



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTANT ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A. INTRODUCTION

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOCG) is seeking a qualified planning consultant to assist the NHCOCG in preparing a comprehensive Regional Transportation Plan. The NHCOCG consists of the Mayors and First Selectmen from the following member towns: Barkhamsted, Burlington, Canaan, Colebrook, Cornwall, Goshen, Hartland, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, Washington and Winchester.

Local officials are interested in preparing a Regional Transportation Plan to:

1. update and expand the previous Regional Transportation Plans prepared for the area;
2. identify and prioritize the regionally significant transportation improvements in the area; and
3. enhance the competitive position of regional towns in applying for funding from state and federal funding sources.

B. OVERVIEW OF WORK TASKS

The scope of work for this project consists of the following major tasks:

1. Develop a detailed work plan for addressing all required sections of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in cooperation with NHCOCG staff. Sections may include 1) Introduction, 2) Land Use, 3) Existing Transportation System in the Northwest Hills, 4) Projected Trends and Impacts, 5) Goals and Objectives, 6) Scenario Development and Assessment, 7) Recommended Plan, 8) Civil Rights – Environmental Justice, and 9) Transportation Funding Sources.
2. Review previous regional transportation plans prepared for the area and other relevant information and incorporate updated data, strategies, and priorities into a “working draft” of the RTP. Over the past year, NHCOCG has prepared GIS maps and collected updated Census and ConnDOT data to inform this RTP update. The selected consultant will pull all this information together, analyze it, and organize it into a working draft.

3. Develop and implement an outreach program to solicit public input on transportation improvement needs and priorities. This shall include outreach on road, bus and rail improvement needs. One specific public outreach task shall include conducting a series of public meetings on the improvement of the Housatonic Railroad for on-going freight and future passenger service.
4. Meet with individual town officials (i.e. Mayor/First Selectman, Road Supervisor) and other interested parties (e.g. transportation providers, social service agencies) to discuss transportation needs, issues, and priorities.
5. Conduct an assessment of local roads eligible for funding under ConnDOT's Rural Collector and LOTCIP funding programs and develop a 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan for the use of the annual funds allocated to the NHCOCG.
6. Develop and implement a scenario planning process to assess alternative transportation futures for the region.
7. Prepare a matrix to identify regional transportation improvement priorities and develop a realistic economic development strategy, and plan of action, which will include specific projects to achieve the region's transportation goals and objectives. Specific transportation recommendations and/or projects shall be identified along with a proposed timeline and potential funding sources.
8. Prepare informative GIS maps and other graphics to enhance the presentation of the RTP.
9. Prepare a draft of the RTP with specific strategies and recommendations and coordinate a public outreach and review process to solicit feedback on the Plan.
10. Finalize the RTP based on feedback received on the draft Plan.

The result of this planning process will be the development of a comprehensive RTP with clearly defined goals, policies, strategies, short-term projects, and long-term projects that will serve to protect, enhance, and maintain the region's transportation infrastructure and services.

C. PRODUCTS

The products resulting from this project will include:

1. a draft RTP addressing the work tasks outlined above, and
2. a final RTP which includes appropriate changes to the draft report based on the comments received.

The report shall conform to any guidelines established by ConnDOT, FHWA, and FTA for a Regional Transportation Plan. The report will be written in an easy-to-read manner with a cover design pre-approved by NHCOCG staff. It is anticipated that the report will include colored maps and graphics to facilitate communication. The report generated will be used to inform local officials and others about the region's transportation improvement needs and priorities, and provide the framework for continued maintenance and enhancement of transportation resources within the Region.

In addition to meeting individually with each of the 21 member towns in the region, the consultant will be required to conduct a minimum of seven public meetings in the

development of the RTP. These shall include an initial meeting with the NHCOC, up to three meetings on the Housatonic Railroad, a meeting with social service providers on existing and desired bus services, a presentation of the draft RTP, and a presentation of the final report. The consultant shall communicate on a regular basis with the NHCOC staff during the course of this project and shall provide draft sections of the consultant's report for review as they become available. The consultant will be expected to provide fifty copies of both a draft and final version of the RTP. Printing costs for the above products are to be included as a consultant expense. The consultant shall also provide an editable CD version, and PDF version, of the final report.

D. PROJECT SCHEDULE AND ADMINISTRATION

The project will be initiated and completed between November 26, 2014 and December 31, 2015 as follows:

1. *November 26, 2014* - Request for Proposals released.
2. *December 19, 2014* - Consultant Proposals Due
3. *January 30, 2015*- Consultant selected
4. *February 15, 2015* - Project begins
5. *October 15, 2015* - Draft RTP submitted
6. *December 15, 2015* - Final RTP submitted

NHCOC staff will manage the study. A Transportation Committee of the NHCOC may be established to review drafts of the study sections and guide consultant activities. The NHCOC shall have the right to reject and revise all parts of the consultant's work during its formulation.

E. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS AND SELECTION OF CONSULTANT

A selection committee comprised of representatives from the NHCOC will review the proposals. The selection committee will likely request interviews with the top ranked firms following the review of the written proposals. The date for the interviews is tentatively scheduled for January 14, 2015. The recommendation of this selection committee will be forwarded to the NHCOC for selection of a consultant. The following criteria will be used in evaluating proposals:

1. Previous experience in the services required and overall qualifications of the firm.
2. Qualifications of key personnel assigned to this study.
3. Responsiveness to study objectives and creative approach for accomplishing objectives.
4. Consultant cost estimate, and associated allocation of personnel resources for completion of the project tasks.
5. Reasonable proximity to the Northwest Hills Region to avoid undue travel costs.

F. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Responses should specify the methodology for preparing the plan, project schedule milestones, consultant cost estimate and allocation of personnel resources for the project

including wage rates and the classification of staff to be assigned, the qualifications of the key personnel to be assigned to this work effort, and the experience and qualifications of the consultant in the services required. Written samples of previous work are requested, and will be returned upon completion of the selection process.

A final work program and fee payment schedule will be negotiated with the top ranked consultant selected for this study. If negotiations are unsuccessful, then the next highest ranked consultant will be selected, etc. The NHCOG reserves the right to reject all responses. The consultant selected for this study will be requested to execute a contract with the NHCOG.

To be considered, consultant proposals must be submitted in electronic form by email to rlynn@northwesthillscog.org or by regular mail to Northwest Hills Council of Governments, 42D North Street, Goshen, CT 06756 and be received by the NHCOG by 4:00 pm on December 19, 2014.

All questions or inquiries about this Request for Proposals must be in writing and addressed to Rick Lynn, NHCOG Executive Director at rlynn@northwesthillscog.org. All responses to questions received will be sent to all consultants that have been sent a copy of this Request for Proposals.

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NHCOG retains the right to reject any submittals, request additional information, or re-issue this RFP.