



**CITY OF CLEVELAND**

Mayor Justin M. Bibb

**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF  
CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**JAMES D. DEROSA**  
DIRECTOR

**Request for Proposal for Environmental Services -  
North Coast Connector Project (PID 115542)**

**Issued by:** City of Cleveland, Mayor's Office of Capital Projects  
**Release Date:** April 18, 2025

Notice is hereby given that Proposals will be received by the City of Cleveland for performing all work necessary in accordance with the Requirements specified herein. Please carefully read and follow the instructions provided. Proposers are responsible for making certain that their proposal is complete and is received by the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects (MOCAP), Division of Engineering and Construction on or before the closing deadline.

**This procurement will follow a Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) process in accordance with the Brooks Act (Public Law 92-582) and the Ohio Revised Code §§ 153.65-.73.**

Proposals should be emailed to: Linda Frazier, FUSE Executive Fellow, at [lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov). The email subject line shall read as follows: ***Request for Proposal for Environmental Services - North Coast Connector***. Email Submission Deadline is May 19, 2025, at 12:00 PM, EST [insert consultant name here].

**Proposals received/email timestamped after the closing deadline will be rejected.**

**RFP Scheduled Activities**

To the extent achievable, the following schedule will be used for the procurement process. The City reserves the right to modify the dates below as necessary:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| a. RFP Distributed                              | April 18, 2025                    |
| <b>b. Pre-Bid Conference</b>                    | <b>April 23, 2025</b>             |
| c. Questions/Clarification due via email        | April 25, 2025                    |
| d. Addendum(s) and Responses Posted by          | May 2, 2025                       |
| <b>e. Deadline to Submit Proposal via Email</b> | <b>May 19, 2025, 12:00 PM EST</b> |
| f. Evaluations/Selection                        | May 19, 2025 - June 13, 2025      |
| g. Notice of Award                              | June 20, 2025                     |

Please direct inquiries to Linda Frazier, FUSE Executive Fellow via email at [lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov). The **Pre-Bid Conference will be held virtually via TEAMS**. Please submit names and email addresses of any planned participants by April 22, 2025 at 5:00 PM EST via email to [lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov).



### **Submittal Checklist**

This checklist is provided to assist Proposers with submitting a complete Proposal. Proposers are to submit Proposal as noted below and are to include this checklist with Proposal.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Cover Letter
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Submittal Checklist
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Table of Contents
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Section One – Certifications and Forms
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Section Two – Organization, Capability and Experience
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Section Three – Response to Requirement

**Non-submittal of any requested item may be considered non-responsive.**

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Agreement** – The Agreement constitutes the entire contract between the City Of Cleveland and the selected Proposer. Term may be used interchangeably with Contract.

**Authorized Representative** – Person who has the legal authority to enter into and sign contracts on behalf of the organization.

**Closing Deadline** – The last day and time the Proposal must be received via email to [lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov). Term may be used interchangeably with Submission Deadline.

**Contract** – The Contract constitutes the entire agreement between the City of Cleveland and the selected Proposer. Term may be used interchangeably with Agreement.

**Consultant** – The Proposer awarded the Contract derived from this RFP. Term may be used interchangeably with Contractor, Vendor, or Service Provider.

**Evaluation Committee** – A committee established to review and evaluate proposals to determine the Contract award. The committee may include representatives of the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects or other departments of the City Of Cleveland.

**Proposer/Respondent** – A person, partnership, firm, company, or corporation submitting a proposal with the intention of obtaining a City Of Cleveland contract.

**Subcontractor(s)** – Any person, entity, or organization, to which Contractor or Consultant/Vendor/Service Provider or the City of Cleveland has delegated any of its obligations hereunder.

## I. Introduction

The City of Cleveland, through the Mayor's Office of Capital Projects (MOCAP), is soliciting proposals from experienced environmental consulting firms to support the preparation of environmental documentation for the **North Coast Connector Project (PID 115542)** in compliance with the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as amended by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations and guidance**. The project is a significant transportation initiative designed to improve connectivity between downtown Cleveland and the lakefront through multimodal enhancements, including the construction of a land bridge, expanded pedestrian and bicycle access, transit facility improvements, and road network modifications.

To facilitate the project's advancement, the selected consultant will conduct a **comprehensive environmental assessment**, ensuring that all required studies, agency coordination efforts, and public engagement processes align with federal and municipal guidelines. The consultant will be expected to develop project documentation that evaluates potential environmental impacts, identifies necessary mitigation strategies, and supports approval by FHWA and the NEPA decision for the project. The firm will play a key role in engaging with regulatory agencies and stakeholders to ensure all necessary environmental documentation measures are met, allowing the project to proceed without unnecessary delays.

The City intends to use the results of this RFP to issue one agreement to the most responsive and responsible Proposer as evaluated per Section XI of this RFP. The contract term is anticipated to commence July 1, 2025 and end of December 31, 2025 and is contingent upon available funding and successful performance. The contract term may be extended on a month-to-month basis by the City, at its sole discretion, and will be a firm fixed price contract for the full-term including extensions.

## II. Project Background

The North Coast Connector Project is an ambitious effort to create a direct, accessible link between downtown Cleveland and the city's lakefront. By enhancing multimodal transportation options, the project aims to improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility, integrate transit services, and upgrade roadway infrastructure to support economic development and recreational access.

The project's environmental assessment process must account for potential impacts to air quality, water resources, noise levels, historic and cultural resources, ecological systems, and community development. The documentation must also evaluate how project implementation may affect local traffic flow, transit operations, and adjacent properties, ensuring that the final design aligns with regulatory standards and community interests.

Given the complexity of the project and the need for coordination with multiple agencies, the selected consultant must be well-versed in the NEPA process, capable of managing interdisciplinary technical studies, and experienced in preparing regulatory documentation that

meets FHWA expectations. For a comprehensive look at the NCC Project please refer to <https://clevelandnorthcoast.com/north-coast-connector/>

### III. Scope of Services

The selected consultant will be responsible for managing all aspects of an **environmental assessment** process, ensuring compliance with **23 CFR 771** while coordinating with FHWA and other relevant agencies. The firm's responsibilities will encompass a wide range of technical studies, public engagement efforts, and interagency coordination activities necessary to support the project's successful environmental clearance. Coordination will encompass efforts to finalize the Feasibility Study and Alternative Evaluation Report(s), as well as to complete the development of the project's Purpose and Need statement.

A key component of the documentation will be an analysis of potential **air quality impacts** to determine if a conformity assessment under the Clean Air Act is needed and/or an evaluation of project-related Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT). Additionally, the consultant must conduct a **noise and vibration study** to assess potential disturbances to residential and commercial areas following FHWA regulations 23 CFR 772.

The project's impact on **water resources and stormwater management** will also require careful evaluation to ensure compliance with Clean Water Act regulations. Coordination with the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Ohio EPA, and Ohio Department of Natural Resources** for any necessary permits including Coastal Zone Management Act related approvals. A **Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)** will be required to identify potential hazardous materials or contaminated sites within the project area, ensuring that remediation plans can be developed if needed.

In parallel, the consultant will lead the evaluation of **historic and cultural resources** under **Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act**, to assess potential impacts and determine appropriate mitigation strategies. The consultant will prepare documentation of Section 4(f) and 6(f) resources that should be coordinated and finalized in a process within or parallel to the NEPA document. A **wildlife and ecological assessment** will also be conducted to identify any effects on federally or state-listed species and critical habitats, ensuring compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

Beyond environmental considerations, the consultant will complete the **transportation and traffic impact analysis** to determine how the project will affect existing mobility patterns, transit services, and roadway performance.

Public engagement will be a crucial part of the process. The consultant will develop and implement a **Public Involvement Plan (PIP)** that ensures meaningful participation from local stakeholders, community organizations, and the general public. At least one **public meeting** will be held to present findings, gather input, and address community concerns. The consultant will also prepare public outreach materials, manage stakeholder communications, and document all engagement

activities to demonstrate compliance with NEPA's public participation requirements in compliance with FHWA regulations (23 CFR 771.111).

The regulatory coordination efforts will require extensive engagement with **FHWA, and other participating and coordinating agencies** to ensure compliance with environmental laws and permitting requirements. The consultant will facilitate interagency meetings, manage the documentation of regulatory decisions, and oversee the completion of all required permit applications to keep the project on schedule.

Once all technical studies, public outreach, and regulatory coordination efforts have been completed, the consultant will prepare **the draft document** for FHWA review, receive comments, and revise content. The draft document must comprehensively address all environmental factors, summarize public and agency input, and present a clear analysis of potential project impacts. The consultant will incorporate feedback from regulatory agencies and the public to produce a revised/final document for FHWA approval and support the NEPA decision. After approval of the document, the consultant will develop any materials or processes necessary to track and monitor environmental commitments during implementation. If additional documentation is deemed necessary in the NEPA decision, the consultant will assist in the transition.

For more detail on work accomplished to date see:

ODOT ELLIS Project: <https://ellisproj.dot.state.oh.us/>

ODOT EnviroNet: <https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/working/data-tools/resources/environet>

#### **IV. Proposal Submission Requirements**

##### **A. General instructions**

The Proposal must contain the requested information organized by the prescribed sections. Each Proposer will submit a complete Proposal, providing all information requested. Failure to follow the prescribed format may result in rejection of the Proposal. A Proposal may be rejected if it is conditional or incomplete, or if it contains any alteration of form or other irregularities of any kind. A Proposal may be rejected if any such defect or irregularity constitutes a material deviation from the submittal requirements. Proposals submitted under improperly marked covers may be rejected. If discrepancies are found within the Proposal, the Proposal may be rejected. Each page must be clearly and consecutively numbered. All Proposals must be submitted in the name of the legal entity.

Via email, proposers must submit their proposal and include all materials required for acceptance by the proposal deadline of 12:00 PM EST, May 19, 2025, to: Linda Frazier, FUSE Executive Fellow, at [lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov). **All Proposals must be signed by an authorized representative.** Late Proposals will be rejected. MOCAP will not accept facsimiles. The email subject line should read as follows: ***Request for Proposal for Environmental Services - North Coast Connector - Email Submission Deadline is May 19, 2025, 12:00 PM, EST [insert consultant name here].***

## **B. Qualifications for Proposal**

If Proposer is a partnership or a joint venture, at least one general partner or constituent member must meet the following requirements. Each Proposer must:

1. Provide evidence that it has a minimum of five continuous years of experience within the last 10 years of providing and implementing the required services and deliverables described in this RFP.
2. Be authorized to conduct business in the State of Ohio, County of Cuyahoga and the City of Cleveland.
3. Possess or demonstrate it qualifies for all applicable licenses, certificates, permits, or other authorizations required by any governmental authority, including the City, having jurisdiction over the operations of the successful proposer and the proposed services.
4. Supply three (3) references to which similar services have been provided. If contacted, all references must verify that a high level of satisfaction was provided.
5. Any DBE subconsultant must have five years of experience on environmental services related projects as a prime or subconsultant.

## **C. Insurance**

The Successful Proposer, at its expense, shall at all times during the term of the contract resulting from this RFP, maintain the following insurance coverage. The insurance company(ies) providing the required insurance shall be authorized by the Ohio Department of Insurance to do business in Ohio and rated "A" or above by A. M. Best Company or equivalent. The Successful Proposer, as contractor, shall provide a copy of the policy or policies and any necessary endorsements, or a substitute for them satisfactory to and approved by the Director of Law, evidencing the required insurances upon execution of the contract. The City of Cleveland's Department of Law will advise insurance requirements when appropriate, during execution of a contract.

1. Professional liability insurance with limits of not less than \$3,000,000.00 for the prime and \$1,000,000 for a subconsultant for each occurrence shall be maintained for not less than two years after satisfactory completion and written acceptance of the services under the contract.
2. Workers' compensation and employer's liability insurance as provided under the laws of the State of Ohio.
3. Statutory unemployment insurance protection for all of its employees.
4. Such other insurance coverage(s) as the City may reasonably require.
5. The City will not negotiate with the "Limits of Liability".

## **D. Cover Letter**

A one page cover letter should be submitted and include the Proposer's contact information and specify the **authorized representative**. The person authorized by the firm to negotiate a contract with the City of Cleveland should sign the cover letter. The cover letter should include the name,

phone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the Proposer's contact person e.g., executive assistant, if different from the authorized representative for the selection process.

#### **E. Table of Contents**

Using the Submittal Checklist the Proposer will provide a Table of Contents listing proposal contents by page number.

#### **F. Certifications and Forms (Section One)**

Proposer will complete, execute and return with its proposal all required forms including:

1. Federal Form W-9 including Taxpayer Identification Number
2. Vendor Entry Form
3. Affidavit
4. Non-Competitive Bid contract Statement for Calendar Year 2025
5. Northern Ireland Fair Employment Practices Disclosure (Attachment A)

#### **G. Organization, Capability and Experience (Section Two)**

Provide a concise statement covering the history of your organization under current and any prior names (include number of years in business under each name), your major projects or activities both in general and similar to the subject of the proposal, and why your firm is best suited to fulfill the Scope of Services in Section III of this RFP. The section should clearly state the unique qualifications which the Proposer believes it possesses to meet the goals and objectives of the Scope of Services in Section III. This section should contain the following information:

1. Describe your present organizational structure and current operations including number of years in business;
2. Describe organizational experience providing similar service that demonstrates your firm's capability in providing the services described in your proposal;
3. Describe experience and qualifications of the proposed key staff members assigned to this project; and
4. Include any other relevant information regarding your suitability/capability in providing the services described in the Scope of Services.

#### **H. Response to Requirements (Section Three)**

Proposers are to describe how the Scope of Services in Section III of this RFP will be met. Response should provide sufficient detail to enable evaluators in knowing what is anticipated at every stage and to make a judgment as to the probable success of the proposed effort.

Proposers will provide, in a timeline format, a clear and concise description of the services to be provided and activities to be undertaken as a means of reaching the objectives stated in the Scope of Services in Section III. Proposals may include milestone charts, flowcharts, and



related graphics to display the timeframe for achieving and accomplishing the Scope of Services in Section III.

#### **I. Notes on Cost**

Do **not** submit a fee proposal or cost estimate at this time.

Cost will not be evaluated during the proposal review phase. The city will negotiate price only with the selected Proposer. Firms are encouraged to ensure any proposed team structures are efficient and cost-effective, as this will be a point of discussion during negotiation.

#### **VI. The City's Right and Requirements**

The MOCAP Director, at his sole discretion, may require any Proposer to augment or supplement its proposal or to meet with the City's designated representatives for interview or presentation to further describe the Proposer's qualifications and capabilities. The requested information, interview, meeting, or presentation should be submitted or conducted, as appropriate, at a time and place the Director specifies.

Furthermore, the City reserves the right to modify the scope of services at any time before execution of a contract to add, delete, or otherwise amend any item(s), as it deems necessary in its judgment, with concurrence from the FHWA, and in the best interests of the City.

The City reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any proposal that is incomplete or unresponsive to the requests or requirements of this RFP. The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive and accept any informality or discrepancy in the proposal or the process as may be in the City's best interests.

#### **VII. Equal Opportunity**

The successful Environmental Consultant, as contractor, will be required to comply with all terms, conditions and requirements imposed on a "contractor" in the following Equal Opportunity Clause, Section 187.22(b) of the Cleveland Codified Ordinances, and should make the clause part of every subcontract or agreement entered into for services or goods and binding on all persons and firms with which the successful Owner's Representative may deal, as follows:

***No contractor shall discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, ethnic group or Vietnam-era or disabled veteran status. Contractors shall take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, ethnic group or Vietnam-era or disabled veteran status. As used in this chapter, "treated" means and includes without limitation the following: recruited whether by advertising or other means; compensated, whether in the form of rates of pay or other forms of compensation; selected for training, including apprenticeship, promoted, upgraded, demoted, transferred, laid off and***

***terminated. Contractors shall post in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment, notices to be provided by the hiring representative of contractors setting forth the provisions of this non-discrimination clause.***

Within sixty (60) calendar days after entering into a contract, the successful Environmental Consultant, as contractor, should file a written affirmative action program with the Office of Equal Opportunity containing standards and procedures and representations assuring that the contractor affords all qualified employees and applicants for employment equal opportunities in the Contractor's recruitment, selection and advancement process.

#### **IX. Proposal as a Public Record**

Under the laws of the State of Ohio, all parts of a proposal, other than trade secret or proprietary information and the fee proposal may be considered a public record which, if properly requested, the City must make available to the requester for inspection and copying. Therefore, to protect trade secret or proprietary information, the Proposer should clearly mark each page - but only that page - of its proposal that contains that information. The City will notify the proposer if such information in its proposal is requested, but cannot, however, guarantee the confidentiality of any proprietary or otherwise sensitive information in or with the proposal. Blanket marking of the entire proposal as "proprietary" or "trade secret" will not protect an entire proposal and is not acceptable.

#### **X. Other Conditions and Information**

##### **A. Composition of Professional Services Team**

It is the prime consultant's responsibility to determine the subconsultant/subcontractors required to complete this project.

##### **B. Standard of Care**

The standard of care of the services provided by the consultant will meet or exceed that level commonly expected of professional engineers that are licensed to practice in the State of Ohio.

##### **C. Proposal Acceptance**

The City reserves the right to accept proposals, in whole or in part, to reject any or all proposals or portions thereof, to waive irregularities, informalities, and technicalities, to re-issue or to proceed to obtain the Professional Services desired otherwise, and to negotiate separately, as necessary, to serve the best interest of the City of Cleveland. The Director may modify or amend any provision of this RFP. Proposers whose proposals are not accepted will be notified in writing. The Director of MOCAP or his designee, will make notification of the award. For this Request for Proposal, the proposal must remain valid for 180 days after submission.

#### **D. Costs Incurred**

The City is not liable for any costs incurred by any responding firms before execution of a contract and issuance of written Notice to Proceed.

#### **E. Economy of Preparation**

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically in 8-1/2" x 11" vertical format, providing straightforward, concise descriptions and information.

#### **F. Professional Services Agreement**

The successful consultant will be required to execute an agreement substantially in the form of the **Sample Professional Services Agreement, Attachment B** as amended to incorporate the full range of consulting services described in this RFP. Where a conflict arises between the terms and conditions of the RFP and the Consultant's Proposal then the terms and conditions of the RFP will prevail, unless specifically addressed in the Professional Services Contract.

### **XI. Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will undergo an initial administrative review prior to evaluation. Any Proposal which fails to meet the submission requirements may be considered non-responsive and may be rejected. Additional consideration will be given to firms that demonstrate a commitment to include participation from Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs).

#### **A. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Participation Goal**

It is the policy of the City that firms certified as Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) will have equal opportunity to compete for and participate in agreements included in this RFP, either as a prime consultant or subconsultant. The Consultant must use Good Faith Efforts to include DBE participation as Title 49 CFR Part 26 will apply. The Consultant must ensure that the DBE firms participating in the agreement are performing a "commercially useful function" as defined in 49 CFR 26.55.

Proposals will be evaluated on a maximum point scale of 100 as follows:

<b>Proposal Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Qualifications of Company and Personnel	25
Relevant Project Experience	25
Timeline and Delivery Schedule	20
Project Understanding and Approach	20
References and Organization Capacity	10
DBE Participation	P/F
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## **B. Selection and Negotiation Process**

The City will rank the submitting firms based on qualifications. It will then select the highest ranking Proposer and enter into negotiations to establish a fair and reasonable cost for the required services. If an agreement cannot be reached, negotiations will be terminated and initiated with the next most qualified firm.

## **XII. Submission Deadline & Contact Information**

The deadline for proposal submissions is **May 19, 2025 at 12:00 PM EST**. Proposals should be submitted electronically to [lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov) with the subject line: ***Request for Proposal – Environmental Services - North Coast Connector – Email Submission Deadline May 19, 2025, 12:00 PM EST [insert consultant name here]***.

For any questions regarding this RFP, please contact Linda Frazier, FUSE Executive Fellow, MOCAP, via email at [lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov). The **Pre-Bid Conference will be held virtually via TEAMS**. Please submit names and email addresses of any planned participants by **April 22, 2025, 5:00 PM EST** via email to [lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:lfrazier@clevelandohio.gov).