

Ruta N and Toyota Mobility Foundation Launch Call for Proposals to Develop Solutions That Improve Inclusive Mobility in Medellín

- A cohort of solutions will be selected to ensure safer, more autonomous, and more accessible travel for all.
- The initiative prioritizes the Manrique and Aranjuez communes, where the largest number of residents with reduced mobility are concentrated.
- The solutions will aim to address trip planning, independent and safe access to public transport, and communication between users and the public transportation system.
- The period for submitting innovative solutions is formally open starting today, November 6, and will run until December 1. Interested parties may review the terms of reference and apply at rutanmedellin.org.

In Medellín, where more than 55% of the city's roads have slopes greater than 6%, getting around can be a challenge, especially for people with reduced mobility. With the goal of making public transportation more accessible for everyone, the Ruta N Corporation and the Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF), a global non-profit organization established by the Toyota Group to promote inclusive and sustainable mobility, have joined forces to drive solutions that enable all individuals to access public transport independently and reliably. The initiative will initially focus on districts 3 (Manrique) and 4 (Aranjuez), which have the highest percentage of residents with physical disabilities in Medellín.

"At Ruta N, we are building the STI+e District with the citizen at the center and technology at their service. Innovation in Medellín is lived in the streets, in the neighborhoods, and in every story that reflects our collective ability to reinvent ourselves. The smartest cities in the world don't happen by chance. They are built with vision, data, and purpose. In Medellín, technology does not replace the human: it enhances it. That is why we are pursuing a government model centered on citizen experience," said Carolina Londoño Peláez, Executive Director of Ruta N.

The first challenge focuses on ensuring safe and inclusive "first and last mile" journeys, addressing the safety of pedestrians and individuals using mobility aids such as wheelchairs, canes, or walkers from their homes to the bus stop. Proposed solutions should contribute to making these routes safer and more accessible, reducing risks and eliminating physical and environmental barriers that hinder daily mobility, especially in steep areas.

The second challenge seeks to improve access to public transport, promoting solutions that provide users with real-time information about buses, and functionality of lifting platforms or

other accessibility devices. The objective is to make travel planning easier and offer a safer, more reliable experience for users who depend on these assistive mechanisms. Solutions are expected to focus on developing or integrating technological systems that facilitate communication between users, drivers, and transportation authorities, ensuring the availability and proper functioning of accessibility equipment.

"Toyota Mobility Foundation aims to create innovative solutions for mobility challenges, recognizing movement as a fundamental human right and key to personal choice," said Lorielyn Mills, Program Director at Toyota Mobility Foundation.

Considering that more than 70,000 people in Medellín live with reduced mobility, of which about 20% are adults of working age, and nearly 25% are elderly adults, according to the 2023 Registry for the Location and Characterization of Persons with Disabilities (RLCPD).

The third challenge seeks to foster solutions that enable people with mobility limitations or other disabilities to enter, travel on, and exit buses quickly, safely, and confidently. Sought solutions would focus on redesigning vehicle interiors, optimizing space, improving the arrangement of support elements, and developing mechanisms that facilitate safe movement within the bus.

"It's an honor to be working alongside local stakeholders here in Medellín to help close gaps in accessible transportation for a more equitable mobility ecosystem," said Trey Ingram, Program Manager at Toyota Mobility Foundation.

Teams, organizations, and entrepreneurs capable of implementing their projects in Medellín are invited to participate if they have validated solutions, prototypes, or ideas aimed at improving inclusive mobility in public transportation through design, engineering, digital innovation, and user empowerment – addressing one or more of the challenges.

The call for proposals will remain open until December 1, 2025. During this period, interested applicants can submit their proposals via the website rutanmedellin.org, by completing a form detailing their solution, development stage, expected impact, and other relevant information.

The selection process, with a total funding pool of more than 1 billion Colombian pesos, will take place in two stages. In the first stage, Ruta N and TMF will review all submissions and select the solutions with the greatest potential for impact, technical feasibility, and innovation to participate in the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) phase. In this phase, participants will receive technical support and financial resources to strengthen their solutions and test them in real environments within the Manrique and Aranjuez districts.

Following this testing phase, the most promising solutions will advance to the scaling and validation stage, where they will also receive resources and support to verify the effectiveness, sustainability, and potential for replication of the selected solutions.

“The Medellín Mobility for All initiative is a premier example of the continuous improvement central to Toyota’s philosophy. We believe that promoting mobility and innovation in a city that inspires the world is also a way to continue building, together, a more prosperous, sustainable, and connected future for all Colombians.” said Hiroshi Yonenaga, President of Automotores Toyota Colombia.

About Toyota Mobility Foundation

[Toyota Mobility Foundation](#) (Chair Akio Toyoda) was established in August 2014 by Toyota Motor Corporation (Toyota) to support the development of a more mobile society in which everyone can move freely. The Foundation underscores Toyota’s ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and respect for people. It utilizes Toyota’s expertise and technologies to support strong mobility systems while eliminating disparities in mobility. TMF works in partnership with universities, governments, non-profits, research institutions and other organizations, creating programs that are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address mobility issues around the world.

“TMF aims to create a truly mobile society that will help people live better lives no matter where they are,” said Chair, Akio Toyoda.

About Ruta N

One of Ruta N’s strategic goals is to make Medellín a smarter, more agile, and centered on the citizen experience. Therefore, having a district that learns, anticipates, and responds to improve people’s lives is one of the Corporation’s top priorities. This alliance sets a precedent for building a smarter district, one where citizens’ needs and priorities are at the heart of urban regeneration.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Toyota Mobility Foundation

Alison Powell

Communications Manager

alison.powell@toyota.com

Ruta N

Alejandra Restrepo Buitrago

Profesional Marca y Comunicaciones

alejandra.restrepo@rutanmedellin.org

www.rutanmedellin.org