



City of Mendota, Illinois

Request for Qualifications

Safe Routes to School City-Wide Comprehensive School Travel Plan

RFQ Issued: Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Response Due: 4:00 P.M. on January 24, 2025

The City of Mendota, Illinois (“Requestor”) is issuing a Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) for qualified firms to submit responsive proposals in the form of a “Statement of Qualifications” (“SOQ”) to provide services related to the development of a City-wide Comprehensive School Travel Plan (“Project”). The RFQ will follow a qualifications-based selection (“QBS”) process.

In order to have your firm’s SOQ considered, it must be submitted in a sealed envelope containing:

- Two (2) original copies of the Letter of Interest and the SOQ

The sealed envelope shall be plainly marked:

Mendota City Clerk’s Office
Attn: Safe Routes to School Comprehensive School Plan
800 Washington St., Mendota IL 61342
Submitted by: *Firm Name*

The SOQ must be received at the Mendota City Clerk’s Office, 800 Washington Street, Mendota, Illinois 61342, no later than 4:00 P.M., January 24, 2025 (“Submittal Deadline”). The SOQs may be submitted by mail, delivery service, or in person. Faxed or emailed SOQs will not be accepted. In-person deliveries will only be accepted at the City Clerk’s office during the City Clerk’s current hours of operation. Any SOQ received after the Submittal Deadline closing time and date will not be considered.

Background

Mendota is a US city in LaSalle County, located in North Central Illinois. Located at the longitude and latitude of -89.118330, 41.549170, Mendota is approximately 85 miles west of Chicago, 70 miles east of Moline, and 55 miles south of Rockford. The population of Mendota is about 7100, and it has two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Many students have to cross one of two major state highways and train tracks to get to school. Attendance to schools is based on grade and not neighborhood. Thus, all students attend every school. Virtually all students should have the means to walk or bike to school. The city is committed, and many of its residents are committed to improving and increasing the safe routes to schools and other community assets.

Purpose

As the grant writing committee surveyed parents for the Safe Routes to School grant application, many parents shared concerns about the lack of sidewalks and the conditions of the sidewalks that prohibit them from letting their children walk to school. In 2023, volunteers asked residents what were their wants for the city. Third highest response on the list from more than 1700 residents who participated in the survey was to have better sidewalks and bike paths. Through a Walkability grant, a committee of 12 members has begun to identify mobile project priorities. Currently, an 8th-grade class, with resident assistance, is completing a full audit of the sidewalks in the city that can be used in conjunction with this proposed project. The City of Mendota is seeking consulting and professional services to develop a comprehensive community-wide usable plan and map for grant/funding for safe walking and biking paths to all four Mendota area public schools.

Objective

The City of Mendota's main source of revenue is property taxes. Many of the city's neighboring communities can implement various infrastructure improvement programs because they have a robust business community and many sales tax-generating businesses. Currently, the City has limited funding dedicated to the construction of new sidewalks, bike paths, or other pedestrian improvements. The City is in the process of updating its comprehensive infrastructure plan. We hope that once this project is completed, the needs identified in the City Comprehensive-Wide School Travel Plan can be integrated into the Infrastructure Strategic Plan.

Summary of Project components:

- Sub-Committee Kick-Off Meeting
- Review and Document Existing Conditions
- Community Engagement via On-line Surveys, Focus Groups, Key Stakeholder Interviews, and Community Presentation.
- Evaluation of Results and Development of Recommendation
- Document, Revision, and Adoption of a School Travel Plan

Project Timetable: The Project is currently planned to start in February 2025. The expected completion date for this Project is June 2025.

Expected Problems: None anticipated

Project Budget: The estimated total cost for the development of the City-Wide Comprehensive School Travel Plan is up to \$90,000.00.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant will work closely with the City of Mendota and the volunteer-based, Mendota Walkability Committee, by having regularly scheduled meetings to garner member input and keep them advised of the progress of the project.

The selected consultant shall document and conduct focus group meetings, host on-line surveys, conduct safety audits, and create street safety demonstration sites to develop the City-wide, Comprehensive School Travel Plan. The consultant must help the City of Mendota with Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure grant reporting. Target schools have been identified as:

- Blackstone Elementary (District 289)
1309 Jefferson St.
- Lincoln Elementary (District 289)
805 4th Ave.
- Northbrook Middle School (District 289)
1804 Guiles Ave.
- Mendota Township High School (District 280)
2300 W Main St.
- Holy Cross Catholic Elementary School
1008 Jefferson St.
- Illinois Valley Christian School
104 6th Ave.

The City-Wide Comprehensive School Travel Plan will analyze the above schools and determine the best walking and biking routes to each school for City residents, providing recommendations for possible improvements. The comprehensive plan must include a safety audit with data collection, as well as evaluation of safest routes as required by state funding.

Task 1: Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting

The City has convened members as part of a Walkability grant. The City will reach out to those members and others to serve as a Steering Committee for this project and other projects related to improving mobile access. Members include representatives of each school district, healthcare, business, residents and City staff, including Public Works and Police, as well as support from the qualified firm. Agency representatives with LaSalle County Department of Transportation and Highways and the Illinois Department of Transportation will be invited to participate, as deemed appropriate. The qualified firm will facilitate an in-person kick-off meeting to go over communication protocols and schedule, as well as a visioning exercise that identifies specific goals for the plan that are reflective of the community travel needs. The qualified firm will also facilitate regular check-in calls throughout the Project to provide the Steering Committee with progress reports on the study.

Task 2: Document Existing Conditions

The qualified firm, with the help of the City and school representatives, will gather information on current student travel processes and patterns. The qualified firm will review the Walkability Committee plan. The qualified firm will also review existing Village and school policies related to walking and biking.

The qualified firm will coordinate with City staff to obtain relevant map files, including but not limited to:

- Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)
- Speed limits
- School District and community boundaries
- Bicycle and pedestrian crashes
- Intersection traffic control
- Future Active Transportation Projects

The qualified firm will observe drop-off and pick-up operations at each school. Documented characteristics may include, but are not limited to, walking and biking patterns; existing traffic control/crossing guard personnel and operations; conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians; total pickup/drop-off demand at each major bell; key staging locations and curbside activities; bus activity, vehicle queues; unsafe staging or circulation behaviors; and highway/train traffic patterns.

Task 3: Community Engagement

The Project will be carried out with the ethos that community engagement is critical to the process of making our streets safe for children walking and biking to school, and that it must be inclusive and respectful.

On-line Survey:

The qualified firm, at the onset of the Project, will develop an on-line survey to gain baseline data. The qualified firm will create promotional materials to publicize the survey which will be made available through the City and school districts.

Small Group Meetings:

The qualified firm will conduct up to six (6) stakeholder meetings in-person. Ideally these meetings will occur at each school or neighborhood, where the attendees can observe and discuss possible issues impacting student ability to walk or bicycle to school safely. Key stakeholders in each group will be determined in conjunction with the Steering Committee and may include a variety of disciplines (i.e., education, health, planning/ engineering, law enforcement, etc.) and backgrounds (PTO, students, crossing guards, parents, etc.) who want to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing. At the meeting, information gathered to date will be reviewed, and the group will conduct a walk audit by walking the area surrounding the school, particularly along known school walking routes. The group will identify infrastructure issues (gaps and barriers) that could impact safe walking or bicycling, such as lack of sidewalks, crosswalks or comfortable bike facilities. Depending on the timing of each meeting, the team will observe school arrival or dismissal, with the goal of observing the behaviors of the various travel modes (school buses, private vehicles, walkers, bicyclists) and how they interact. In doing so, the team will identify issues that could be addressed using programmatic strategies.

Community Presentation:

After the results of the community survey are collected and focus groups are conducted, the qualified

firm will present its findings and proposed paths for final feedback. Qualified firm staff will prepare the meeting materials, facilitate the meetings, and collect and synthesize the information. City staff will secure a venue, coordinate the event invitations, and provide additional staffing.

Task 4: Evaluate & Develop Recommendations

After reviewing existing conditions and collecting input from the community, the team will synthesize the primary barriers—a mix of infrastructure and behavioral issues—at each school impacting a student’s ability to safely walk or bicycle, and an estimate of students impacted (if student addresses are available).

The qualified firm will begin to identify specific plans, policies, and infrastructure solutions. Infrastructure recommendations will identify short, medium and long-term engineering treatments to improve safety and connectivity for walking and bicycling to school. Non-infrastructure recommendations will address behavior-related school travel issues and help each school implement education, encouragement, enforcement and/or evaluation strategies. Based on a discussion with the Steering Committee providing feedback, the initial recommendations will be refined into a final list of detailed recommendations. The qualified firm will create a series of maps, tables, images, charts and other graphics necessary to summarize the infrastructure and non-infrastructure countermeasures.

Task 5: Document, Revisions & Adoption

The qualified firm will develop a draft Village-Wide School Travel Plan that will be visually and user-friendly, clearly articulating recommendations that support the vision for each school and provide a strategy, both internal and external, to communicate with parents and residents. Maps, images, charts and other graphics will allow all readers of the report to clearly understand the information. The report will include an implementation matrix that summarizes recommendations, associated costs, and funding opportunities, as applicable, and categorizes actions into implementable time frames ranging from short-term to long-term ones.

An initial document will be submitted to the Steering Committee and jurisdictional agencies for review, and comments will be incorporated into a final draft for public comment. This will allow for members of the public to review and add any input they may have. A final summary presentation will be prepared and presented at a public meeting, and the final City-Wide School Travel Plan will be adopted by the City.

2. **Public Notice** – The City of Mendota will post an announcement on the City www.mendota.il.us/departments/bids The item will be advertised for at least fourteen (14) days prior to the acceptance of SOQs and will be on continuous display on the website.

The Project will be placed on the City website on **December 18, 2024** and will remain available for public viewing through the submittal date of **January 24, 2025**.

3. **Conflict of Interest** – The City of Mendota requires qualified firms to submit a disclosure statement

with their procedures. The City requires the use of the IDOT BDE DISC 2 Template as their conflict of interest form.

4. **Suspension and Debarment** – The City of Mendota will use SAM Exclusions and IDOT’s CPO’s website to verify suspensions and debarments actions to ensure the eligibility of firms short- listed and selected for projects.

5. **Evaluation Factors** – The City of Mendota has set the following criteria. The maximum of DBE and Local Presence combined cannot factor more than ten percent (10%) on projects where federal funds are used. Project specific evaluation factors are as follows:
 - Qualifications of Firm/Firm Experience: Twenty percent (20%)
 - Project Technical Approach: Twenty percent (20%)
 - Staff Capabilities: Thirty percent (30%)
 - Workload Capacity: Ten percent (10%)
 - References/Past Performance: Twenty percent (20%)

6. **Selection** –The City of Mendota selection committee members for this Project will include the City Clerk, Public Works Director, Street Director, Project Director, Grant Manager, and a selected engineer. Selection committee members will provide an independent score for each proposal using the form below prior to the selection committee meeting:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Weighting</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Firm 1</i>	<i>Firm 2</i>	<i>Firm 3</i>	<i>Firm ...</i>
<i>Qualifications of Firm</i>	20%	20				
<i>Project Approach</i>	20%	20				
<i>Staff Capabilities</i>	30%	30				
<i>Workload Capacity</i>	10%	10				
<i>References/Previous Work Experience</i>	20%	20				
<i>Total</i>	100%	100				

The selection committee members’ scores are averaged for a committee score which is used to establish a short list of three firms. The committee score is adjusted by the committee based on group discussion to develop a final ranking. If there are other firms within ten percent (10%) of the minimum score, the Project Director may choose to expand the short list to include more than three (3) firms.

7. **Independent Estimate** – The City of Mendota will prepare an independent in-house estimate for the Project prior to contract negotiation. The estimate is used in the negotiation.

8. **Contract Negotiation** – The City of Mendota will have a two-person team to negotiate with firms.

9. **Acceptable Costs** – The Project Director will review the contract costs and the indirect cost rates to assure they are compliant with Federal cost principles prior to submission to IDOT.

10. **Invoice Processing** – The Project Director will review and approve all invoices prior to payment and submission to IDOT for reimbursement.
11. **Project Administration** – The Project Director will monitor work on the Project in accordance with the contract and to file reports to IDOT. An evaluation of the qualified firm’s work at the end of the project will be conducted. These reports are maintained in the City’s database. The City of Mendota follows IDOT’s requirements and the required submission of BLRS Form 05613 to the IDOT District office at contract close-out along with the final invoice.
12. **Submittal Requirements** – Any firms interested in providing the above scope of services to the City of Mendota shall express that through the submission of a Letter of Interest and a SOQ (Statement of Qualifications). That SOQ should include the following information in addition to any of the previously stated requirements:
 - a. The name of the firm, corporate office address, closest office address, and a brief history of the firm.
 - b. A statement that the firm can provide all of the services in the Scope of Services list above with current in-house staff, or if not, a specific listing of those services the firm will provide in-house and those it proposes to provide through sub-qualified firms.
 - c. Narratives of the individual who would be assigned as the City of Mendota’s main point of contact and other key personnel who might be assigned to provide the scope of services outlined above, as well as an organizational chart of all persons employed locally by the firm who will be part of this scope of work.
 - d. Related project experience of the firm during the last five (5) years, including project name, project description, client name, client contact information, month and year completed, and construction cost,
 - e. Copies of the firm’s registration with the State of Illinois as an Illinois Professional Design Firm and copy of the firm’s Prequalification with the Illinois Department of Transportation indicating they are prequalified
 - f. Any additional information not listed above that may be useful and helpful in determining the qualifications of the firm, provided however, that the total submittal does not exceed forty (40) pages. The IDOT BDE DISC2 disclosure statement does not count against the page limit.
 - g. The firm’s response to the RFQ should clearly demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Project specifics and challenges and provide a detailed proposed approach to successfully completing the Project. Responses which are generic, nonspecific to the subject work, or that simply reiterate the tasks listed in this RFQ typically will be viewed as less desirable. Submittals that reflect thoughtful, innovative, comprehensive, and cost-effective understanding in developing a proposed approach typically are viewed more favorably.
13. **Inquiries and draft pre-final construction plans** – Any inquiries or requests for clarification should be directed to Annie Short, Project Director, via email to ashort@mendotacity.com **no later than 5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 17, 2025**. Responses to requests for information will be provided in writing and posted to the City’s Website www.mendota.il.us/departments/bids **by 3:00**

P.M. on Monday, January 20, 2025. No clarification will be provided verbally, either in person or over the telephone or in a direct response email, and no one other than the Project Director is authorized to provide clarification on behalf of the City. It is the qualified firms/proposer's responsibility to check the website for this information.

14. **Terms and Conditions** – The City reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this RFQ and/or request additional information during the evaluation process. The City reserves the right at any time and for any reason to extend the deadlines in this RFQ, to cancel this QBS procurement process, to reject any or all SOQs, or to accept alternative SOQs based on updated Submittal Requirements.
15. **Incurred Costs** – The City shall not be held liable in any way for any costs incurred by qualified firms in replying to this Request for Qualifications or any part of the procurement process.
16. **Communications** – After the Submittal Deadline and during the selection process, any communications regarding this RFQ must be in writing and directed only to Annie Short, Project Director via email at ashort@mendotacity.com

