The Central Pines Regional Council, on behalf of the

Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization

REQUEST for PROPOSALS (RFP)

The Infrastructure Handshake

TITLE: The Infrastructure Handshake

ISSUE DATE: November 2, 2026

DEADLINE: November 20, 2026

ISSUING AGENCY: The Central Pines Regional Council on Behalf of the Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization

I. SYNOPSIS

SUBCONSULTANTS ARE PERMITTED UNDER THIS CONTRACT.

The solicitation, selection, and negotiation of a contract shall be conducted in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local procurement requirements.

The primary consultant and any subconsultants should possess demonstrated expertise in:

- Strategic facilitation
- Organizational development
- Public sector collaboration
- Stakeholder engagement and consensus building
- Process improvement
- Public involvement
- General Transportation

This RFP solicits proposals from qualified consultant teams to develop a formal collaboration framework between Triangle West TPO Board and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to improve transportation project development, communication, coordination, and decision-making. Triangle West and NCDOT have different transportation improvement priorities that affect how projects are designed and implemented. The "Handshake" process builds collaboration around both organizations accomplishing their goals together instead of projects not progressing to implementation because of standoff.

Proposed Contract Scope Summary

Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization allocated funds to study the US 15-501 corridor in Durham and Orange Counties. This "pre-work" includes developing a shared collaboration framework that improves project development and delivery outcomes through enhanced communication, coordination, transparency, and mutual understanding between Triangle West TPO and NCDOT.

The framework should result in:

- Greater clarity regarding project development stages;
- Earlier and more meaningful local input opportunities;
- More predictable decision-making processes;
- Improved transparency;

- Greater local buy-in and stakeholder confidence; and
- Improved project outcomes.

Project Area

The Project Area is the entirety of the Triangle West planning area which includes the City of Durham, Durham County, portions of Orange County, the Town of Chapel Hill, the Town of Carrboro, the Town of Hillsborough, and northeast Chatham County. The deliverable framework should be applicable to all significant highway projects in the Triangle West planning area.

Proposed Budget and Allocation of Resources

The project budget is $100,000.

Responses must be in .pdf format and received ELECTRONICALLY no later than 4:00pm on November 20th, 2026.

The address for electronic deliveries is: Doug.Plachcinski@twtpo.org

Proposals received after the deadline are disqualified.

Except as provided below any firm wishing to be considered must be properly registered with the Office of the Secretary of State and with the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors. Any firm proposing to use corporate subsidiaries or subcontractors must include a statement that these companies are properly registered with the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors and/or the NC Board for Licensing of Geologists. The Engineers performing the work and in charge of the work must be registered Professional Engineers in the State of North Carolina and must have a good ethical and professional standing. It will be the responsibility of the selected private firm to verify the registration of any corporate subsidiary or subcontractor before submitting a Letter of Interest. Firms that are not providing engineering services need not be registered with the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors. Some of the services being solicited may not require a license. It is the responsibility of each firm to adhere to all laws of the State of North Carolina.

The firm must have the financial ability to undertake the work and assume the liability. The selected firm(s) will be required to furnish proof of Professional Liability insurance coverage in the minimum amount of $1,000,000.00. The firm(s) must have an adequate accounting system to identify costs chargeable to the project.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The consultant shall assist Triangle West TPO and NCDOT in achieving the following objectives:

1. Establish a shared understanding of transportation project delivery processes.
2. Identify organizational and procedural pain points.
3. Develop guiding principles for collaboration.
4. Clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
5. Define timing and methods for effective engagement.
6. Create a framework applicable across multiple project types.
7. Test and refine the framework using actual transportation projects including U-5720 (US 70 east of I-885) and U-6067 (US 15-501 between Chapel Hill and Durham).

III. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1. Project management will include work necessary for communication and completion of the project tasks on time and within budget. The Consultant's Project Manager or their primary duties will not be reassigned without the written consent of the Triangle West Project Manager. The Consultant's staff will have the training and expertise necessary for the work tasks to which they are assigned.
2. Project Leadership
    a. Triangle West Executive Director

b. Selected Triangle West Board Members

c. NCDOT Division 5,7, and 8 Engineers

d. NCDOT Planning and Project Development Division Directors

e. NCDOT Intermodal Mobility Division Director

f. The NCDOT Deputy Director

g. NCDOT Chief Engineer's Office

3. The Consultant will provide invoices in the standard format provided by the Triangle West Project Manager. Invoices will be accompanied by a cover letter with a narrative explaining the general status of the project, including at a minimum the work completed during the time period the invoice covers; the anticipated remaining efforts and required schedule changes; progress report form; supporting data for direct expenses; and an updated project status report and project schedule reflecting Scope of Work activities identified by the Triangle West Representative.

4. On the timeframe approved by the TRIANGLE WEST Project Manager, the Consultant's Project Manager will update the TRIANGLE WEST Project Manager with regards to the status of the project schedule, budget, and general status/progress. This task is in addition to Progress Meetings and may be performed in a phone, email, or mailed correspondence as approved by the TRIANGLE WEST Project Manager.

5. The Consultant shall coordinate with TRIANGLE WEST for invoicing and contract administration. TRIANGLE WEST will coordinate necessary approvals with Central Pines Regional Council. TRIANGLE WEST is responsible for reviewing project submittals, schedules, and reports.

6. Project Management Deliverables:

    a. Monthly Invoices and Progress Reports

    b. Touchpoint/Connections with TRIANGLE WEST Project Manager as scheduled.

IV. PROPOSED SCOPE ELEMENTS

A. Create a Project Work Plan including schedule and deliverables.

B. Landscape Assessment and Discovery identifying key issues, perceptions, opportunities, and process gaps before collaborative workshops begin.

C. Conduct a Facilitated Workshop Series that builds shared understanding and identify solutions supporting long-term collaboration.

D. Develop a practical collaboration framework that can be consistently applied to transportation projects.

E. Test the framework with Pilot Applications.

F. Framework finalization and Adoption.

V. FINAL PRODUCTS

A. Executive Summary

B. Discovery Assessment Memorandum

C. Workshop Documentation

D. Process Maps

E. Draft Collaboration Framework

F. Pilot Test Evaluation

G. Final Collaboration Framework

H. Editable source files

I. Presentation materials

J. Digital copies of all project deliverables

All materials shall be written in clear and accessible language suitable for elected officials, staff, and the public.

VI. PROPOSED CONTRACT PAYMENT TYPE: Lump Sum

VII. PROPOSED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: April 30th, 2027

VIII. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS: All responses are limited to 10 pages of the cover sheet.

Firms submitting Proposals are encouraged to carefully check them for conformance to the requirements stated above. If Proposals do not meet these requirements, they will be disqualified. No exceptions.

IX. SELECTION PROCESS

Following is a general description of the selection process:

- Triangle West's Selection Committee will review all qualifying Proposals submittals.
- Triangle West's Selection Committee may shortlist firms for interview. Dates of shortlisting and dates for interviews are shown in the section SUBMISSION SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES at the end of this RFP.

X. TITLE VI NONDISCRIMINATION NOTIFICATION

CPRC, under the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 US.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all RESPONDENTS that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit LETTERS of INTEREST (LOIs) in response to this ADVERTISEMENT and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

XI. SMALL PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRM (SPSF) PARTICIPATION

NCDOT encourages the use of Small Professional Services Firms (SPSF). Small businesses determined to be eligible for participation in the SPSF program are those meeting size standards defined by Small Business Administration (SBA) regulations, 13 CFR Part 121 in Sector 54 under the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The SPSF program is a race, ethnicity, and gender-neutral program designed to increase the availability of contracting opportunities for small businesses on federal, state, or locally funded contracts. SPSF participation is not contingent upon the funding source.

The Firm, at the time the Letter of Interest is submitted, shall submit a listing of all known SPSF firms that will participate in the performance of the identified work. The participation shall be submitted on the Department's Subconsultant Form RS-2. RS-2 forms may be accessed on the Department's website at NCDOT Connect Guidelines & Forms.

The SPSF must be qualified by the Department to perform the work for which they are listed.

Professional Services Contracts are race and gender-neutral and do not contain goals. However, the Respondent is encouraged to give every opportunity to allow Disadvantaged, Minority-Owned, and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (DBE/MBE/WBE) subconsultant utilization on all LOIs, contracts, and supplemental agreements. The Firm, subconsultant, and subfirm shall not discriminate based on race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex in the performance of this contract.

XII. SELECTION CRITERIA

In selecting a firm/team, the selection committee will take into consideration qualification information including such factors as:

1. Relevant Facilitation and Collaboration Experience 15%
2. Project Team Qualifications 15%
3. Technical Approach and Scope Comprehension 30%

4. Project Schedule and Capacity 40%

After reviewing qualifications, if firms are equal on the evaluation review, then those qualified firms with proposed SPSF participation will be given priority consideration.

XIII. SUBMISSION ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

The LOI should be addressed to **Doug Plachcinski, Executive Director.** The subject line must be, **"Infrastructure Handshake."** Applicants must include the name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the prime consultant's contact person for this RFLOI.

The LOI must also include the information outlined below in the order outlined below:

1 - Statements of Scope Comprehension

2 - Team Qualifications and Experiences

3 - Technical Approach

The consultant shall provide information on to understanding of, and approach to accomplish, this project, including its envisioned scope for the work and any innovative ideas/approaches, and a schedule to achieve the dates outlined in this RFLOI (if any project-specific dates are outlined below).

All submissions, correspondence, and questions concerning this RFP should be directed to Doug Plachcinski, at doug.plachcinski@twtpo.org.

IF APPLICABLE, questions may be submitted electronically only to the contact above. Responses will be issued in the form of an addendum available to all interested parties. Interested parties should also send a request, by email only, to the person listed above to be placed on a public correspondence list to ensure future updates regarding the RFP or other project information can be conveyed. Questions, responses, and addendums will be posted to the Central Pines Regional Council website and TRIANGLE WEST Website, as well as distributed to the public correspondence list for this RFLOI. Questions must be submitted to the person listed above no later than November 8, 2026 by 2:00 p.m. The last addendum will be issued no later than Friday, November 10, 2026.

XIV. SUBMISSION SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES

RFLOI Release – November 2, 2026

Deadline for Questions – **November 8, 2026**

Issue Final Addendum – **November 10, 2026**

Deadline for LOI Submission – **November 20, 2026**

Firm Selection and Notification - **the week of December 7th, 2026**

Anticipated Notice to Proceed – **January 4, 2027.**