

Introduction

Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Planning, Engineering and Environmental Services, as appropriate, for the topic areas described below.

The NRPC seeks to select qualified and innovative contractors to provide a range of services to the NRPC for a two-year period. The NRPC may extend one or more of the contracts for up to two additional one-year periods. Contract extensions will be based on contractor performance for the prior contract periods and availability of funds for projects under a specific topic area. The program will commence in July 2021 and extend through June 30, 2023, with possible extensions to June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

The NRPC will be selecting qualified contractors for each of the topic areas listed below. Individual contractors may propose for one, or more than one, topic area. The NRPC will select prime contractors only and is not looking for contractor teams through this RFQ. However, once contractors are on the NRPC list and are selected for large and multi-disciplinary projects, they may assemble project-specific teams. If project teams are formed for a specific project, then the prime contractor will submit a list and an overview of qualifications for the proposed sub-contractors together with their scope of work and cost proposal. Approval of sub-contractors by the NRPC is required unless they are already on the NRPC contractor list.

Projects funded through this program will be funded with a mix of state, federal, local and private funds. All requirements associated with those funds will be followed.

Topic areas included in this request for qualifications are:

Project Development (Scoping) Projects & Technical Assistance Studies

Projects under this topic area include Roadway, Intersection, Bicycle/Pedestrian and Bridge facilities. These projects are generally selected because municipalities or previous planning studies have identified issues and there is a desire to develop specific solutions. Most studies in this topic area follow the procedures outlined in the VTrans Project Development Manual (updated in 2017).

Specific responsibilities for each project are anticipated to include evaluating Existing and Future Conditions; preparing the draft Purpose and Need Statement in coordination with the local municipality, other stakeholders, NRPC, and VTrans (for state facilities); coordinating and facilitating local concerns meetings and alternatives presentation meetings; conducting alternatives analyses including resource impact assessment; and preparing conceptual plans and scoping reports. In addition, public outreach should be done in accordance with the NRPC's Title VI Plan and the VTrans Project Development Manual which requires extensive early

coordination with the public, resource agencies and VTrans (for state facilities) in an effort to obtain early consensus on the project.

Technical Assistance studies could include but are not limited to development of transportation impact fees and ordinances, development of official maps, capital improvement planning, and other transportation issues.

Transportation Planning/Corridor/Area Wide Studies

Corridor studies are expected to generally follow the VTrans' Corridor Management Planning Process to the extent possible. Specific responsibilities may include analyzing Existing and Future transportation and land use conditions; developing the vision and goals for the corridor in close collaboration with the community and other stakeholders; identifying and analyzing potential short-, medium- and long-term multimodal strategies to meet the vision and goals; coordinating and leveraging asset management investments in the corridor; and developing a corridor Implementation Plan. The consultants should demonstrate the ability to lead complex projects as well as working with stakeholder groups and facilitating a robust public involvement process.

Circulation and area wide studies address specific transportation issues in the study area such as safety, mobility, accessibility, and connectivity. These studies evaluate current and future conditions and develop multimodal strategies to address these issues.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Studies

Projects under this topic area identify existing needs of bicyclists and/or pedestrians within a defined area by taking into consideration existing conditions, future utilization potential and safety issues; identify, prioritize and assess possible facility improvements; facilitate a public involvement process to ensure local input and support of improvement recommendations; draft a report identifying issues, discuss and illustrate proposed recommended improvements and discuss the overall feasibility of the project.

Water Quality Project Assessment, Concept Plans, Design, and Construction Management

Projects in this topic area may include data assessment, conceptual plans, cost estimates, final designs, and/or construction project management for water quality improvements as identified in road erosion inventories, river corridor plans, hazard mitigation plans, stormwater master plans, flow restoration plans, pollution control plans, or related efforts to evaluate, design, and build water quality improvement projects.

Energy/Climate

This is primarily work related to local and regional implementation of the strategies in local and regional energy plans, Vermont's comprehensive energy plan and Vermont's Climate Action

Plan (due December, 2021). Projects in this topic area may include greenhouse gas inventories, forecasting and target setting; energy analysis; energy and climate action plans; resilience plans; planning for the electrification of the fleet; promotion of electric vehicles; and public/stakeholder engagement on these issues.

Public Transportation Studies

Projects in this topic area may include technical assistance for transit planning, on-demand/microtransit feasibility studies, emerging mobility service analysis, rural transit feasibility studies, existing and/or future transit ridership analysis, the development of regional transit funding models, planning studies related to transportation for elders and persons with disabilities, or related topics.

Village Master Plan, Marketing Plans and Recreation Plans

Projects in this area include developing village and downtown marketing plans, master plans and revitalization plans. This area also includes projects that build local recreation and tourism connections with existing trails and paths in the region. The plans will include high quality renderings, schematics and/or illustrations. The plans will include economic and land use evaluations and will contain actionable steps for communities to implement the local vision. Extensive community engagement will be a key component of this work.

SOQ Format

All contractors are required to prepare a Statement of Qualifications (SOQs) and a Cost Proposal as part of this submission. To be considered responsive to this RFQ, each proposal must conform to the following requirements. The contractor shall:

- › Submit an electronic copy of the SOQ via email in pdf format. The SOQ shall not exceed 30 pages, not including resumes.
 - › Submit an electronic copy of the Cost Proposal as a separate email attachment as a pdf.
 - › Submit an electronic copy of the Contractor Financial Background Questionnaire (see Attachment 1) as a separate attachment as a pdf.
1. Clearly indicate in the email that the response is for Planning, Engineering and Environmental Services and indicate the topic area(s) the contractor wishes to be considered for. The email should identify the Name and address of the prime consultant.

Submissions must be sent to Marlena Valenta (mvalenta@nrpcvt.com) by 4:00 p.m., June 25, 2021

A confirmation email will be sent of receipt of the proposal. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Questions regarding this RFQ should be directed to Marlena Valenta atmvalenta@nrpcvt.com. NRPC will maintain a list of questions and answers linked to the NRPC RFP website (<https://www.nrpcvt.com/rfp-rfq>). Questions will be accepted until June 17th to ensure all parties have adequate time to review the answers.

Statement of Qualifications Requirements

The statement of qualifications should clearly indicate the topic area(s) the contractor is proposing for and, for each of these areas, demonstrate that the contractor understands the topic area, the character of the deliverables, the services required for their delivery, and the specific tasks that must be performed.

NRPC is committed to furthering our understanding of the significant historical role land use policies and transportation investments have had in systemic racism and inequity and making sure that future public policy (including transportation, land use, energy planning, etc.) and capital investments encourage equity and provide increased opportunities and improved conditions for Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and low-income residents. Successful contractors must be committed to working effectively with diverse community populations and expected to strengthen such capacity if selected.

The SOQ should include the following:

1. Cover Letter
2. Provide a brief introduction to the firm along with an overview of the contractor's understanding of the nature of the work and general approach to be taken.
3. Introduction to the Contractor. Proposers should provide the following information relative to their firm:
 - a) Firm name and business address, including telephone number and email contact.
 - b) Year established. Include former firm names and year established, if applicable. Identify the state in which the firm was organized or incorporated.
 - c) Type of ownership, and name and location of parent company and subsidiaries, if any.
 - d) Indication of whether the contractor is licensed to do business in the State of Vermont. Contractors are not required to be licensed to respond to this RFQ, but they will be required to obtain the license prior to being awarded this contract.
 - e) Number of full-time employees. Part-time employees routinely engaged by the respondent may be included if clearly identified as such.
 - f) A description of the contractor's general qualifications, including experience with similar types of contracts.

g) A description of the contractor's commitment to, and experience with addressing, diversity and equity.

4. Qualifications and Experience for Specific Topic Area(s)

In this section contractors should provide a description of their relevant specific skills and services they offer for each of the topic areas they are proposing for.

5. Qualifications of and Experience of Key Staff for Specific Topic Area(s)

For each topic area contractors are proposing for, contractors shall identify key staff that would be assigned to this program and include the function and/or responsibility of each of the identified staff. Summaries of the past experience of these key staff should be provided, with emphasis on previous experience on similar projects. Resumes of the key staff should be included as an appendix. This section should also include a discussion of the contractor's ability to respond to requests in a timely manner.

6. References (provide a minimum of three)

The respondent shall submit names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least three references familiar with the contractor's ability, experience, and reliability in the performance and management of projects of a similar nature.

Cost Proposal Requirements

The Cost Proposal shall include the following:

1. An hourly rate schedule for all job categories that may be utilized under this contract.
2. Overhead rate and fee.

Non-Discrimination and Title VI

The consultant shall affirmatively state that they will comply with the provisions of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and subsequent related acts, and all other federal statutory laws which provide in whole or in part that no person or entity on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, physical disability, or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated under the State, federal and USDOT assisted contracts, programs and activities.

Confidentiality

The successful response/proposal will become part of the contract file and will become a matter of public record, as will all other responses received. In case, a proposer includes any material that is considered to be proprietary and/or confidential under 1 VSA, Chapter 5, the proposer shall clearly designate the material as such, explaining why such material should be considered confidential. Under no circumstances can the entire response or cost proposal be marked confidential. If the Contractor marks portions of the proposal confidential, the Contractor shall provide a redacted version of the proposal for release to the public.

Contractor Selection Procedure

Review of Written Qualifications and Cost Proposals

Qualifications for each topic area will be evaluated separately considering the criteria listed below by a selection committee consisting of members of NRPC staff. A list of qualified contractors under each topic area will be developed based on the following criteria:

- › Responsiveness to the RFQ (10 Points)
- › Demonstration of overall understanding of the work under the proposed topic area(s) (20 Points)
- › Qualifications of the contractor and assigned personnel for specific topic area(s) (30 Points)
- › Proven record of successfully completing similar projects under specific topic area(s) (30 Points)
- › Being a disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE), demonstrated partnerships with DBEs, or experience/commitment to addressing racial equity (10 points)

Once the SOQs are discussed and ranked, the cost proposals will be reviewed. The NRPC reserves the right to seek clarification of any proposal submitted and to select contractors that best promote the public interest. The selection committee will announce final decisions by July 2, 2021.

All proposals become the property of the NRPC upon submission. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the contractor.

The NRPC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this solicitation, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities or to cancel the RFQ in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the NRPC. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates NRPC to award a contract.