

Request for Qualifications

Metro-North Railroad New Canaan Branch Noise Pollution Abatement Feasibility Study

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) invites Statements of Qualifications from consultants and/or firms with experience in transportation planning, transportation engineering, traffic engineering and public involvement.

WestCOG will use funding from the Connecticut Department of Transportation for a study to determine a cost-effective approach to implementing noise reduction measures, quiet zone(s) or other methods, along the New Canaan Branch Line of the Metro-North Railroad. The goal of the study is to reduce the environmental impacts for the residents and businesses around the crossings while also improving the safety of all users at the railway-highway grade crossings.

WestCOG will accept complete Statements of Qualifications, by email only, until 4:00 p.m. ET on Friday, April 8, 2022. Statements of Qualifications must be submitted to:

Cricket Carpenter
Office Manager
Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG)
1 Riverside Road
Sandy Hook, CT 06482
ccarpenter@westcog.org

Statements of Qualifications that are incomplete will not be considered.

I. General Instructions and Requirements

Inquiries

Questions regarding this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) should be directed to Cricket Carpenter at the email address noted above, ccarpenter@westcog.org by 11:59 p.m. ET on Monday, March 28, 2022. Questions will be posted on the WestCOG website on Friday, April 1, 2022 by 5:00 p.m. ET. Please note that it is WestCOG's policy to respond only to technical questions that are received no later than one week prior to the deadline to submit statements of qualification in response to the RFQ. Under no circumstances will WestCOG provide interpretive guidance.

Freedom of Information

Respondents are advised that any and all material submitted in response to this RFQ and received by WestCOG shall be subject to the applicable provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information law (Conn. Gen. Stat. 1-200 et seq.).

Signature Requirements

Statements of Qualifications must be signed by a representative of the firm having legal authority to contract on behalf of the firm. *Statements of Qualifications* will be treated as bona fide offers and must remain open for a period of ninety (90) days from the closing date for submissions.

Statements of Qualifications from Consortia, Joint Ventures and Teams

Qualifications statements from consortia, joint ventures or teams will be accepted. In such cases, a lead firm must be identified for contracting purposes. A qualifications statement must be prepared for each member of the consortia, joint venture or team, and each qualifications statement should clearly identify the lead firm.

In selecting a lead firm, consortia, joint ventures and teams should consider the following: (1) the lead firm should have sufficient experience and expertise to perform or supervise all facets of the proposed project; (2) the lead firm will be legally responsible to WestCOG for performance of the total contract, consortium, joint venture or team, and the lead firm must perform at least fifty one (51%) of the total work awarded under any contract issued as a result of this RFQ. Please note that firms that are subsidiaries or affiliates of another may not rely on the experience, expertise or resources of its parent firm to meet these requirements.

Submission of Qualifications Statements

WestCOG will accept complete *Statements of Qualifications* by email until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 8, 2022.

Please see the section entitled, "Required Format" for additional guidance.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Requirement

DBE firms are encouraged to respond to this RFQ. WestCOG will strive to ensure that DBEs have the maximum practicable opportunity to compete for work on this project.

The selected Consultant must meet WestCOG, State, and Federal affirmative action and equal opportunity employment practices. A Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) set-aside is not required.

Equal Employment and Nondiscrimination

All contracts awarded by WestCOG as a result of this RFP are subject to Section 4a-60 of the Connecticut General Statutes, "Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action provisions in contracts

of the state and political sub-divisions other than municipalities.” Contracts also are subject to all other applicable state and federal laws concerning civil rights, nondiscrimination, and equal opportunities for employment.

Insurance Requirements

Successful firms are required to maintain insurance coverage as required by state and federal law.

Addenda and Supplements

If revisions or additions to this RFQ are necessary, a copy of such revisions or additions will be posted online where WestCOG posted this RFQ. It is the responsibility of the consultant to check for revisions or additions to this RFQ.

Rejection Rights

WestCOG reserves the right to reject any and all qualifications statements received in response to this RFQ. WestCOG also reserves the right to cancel this RFQ at any time and to reissue this or a substitute RFQ at a later date.

Multiple Awards

WestCOG reserves the right to issue multiple awards. WestCOG also reserves the right to retain portions of the work described in the attached scope of work for performance by its own staff, or to exclude portions of the work described in the attached scope of work from negotiated consultant agreements.

Cost of Qualifications Statement Preparation

All costs associated with any response to this RFQ, including the development of qualifications statements and participation in the selection process, are the sole responsibility of the respondent firms. WestCOG will not reimburse firms for such costs, nor will any selected firms be permitted to negotiate such costs as part of any contract or agreement with WestCOG.

Interest of Members or Delegates to Congress

No member of or delegate to the Congress of the United States shall be permitted to share or have interest in or benefit from, directly or indirectly, any contract or agreement resulting from this RFQ.

Prohibited Interest

No member, officer, or employee of WestCOG, or member of a local public body having jurisdiction within WestCOG’s service area, during his or her tenure or one year thereafter, shall be permitted to share in, have interest in or benefit from, directly or indirectly, any contract or agreement resulting from this RFQ.

Other

Any firm selected to perform any or all work associated with this RFQ may be required to execute an agreement with WestCOG and meet any conditions on the use of funds imposed by WestCOG, Connecticut Department of Transportation, or United States Department of Transportation. All fees will be negotiated and stated in any agreement.

II. REQUIRED FORMAT

The qualifications statement must contain the following information:

1. Letter of interest.
2. A concise statement identifying the point of contact for the statement of qualification, their contact information (mailing address, email, and phone number), and proposed project manager.
3. General information (such as brochures) on the consultant and any proposed sub-consultants including description of current workloads.
4. Statement summarizing the experience of the consultant and any proposed sub-consultants, including at least five references and summaries of comparable projects (type, scale, and scope) performed within the last five years that demonstrate knowledge and expertise in evaluating traffic congestion and developing mitigation projects.
5. Statement describing the organizational framework for this project, including clear identification of the lead consultant, project manager, and sub-consultants (if any), the roles and responsibilities of each sub-consultant (if any), identification of DBE contractor (if any), and a clear, concise statement disclosing whether or not there are any shared interests among the firm and proposed sub-consultants, e.g. parent-subsidiary, joint ventures, formal affiliations, etc.
6. Narrative that describes the suggested project delivery approach and addresses the goals and objectives stated in the Scope of Work.
7. Resumes of key personnel to be assigned to this project and the percentage of time they will devote to project activities.
8. Proof of Connecticut DBE certification (if applicable), and
9. Current Federal Form SF-330, Part II.

III. SELECTION PROCEDURES

Complete responses to this RFQ that meet all of the listed requirements will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Qualifications of the consultant.
2. Qualifications of sub-consultants (if any).

3. Qualifications of key personnel assigned to this project.
4. Thoroughness, creativity, and clarity of suggested approach.
5. Experience and proven record of success with comparable projects.

A Consultant Selection Team will be convened to evaluate Statements of Qualifications received by the closing date stated in this RFQ. The firms whose proposals receive the highest aggregate ranking will be requested to appear for an interview. WestCOG will notify firms, consortia, joint ventures, and teams selected for interview with the Consultant Selected Team within 60 days of the closing date. The Consultant Selection Team will rank the firms, consortia, joint ventures, and teams according to the criteria identified in this RFQ and submit its recommendations to WestCOG. Selection of any firm, consortium, joint venture or team for this project may be subject to the approval of the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

IV. AWARD

Following selection of the most qualified firm, consortium, joint venture, or team, WestCOG will commence scope and fee negotiations with that firm, consortium, joint venture, or team. The lump sum fee for the project will be based on the scope of work, job titles, certified payroll records, burden, fringe, and overhead (BF&O) rates, and direct costs. If an agreement cannot be reached on scope of work and cost, WestCOG reserves the right to terminate negotiations with that firm, consortium, joint venture or team and commence negotiations with the next most qualified firm, consortium, joint venture or team.

V. RESOURCES

Firms seeking to learn more about WestCOG are encouraged to visit www.westcog.org.

SCOPE OF WORK

Metro-North New Canaan Branch Noise Pollution Abatement Feasibility Study

The Scope of Work outlined below is an estimation of activities required to successfully complete the feasibility study. Any proposals for additions to, modifications of, or exceptions from the Scope of Work shall be clearly stated in the proposal and fully explained in the appropriate section(s), with costs specifically broken out.

Task 1: Preliminary Investigation/Risk Index Update and Review

1. Analyze and update the existing conditions at each of the public and private crossings identified in the Study Area. The information collected should fully update the “USDOT Grade Crossing Inventory Form” for each crossing and any additional applicable information including, but not limited to, pavement width, number of lanes in each direction, nearby driveways, surrounding uses including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, current warning signs and devices, and any current or planned improvements near the crossings. Gather necessary data to provide updated traffic, crash data, pedestrian, school bus and train counts to the appropriate agencies such as the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) Rail Division, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), WestCOG, and the municipalities.
2. Conduct a safety and environmental analysis that includes a noise survey – to address as a source of pollution from an Environmental Justice perspective.
3. Identify, describe and map sensitive receptors – including but not limited to civic facilities (e.g. schools, libraries); senior housing/centers; and medical facilities.
4. Using the updated existing conditions, conduct an initial analysis to determine the existing risk index for each of the crossings, the overall Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI) and the Risk Index with Horns (RIWH) in the proposed quiet zone(s).
5. Identify preliminary issues at each crossing and corresponding potential safety improvements. All recommendations and procedures pursued in this study should adhere to the Final Rule requirements in 49 CFR Part 222.

Deliverables: Draft USDOT Grade Crossing Inventory Forms, Technical Memorandum (for inclusion in Final Report)

Task 2: Coordinate Diagnostic Team Meetings

1. Coordinate and attend the required field diagnostic team meetings with all required agencies such as Metro-North Railroad, CSX Transportation, CTDOT Rail Division, FRA, and the municipalities. Prepare and distribute all meeting agendas and minutes.
2. Prepare all required documents and necessary plans to facilitate the diagnostic meetings.
3. Document any safety improvements required by other agencies.

Deliverables: agendas, minutes, and documents/plans for meetings

Task 3: Define and Analyze Issues/Opportunities

1. Determine the applicability of each safety measure and evaluate any possible alternatives.
2. Develop a policy to guide improvements to private v. public crossings (four private crossings are included).
3. Analyze the crossings respective to Quiet Zone improvements (i.e. measurements of risk, quiet zone safety measures, evaluation of grade crossing improvements).
4. Provide a measurement of Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI) figures for each crossing, based upon implementation of proposed Supplemental Safety Measures (SSMs).
5. Complete required safety analyses, make final recommendations regarding the necessary SSM or Alternative Safety Measures (ASM) and prepare detailed cost estimate including any necessary track circuit modifications, for installation of proposed SSM or ASM at each crossing. Note that not every crossing is expected to require a treatment.
6. Identify any necessary Environmental Review documentation and materials.

Deliverables: QZRI figures, SSM/ASM recommendations and cost estimates, recommended ER documentation

Task 4: Financing Strategies

1. Prepare a cost/benefit analysis for the implementation of recommended noise reduction measures. It should account for the specifics of each measure against projected benefits including, but not limited to improved public health, effect on Environmental Justice populations, effect on property values, and improved safety at grade crossings.
2. Identify and recommend various methods for project delivery and the feasibility of applying innovative tools to finance the recommended improvements, i.e. Tax-Increment Financing, special assessment district, or other methods appropriate for this project.

Deliverables – Financing Strategies Memorandum (to be included in Final Report)

Task 5: Feasibility Study

1. Prepare and present draft study findings to WestCOG and the participating municipalities. The draft study shall document and summarize findings related to implementation of a quiet zone(s) or other methods and railroad safety recommendations in Darien, New Canaan and Stamford. The draft study shall include but not be limited to, risk index computations for each crossing, exhibits and plans detailing proposed SSM for each crossing (concept designs); estimated design and construction costs for all improvements at each crossing; estimated cost of any permits required, and a design/construction schedule for implementation of the recommendations.
2. Make any required modifications to the draft study per appropriate agencies' comments and produce/present a Final Feasibility Study.

Deliverables: Draft and Final Feasibility Study

Task 6: Public Involvement

1. Coordinate and hold a public kickoff meeting with WestCOG and the involved municipalities.
2. Following the initial kickoff meeting, conduct an online or mail in survey of the residents in the at-grade crossings noise shed. Relevant questions to ask include, but are not limited to, their quality of life, experience using the crossings, and demographics.
3. Coordinate and hold meetings with the public and involved public officials in each individual community to request input and discuss issues relevant to the study team, including the outcome of the survey.
4. Invite members of the public, area real estate groups, NRAC members and other key stakeholders.
5. Coordinate and hold a public report out meeting that links the survey findings, team issues analysis, and recommended actions.

Deliverables: Public Meeting Presentation and Materials; Invitations; Online or Mail Survey Template; Post-Survey Summary

Task 7: Preparation for Quiet Zone Establishment (to be pursued at WestCOG's discretion)

1. Report findings and updated US DOT Grade Crossing Inventory Forms to CTDOT and Railroad for an update submission to the FRA database.
2. Draft a Notice of Intent (NOI) and a Notice of Establishment (NOE) to create each new 24-hour Quiet Zone in accordance with FRA guidelines (§222.43) to be submitted by the lead municipality at a later date.
3. If alternate safety measures are proposed, submit the necessary approval requests to the FRA.

Deliverables: Final USDOT Grade Crossing Inventory Forms, NOIs, NOEs, FRA submittals, proposals to operating railroads

Task 8: Project Management

1. The consultant will prepare a project schedule to identify key milestones, meetings, and deliverables.
2. Noise Reduction Advisory Committee:
 - a. **Organization:** The consultant, in conjunction with WestCOG, the City of Stamford, Town of Darien, Town of New Canaan, and CTDOT, will work with the Noise Reduction Advisory Committee (NRAC) to help guide the overall study process. The NRAC will consist of municipal representation, representatives from CTDOT, WestCOG, FRA, Metro-North and other stakeholders as identified.
 - b. **NRAC Meetings:** The consultant will meet with the NRAC at key project milestones to report findings and to seek input. WestCOG will work with the consultant in scheduling project meetings. The consultant will notify attendees, develop presentation and handout materials for each meeting, as appropriate, attend and participate in these meetings and develop and distribute meeting

summaries. It is anticipated that most communication between the consultant and the NRAC will be conducted via email or through virtual meetings.

Feedback from NRAC members on study products or process following, or in between, meetings will be directed to WestCOG for transmittal to the consultant so that responses can be coordinated with WestCOG in an organized fashion. The consultant Project Manager will serve as the study spokesperson at the direction of the WestCOG Project Manager, facilitating the NRAC Meetings.

Deliverables:

1. Agendas, presentation material, handouts, meeting summaries/minutes for NRAC meetings, and project schedule
2. Ongoing meetings: The Consultant will organize and administer meetings sponsored by WestCOG, in concert with the involved municipalities, at WestCOG's direction. Such meetings may include one or more public engagement sessions, meetings with municipal, state officials and railroad industry personnel, and the FRA.