Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency
NOACA

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Cleveland, Ohio 44114-3204
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www.noaca.org

Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Long Range Plan (LRP) Public Opinion Survey

Issue Date:  March 4th, 2020
Closing Date:  March 25th, 2020
DBE Goal of 0%

NOACA is seeking a qualified person or firm to contract for consulting services for the Long Range Plan (LRP) Public Opinion Survey. The deadline for submittals is 12:00PM ET on March 25th, 2020. Please read entire RFP for specific information and requirements.
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1. THE NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY (NOACA)

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is a Cleveland-based transportation and environmental planning organization that serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and designated areawide water quality management agency for the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina in Ohio.

In these capacities it:

- Works with other organizations to help address northeast Ohio’s transportation, air quality, and water quality needs.
- Conducts metropolitan planning for various modes of transportation, including vehicles, freight, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, etc., while considering the transportation system’s impact on the environment and land use.
- Prepares the region’s long-range transportation plan and short-range transportation improvement program, which is the region’s capital budget for federally funded transportation projects.
- Conducts studies that address congestion, improve safety and strengthen community livability.

The vision of NOACA is as follows: NOACA will STRENGTHEN regional cohesion, PRESERVE existing infrastructure, and BUILD a sustainable multimodal transportation system to SUPPORT economic development and ENHANCE quality of life in Northeast Ohio.

NOACA is directed by a 45-member Board of Directors, representing the City of Cleveland and all five NOACA counties and their communities, plus transit agencies, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD), the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).

The NOACA region is home to 2.1 million people and over 150 units of government. The region is anchored by several urban core cities with the largest being Cleveland.

More information about NOACA is available on our website at www.noaca.org

2. BACKGROUND

NOACA is currently in the process of developing its Long Range Plan (LRP). As Northeast Ohio’s metropolitan planning organization (MPO), NOACA conducts multimodal transportation planning in the Cleveland-Elyria urbanized area and determines how federal funding will be allocated to upgrade and maintain the region’s transportation system. Preparing and updating the region’s long-range transportation plan is one of NOACA’s core responsibilities as an MPO, and allows the region to remain eligible for federal transportation funding.

The Long Range Transportation Plan will support the Agency’s strategic plan, Regional Strategic Plan—Going Forward, Together, adopted in 2015. The Regional Strategic Plan presents an overarching vision for the region, identifies strategies for allocating agency resources and guides development of NOACA plans and programs—including the long-range transportation plan.

At the core of the Regional Strategic Plan is the region’s Vision Statement, outlining five distinct goals:

- Strengthen regional cohesion
- Preserve existing infrastructure
- Build a sustainable multimodal transportation system
• Support economic development
• Enhance quality of life in Northeast Ohio

The long range plan currently under development support these goals and under federal surface transportation law must include:

• **Trends and Forecasts** - Regional land use, population, employment and housing data and traffic forecasts
• **Conditions and Performance** - Projected demand for transportation services over 20 years
• **Regional transportation system assessment** - A system-wide approach considering roads, traffic congestion, bridges, transit, non-motorized transportation and intermodal connections
• **Future policies, strategies and projects**
• **Financial Plan** - Cost estimates and reasonably available financial sources for operation, maintenance and capital investments to implement the plan’s projects and strategies
• **Asset Management** - How to preserve existing roads and facilities and make efficient use of the existing system
• **Public involvement opportunities** – Engaging stakeholders and the public in the development of the LRTP
• **Air quality/transportation conformity** – the demonstration that the LRTP is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for attaining federal air quality standards

Federal regulations also require urbanized areas that are in nonattainment of federal air quality standards to update their long-range transportation plans every four years.

A key part of the long range transportation plan development process is public engagement and the collection of input from the public and stakeholders on their perceptions of the current state of the transportation system, and their priorities and desires for the future of that system.

3. **SCOPE & PROJECT DETAILS**

NOACA is seeking the services of a professional firm experience with public opinion research to examine the views, behaviors and impacts of transportation and environmental planning throughout the service region. The development of online and other resource surveys shall acts as a representative sample to gain respondent opinions as part of a public participation process to update NOACA’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The questionnaire shall target the region population on issues of transportation, specifically, the impact of planning on the societal and economic outcomes experienced by communities; perceptions of service and quality offered by existing transportation assets within the region; and most importantly an examination of future transportation needs as articulated by those included in the survey sample.

The survey intends to elicit information from respondents that characterize their opinions, beliefs and needs related to mobility, accessibility and access to locations in and around the NOACA region. NOACA will rely on the advice of the successful firm in producing a survey questionnaire that:

• Relates opinions of respondents to their experience as users of the region’s transportation system;
• Understands the values and beliefs related by respondents to questions of perception about the transportation system and its utility to them; and,
• Elicits from respondents comments that explain their vision of what the future transportation system should comprise

The successful respondent will be able to articulate a plan to create and implement a program of opinion research with at least the following components:

A. Survey sample of sufficient size and demographic composition as to provide a high degree of confidence that the results are an accurate representation of NOACA population - to account for the following population characteristics:

1. Geographic: survey participants must be proportional to the population in each of the five NOACA counties
2. Urban/Rural: survey participants must be proportional to the population that is urban vs. rural
3. Age: in general groupings over the age of 18.
4. Socioeconomic, such as income level, race/ethnicity, level of education, etc.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey will be design to collect information from respondents on a variety of topics, and questions grouped into six main sections:

1. Travel behavior questions
2. Customer satisfaction questions
3. Policy and funding questions
4. Questions about emerging trends
5. Demographic questions
6. Emerging technologies

The survey data results collected from respondents’ should include a comprehensive look at current travel behaviors, their satisfaction with transportation infrastructure and services, and their opinions on policy and funding mechanisms. Additionally, the survey should include collected data on emerging trends for innovative transportation technology.

B. A detailed survey methodology that would not only achieve the number mix of respondents required, but also maximizing the number of respondents and accuracy while minimizing cost; and,

C. Specific highlights of any ideas generated in the proposal to oversample any segment of the population – and clear articulation of intended outcome provided (e.g., reasons for oversampling specific demographic sub-group such as Millennial or Baby Boomer cohorts).
For our geo-spatial analyses, the residential location of survey respondents shall be collected and tied to all responses. The residential location need not be a specific address, but a geographic marker that allows NOACA to have a reasonable idea of the residential location, such as the nearest major intersection or name of neighborhood. It is the expectation of NOACA that the selected firm will work with NOACA staff and external Communication consultant on developing the survey questions.

NOACA will provide the results of the last opinion survey to balance the diverse needs for consistency according to past responses to track behavior and attitudes over time; comprehensiveness in addressing current and emerging transportation topics; brevity to reduce respondent burden and entice balanced participation; and cost effectiveness in data collection.

NOACA is requesting that the respondent provide the option of completing the survey using online computer-assisted self-interview (CASI) or Software as a Service (SaaS) tools and a paper survey option for community held public meetings. This hybrid approach allows citizens without Internet access or with a preference for completing the paper survey to participate in the research.

Schedule of Work

The Consultant must provide as part of its response to this RFP its estimated schedule of work and milestones to complete this project in the defined timeframe.

Timeframe to execute the work

Work shall commence immediately upon contract award. Consultant shall work with NOACA and its Communication consultant to develop the survey questions. All other deliverables are due to NOACA by COB on May 8th, 2020.

Activities / Deliverables:

- Development of the survey questions with NOACA and its Communication Consultant
- Analysis and Report covering Methodology and Key Results
- Raw data in Excel format. Information such as phone or email address, or other data that eliminates anonymity of the respondent need not be included in the raw data submitted.
- Platform to assist with communicating and collecting survey results from a wide audience.

4. PROCUREMENT TIMELINE
NOACA’s process and timeline for selection of a consultant are as follows:

**March 25th, 2020. 12:00 noon - Deadline for Submittals.**
Submittals must be received at NOACA by the above deadline. Digital proposals are to be submitted via e-mail to procurement@mpo.noaca.org, but NOACA assumes no responsibility for formatting or transmission errors. Submittals received after the deadline will not be considered. Please reference, “Public Opinion Survey” in email subject line.

**March 26-27, 2020. Consideration of Submittals and Selection of Interview Candidates**
An evaluation team will select candidate(s) from submittals received for interview(s). This process will include review of submittals, references, and other information as necessary, as well as rating of submittals.

**March 30-31st, 2020. Interviews with Selected Candidates (If Needed).**
Interviews will provide an opportunity for NOACA and selected candidates to further gauge their fit and ability to work with each other.

**April, 2020 Approval of Contract**

### 5. SELECTION PROCEDURES

NOACA will directly select a consultant based on the Letter of Interest (LOI), proposal and interview. Firms interested in being considered for selection should respond by submitting (1) copies of the Letter of Interest electronically to procurement@mpo.noaca.org by 12:00 PM on the response due date listed above:

**Responses received after 12:00 PM on the response due date will not be considered.**

#### 7.1 Requirements for Letters of Interest

A. Instructions for Preparing and Submitting a Letter of Interest

1. Provide the information requested in the Letter of Interest Content (Item B below), in the same order listed, in a letter signed by an officer of the firm. Do not send additional forms, resumes, brochures, or other material.

2. The Letters of Interest shall be limited to twelve (12) 8½" x 11" single-sided pages.

3. Please adhere to the following requirements in preparing letters of interest:

   a. Please use a minimum font size of 11-point and maintain margins of 1” on all four sides.
   
   b. Page numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
   
   c. Use 8½” x 11” paper only.

B. Letter of Interest Content

**Firm & Staff:**
- Team Personnel – List the Project Manager and other key staff members, including key sub consultant staff. Include personnel for important disciplines and staff members that will be
responsible for the work, and the project responsibility of each. Address the experience of the key staff members on similar projects, and the staff qualifications relative to the selection sub factors noted. Provide resumes of each firm/team member along with a list of major services offered by each team member.

- Firm Experience – Provide detail of the firm’s qualifications as well as success with projects of similar programs, budgets, and/or clients. Describe the capacity of your staff and their ability to perform the work in a timely manner, relative to present workload, and the availability of the assigned staff. List significant sub consultants, their current prequalification categories and the percentage of work to be performed by each sub consultant.

Project Approach:
- Provide a description of your Project Approach, not to exceed four pages. Address your firm’s: 1) Technical approach; 2) Understanding of the project; 3) Your firm's qualifications for the project; 4) Innovative ideas; 5) Your firm's project specific plan for ensuring increased quality, reduced project delivery time and reduced project costs; 6) Schedule for completing the tasks.

The above items must be included within the 12-page body of the LOI. Remaining space within the twelve (12) pages may be utilized to provide additional information concerning general qualifications.

6.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated understanding of the demographic and geographic diversity of Greater Cleveland through previous engagements performed in the Greater Cleveland area</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in conducting surveys to capture opinions related to transportation and regional planning, economic growth and development and sustainable economic growth and development practices</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology to execute this project, including project timeline</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-No more than one page</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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7. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS
A. It is the policy of NOACA, as required by the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) shall have equal opportunity to compete for this federally assisted contract and/or subcontract with another other consultant to perform the requested services. Consequently, the requirements of Title 49 CFR Part 26 will apply to this contract. If not a DBE itself, the Consultant must use its best efforts to solicit from and to utilize DBE subconsultants with meaningful minority groups and female representation among their employees. The Consultant must ensure that the DBE subcontractor(s) is performing a "commercially useful function" as defined in NOACA policy.

This proposal includes a DBE Goal of 0%. At least this percent of the agreement shall be performed by certified DBE firms. The percentage goal may be met if the awarded Consultant is DBE certified. DBE certification must be from the State of Ohio.

Only firms certified as DBE through a State’s Unified Certification Program (UCP) will be counted toward meeting this goal. A listing of currently certified DBEs in Ohio can be accessed on the UCP website at www.ohioucp.org. Potential DBEs may also access the website to obtain information on how to become certified. To qualify for certification as a DBE, an applicant must meet the eligibility standards established in the federal regulations at 49 CFR Part 26 and 13 CFR Part 121. DBE certification must be in place at the time of contract award and throughout performance of the contract.

The Consultant must document the progress and efforts being made in securing the services of DBE subconsultants. In the event the Consultant is unable to meet the DBE goal placed on the contract, a request for a waiver of all or part of the goal may be made to NOACA. The written request must indicate a good faith effort was made to meet the goal.

The Consultant’s proposal must include the percentage of work to be performed by each DBE subconsultant, and a description of the work to be performed by each. Consultant proposals that do not include the minimum percentage of DBE participation noted above, or that cannot demonstrate good faith efforts to include DBEs, will be rejected. If selected, the Consultant’s price proposal shall reflect the required level of DBE participation, or provide an explanation of how the requirement will be met in later phases of the work.

**GOOD FAITH EFFORTS**

The Consultant must document the progress and efforts being made in securing the services of DBE subcontractors. In the event the Consultant is unable to meet the DBE Goal placed on a project, good faith efforts to secure DBE participation must be demonstrated. The written request must indicate a good faith effort was made to meet the goal and be sent to the DBE Liaison Officer, NOACA Division of Programming, 1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, 44114. There will be no extension of time for the project granted if the Contractor wishes to avail themselves of this process.

NOACA shall consider the following information and documentation when considering Good Faith Efforts (GFE) have been met:

1. Dollar value and % of DBE goal. Dollar value and % of waiver request.
2. Signed copy of each subcontract or purchase order agreement between the Consultant and DBE subconsultant utilized in meeting the contract goal.
3. Copy of dated written communication, fax confirmation, personal contact, follow up and negotiation with the DBE’s.
4. Copy of dated written communication and/or fax confirmation that bidder solicited and provided DBE’s with adequate information about the plans, specifications and requirements of the contract in a timely manner to assist them in responding to a solicitation.
5. Copy of dated written communication of each noncompetitive DBE quote that includes the dollar value of each reference item and work type.
6. Copy of dated written communication of DBE’s that were not interested in providing a quote for the project.
7. Documentation of all negotiating efforts and reason for rejecting DBE bids for service.
8. Solicitations made by the Consultant for subcontracting opportunities and DBE quotes through associations, networks, or other appropriate methods of announcement.
9. Documentation of GFE to meet the DBE subcontract goal, by looking beyond the items typically subcontracted or consideration of subcontracting items normally performed by the prime as a way to meet the DBE goal. NOACA will review the submitted documentation and issue a written decision within ten (10) business days.

**COMMERCIALY USEFUL FUNCTION**

NOACA is required to monitor DBE Consultants and subconsultants to ensure they are performing a Commercially Useful Function (CUF) on the project. A DBE is performing a CUF when it is responsible for execution of the work of the contract and is carrying out its responsibilities by actually performing, managing, and supervising the work involved with the DBE’s employees. A DBE firm must have the proper North American Industry Notification System (NAICS) codes for the type of work they are performing. The DBE must also be responsible, with respect to materials and supplies used on the contract, for negotiating price, determining quality and quantity, ordering the materials and installation (where applicable), and paying for the work components itself.

B. Consultants agree not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, age, creed, sex, sexual orientation or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Consultants further agree to comply with all requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., 49 C.F.R. Part 21.

The proposal, including price, shall be valid for at least nine months from the date of submission.

B. NONDISCRIMINATION Consultants agree not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, age, creed, sex, sexual orientation or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Consultants further agree to comply with all requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., 49 C.F.R. Part 21.

C. An RFP does not constitute an offer or a contract. No contract may be awarded without a resolution by the NOACA Board of Directors.
D. NOACA reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at anytime.
   NOACA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive minor irregularities in the proposal process. NOACA may accept any proposal if such action is believed to be in the best interest of the agency.
E. NOACA is not liable for any cost incurred by the proposer prior to execution of a contract.
F. The contract between the successful proposer and NOACA shall include all documents mutually entered into specifically, including the contract instrument, the RFP and the response to the RFP. The contract must include, and be consistent with, the provisions stated in the RFP.
G. The prime consultant or system provider will be required to assume the responsibility for all services offered in the proposal regardless of whether directly performed by the prime consultant. Further, the prime consultant will be the sole point of contact for NOACA with regard to contractual matters.
H. The consultant project team shall be approved by NOACA. NOACA must approve any changes in the project team.
I. Any award of contract will be to the consultant or contractor that provides the highest value relative to costs.
J. Consultants must show proof of liability insurance.
K. NOACA reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at anytime.
L. Suspended or Debarred Firms or individuals included on the Systems Award Management (SAM) and Ohio Findings for Recovery as suspended or debarred are not eligible for selection.

8. QUESTIONS
For questions regarding the RFP, please contact procurement@mpo.noaca.org. All questions must be submitted by email and be submitted by March 13th, noon. All answers will be publicly posted on www.NOACA.org.

9. SUBMITTALS
Submissions must be made electronically by 12:00 noon on Wednesday, March 25th, 2020, using a PDF or Microsoft Office format. To submit the proposal, please email the proposal to procurement@mpo.noaca.org. If the proposal is a large file, greater than 65MB, please instead request the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site and password for posting the proposal materials.

NOACA supports environmental consciousness and discourages mailed submissions for this RFP. However, for material that must be mailed, use:

Susanna Merlone, Director of Administrative Services
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency
1299 Superior Ave.
Cleveland OH  44114