

# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

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## 2013 Planning Grant

### Notice of Request for Qualifications

The Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) is seeking Letters of Interest (LoI) from qualified firms to conduct a planning study for Bath Township and Copley Township. This is a joint effort between AMATS and the Townships, with AMATS contributing Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) funds. The purpose of the planning study is to increase connectivity and improve livability in the Montrose area in accordance with AMATS' Connecting Communities Initiative. The cost of the study is not to exceed \$50,000 and will be completed within one year of the contract date.

It is anticipated that the selected Consultant will be authorized to proceed by October 2013.

### Selection Procedures

The Consultant will be selected from the Letter of Interest (LoI), although AMATS and the Townships reserve the right to interview candidates after the initial scoring. The requirements for the LoI are shown below.

Firms interested in being considered for selection should respond by submitting **four (4)** copies of the Letter of Interest and an **electronic copy** to the following address **by 4:30 PM** on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Heather Davis Reidl

Suite 806 CitiCenter

146 S. High Street

Akron, OH 44308

[hreidl@akronohio.gov](mailto:hreidl@akronohio.gov)

330-375-2436

Responses received after the close of business on the specified due date will not be considered.

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Montrose: North/South East/West

### **The Planning Issues at Hand**

Sustainability of the area is in question. Montrose is reaching the age when existing commercial businesses are looking at new properties to develop while leaving behind huge buildings to become second generation commercial enterprises, or worse, vacant big box monstrosities. It will be important to look at best practices in revitalizing and repurposing aging retail areas to ensure Montrose remains competitive. Engaging private sector developers and landowners is vital in understanding these issues.

A negative experience for travelers, especially on high-volume shopping days, leads to frustration, which could lead to a decrease in business. Over the long term, businesses could have difficulty remaining viable.

Planned and balanced business growth is necessary because as the commercial area grows, residential options in the vicinity become less appealing, increasing the commercial sprawl and making it more difficult to keep the residential zoning intact.

Capacity issues and access challenges are problematic for commuters during peak traffic hours. Access to State Route 18 needs to be controlled. In addition, traffic patterns are confusing for all modes of transportation. Trucks, cars and buses compete for the same space allowing no easy access for bicyclists and pedestrians. Currently, it is not safe to travel by bicycle or on foot since there are no designated shoulders or sidewalks in Bath and Copley, only in Fairlawn. Also, the lack of transportation options results in fewer choices available to shoppers and workers in the Montrose area. It is necessary to integrate strategies for multimodal transportation with complete street principles. Aesthetic improvements should also be coordinated with complete street design concepts allowing for improved quality of life.

The key issues identified in the corridor include:

- Limited pedestrian infrastructure/Transit Last Mile Connections
- Limited bicycle infrastructure and storage
- Automobile access and wayfinding
- Poor visual aesthetics/Parking reduction
- Zoning and land use coordination among townships

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### Goals of the Planning Process

- Identify appropriate locations for alternative modes of transportation (bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, expanded transit routes);
- Provide residents' accessibility to employment and education centers, which in turn will support economic development activities;
- Ensure an equity focus in the community planning process by including residents of all abilities and income;
- Improve community collaboration (internally and externally);
- Identification of community action items and implementation strategies.

### Process

The planning grant process is broken into four phases, starting with the Discovery phase. The Discovery phase kicks-off with an initial AMATS and the community meeting to start discussing key issues, focus areas, expectations and outcomes. AMATS will do an initial analysis before the consultant selection process begins. Once a consultant is selected, the Development phase begins. The consultant will take the community's identified key issues and goals and begin working on ideas, design concepts, recommendations and other potential solutions and put them into a Draft Plan. Recommendation and Review is the third phase whereby the community, the consultant and AMATS will be working to finalize recommendations and review the Draft Plan provided by the consultant. Public involvement during this phase will be completed as applicable. Once the Draft Plan has been reviewed and revised and feedback has been given, the consultant will provide the community with a final Plan. After the Plan has been presented, AMATS will remain a partner with the community to help implement the Plan.

The Consultant will be expected to work with AMATS' Knowledge Management Consultant, Escalys. Escalys will be used to document critical learnings during the process.

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### Anticipated Deliverables

1. Recommendations/Solutions: identify transportation (with an emphasis on alternative modes such as bus transit, pedestrian, bicycle, etc.), land use, and other solutions to resolve the gaps/deficiencies.
2. Final Plan: including background discoveries, recommendations and solutions and an implementation strategy with potential funding sources.

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### **MBE/DBE Participation (Not applicable unless Consultant plans to subcontract work)**

AMATS uses the City of Akron's Disadvantaged Business Entity (DBE) goals. The City of Akron's procurement goals state that any minority business enterprise that desires to be a minority business enterprise subcontractor must first be certified by the Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator of the Department of Administrative Services of the State of Ohio. Any public contract valued at ten thousand dollars or more in which the contractor intends to subcontract ten percent or more of the total value of the contract shall provide that the contractor will award subcontracts to minority business enterprises at a minimum of five percent for professional services.

The City of Akron's Contract Compliance Officer may authorize a partial or total waiver of the subcontracting preference requirements section upon application and demonstration by the contractor that there are not sufficient, qualified minority business enterprises reasonably available to the contractor to fulfill the minority subcontracting requirements.

#### Requirements for Letters of Interest (LoI)

##### 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 a letter signed by an officer of the firm. Do not send additional forms, resumes, brochures, or other material.
2. Letters of Interest shall be limited to ten (10) 8½" x 11" single sided pages (including cover letter) plus two (2) pages for the Project Approach (Item B.1 below).
3. Please adhere to the following requirements in preparing and binding letters of interest:
  - a. Please use a minimum font size of 10-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.
  - d. Bind letters of interest by stapling at the upper left hand corner only. Do not utilize any other binding system.
  - e. Do not provide tabbed inserts or other features that may interfere with machine copying.
4. Letters of interest not adhering to the above instructions are subject to a deduction in the ranking system.

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### B. Letter of Interest Content

1. **Project Approach** - Provide a description of your project approach. Describe why your firm is a good fit for this project. Confirm that your firm has a solid understanding of the project area and issues. Describe any innovative ideas and any other relevant information concerning your firm's qualifications for the project. Address your firm's technical approach and cost containment practices. (two-page maximum)
2. **Project Team and Capacity of Staff and Facilities to Perform Work** - List other key individuals of the project team including the engineer(s) responsible for the technical design of the project and any key sub-consultant staff. Discuss relevant experience of the team with multi-modal transportation and land use planning. Describe staff capacity and the ability to perform the work in a timely manner to meet the project schedule referenced in the Request for Qualifications.
3. **Consultant's Performance on Similar Projects** - Provide three key projects to serve as examples of similar projects completed by the consultant within the last five years working with multiple jurisdictions. Include reference names with phone numbers. Indicate if any of the proposed project team members worked on these key projects.
4. **Project Manager** - List the Project Manager and discuss relevant experience managing multiple jurisdictions, multi-modal transportation and land use plans.
5. **Prime Consultant Percentage of Work** - Estimate the percentage of work to be completed by the prime consultant.

Items 2 thru 5 must be included within the 10-page body of the LOI. Remaining space within the ten (10) pages may be utilized to provide personnel resumes or additional information concerning general qualifications.

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### Quality Based Consultant Selection Process

#### Rating Form

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>Score</b>
Project Approach	40	
Project Manager, Team & Capacity of Staff	30	
Consultant's Performance	20	
Prime Consultant % of Work	5	
LOI in Conformance	5	
<b>Total Score</b>	100 points total	