REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Communications Consultant – insight2050

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is requesting proposals from firms to provide professional communications and public outreach services for creating a work plan and strategies for Central Ohio local communities and professional planners and developers to utilize for enhanced resident awareness and engagement on issues and opportunities related to the insight2050 initiative.

MORPC is a voluntary association of more than 60 local governments and regional organizations in the 15-county Central Ohio area. A catalyst for change, evidence of MORPC's work is seen every day through planning, programming and services in the areas of housing, transportation, water, land use, economic development, environment, public policy, and technology.

insight2050 is a collaborative initiative led by MORPC, the Columbus District Council of the Urban Land Institute, and Columbus 2020 designed to help Central Ohio communities proactively plan for development and population growth over the next 30+ years that is expected to be dramatically different from the past. The findings of the insight2050 report continue to be shared with communities and organizations across the region and through various media outlets including the website www.getinsight2050.org.

Consultants interested in being considered must submit their proposal via email as well as provide 5 printed copies. Proposals must be received by 5:00 pm (EDT), Monday, March 28, 2016.

Submit proposals to:
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)
Attn: Laura Koprowski, Director, Public & Government Affairs
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43215
lkoprowski@morpc.org

Proposals must arrive to the email and in the MORPC offices prior to the proposal due date and time (5:00 pm (EDT), Monday, March 28, 2016). Firms making proposals should take this into account when choosing a mail carrier. Facsimile submissions will not be accepted.

All questions must be submitted in writing and should be submitted to Jennifer Noll by email (jnoll@morpc.org), fax (614-228-1904), or mail at the MORPC offices. No answers will be given over the phone. Written answers, including any amendments to the RFP if necessary will be posted on MORPC’s website. Responses to questions will be posted at http://www.morpc.org/about-morpc/overview/rfps-rfqs/index.
The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4 and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation issued pursuant to such Act, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority business enterprise will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex or gender, sexual orientation, disability or other handicap, age, marital/familial status, income, or status with regard to public assistance in consideration for an award.

Neither MORPC nor any member agency of the Committee shall be liable for any costs incurred by the consultant in response to this RFP, or any costs incurred in connection with any discussions, correspondence or attendance at interviews or negotiation sessions.

All materials submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of MORPC and may be returned only at MORPC’s option.

All materials received shall be considered public information and shall be open to public inspection.
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I. **OVERVIEW/PROJECT BACKGROUND**

insight2050 is a collaborative initiative among public and private partners designed to help Central Ohio communities proactively plan for development and population growth over the next 30+ years that is expected to be dramatically different from the past. The region is expected to grow by 500,000 people and 300,000 jobs. An unprecedented 81 percent of our region’s future growth will be households without children. While this includes Millennials, this growth will be driven substantially by the increasing numbers of “empty nesters” (one and two person households) as the Baby Boomers reach later stages of life in numbers greater than any previous generation.

The findings of the insight2050 report were released in November 2014 and continue to be shared with communities, businesses, public, and organizations across the region and through various communication tactics including the website [www.getinsight2050.org](http://www.getinsight2050.org). Last year, the project partners kicked off Phase II of insight2050 and developed a Communications Plan. The focus of the Communications Plan is utilizing strategies that will create meaningful support of the insight2050 report findings and taking action in Phase II. The plan’s objectives are to:

- Continue to engage Central Ohio stakeholders and others to foster understanding and support among the general public
- Provide and promote tools that will assist communities with bringing awareness and knowledge to their residents
- Educate communities about the existing and newly created planning products designed for this initiative
- Utilize media and online communications strategies, consultants, partners, etc. that will advocate for insight2050 and positively position its messaging

MORPC and its partners the Columbus District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Columbus), and Columbus 2020 seek a consultant to provide professional communications and public outreach services for creating and implementing strategies for Central Ohio local communities to utilize to enhance resident awareness and engagement on issues and opportunities related to the insight2050 initiative. The consultant will collaborate with the insight2050 partners and insight2050 Communications Committee on this project.

II. **SCOPE OF SERVICES/PROJECT SCOPE/STUDY PURPOSE & APPROACH**

MORPC is seeking a qualified consultant to create and assist with implementing an array of public engagement and communications tools for Central Ohio local governments and professional planners and developers to utilize in raising awareness about the findings of the insight2050 report as well as current and future development and land use issues facing our region’s communities. The insight2050 Communications Committee has created a key messages and talking points document for the consultant to use. The scope of services for the consultant includes:

- Create a resident engagement toolkit that can be used and adapted by local communities. The toolkit should raise awareness among residents about the findings of insight2050 through public relations, communications and media strategies, and social media. The toolkit should contain a variety of methods that include but not limited to media outreach, sample newsletter articles, social media and blog messages, and website copy;
- A work plan for MORPC, the insight2050 partners and local governments that provides and explains how to use the toolkit to be successful with sharing insight2050 findings and concepts with community residents;
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- Organize and conduct a minimum of one workshop for local government communications staff to explain how to successfully implement the toolkit;
- The toolkit strategies should be sensitive to cost and provide options for different local community budgets;
- Attend insight2050 Communications Committee meetings and other necessary meetings as assigned; and
- Proposal should include a level of flexibility as needs and desires change.

III. PROPOSAL FORMAT

The proposal must address the following items in the following order. Failure of the proposal to respond to a specific requirement may be a basis for elimination from consideration during the comparative evaluation. MORPC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals.

Each consultant shall submit a formal proposal and shall contain the following sections:

A) Cover Letter
B) Organization, Personnel, Experience & Project Management
   a. Consultant's Personnel Profile and Corporate Qualifications
   b. Project Team Availability and Capacity
   c. Project organization chart showing key personnel, their relationships and affiliations
C) Consultant’s Methodology/Work Plan
D) List and Description of Deliverables
E) Project Schedule
F) Budget or Cost Proposal

A.) COVER LETTER

The cover letter shall be signed by a representative authorized to legally bind the firm, and include:
- Name, telephone number, and e-mail address of a contact person with authority to answer questions regarding the proposal (ideally the day-to-day project manager for this work).
- Name, address, and phone number of a contact person to be notified regarding contractual issues.
- Identification of the firm as a corporation or other legal entity.

The letter shall state that the proposer:
- Has sole and complete responsibility for delivery of the required services.
- Is presently not debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal department or agency or the Ohio Department of Transportation.
B.) ORGANIZATION, PERSONNEL, EXPERIENCE & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

CONSULTANT’S PERSONNEL, CORPORATE PROFILE & PROJECT ORGANIZATION
Specific background information on key individuals who are anticipated to be assigned to the project should be included, most notably the project manager. Identify the location of the office where the majority of the work is to be performed. This section shall also provide an overview of each key personnel working on the project and show their relationship to the firm and their affiliations. Identify any diversity and inclusion efforts the consultant is taking or will take.

C.) CONSULTANT’S METHODOLOGY/WORK PLAN

This section shall indicate the consultant’s understanding of the project scope of work, a definition of the scope of the project (including a discussion of the tasks to be performed to accomplish the scope of work), description of the final product(s), and the consultant’s approach to the project (including the estimated time of completion for key tasks, phase deliverables, the management organizational chart, and identification of the insight2050 partners and Communications Committee’s roles in the project).

The consultant’s proposal shall contain a step-by-step explanation and description of the methodology to be employed and how the methodology addresses MORPC’s scope of work. The consultant’s proposal shall further contain a detailed level of effort. In addition, please explain any aspect of your method that is unique or innovative.

Also, administrative information, such as the consultant’s status reporting procedures and the consultant’s approach to effective communication with MORPC personnel and sub-consultants, shall be included.

D.) LIST AND DESCRIPTION OF DELIVERABLES

The consultant’s proposal shall list and describe the deliverables for each identified task that are part of the various steps of the methodology/workplan. All materials created and submitted throughout the lifetime of the projects related to the contract shall become the property of MORPC. All materials received shall be considered public information and shall be open to public inspection.

E.) PROJECT SCHEDULE

Included as part of the proposal, the proposer shall provide a schedule identifying all tasks and sub-tasks, all deliverables, and time in the scope of work. The project should be completed by July 31, 2016. If the consultant believes this will adversely affect the quality of the project, the consultant should explain why.

Proposed Timeline:

Proposals due on March 28, 2016
Selection and initial scope meeting the week of April 11, 2016
Target to begin work on April 18, 2016
F.) **BUDGET OR COST PROPOSAL**

The expected budget for this task is $25,000. Additionally, MORPC and the other insight2050 partners will provide in-kind services for the project, including but not limited to:

- project and contract management,
- data and GIS support,
- graphic design,
- public involvement (facilitation assistance and facility use), and
- website hosting.

The proposer should be aware that the project is funded with U.S. DOT funds and will be subject to all the requirements thereby imposed. In addition, as U.S. DOT funds are administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), this project will be subject to all requirements imposed by ODOT.

The proposer should be aware that it is the goal of MORPC to process and pay properly prepared and submitted invoices within 60 days, although that is not guaranteed. Improperly prepared and submitted invoices will be returned and will consequently not be processed and paid within the 60-day goal. Proof of payment will be required for all charges included on invoices.

IV. **PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

**RFP TIMELINE**

The schedule for the RFP is given below. Dates are tentative and may be modified by MORPC as necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 14, 2016</td>
<td>Proposal is posted on MORPC website for interested parties to retrieve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 28, 2016</td>
<td>Completed proposals due to MORPC by 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29, 2016</td>
<td>Proposals will be opened at 2:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5, 2016</td>
<td>Evaluations of proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11, 2016</td>
<td>Oral presentations at MORPC, if required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11, 2016</td>
<td>Evaluation Committee makes recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of April 18, 2016</td>
<td>Contact all bidders regarding awards to be made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of April 11, 2016</td>
<td>Contract preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15, 2016</td>
<td>Contract finalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18, 2016</td>
<td>Project begins.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The selection of the project consultant will follow a multi-step process. The first step will be an evaluation of the written proposals using the criteria listed below.
EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

1. General Quality & Adequacy of Response (10%)
   a. Completeness and thoroughness
   b. Responsiveness to terms and conditions
   c. Overall impression

2. Organization, Personnel, Experience & Project Management (25%)
   a. Qualifications and experience of proposed personnel, including project manager
   b. Relevant knowledge, skills & experience with the project
   c. Experience working with similar clients
   d. Demonstrated capacity to do the work
   e. Project Area Understanding/Local Presence:
      i. Familiarity with the project area's characteristics
      ii. Familiarity with the project area's economy, culture, and environment
      iii. Capacity to locally coordinate and administer the project

3. Technical Approach & Work Plan (50%)
   a. Clarity and organization in concept development
   b. Quality and quantity of services to be rendered
   c. Approach to project, including the ability to develop creative strategies
   d. Addresses expected outcomes:
      i. Identifies who will do the work
      ii. Includes realistic & sufficient timelines
      iii. Includes reasonable & useful reporting timelines
   e. Specialized experience relevant to the work scope

4. Cost/Budget (15%)
   a. Clarity of budget and congruence with RFP and proposed scope of work
   b. Cost

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Evaluation Committee will consist of representatives from MORPC, the Columbus District Council of the Urban Land Institute, Columbus 2020, and the insight2050 Communications Committee. The purpose of the Evaluation Committee is to evaluate proposals and it reserves the right to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part received in response to this request. The Evaluation Committee may waive minor defects which are not material when no prejudice will result to the rights of any other consultants or to the public.

The second step would include oral presentations. Depending upon the relative merits of the proposals, two or three of the consultants will be invited to give an oral presentation and respond to questions from an interview panel. The second step may be waived if the Committee finds from the evaluation in the first step that one team is clearly more qualified to perform the study than the other teams.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

At the Evaluation Committee’s option, the consultant may be required to make a live summarization of its proposal at MORPC’s offices in Columbus. If presentations are necessary, MORPC will contact the consultant’s authorized representative to schedule the time, date, and location of the presentation. The presentation will be within two weeks of notification. Total time of the presentation shall be limited to
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50 minutes, with 15 minutes reserved for questions and answers. The proposed project manager shall attend and deliver the presentation. A few other key personnel should be present to assist in the presentation and discussion. Key personnel shall have been specifically listed in the consultant’s proposal as part of the project team.

The purpose of the presentation is to provide clarification of information presented in the written proposal. The presentation will be given to the Committee. The presentation will focus on the consultant’s project understanding and project approach. All information detailed in the presentation shall have been originally incorporated in the submitted written proposal. The consultant must explain how the expertise of the proposed team will be applied to satisfy the RFP requirements and accomplish the feasibility study.

If presentations are requested, the consultant must comply at no cost or obligation to MORPC. A consultant’s refusal to make a presentation as described shall result in the consultant’s proposal being rejected from consideration for the project.

**CLARIFICATION INTERVIEWS**
At MORPC’s option, the consultant may be required to answer questions about the proposal. The purpose of the interview is to provide clarification of information presented in the written proposal. If interviews are necessary, MORPC will contact the consultant’s authorized representative to schedule the time, date, and method of interview (e.g. in-person presentation or conference call). The interview will be within two weeks of notification. The interview will be given by members of the Evaluation Committee. If in-persons interviews are requested, the consultant must comply at no cost or obligation to MORPC. A consultant’s refusal to make a presentation as described shall result in the consultant’s proposal being rejected from consideration for the project.

**SELECTION AND NEGOTIATIONS**
Based on the evaluation of the proposals, the most qualified consultant will be selected. If negotiation with the highest ranked consultant fails to result in a mutually acceptable agreement, MORPC will notify that firm in writing of the termination of negotiations. The next highest ranked consultant, as determined by the earlier technical proposal evaluation, will then be invited to enter into negotiations with MORPC. If negotiations again fail, the same procedure shall be followed, with each next most qualified firm until a contract has been negotiated. If the remaining proposals are considered not to be qualified, the notification and selection processes will be repeated.

**V. PROPOSAL TERMS & CONDITIONS**

*Evaluation of Proposal Compliance with Specifications*
Understanding that no consultant may completely meet all requirements of the specifications, MORPC reserves the sole right to determine whether a proposal substantially complies with the specifications; accept, negotiate modifications to, or reject the terms of any proposal; and waive the right to accept a part, or parts, of a proposal, unless otherwise restricted in the proposal.

*Modification and/or Withdrawal of Proposals*
Modifications of a submitted proposal must be received by the designated due date specified. Withdrawal of proposals will be allowed only in those cases in which a written request to withdraw a Proposal is received by MORPC prior to the date and hour for receiving and opening Proposals. In such case, same will be returned to consultant unopened.
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Proposer Qualifications
MORPC may require all proposers to submit evidence of qualifications, and may consider any evidence of the financial, technical, and other qualifications and abilities. MORPC will not award a contract to a proposer who, in its opinion, is not fully qualified on the basis of financial resources and responsibility, possession of adequate equipment, personnel, experience, and past record of performance to perform the obligation to be undertaken competently and without delay.

Award of Contract
Each consultant acknowledges that MORPC will use its discretion and judgment in making the final decision and further acknowledges that no claim by the consultant will arise in any way relating to the exercise of that judgment by MORPC. MORPC reserves the right to accept the Proposal deemed to be in the best interest of MORPC or to reject any and all Proposals.

MORPC’s Executive Director is the only individual who may legally commit MORPC to the expenditure of public funds. No cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed contract or a specific, written authorization to proceed.

GENERAL INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

Compliance with US DOT Regulations
The project will be funded from federal funds. Consequently, the consultant must comply with all U.S. Department of Transportation regulations pertaining to federal transportation planning studies. Consultant will be required to comply with all regulations of U.S. Department of Transportation relative to, for example, non-discrimination in federally-assisted programs.

Ownership of Products
MORPC will retain the copyright for all data, materials, information, processes, studies, reports, surveys, proposals, plans, codes, scientific information, technological information, regulations, maps, equipment, charts, schedules, photographs, exhibits, software, software source code, documentation, and other materials and property that are prepared, developed or created under or in connection with this project. Therefore the submitter should anticipate that all products of this work effort will become the property of MORPC who will make them available to other government agencies and their contractors.

Deviation Clause
The consultant’s attention is called to the condition that, if awarded a contract, the consultants will be required to furnish the particular item referred to in strict accordance with the specifications or descriptions as proposed, unless a departure or substitution is clearly noted and described in the proposal, along with the reasons therefore.

Tax Exemption
MORPC is exempt from the payment of federal excise and transportation taxes levied under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. MORPC is also exempt from Ohio State Gross Retail (sales tax). The successful consultants will be furnished with any certificates of exemption required.
MORPC STATEMENTS ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Equal Opportunity
The consultant agrees that it will not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, or sub-contractor and that it will take affirmative action to insure that employees, applicants and sub-contractors are treated equally during employment without regard to race, color, gender, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or other handicap, age, marital/familial status, veteran status, or status with regard to public assistance.

Disadvantaged Vendors
Disadvantaged Vendors shall have the maximum opportunity to participate in the performance of contracts financed under this solicitation. In this regard, all proposers shall take all necessary and reasonable steps to ensure that minority vendors have the maximum opportunity to compete for and perform any subcontracts. Also, proposing firms are encouraged to notify MORPC if they meet one of the disadvantaged vendor designations, such as Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Small Business Enterprise (SBE), or Women-owned Business Enterprise (WBE).