

Great Falls, Montana Transportation and Logistics Assessment Strategy

Request for Proposals

Great Falls Development Authority, Inc.

November 8, 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

The Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. (GFDA) seeks proposals to conduct a market assessment of transportation and logistics demand in the Great Falls Montana trade area and to use the transportation and logistics market demand assessment to help GFDA develop a transportation and logistics economic development strategy for GFDA and partners to pursue the identified opportunities. The purpose of the project is to determine market demand for increased distribution and logistics services and facilities in the Great Falls trade area, detailing such demand by type of service and facility, as well as assess the impact that increased distribution and logistics services and facilities would have on the regional economy, culminating in the development of a strategy that we can implement over the next 3-5 years to attract investment in our trade area.

Interested firms are encouraged to discuss this RFP with us, as detailed below.

II. BACKGROUND

Great Falls Development Authority
<https://growgreatfallsmontana.org>

GFDA is a regional public/private economic development organization (EDO) and certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that focuses its efforts on the 13-county Great Falls Montana trade area, also known as Montana's Golden Triangle. Great Falls Montana is an MSA with 86,000 population. Our trade area extends to the Canadian border, totaling about 209,000 population. Counties include Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, Glacier, Hill, Judith Basin, Liberty, Meagher, Pondera, Teton, Toole, and northern parts of Lewis & Clark. We partner with economic development in Lethbridge, AB.

Our target industries are food/agriculture/bioscience, business services, energy, tourism, advanced manufacturing, defense, logistics, healthcare, and regional retail/services. Our EDO works on business attraction, business retention/expansion, business start-ups, downtown revitalization, workforce, and housing, amongst other things.

In June we adopted a new 2023-2025 Economic Development Strategy

<https://growgreatfallsmontana.org/about/strategic-plan/>

One of the strategic actions in the strategy is to commission this market assessment.

In developing our new economic development strategy, we commissioned a [preliminary transportation/logistics assessment](#). The assessment found that logistics services in the Great Falls region are not cost-competitive and are a limiting factor in attracting more manufacturing and other industry investment.

GFDA is the developer of the [Great Falls AgriTech Park](#). As part of the Park or elsewhere in the Great Falls area, we have been working to attract a private transload operator and warehousing to support manufacturing growth.

III. OBJECTIVES

We seek consultant or consultant team help to help us attract more transportation and logistics services in the Great Falls trade region that will make shipping costs more competitive and offer a greater array of services needed by existing businesses to support their current operations and future growth, and to help us attract more manufacturing operations. This will be a two-step process beginning with a transportation and logistics market demand assessment that will provide the foundation for the transportation and logistics economic development strategy that will guide us over the next 3-5 years. This project should include establishing a baseline of existing distribution and logistics services, facilities, and costs in the Great Falls trade area as well as demand for increased distribution and logistics services and facilities in the Great Falls trade area, detailing such demand by type of service and facility, assessing the impact that increased distribution and logistics services and facilities would have on the regional economy.

The objectives of this RFP are:

- 1) Summarize existing distribution and logistics services, facilities, and costs in the Great Falls trade area, essentially determining our baseline.
- 2) Assess the demand for increased distribution and logistics services and facilities in the Great Falls trade area and detail such demand by type of service and facility.
- 3) Assess the impact that increased distribution and logistics services and facilities would have on the regional economy, particularly in supporting growth in manufacturing and in making the cost of operations related to shipping and logistics more competitive.
- 4) Assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the region to pursue increased distribution and logistics services and facilities in the region.

Assess whether market demand exists to attract expansion of existing or new transportation/logistics service providers and facilities, including a transload operation and various types of warehousing.

- 5) Based on the market demand assessment, work with GFDA to develop an economic development strategy for GFDA and partners to pursue the identified opportunities.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK

Consultants should detail their proposed scope work in their proposals. At a minimum, there are two required deliverables: 1) the market demand assessment; and 2) the economic development strategy.

The market demand assessment work should include extensive discussions with existing transportation and logistics businesses in our 13-county region, as well as with BNSF, MDT, USAF, manufacturers, and agricultural shippers in our region. We expect the Consultant to spend extensive time in person in the region. GFDA will provide staff support to identify businesses and arrange meetings. The Consultant should include an assessment of the potential for existing businesses to invest in and/or develop logistics operations and facilities, as well as the potential to attract such investment. The market demand assessment should produce demand data that GFDA and potential transportation/logistics businesses can use to determine the feasibility of proposed investments in operations and facilities in the region. We expect 80% or more of the Consultant's work will be devoted to the market demand assessment.

The economic development strategy work should be conducted as a team with GFDA project staff. We desire a strategy that we can put into action to produce results. The economic development strategy should consider business expansion, start-up, and attraction opportunities, as well as financing, investment, and other tools and services GFDA could offer to attract and support private investment.

The market demand assessment and economic development strategy products should be produced in PDF format; printed copies are not required. Consultants should include ongoing meetings with our project team throughout the project, some of which can be held virtually if desired. The Consultant should include a public PowerPoint presentation upon completion of the market demand assessment and a final PowerPoint presentation upon completion of the economic development strategy either virtually or in person.

V. CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

We are in search of a consultant or consultants with a robust background in transportation and logistics market demand assessments, as well as in realistic transportation/logistics-related economic development strategies. The consultant or team should bring a wealth of expertise in transportation and logistics market

assessment, particularly from the perspective of existing manufacturers and other companies needing shipping services, with an emphasis on market demand assessments in markets similar in size to the Great Falls trade area. Their experience should span various aspects of transportation and logistics. Moreover, we value a consultant who can demonstrate a deep understanding of the regulatory and compliance landscape within our geographic region. A proven history of delivering innovative and sustainable solutions in transportation and logistics is paramount, and we look forward to leveraging this experience to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our economic development strategies.

The ideal consultant team would include deep transportation/logistics market assessment experience and transportation/logistics related economic development.

VI. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

An electronic copy of the proposal should be submitted in PDF format by email, Dropbox, or other electronic file-sharing method by 5:00 PM MST on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, to:

Tyler Menzales
TMenzales@GrowGreatFalls.org

We plan to distribute the proposals to our selection task group and, therefore, will not accept the submittal of printed materials. We welcome the inclusion of online URLs that would allow us to assess experiences in more depth.

The submittal should follow the order below and include, at a minimum the following information:

- A cover letter signed and dated by the person or an authorized representative of the organization making the submittal.
- A brief statement of your firm's understanding of the goals of this effort and of the services requested in this RFP.
- A brief statement of the history of your team, including relevant projects.
- A proposed work plan indicating how your firm proposes to perform the project as defined in your scope of work. This work plan should be detailed enough to demonstrate your familiarity with this type of project. It should include information on your firm's methodology and schedule for completing the scope of work requirements. It should include the firms or sub-consultants and individuals that will prepare each major task or work product.
- Qualifications of key individuals to be assigned to this project, their availability during the relevant time periods, and their recent experience on similar projects.
- Examples of at least five similar transportation and logistics market assessments that your firm has completed.

- Preference will be given to consultants who provide references from at least three clients the consultant has recently provided services to.

VII. PRICE

The consultant will present a lump sum budget for the work. Travel expenses should be detailed and included in the budget. Note, that we will provide pro bono hotel accommodations. The all-inclusive lump sum should not exceed \$80,000.

VIII. CONSULTANT SELECTION

Consultants that respond to this RFP will be evaluated and ranked. This evaluation will be based on the submitted proposals and, at the discretion of the Committee, on interviews with those consultants who appear to be particularly well qualified, as determined from their written proposals.

The consultants will be evaluated and ranked in accordance with the following factors, which are weighted as shown:

- The consultant's experience with similar projects (25%)
- The breadth of the consultant's experience, including the qualifications and availability of the key personnel who would be assigned (20%)
- The methodology and scope of services to be provided (50%)
- Cost (5%)

Negotiations will commence with the highest-ranked consultant. Upon reaching an agreement on a final work plan and price, the Great Falls Development Authority will award the contract. If an agreement cannot be reached with the highest-ranked consultant, negotiations may proceed with lower ranked consultant(s).

IX. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & CONDITIONS

A. STATEMENT OF NONCOMMITMENT

Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in preparation of proposals responding to the RFP. The GFDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and re-advertise. All proposals become the property of the GFDA.

B. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Successful contract bidders must comply with provisions of all applicable federal law, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any subcontracting by the successful bidder subjects subcontracting firm(s) to the same provisions of federal law.

In accordance with state and federal requirements, the consultant (hereinafter referred to as "contractor") must agree as follows:

1.) COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 FOR FEDERAL AID CONTRACTS

(a) Compliance with Regulations. The Contractor shall comply with all Regulations relative to nondiscrimination in Federally-assisted programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 24 CFR Part 1, as they may be amended (hereafter referred to as the Regulations), which are incorporated by reference and made part of this Agreement.

(b) Nondiscrimination. The Contractor, with regard to the work performed by it during the Agreement, shall not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, color or national origin in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment. The Contractor shall not participate either directly or indirectly in the discrimination prohibited in 24CFR Part 21.

(c) Solicitations for Subcontractors, Including Procurements of Materials and Equipment. In all solicitations, whether by competitive bidding or negotiation by the Contractor for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurements of materials or leases of equipment, any potential subcontractor or supplier shall be notified by the Contractor of the Contractor's obligations under this Agreement and the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination.

(d) Sanctions for Noncompliance. In the event of the contractor's noncompliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of this Agreement, the Department may impose sanctions as it determines appropriate, including, but not limited to withholding payments to the Contractor under the Agreement until the Contractor complies, and/or cancellation, termination or suspension of the agreement in whole or in part.

2) COMPLIANCE WITH THE MONTANA GOVERNMENTAL CODE OF FAIR PRACTICES, 49-3-207. MCA

In accordance with 49-3-207, MCA, the Contractor agrees that for this agreement all hiring will be made on the basis of merit and qualifications and that there will be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, political ideas, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, or national origin by persons performing the Agreement.

3) COMPLIANCE WITH MINORITY & WOMEN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Contractor will make efforts to encourage the use of minority and women's business enterprises in connection with Agreement activities in accordance with 24 CFR Part 85.36(e) which describes the actions to ensure that minority and women's business enterprises are used when possible in the procurement of property and services.

C. VENUE

The laws of the State of Montana govern this contract. The parties agree that any litigation concerning bid, proposal, or subsequent contract must be brought in the Eighth Judicial District of Cascade County, State of Montana and each party shall pay its own costs and attorney fees. (Reference 18-1-401 MCA)

D. INSURANCE

Certificates of Insurance, indicating compliance with the required coverage, must be filed with the Great Falls Development Authority within ten (10) working days of the Notice of Award. The proof of insurance/exemption must be valid for the entire contract period.

E. RFP AUTHORITY

This RFP has been issued in accordance with Title 18, Montana Code Annotated and the Administrative Rules of Montana, Title 2, Chapter 5. The RFP process is a procurement option, allowing award to be based on stated criteria or evaluation factors. The evaluation factors to be used in this procurement have been specified in this RFP.

F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

We encourage potential respondents to discuss the project with us. For more information regarding this RFP, please contact:

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