

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Traffic Calming and Complete Streets Best Practices Toolbox

Announcement

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (“WestCOG”) has initiated a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to identify and procure a qualified firm or individual primarily to produce a Toolbox of planning practices for neighborhood streets.

About WestCOG

Founded in 2014, the Western Connecticut Council of Governments is one of nine regional Councils of Governments established pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-124i et seq. WestCOG serves the Western Connecticut Planning Region, the second most populous and fastest growing region in Connecticut, with an estimated population of 610,000. With a location connecting New England to New York, Western Connecticut is an economically dynamic region, with strong cultural, educational, and natural amenities.

WestCOG is governed by a Board consisting of the Chief Elected Officials (Mayors and First Selectmen) of its member communities, comprising three principal cities (Stamford, Norwalk, and Danbury) and fifteen surrounding towns (Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Sherman, Weston, Westport, and Wilton).

Connecticut’s Councils of Governments (COGs), which are now recognized as county equivalents for government purposes, provide a regional framework for cooperation among local governments and between them and state and federal agencies. COGs may “accept or participate in any grant, donation or program available to any political subdivision of the state and may also accept or participate in any grant, donation or program made available to counties by any other governmental or private entity.” COGs may furthermore exercise any power that any political subdivisions of the state (e.g., municipalities and school districts) do¹. Which authorities COGs exercise, and the extent to which they do so, is the decision of their governing boards.

¹ These include but are not limited to: “(1) Engineering; (2) inspectional and planning; (3) economic development; (4) public safety; (5) emergency management; (6) animal control; (7) land use management; (8) tourism promotion; (9) social; (10) health; (11) education; (12) data management; (13) regional sewerage; (14) housing; (15) computerized mapping; (16) household hazardous waste collection; (17) recycling; (18) public facility siting; (19) coordination of master planning; (20) vocational training and development; (21) solid waste disposal; (22) fire protection; (23) regional resource protection; (24) regional impact studies; and (25) transportation.” (CGS §8-31b(b))

WestCOG hosts two federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (Southwestern MPO and Housatonic Valley MPO) that provide transportation planning for the region.

More information on WestCOG is available at <http://westcog.org>.

Project background

In the absence of local design guidelines, many local governments defer to the *Connecticut Highway Design Manual* for the design of local roads, a document principally intended for use on facilities that serve a transportation rather than property-access purpose. This document was last released in 2003, with revisions through 2020.

To address the need for design guidelines appropriate to neighborhood contexts, in 1983 the Connecticut General Assembly directed the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) to “develop guidelines for the design and construction of roads and streets in residential subdivisions” (Public Act 83-10). This document, *Guidelines for Subdivision Streets*, was released in 1987, with no updates since then.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) responded to this need with *Guidelines for Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Local Roads (ADT ≤400)* in 2001, replaced by and expanded upon in *Guidelines for Geometric Design of Low-Volume Roads* in 2019.

Understanding of the safety, environmental, and financial impacts of design choices has evolved considerably since the 1980s. These concerns have been reflected in the:

- CT Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board’s prioritization of design manual updates,
- Statutory direction to “create a design manual for context-appropriate streets” (Public Act 21-29), and
- Inclusion of a traffic calming study in WestCOG’s work plans,

In addition to these, a multitude of peer-reviewed studies have been conducted under the auspices of the Transportation Research Board and various transportation research centers and universities.

This RFQ is intended to result in development of a Toolbox of planning principles and precepts for residential streets and local roads that reflects best practices. The Toolbox should apply to lower-speed (less than 40 mph) roads, streets functionally classified as “local” and should be based on consideration of safety and mobility of all users (i.e., motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, emergency responders), environmental sustainability, economy of construction and maintenance, community cohesion, land use, and utility accommodation. Thus, the Toolbox and planning best practices will reflect and be consistent with principles and recommendations for Complete Streets.

Manual guidelines should be based on objective information rather than being derived from design documents (e.g., AASHTO *Green Book*, DOT design manuals) and may consider approaches and factors beyond what is conventionally treated in such documents, such as:

- Domestic and international experiences with traffic calming, such as *woonerven* (Holland) and *verkehrsberuhigte Bereiche*, (Germany), practices in Australia, New Zealand and Sweden (which have similar development patterns to the U.S.) and private roads and historic roads in comparable contexts.
- Minimization of impervious surfaces, surface runoff and water pollution; and light, noise, and air pollution; and elevated summer temperatures.
- Impacts on the cost and affordability of adjacent developments.

The Toolbboox should be prepared to:

- Be used in lieu of the *Highway Design Manual, Design Guidelines for Subdivision Streets*, or other federal, state, or local design manuals/guidelines for neighborhood streets.
- Create no additional legal liability for local governments or private entities that adopt or use it in place of the aforesaid documents.

The publication should include:

- geometric criteria (i.e., horizontal and vertical alignment, cross section elements and dimensions), for street and road segments,
- geometric criteria for at-grade intersections, including roundabouts,
- geometric criteria for bridges,
- roadside treatment and amenities,
- flexible pavement structures for two-levels of traffic loading and 20-year design lives consisting of bound and unbound layers commonly used in the region,
- Traffic calming and other features that encourage driver-selected operating speeds that align with desired speeds.
- discretionary decisions (i.e., not mandatory or “shall” imperative) within the scope of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD),
- summary information on the documented consequences of design decisions (primarily from research used to develop the *Highway Safety Manual*) on safety.

Links for reference:

- CTDOT Highway Design Manual, (Revised 2020): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOT/documents/dpublications/highway/CTDOT_HDM_20.pdf
- Complete Streets Controlling Design Criteria and Justification Process: [ECD-2023-8_Complete_Streets_Controlling_Design_Criteria_final_sah.pdf](#) (ct.gov)
- ASHTO Guidelines for Geometric Design of Low-Volume Roads: [Guidelines for Geometric Design of Low-Volume Roads, 2nd Edition, Single User PDF Download | AASHTO Store \(transportation.org\)](#)
- FHWA: Design Standards, FAST Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Provisions: [Design Standards, FAST Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Provisions - Geometric Design - Design - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#)
- Johns Hopkins University: A National Investigation on the Impacts of Lane Widths on Traffic Safety - Narrowing Travel Lanes as an Opportunity to Promote Biking and

Scope of Work

The Scope of Work outlined below is an estimation of activities required to successfully complete the project. 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 1a: Capture regional status quo

1. Inventory standards currently used by the region's municipalities.

Deliverable: technical memo on existing standards.

Task 1b: Investigate and evaluate best practices

1. Collect data on neighborhood street planning standards and practices. Consider models from diverse jurisdictions. Analyze experiences, performance, and outcomes. Identify best practices.
2. Specifically consider emergency vehicle (fire, police, ambulance, etc.) access and summarize observations, perspectives and concerns of emergency service providers.
3. Specifically consider the relationship between planning, land use and the built environment (including characteristics of housing structures), fire risks, and the need for emergency vehicle access.
4. Review data collection and analysis with project advisory committee (PAC) and adjust as needed.
5. Evaluate applicability of these practices to Western Connecticut, given factors such as built, natural, and legal environments.
6. Discuss evaluation with PAC and adjust as needed.

Deliverable: technical memo on best practices and experiences.

Task 2: Create planning best practices and planning precepts

1. Drawing on technical memos 1a and 1b, propose and discuss content of planning practices with PAC.
2. Produce and share two rounds of preliminary planning precepts with PAC and adjust as needed.
3. Produce draft best practices and planning precepts and share publicly.
4. Produce and release final practices, summarized into the Toolbox.

Deliverables: first round best practices and planning precepts, second round best practices and planning precepts, draft best practices and planning precepts, final best practices and planning precepts and complete Toolbox.

Task 3: Project management

1. Prepare and execute project schedule with key milestones, meetings, and deliverables.
2. Manage communications with WestCOG and project advisory committee.

Deliverables:

1. Project schedule and agendas, presentation material, handouts, summaries/minutes for PAC meetings.
2. Organize and administer project meetings, at WestCOG's direction.

Submittal process

Format

Each application should include the following components:

1. Cover page with project title; proposing firm or individual; and name, telephone number, and e-mail address for the project manager.
2. Project approach. The approach should identify and briefly describe major responsibilities, tasks, hours associated with each task, and expected outputs/achievements during a year (assume fiscal year).
3. Work history. Similar or relevant work conducted by proposer in the past, with project outcomes and at least five client references. Name, title, employer, relationship to the project, telephone number, and e-mail address should be given for each reference.
4. Qualifications. Task assignments and resumes for key staff on project. The total hours each staff person is expected to spend on each task should be documented.
5. Description of organization:
 - a. Corporate background. Include the history, location(s), length of time in existence, and structure of the firm; and demonstration of the capacity of the firm to carry out the project.
 - b. If a joint venture is proposed, provide the number of projects that have been conducted under previous joint ventures with the designated firm(s) and the success of those joint ventures as measured by on- time and under-budget performance and customer satisfaction with the performance of the work.
 - c. 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. Signature of a representative of the firm having legal authority to contract for the firm, or, in the case of an individual, said individual's signature. *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.
7. A completed Organizational Conflict of Interest Statement that either warrants that there are no relevant facts or circumstances that could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest or, as applicable, gives a full, written disclosure of all such conflicts of interest.
8. Proof of Connecticut DBE certification (if applicable).
9. Current Federal Form SF-330, Part II.

Material submitted in response to this RFQ and received by WestCOG may be subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information law (CGS §1-200 et seq.).

How to submit

Proposals are due by the end of the submittal period, Friday, February 23, 2024 at 11:45 PM ET. Submissions should be directed to: Mr. Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director at ccarpenter@westcog.org.

Submissions should be provided in PDF format, as a single file. The file may be attached to the e-mail, or, in case of a large submission (larger than 10 megabytes), linked in the e-mail. Recipients should enable delivery and read receipts in their e-mail client. No other confirmation will be given.

Selection procedures

Complete responses to this RFQ that meet all 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 interviews with the Consultant Selection 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 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.

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.

Communications

Location of posting

This RFQ may be found online at <https://westcog.org/about/RFQs-grant-opportunities/> until March 26, 2024. It is the responsibility of interested parties to retrieve and store a copy of the RFQ beyond this date.

Pre-bid meeting

A pre-bid meeting will be held Friday, February 2, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET. The meeting will be held by videoconference. Parties interested in attending should e-mail ccarpenter@westcog.org for an invitation link. Attendance, by phone or in person, is optional and is not required to respond to this RFQ.

Inquiries

Proposers may submit questions on this RFQ by Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 11:45 PM ET. Questions should be directed to Mr. Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director at ccarpenter@westcog.org. Answers will be posted online where WestCOG posted this RFQ by Friday, February 16, 2024.

No questions will be accepted by other forms of communication. Information about WestCOG can be found at <http://westcog.org>.

Addenda and supplements

Should WestCOG amend or adjust this RFQ, such changes will be posted online where WestCOG posted this RFQ. It is the responsibility of proposers to check for changes to the RFQ.

Conditions

Legal Requirements

Contracts awarded as a result of this RFQ are subject to all applicable federal and state laws, including those concerning civil rights, nondiscrimination, and equal opportunity. Any responses to this RFQ, as well as any work resulting from it, are subject to Freedom of Information. (FOI) laws and regulations.

Prequalification for Year 2023 (and 2024 when available)

Consultant respondents must be prequalified by CTDOT in one of the following categories:

Highway Design
Traffic and Safety Engineering

Insurance requirements

Proposers must maintain insurance coverage as required by federal and state law.

Consortia, joint ventures, and teams

Proposals from consortia, joint ventures, and teams (“groups”) will be accepted. In such cases, a lead firm must be identified for contracting purposes. A work history and statement of qualifications must be provided for each member of the group.

In designating a lead firm, groups should consider the following:

1. The lead firm should have sufficient experience and expertise to perform or supervise all facets of the project and must have sufficient resources to carry out the contractual responsibilities of the group.
2. The lead firm will be legally responsible to WestCOG for the performance of, and must perform at least 51% of, the total work awarded under any contract issued as a result of this RFQ.
3. Firms that are subsidiaries may not rely on the experience, expertise, or resources of its parent firm to meet these requirements.

Equal Employment and Nondiscrimination

All contracts awarded by WestCOG as a result of this RFQ 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.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)

DBE firms are encouraged to respond to this RFQ. If a DBE firm is proposed, the proposal must clearly identify the DBE firm, the role the DBE will play in the project, and the tasks assigned to the DBE. Proof of Connecticut DBE certification must be submitted with the proposal. Responses that fail to give proof of DBE certification and description of project involvement will not be identified as including DBE participation.

Nonreimbursement of proposal costs

Costs associated with responses to this RFQ, including proposal development and participation in a 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 a contract with WestCOG.

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.

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.

Conflicts of interest

Proponents must also submit a completed Organizational Conflict of Interest Statement. A link to the Statement is provided: <https://westcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/WestCOG-Organizational-Conflict-of-Interest-Statement-Formatted.docx>