultants. Key personnel may not change without City and DOT approval.
- **Engagement approach** for stakeholders, the public, and City Council, including how materials will be made accessible.
- **Schedule** showing tasks, meetings, deliverables, and review periods.
- **References**: three client references.
- **Required federal forms** in Attachment C.

8. Evaluation and Selection

A City evaluation team [and a CyRide representative] will score proposals using the criteria below. Price is not scored. The City may interview the top-ranked firms. The City will then negotiate scope and fee with the top-ranked firm. If an agreement cannot be reached, the City will end negotiations and move to the next-ranked firm.

Criterion	Weight
Project understanding and approach	35%
Relevant experience of the firm and team	25%
Team structure and key personnel	20%
Engagement approach	10%
Schedule, responsiveness, and capacity to perform	5%
References	5%
Total	100%

DOT will review the negotiated contract, and the Ames City Council must approve it before it is signed.

9. Federal Requirements

Because federal funds pay for this contract, the consultant must meet the following requirements. They will be part of the contract (see Attachment C).

- 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Guidance) as adopted by DOT at 2 CFR Part 1201, including the contract provisions in Appendix II to Part 200.
- Equal employment opportunity, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and DOT nondiscrimination rules (49 CFR Part 21).
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, including accessible public materials and meetings.
- Debarment and suspension certification (2 CFR Parts 180 and 1200). The firm and subconsultants must not be excluded in SAM.gov.
- Byrd Anti-Lobbying certification and disclosure (31 U.S.C. 1352; 49 CFR Part 20) for contracts over \$100,000.
- Ban on certain telecommunications and video surveillance equipment (2 CFR 200.216).
- Records kept and open to DOT, the Comptroller General, and the City for at least three years after grant closeout.
- Invoices by task showing dates of service, staff, hours, rates, itemized expenses, and a signed statement that costs were incurred for this project.
- Credit to DOT funding on public materials. Draft work may be shared with DOT before public release.
- Firms are encouraged to use small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses as subconsultants (2 CFR 200.321). [Confirm any DBE goal or reporting requirement with DOT.]

10. How to Submit

Step	Date
RFP issued	[Jan. 4, 2027]
Optional pre-proposal meeting (virtual, with captions)	[Jan. 12, 2027]
Written questions due	[Jan. 19, 2027]
Answers posted as an addendum	[Jan. 26, 2027]
Proposals due, 5:00 p.m. Central Time	[Feb. 5, 2027]
Interviews (if held)	[Week of Mar. 1, 2027]

Step	Date
City Council contract approval (after DOT review)	[Apr. 27, 2027]

Email one PDF proposal to [project manager email] with the subject line “Proposal – Multi-Modal Downtown Transit Hub Study.” Send all questions in writing to the same address. Answers will be shared with every firm that registers interest. Late proposals will not be accepted.

The City may reject any or all proposals, waive minor irregularities, and negotiate the final scope of services. The City is not responsible for costs of preparing proposals.

Attachments

- Attachment A – Study area map [insert, with a text description]
- Attachment B – Project site map [insert, with a text description]
- Attachment C – Federal contract provisions and required certifications [Purchasing to insert]
- Attachment D – City standard professional services agreement [insert]

Accessibility and Alternative Formats

This document is available in alternative formats on request. To request an accommodation or another format, contact the Public Works Department at 515.239.5160 or visit www.CityOfAmes.org.