



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) NO. 334 – Regional Vision: Strategic planning and engagement integration

Pre-Bid Questions and Answers

Deadline for Proposal Submissions: Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. CT

Questions and answers received by CMAP are provided below:

Submittal questions

1. Will you accept proposals from outside the USA?

CMAP cannot legally enter a contractual relationship with a vendor who does not have a valid and active System for Award Management (SAM) CAGE code. Firms can begin the process to register at www.sam.gov. We do not accept NATO CAGE/NCAGE codes from foreign entities. Per Sam.gov: every entity in the US needs to be registered here to receive Federal/Non-Profit funds.

CMAP also requires a Form W-9 to enable payment, which needs a federal Taxpayer Identification Number, be it a Social Security Number or Employer Identification Number.

While a vendor need not physically reside in the USA to submit a response, CMAP may consider the response incomplete if the vendor does not have the required CAGE code and Taxpayer Identification Number. Vendors can detail any concerns in the “Exceptions” section of the Proposal Submittal Form.

2. Do facility rental fees need to be accounted for in the proposal?

Yes, if you plan on incurring facility rental fees for larger events (such as the State of the Region event) that you wish to be reimbursed for, they would need to be accounted for in responses.

3. What CMAP meeting facilities would be available for this work?

CMAP has several large meeting rooms and small conference rooms in it’s offices at Chicago’s Old Post Office building.

4. Can you please provide clarity around the page limits?



The RFP states that there is a ten-page limit for the project approach. Are additional pages allowed to provide an approach for the optional activities?

For the optional additional activities A-C, are additional pages allowed for the approach for each of these tasks?

Is a cover letter excluded from the 10-page limit?

Are proposal cover and divider pages allowed outside of the 10-page limit?

There is a 10-page limit for the narrative, if a team is going to bid on/include any of the three optional add-on activities (No. A - C) will those activities have to be included in the 10-page limit? Or will additional pages be allowed?

Does the 10-page limit only reference Tasks 0-4, the required sections? Or is it inclusive if we are bidding on the optional items as well.

The 10-page limit applies to the body of vendor's overall project approach. If needed, submissions that include bids on any of Options A-C may use up to an additional two pages to incorporate their approach on these activities into the overall project approach, for a maximum of twelve pages total. Neither page limit includes a cover, cover letter, or divider pages. The RFP also sets a separate, two-page limit for supporting materials for each of project examples listed in a firm's proposals.

5. Is there a page size limitation?

Please use standard 8.5x11 pages.

6. The Proposal Submittal Form excel sheet contains a "Project Examples" and "Client Examples." Tab, which should be used?

The proposal submittal form has a tab for client examples, that is not covered in the RFP. Please explain what this is for.

Vendors that will be providing a professional service towards a project are required to fill out the "Project Examples" tab, vendors that will be providing products (data, software) or general services or completing tasks as assigned (maintenance, augmented staff, audit services etc.) are required to fill out "Client Examples".

For this particular procurement the Project Examples tab is required.

7. How should the Optional (A-C) activities be represented on the Price Proposal Form?

On the submission form for total price proposal, should this be the grand total of the required tasks plus the optional (A-C) additional activities?

Should additional tabs be added to the proposal submittal form to provide a price proposal for each of the three optional additional activities? If not, where/how should the budget for each of these tasks be provided?



How detailed should it be, especially, if we are planning to bid on the additional activities? Would they be listed under other costs? Would CMAP prefer one cost for branding, one cost for special events, and one cost for public engagement campaign or would CMAP prefer a breakdown of items like venue cost and food etc. under special events for example?

The 'Total Price Proposal' on the Submission Form should reflect the total bid for all required Tasks 0-4 and any Options A-C included in the proposal. The selected 'Price Proposal' tab should similarly reflect the vendor's bid for all activities included in the submission. To support selection and negotiation, vendors may break out and clarify their topline budget figures for each of the separate Options A-C in either their project approach or in the space provided for requested exceptions on the Proposal Submittal Form. CMAP will seek clarification on budget breakouts if needed.

8. Are there any budget restrictions in terms of allowable and unallowable costs? Particularly, when it comes to special event planning and the public engagement campaign.

The allowable charges standard to most CMAP contracts are outlined in Attachment 4, Section 5 of RFP 334, beginning on page 19, available on the [Procurements Hub](https://cmap.illinois.gov/procurement) website (<https://cmap.illinois.gov/procurement>). Proposals should NOT include food, beverages or swag. If CMAP determines these items to be necessary, they will procure these items separately.

Evaluation questions

9. If a proposer recommends an approach that inadvertently includes a limitation, will the proposer lose points or will reviewers allow room for discussion during the interview?

Complete submissions are scored on each of the criteria identified in the RFP. Except for the bonus point for DBE/MBE/WBE/VBE participation, individual points are neither awarded nor deducted based on specific elements of the submission. CMAP may seek clarification on specific elements of a response via interviews, if needed, and expects the successful consultant to co-develop a final approach that meets the project's objectives.

CMAP will consider proposed exceptions or amendments to the scope, terms, conditions, and procedures outlined in the RFP and depending on their reasonableness and applicability to the project at hand, may include them as amendments in the executed contract. Vendors must use the available space in the Proposal Submission Form to detail any requested exceptions to the scope and/or general terms and conditions. Exceptions will not necessarily affect final evaluation scores, but they need to be taken into consideration by the evaluation committee to accurately review all submissions. Therefore, any legal review should be conducted by the proposer prior to submitting their proposal so that any proposed exceptions or amendments can be included in the proposal. Failure to disclose exceptions until after an award may result in a rescinded award.

10. How does the bonus point for DBE/MBE/WBE/VBE participation work?



Those submissions that include a PRIME consultant with the proper paperwork to qualify as a certified DBE/MBE/WBE/VBE vendor will receive a bonus point. This bonus point is given regardless of other scoring. See posting materials for paperwork requirements.

During the pre-bid meeting, CMAP staff reviewed the evaluation criteria and in discussing the bonus point for DBE/MBE/WBE/VBE participation, said that the point available here "may help to break a tie in the scoring process." Does that mean the point is only awarded if there is a tie, or is the point awarded regardless of the scores of other proposers and based on the composition of the team?

Staff misspoke in the September 25 pre-bid webinar.

11. When did you adopt your current core values?

CMAP adopted its core values as a public agency in 2019. Find more information on our website at <https://cmap.illinois.gov/about/>.

ON TO 2050's plan principles — Inclusive Growth, Resilience, and Prioritized Investment — were adopted in October 2018 as part of the previous comprehensive regional plan's development. Find more information on our website at <https://cmap.illinois.gov/regional-plan/principles/>.

Scope questions

12. Can you please provide some clarify around the goals of the engagement campaign?

How far reaching is the public engagement campaign – through your stakeholder partners or to the general public?

What engagement resources do you have for the public campaign?

What demographics are you trying to reach in the planning process? More generally, could you outline the key audiences for inclusion in the public engagement campaign?

For the project as a whole, audiences will expand out over time — beginning with agency leadership, then CMAP's board/committees and close partners, and culminating with an intense, concentrated period of community visioning with the general public in spring/summer 2026. These audiences correspond roughly to the separate tasks and activities outlined in the RFP.

More specifically, the public engagement campaign outlined in Options C will focus on proactive public engagement of the residents and constituencies of northeastern Illinois. A primary objective will be to cultivate new stories and storytellers to shift the narratives that tend to dominate planning. Doing so requires the highest standards of equitable and inclusive engagement. The planning process must be accessible and open to all. CMAP will also work with the successful consultant to identify marginalized or traditionally excluded



communities as well as strategies to reach them. This may include partnerships with community-based organizations.

Federal law requires metropolitan planning organizations like CMAP to create a public participation plan for providing the general public with a reasonable opportunity to be involved in the planning process. More information on CMAP's stakeholders and current engagement resources is available on our website (<https://cmap.illinois.gov/wp-content/uploads/Public-Participation-Plan-FINAL.pdf>).

13. Can you please provide some clarify around the approach for the 2060 plan?

Can you tell us more about why you are taking a new approach for the 2060 planning process than CMAP did for 2040 and 2050?

What is the number one thing you want to get out of the 2060 planning sessions that you haven't seen previously?

CMAP is pursuing a new approach to fulfill its federal and state responsibilities by developing a Regional Vision that will guide planning activities — with future action plans and strategies tailored to issues in transportation, climate, and the regional economy — over the next 5-10 years. A single, comprehensive plan like ON TO 2050 (available on CMAP's website at <https://cmap.illinois.gov/regional-plan/>) represents a snapshot in time that cannot evolve and adapt to new and shifting priorities. Climate action, housing coordination, industrial strategies, and other issues require more dedicated and responsive planning than is feasible under the previous model. Also, the region's funding environment has changed substantially since the COVID-19 pandemic, with increased federal spending and a greater emphasis on regional coordination across funding sources. CMAP's planning cycle needs to adapt to take advantage of these opportunities.

The new approach builds on the significant progress and direction provided by ON TO 2050, while shifting away from the agency's prior model of comprehensive planning. This offers both product and process improvements to the agency's work, including deeper analysis and more tailored solutions on high-priority and near-term issues, stronger alignment to regional goals across several strategic initiatives, and greater flexibility to address issues and opportunities that arise off the four-year update cycle of federal transportation programs. (See more information on peer comparisons and anticipated benefits at <https://cmap.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12807886&GUID=2E8D7D91-B5D5-43F4-95B2-6185FADCDF42>.)

For the core activities outline in Tasks 0-4 of this RFP in particular, the Regional Vision offers a chance to think differently about how CMAP works with coalitions on multi-year strategic initiatives, such as:

- Refining and reasserting first principles that allow the region to go further and faster together on critical issues.
- Re-engaging key partners in horizon-based thinking and then championing structural and systemic solutions to longer-range, lasting challenges.



- Working with partners to complete and close gateways — clear, formal decision points on regional values, priorities, and commitments — so that related efforts can proceed with confidence.
- Refining and gaining traction on the proposed actions of ON TO 2050 — many of which were developed with a long time horizon and enduring value — in operating conditions that have changed substantially since 2018.

14. Can you please provide some clarify around what is meant by a “new and untried approach”?

The RFP uses extraordinary and exciting language that implies not only that CMAP is seeking a “new and untried approach” but that it also is recognizing communication as a key strategic tool to regional planning, rather than a tactic to support it. Are we interpreting this correctly? If this interpretation is true, has CMAP previously done work where communications was the lead strategy of the particular effort? If you have done prior work with communications as the lead strategy, was it a smooth process for CMAP leaders and planners?

Can you also share your hopes for how this new approach might have impacts outside of CMAP and in communities? Is there a particular external outcome, action, narrative change, public perception, et al, that you are hoping to see?

CMAP strives to create opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute to and enhance the agency’s work in the region. Previous comprehensive plans — including [GO TO 2040](#) and [ON TO 2050](#) as well as subsequent technical updates — were the product of a multi-year planning process featuring extensive staff research, stakeholder engagement, and public outreach. More information on the public engagement activities for ON TO 2050 is available on our website at <https://cmap.illinois.gov/wp-content/uploads/FY19-0021-ENGAGEMENT-REPORT.pdf>.

The Regional Vision will likewise incorporate other activities related to policy analysis and development. In addition to this RFP for strategic communications, CMAP has put out procurements for other components of the Regional Vision, including existing conditions analysis (to assess and summarize the state of the region today) and scenario planning (to explore plausible futures for the region and refine robust strategies).

The public engagement campaign in Option C will be intentionally ‘big picture’ — aspirational, forward-thinking, and open-ended. This community visioning work will focus on collaborative activities that invite residents to envision and explore different possible futures for their communities. This includes identifying issues and shared priorities that residents want solved as well as recognizing the assets they already have in place or those missing from their community fabric. These efforts will enhance the regional vision’s content and relevance to diverse populations, educate the general public about regional planning and key issues/themes, and build buy-in for ongoing regional efforts.

More information on CMAP’s stakeholders and current engagement resources is available on our website at <https://cmap.illinois.gov/wp-content/uploads/Public-Participation-Plan-FINAL.pdf>.



15. Can you please provide some clarify around the CMAP team participation?

Who will manage the chosen consultant's work? Will the chosen consultant interact with CMAP's communications staff members?

CMAP's team on this RFP includes the project manager for the Regional Vision, a task lead for community visioning, and dedicated staff from CMAP's Regional Policy & Implementation and Communications & Engagement (C&E) divisions. The successful consultant can also expect direct input and support from CMAP's Executive Office.

For coordination on deliverables, the C&E division also includes a deputy; a principal and two specialists in engagement; a principal and four specialists in communications; and two graphic designers. The successful consultant will complete the tasks and deliverables outlined in the RFP with moderate input from CMAP staff. Additional steps to ensure alignment and reasonable opportunities for feedback (workshops, review, substantive revisions, acceptance, etc.) can be determined during project mobilization.

As outlined in the RFP, the executed contract may include several inter-related services, tasks, and deliverables provided by a qualified firm or team of firms. CMAP will work with the successful consultant to determine a project management structure that best meets the needs of the project and the division of labor across teams.

16. Can you please provide some clarify around the equitable engagement component?

Does CMAP have a philosophy or policy about the use of stipends to compensate community members for their participation in planning processes?

You use the terms "stakeholder" and "steering committee member". Do you have a definition for either? Can we assume that every steering committee member is a stakeholder, but not every stakeholder is a steering committee member?

CMAP is committed to equitable and inclusive engagement with communities that have been traditionally excluded or marginalized from the planning process. The agency is currently piloting a multiyear investment (federally funded through the Illinois Department of Transportation) in the Community Alliance for Regional Equity to deepen partnerships with community-based organizations. More information is available on CMAP's website at <https://cmap.illinois.gov/engagement/community-alliance-for-regional-equity/>.

To compensate them for their time and expertise, each member organization receives a \$10,000 unrestricted honorarium. CMAP is continuing to learn from and evolve this model for public participation, and the program can serve as an internal starting point for innovative ways to partner with communities.

CMAP engages and incorporate input from a range of stakeholders, including the general public, community organizations, government agencies, elected officials, the civic and business communities, and educational institutions. As outlined in Task 4 of the RFP, the successful consultant will work with CMAP to develop the structure for project oversight, stakeholder management, and civic engagement. This may include forming a steering committee and/or related working groups (along with CMAP's boards and committees) to



represent the interests of different stakeholders, provide staff feedback and policy guidance, and champion the Regional Vision’s eventual adoption and implementation.

More information on CMAP’s stakeholders is available on our website (<https://cmap.illinois.gov/wp-content/uploads/Public-Participation-Plan-FINAL.pdf>).

RECORDING AND ATTENDANCE SHEET FOR PRE-BID INFORMATIONAL MEETING. A pre-bid informational meeting was held on September 25, 2024. A recording can be found by using this link: [RFP 334 Pre-Bid Meeting](#). Please note that this link will expire after 90 days.

NAME	AFFILIATION
John Harris	a5 Branding & Digital
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Abigail Rose	All Together
Jeanne Reidy	Avoq
Lynda Carslile	CS-Effect
Evelyn Demirjian	DCC Marketing
Monica Metzger	DCC Marketing
Derrius Quarles	EcoHealth Strategies
Rudy Zacharias	g[squared]
Jason Biernat	High Street
Janet Henderson	Images, Inc
Lauren Mattern	Journey
Cristi Kempf	M. Harris & co.
Berenice Alvarez	Morreale Communications
Asabea Kirkland	Morreale Communications
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