



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Regional Freight Plan

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is requesting proposals from qualified consulting firms to provide professional services to develop the Regional Freight Plan for the 11-county Economic Development District (EDD) in Central Ohio. The Regional Freight Plan will provide a comprehensive, multimodal strategy to improve freight mobility, safety, resiliency, economic competitiveness, and infrastructure investment across Central Ohio.

MORPC is a voluntary association of local government communities in the 15-county Central Ohio area. Our organization strives to enhance the quality of life and competitive advantages of Central Ohio by working through local governments and other constituents. 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. We assist our local government members by providing innovative solutions for the many challenges facing our growing region.

MORPC will not reimburse any costs incurred in preparing responses to this RFP. All submitted materials become the property of MORPC and are subject to public records laws.

Consultants interested in being considered must submit proposals **in a PDF format to the email address below**. Proposals will be received by MORPC until **5:00 PM (ET), August 31, 2026**.

Submit proposals to:

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
Attn: Brian Filiatraut
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43215
bfiliatraut@morpc.org

Proposals must arrive in the MORPC offices prior to the proposal due date and time. Facsimile submissions will not be accepted.

All questions must be submitted in writing and should be submitted via mail, or email to Brian Filiatraut at bfiliatraut@morpc.org. 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/rfps-rfqs/>.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the related nondiscrimination statutes, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, all bidders including

disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, low-income status, or limited English proficiency 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

MORPC seeks consultant support to develop a comprehensive, multimodal Regional Freight Plan for Central Ohio's 11-county EDD. The plan will assess current and future freight conditions and establish strategies to improve mobility, safety, resiliency, and economic competitiveness while advancing equitable outcomes.

The plan will:

- Assess existing and future multimodal freight system conditions.
- Identify infrastructure, operational, and policy needs.
- Develop prioritized strategies and investment recommendations.
- Enhance freight mobility, safety, resiliency, and economic competitiveness.
- Support equitable outcomes and minimize community impacts.
- Assess regional readiness for and strategies around emerging freight technologies, including but not limited to freight autonomous vehicles.
- Align with existing regional planning efforts, including but not limited to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and the Competitive Advantage Projects (CAP) Program.

The plan will position Central Ohio to respond to significant economic growth pressures, including advanced manufacturing, logistics expansion, and emerging energy and technology demands.

Project Approach

This project will be delivered through a **collaborative, hybrid model**:

- **MORPC will:**
 - Lead overall project management and stakeholder engagement.
 - Conduct select regional/local data analysis using ODOT and partner datasets.
 - Coordinate with MORPC's freight advisory body.
- **The Consultant will:**
 - Lead technical analyses, syntheses, and plan development.
 - Provide strategic guidance on engagement and materials.
 - Support interpretation of data and development of recommendations.

Schedule & Budget

- **Project Duration:** August 2026 – December 2027
- **Maximum Budget:** \$250,000 (consultant services)

II. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The consultant will work collaboratively with MORPC to complete the following tasks and strategically engage MORPC's freight advisory body to provide timely and integral input throughout plan development and project identification. The scope of work may be refined during the project, and additional tasks or modifications to the tasks described below may be incorporated as needed. All tasks shall include ongoing coordination, data sharing, and iterative review with MORPC staff. Each major task will culminate in a technical memorandum that will ultimately serve as chapters of the final plan. Major tasks will include:

1. Project Initiation, Coordination, and Collaboration
2. Existing Conditions & Freight System Inventory

3. Freight Market & Commodity Flow Analysis
4. Freight Network Performance Analysis
5. Freight Safety & Community Impact Analysis
6. Future Conditions & Scenario Planning
7. Freight Needs & Opportunity Assessment
8. Project Prioritization & Implementation Strategy

Task 1: Project Initiation, Coordination, and Collaboration

Establish and implement a project management approach that provides clear direction, communication, and coordination throughout the development of the plan. The consultant shall develop and maintain a detailed work plan and schedule, facilitate regular coordination with MORPC and project stakeholders—where needed, provide guidance on the stakeholder engagement activities, and document project decisions and action items. The consultant shall also ensure the integration of relevant regional and statewide plans, develop performance measures aligned with project goals, and maintain consistent communication to support timely decision-making and successful project delivery.

Task 2: Existing Conditions & Freight System Inventory

Develop a comprehensive understanding of the existing freight transportation system and its role in supporting regional economic activity. The consultant shall inventory key multimodal freight assets, identify major freight generators and logistics patterns, establish baseline performance measures, and assess the strengths, opportunities, and constraints of the regional freight network to inform subsequent analyses and recommendations.

Task 3: Freight Market & Commodity Flow Analysis

Analyze freight market conditions and commodity flows within the region, including the movement of goods by tonnage, value, commodity type, and mode. It will assess origin-destination patterns and trade relationships, identify key economic sectors driving freight demand, and examine emerging logistics trends such as e-commerce growth and warehousing expansion. The analysis will also benchmark regional freight performance against peer regions to contextualize competitiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

Task 4: Freight Network Performance Analysis

Evaluate the performance of the regional freight network by analyzing truck volumes, congestion, reliability, and key bottlenecks across major freight corridors. It will assess first- and last-mile connectivity, rail crossing impacts, and gaps in multimodal integration, as well as examine system resiliency and critical infrastructure dependencies. The task will also include a regional assessment of truck parking conditions and related capacity constraints affecting freight mobility and safety.

Task 5: Freight Safety & Community Impact Assessment

Assess freight-related safety and community impacts by analyzing truck-involved crash data and identifying safety hotspots, as well as evaluating conflicts between freight movement and non-motorized users. It will examine disproportionate impacts on underserved communities, identify land use compatibility issues, and develop strategies to mitigate safety risks and community impacts associated with freight activity.

Task 6: Future Conditions & Scenario Planning

Forecast future freight demand through 2055 and assess how major regional growth drivers—including advanced manufacturing, logistics expansion, data centers, and energy infrastructure constraints—will shape freight system needs. It will evaluate alternative land use and development scenarios and identify resulting system deficiencies and capacity gaps under future conditions.

Task 7: Freight Needs & Opportunity Assessment

Identify freight system needs and opportunities by evaluating infrastructure, operational, and policy requirements needed to support efficient goods movement and economic competitiveness. It will assess regional readiness for emerging freight technologies, including electric and hydrogen-powered trucks, automation and autonomous vehicles, intelligent transportation systems, and advanced air mobility. The analysis will also synthesize system strengths, gaps, opportunities, and risks to inform targeted investment and policy strategies.

Task 8: Project Prioritization & Implementation Strategy

Develop a prioritization framework aligned with the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan goals and in conjunction with the region's CEDS and CAP program to evaluate and rank freight projects based on freight benefit, safety, equity, economic impact, and project readiness. It will identify short-, mid-, and long-term investment priorities, organize them into a multimodal project portfolio, and align opportunities with relevant funding programs. The task will conclude with an implementation roadmap, governance structure, and performance monitoring framework to guide delivery and track outcomes over time.

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 not to exceed TWENTY (20) 8.5" x 11" pages (excluding tabs, dividers, etc.) 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
 - d. Project organization's freight plan work in Ohio
- 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.
- Will be signed by a representative authorized to legally bind the firm.

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 involuntarily 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

Specific background information on key individuals who are anticipated to be assigned to the project should be included, most notably the project manager. The background information on these individuals would emphasize their experience relative to project requirements. A statement concerning the recent related experience of persons from your team who will be actively engaged in the proposed effort should also be included. Attach resumes of the project manager and other key personnel to the proposal. A general resume is not a satisfactory substitute for this information.

Identify similar projects undertaken by your firm or proposed team firms a) within Ohio and b) in other states. Document each firm's actual responsibility on the project. Provide appropriate reference(s), name(s) and telephone number(s).

Project Team Availability & Capacity

Identify the location of the office where the majority of the work is to be performed. Discuss your staff's availability and capacity in the skill classes necessary to accomplish the work contemplated in the work elements as outlined in your technical approach. Specifically, break the staffing down by the number of professionals, technicians, and other specialists and indicate the number of each available for assignment to this project. Provide a list of the firm's present workload relative to capacity and availability to provide the requested services.

The consultant should note that as a condition of the contract the key persons, as defined by MORPC, assigned to the project for its duration must be substantially as represented in the proposal. MORPC reserves the right to cancel the contract and seek damages from the consultant in the event the consultant fails to provide the key personnel substantially as represented in the proposal.

Project Organization Chart Showing Key Personnel, Their Relationships and Affiliations

This section shall provide an overview of each key personnel working on the project and show their relationship to the firm and their affiliations. It shall identify the firm's/team's principal-in-charge and the day-to-day project manager together with their qualifications as well as a brief outline of the potential roles and qualifications of other key personnel. If subcontracts are utilized, the position in the project team and identity of the sub-contractor shall be stated.

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), a definition of the final product, 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 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. 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 December 31, 2027. If the consultant believes this will adversely affect the quality of the project, the consultant should explain why.

F) BUDGET

The expected budget for this project is \$250,000. Additionally, MORPC will provide in-kind services for the project, including:

- Project and contract management,
- Data and GIS support,
- Public and stakeholder involvement (facilitation assistance and facility use), and
- Website hosting.

The proposer should be aware that the project is funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration's Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. The proposer will be subject to all the requirements thereby imposed.

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.

Key Date	Event
August 3, 2026	Proposal is posted on MORPC website for interested parties to retrieve.
August 31, 2026	Completed proposals due to MORPC by 5:00 p.m.
Next day after closing date – September 1, 2026	Proposals will be opened at 2:00 p.m.
2 weeks from closing date – September 1 – 11, 2026	Evaluations of proposals.
2 weeks from closing date – September 1 – 11, 2026	Oral presentations at MORPC, if required.
At end of 2-week eval period – September 14, 2026	Evaluation Committee makes recommendation.
Within following week of recommendation	Contact all bidders regarding awards to be made.
September 3 – 10, 2026	MORPC Board meeting to approve resolution/award contract.
September 2026	Contract preparation.
October 2026	Contract finalized.
September 2026	Project begins.

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 (20%)

- Completeness and thoroughness
- Responsiveness to terms and conditions
- Overall impression

2. Organization, Personnel, Experience, & Project Management (40%)

- Qualifications and experience of proposed personnel, including project manager
- Relevant knowledge, skills, & experience with the freight planning
- Experience working with **freight planning in Ohio**
- Demonstrated capacity to do the work
- Plan Area Understanding/Local Presence:
 - Familiarity with the plan area's characteristics
 - Familiarity with the plan area's economy, culture, and environment
 - Capacity to locally coordinate and administer the project

3. Technical Approach & Collaboration Strategy (30%)

- Clarity and organization in concept development
- Quality and quantity of services to be rendered
- Approach to plan—data collection, analysis, forecasting, and technical evaluation
- Addresses expected outcomes:
 - Identifies who will do the work
 - Includes realistic & sufficient timelines

- iii. Includes reasonable & useful reporting timeline
- e. Proposed utilization of MORPC and MORPC's freight advisory body
- f. Specialized experience relevant to the work scope

4. Cost/Budget (10%)

- a. Clarity of budget and congruence with RFP and proposed scope of work
- b. Cost

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Committee will conduct the evaluation of proposals and reserves the right to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part received in response to this request. The 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 plan than the other teams.

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 the 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. ADMINISTRATIVE & ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The technical components of the plan will be prepared by a consultant to be selected through the RFP process. The consultant will work with the Project Manager of MORPC to coordinate routine exchange of data and overall project supervision. Technical components of the plan will be regularly presented to the Committee members whose roles are to review and confirm the results.

Role of MORPC

MORPC will manage the entire plan. MORPC conducts the RFP process and will, together with the Committee, select the consultant to perform the plan as described in this scope. MORPC will work collaboratively with the consultant as outlined in section II.

Role of the Consultant

The consultant will conduct the tasks outlined in section II.

REPORTING

Interim Reports

The consultant shall prepare technical memos at milestone points (at a minimum at the end of each task) of the plan which are to be suggested by consultation between MORPC and the consultant. Each of these technical memos shall describe the major issues addressed and results obtained in that portion of the plan. All these technical memos will serve as a basis for the appendices of the final report. In addition to these technical memos, the consultant shall provide and/or present the interim findings before the Committee as appropriate at milestone points. The consultant shall prepare presentation materials (display graphics, Power Point presentations, and written summaries) at specified milestones throughout the plan as suggested by MORPC.

Interim reports shall be provided in electronic format. All components of a single technical memo would be combined into a single file in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. Page sizes shall be limited to 8.5" x 11" or 11" x 17".

Final Reports

Along with deliverables throughout the overall project, a final report shall be provided detailing the work completed throughout the project. All components of the Final Draft Report would be combined into a single file in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. Page sizes shall be limited to 8.5" x 11" or 11" x 17". An easily reproducible less technical summary document in electronic format should be included for presentation to council persons and other educated and informed non-technical persons. The document will be supported by the technical memorandums.

The consultant may be requested to present to MORPC's Community Advisory Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, and/or the Central Ohio Metropolitan Planning Organization Board.

VI. PROPOSAL TERMS AND 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.

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 USDOT Regulations

The project will be funded from the U.S. Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration's Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. The proposer will be subject to all the requirements thereby imposed.

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.

TITLE VI

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, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender or sex (including pregnancy, gender identification or expression, and sexual orientation), gender identity or expression, age (including federally protected 40 years or older), disability or other handicap, genetic information, marital/familial status, military status (past, present or future), limited English proficiency, medical conditions, or income or status with regard to public assistance.

CONTRACTING REQUIREMENTS

The following are not part of the proposal's requirements but will be requirements in the contract in addition to other contractual requirements. *Please also note that prior to negotiation, the firm selected for negotiation must provide average hourly rates for personnel assigned and a copy of the last audited financial statement.*

Compensation

- A not-to-exceed contract amount based on satisfactory work performed and products and services produced will be entered into after negotiations between MORPC and the selected firm.

Alternative compensation models may be considered.

During contract negotiations, the selected firm must provide individually-priced and prioritized tasks to be completed "if authorized." The sequencing of work tasks must be done in such a way that successful completion of earlier tasks is not dependent upon the completion of later tasks.

Cancellation

MORPC reserves the right to cancel any contract for failure or refusal of performance, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, collusion, or any other misconduct on the part of the consultant.

Unresolved Finding for Recovery

The selected consultant affirmatively represents and warrants to MORPC that it is not subject to a finding for recovery under ORC 9.24 or that it has taken appropriate remedial steps required under ORC 9.24 or otherwise qualifies under that section. The consultant agrees that if this representation or warranty is deemed to be false, the agreement shall be void *ab initio* as between the parties to this agreement, and any funds paid by MORPC to the consultant hereunder shall be repaid to MORPC immediately, or an action for recovery may be commenced immediately by MORPC for recovery of said funds.

Covenants of Consultant

The consultant will be required to covenant and warrant the following:

- a) Consultant is not debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in any contract, supported in whole or in part by the funding sources for this project;
- b) Consultant has not within a three (3) year period had one or more public transactions terminated for cause or default;
- c) Consultant will comply with the provisions of Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, which prohibits the use of federal funds to lobby any official or employee of any federal agency, or member or employee of Congress; and to disclose any lobbying activities in connection with federal funds.