Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

US 12 Scenic Byway Initiative and Technical Study

Release Date: 10/21/2026

Addendum Issued: 10/24/2026

Issued By: Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA)

Cover Letter

The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) invites qualified firms or teams to submit statements of qualifications to provide transportation, civil, and multimodal engineering services for the US 12 Scenic Byway Technical Study, to be completed by December 1, 2027. The selected engineering consultant will join an RDA-led consultant team preparing a coordinated regional framework for US 12 in Lake and Porter Counties that advances lakefront access, tourism, safety, mobility, environmental stewardship, and corridor revitalization across Northwest Indiana.

The study will implement the vision and recommendations of the RDA Comprehensive Strategic Plan by producing a Corridor Management Plan, an Indiana Dunes State Park Access Study, and a prioritized implementation program. The work will support an Indiana Byway Program application, position the corridor for a potential future National Scenic Byway nomination, and prepare high-priority projects for grant and capital funding. Final documentation should address the six federally recognized intrinsic qualities and clearly distinguish between state designation requirements and those associated with a future federal nomination.

The RDA President and CEO, staff, and consultants will lead the overall process, including project management, committee coordination, stakeholder engagement, corridor visioning, intrinsic-qualities documentation, Corridor Management Plan preparation, and integration of the final study. The selected engineering consultant will serve as the technical engineering lead and will coordinate with the RDA, the other lead consultants, INDOT, NIRPC, Indiana DNR, the National Park Service, municipalities, tourism organizations, transportation providers, and other corridor partners.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in scenic byway and active, multi-modal corridors; civil and environmental engineering, access, and environmental analysis; traffic, transportation, and multimodal engineering, including roadway, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit systems; state park access requirements and best practices; federalized land requirements; documentation of the six federally recognized intrinsic qualities; and state and federal scenic byway designation requirements.

The Authority will determine whether a composite team or individual firms will best meet the objectives of the project mission. The RDA also reserves the right to select one or more individual firms, rather than accept a composite team as proposed.

Sincerely,

Sherri Ziller, President and CEO, Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority

Section 1: Proposal Instructions

1. Request for Qualifications:

a. The RDA has an MBE/WBE participation goal of 15%/5% and will ensure that these goals are met under the resulting contract.
b. This RFQ is released, effective 10/21/2026. Questions must be submitted to Amy Jakubin at ajakubin@rda.in.gov by 10/30/2026.
c. To ensure transparency, responses to all questions will be posted on the RDA's website at www.in.gov/rda by 11/4/2026. The question/inquiry and answer link will become active after responses to all questions have been compiled. Only answers posted on the RDA website will be considered official and valid by the RDA.
d. Responses to the RFQ must be submitted by email to Amy Jakubin at ajakubin@rda.in.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. CDT on 11/13/2026. Selection will occur following the November RDA Board Meeting.
e. Offerors are strictly prohibited from contacting any other RDA employees or any third-party representatives of the RDA on any matter having to do with this RFQ. This may result in disqualification.

2. RFQ Schedule (updated 10/24/2026)

a. The following is the anticipated schedule for the RFQ Process:

Issue RFQ	10/21/2026
Last day to submit questions	10/30/2026
Answers to questions posted on the RDA website	11/4/2026
Due date for qualifications submittals	11/13/2026
Interviews/selection	11/19/2026 RDA Board Meeting
Notice to Proceed	Following Contract Negotiations

3. Preventing Unfair Advantage.

a. Fairness and transparency in the procurement process requires that Offerors competing for a specific project do not derive a competitive advantage from having provided services related to the project/contract/work assignment in question.
b. The Offeror shall disclose active contracts with clients and communities in Lake and Porter Counties in the State of Indiana.
c. Title VI Solicitation Notice: The RDA, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all Offerors that it will affirmatively ensure that for any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and no businesses will be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, national

origin (including limited English proficiency), creed, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), age, or disability in consideration for an award.

d. All contracts and subcontracts that result from this solicitation incorporate by reference the provisions of 29 CFR part 201, et seq, the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), with the same force and effect as if given in full text. The FLSA sets minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor standards for full and part- time workers.
e. The Offeror has full responsibility to monitor compliance with the referenced statute or regulation. The Offeror must address any claims or disputes that arise from this requirement directly with the U.S. Department of Labor – Wage and Hour Division.

4. RFQ Submissions

a. Each response will be considered objectively; however, the RDA assumes no obligation to accept or take action on any response. The RDA is not responsible for costs incurred in preparing or submitting a response.
b. Responses must be submitted electronically by email to ajakubin@rda.in.gov no later than **5:00 p.m. CDT on November 13, 2026**. Hard-copy or mailed submissions will not be accepted.

5. Required Proposal Contents

a. All brochures and supplemental documentation shall be included with the proposal.
b. Offerors are required to submit the following information in their proposal: Letter of Transmittal. The Offeror shall provide a transmittal letter with authorizing signature for the proposal. The letter must briefly summarize the vendor's ability and willingness to perform the services required by the RFQ.
    i. Company Profile and Background. Provide the following information: Location – The street address of the Offeror's company headquarters.
    ii. Company's Primary Business. State the Offeror's primary business, the number of years in the Offeror's industry, and the number of employees assigned to these related activities.
    iii. State the legal make-up of your company. Sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc. Also, state MBE/DBE status and/or statements of Diversity Equity and Inclusion commitment.
    iv. Please list any Lawsuits that you are currently engaged in. Please provide any and all suits (include, but not limited to Federal, State, Local or other Municipalities and Governmental agencies).
    v. Key Personnel Information. Provide the name, title, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of the persons who will function as the RDA's primary contact and back-up contact person. Provide brief resumes/qualifications of personnel who will be the primary participants in this project. Include any certifications earned, special training taken, and memberships in professional groups.
    vi. Subconsultants. Please provide company profile, background, and resumes/qualifications for any subconsultants. Also, state MBE/DBE status and/or statements of Diversity

Equity and Inclusion commitment and expected percentage of overall contract fee including subconsultants. The RDA expects Offerors to endeavor to include meaningful contributions from MBE/DBE firms in support of the project or otherwise staff with a Diverse Representation for this RFQ effort.

vii. Similar Project Examples. Include summary sheets, images, locations, dates, costs and contact information.

viii. References. Provide a list of three references.

6. Criteria

a. The RDA will evaluate each proposal submitted based on the following criteria. After receipt and review of the written proposal, the RDA may elect to have the proposal presented in person or clarifications submitted in writing.

b. Offerors shall not assume that any information shared with the RDA prior to this RFQ will be considered in the evaluation process of this RFQ. The evaluation team may or may not have prior knowledge of any discussions and processes. Evaluation will be completed on the information submitted in response to the RFQ only.

Item	Description
1	Qualification and Capability of Firm and Subconsultants
2	Key Personnel
3	Similar Projects and Past Performance
4	Capacity/Availability to Complete Work
5	References
6	MBE/DBE Commitment

7. Purpose and Need/Project Description.

a. Project Purpose: The RDA has succeeded in its first two decades by focusing on planning and financing multijurisdictional major infrastructure projects. These projects have eliminated barriers to economic growth, which, when removed, allow for private sector investment and subsequent "above baseline growth" across the Northwest Indiana (NW IN) Region (Lake and Porter counties, Indiana). The US 12 Scenic Byway Initiative and related technical study is a key implementation recommendation of the 2025 RDA Comprehensive Strategic Plan.

b. This project will be led by RDA leadership with the assistance of a set of existing

c. consultants. The RDA is requesting qualifications for technical services to supplement existing team expertise.

d. The RDA is established as a separate body corporate and politic under Indiana Code 37-7.5 et seq.

e. The RDA is requesting qualifications from a firm or a team of firms. Based on the RDA's review of the RFQ responses by the Offerors, the RDA may suggest modifications to teams.

8. Requested Engineering Qualifications:

a. Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in scenic byway and active, multi-modal corridors; civil and environmental engineering, access, and environmental analysis; traffic, transportation, and multimodal engineering, including roadway, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit systems; state park access requirements and best practices; federalized land requirements; documentation of the six federally recognized intrinsic qualities; and state and federal scenic byway designation requirements. More information about the overall project is listed in Attachment A starting on page 8.

9. Content and Form of Proposal.

a. The following are the required submittal contents, together with the potential points available for each content category:
   i. Qualification and Capability of Firm - Offeror for this engagement shall provide a narrative of prior experience within the past five (5) years and qualifications aligned with the requested engineering qualifications.
   ii. Key Personnel for this Project - Provide a graphic and narrative description of the organizational structure for the provision of services to the areas of expertise,
   iii. Similar Projects and Past Performance - Provide a list of similar project examples, including summary sheets, images, location, dates, costs, and contact information.
   iv. Capacity/Availability to Complete Work - Provide a summary/chart of staff to complete work and percentage of time available to complete work over the 2027 calendar year.
   v. References - Provide the name, address, and telephone number of at least three (3) clients that are familiar with the quality of work performed by you of a similar nature.
   vi. MBE/DBE Commitment - State MBE/DBE status and/or statements of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion commitment and expected percentage of overall contract fee, including subconsultants. The RDA expects Offerors to endeavor to include meaningful contributions from MBE/DBE firms in support of the project or otherwise staff with a Diverse Representation for this RFQ effort.

Section 2: Process and Contracting Instructions

1. Process

a. Responses must be submitted electronically by email to ajakubin@rda.in.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. CDT on 11/13/2026. Hard-copy or mailed submissions will not be accepted.
b. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFQ, or if additional information is necessary for a clearer interpretation of provisions of this RFQ prior to the due date for proposals, an addendum will be posted on the RDA website. If such addenda issuance is necessary, the RDA may extend the due date and time of proposals to accommodate such additional information requirements, if required.

2. Modification or Withdrawal of Offers

a. Modification to, or withdrawal of, a proposal received by the RDA after the exact hour and date specified for receipt of proposals will not be considered.

3. Taxes

a. Proposals should not include any tax embedded in the fees, as the RDA is tax exempt.

4. Compliance Certification

a. Responses to this RFQ serve as a representation that Respondent has no current or outstanding criminal, civil, or enforcement actions initiated by any government entity or agency, and Respondent agrees that it will immediately notify that RDA of any such actions. The Respondent also certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently in arrears in payment of taxes, permit fees or other statutory, regulatory or judicially required payments to the state or federal government. The Respondent agrees that the RDA may confirm, at any time, that no such liabilities exist, and, if such liabilities are discovered, that the RDA may bar the Respondent from contracting with the RDA, cancel existing contracts, withhold payments to set off such obligations, and withhold further payments or purchases until the entity is current in its payments on its liabilities.

5. Equal Opportunity Commitment

a. Pursuant to IC 36-7.5-2-8, it has been determined that there is a goal for minority and woman business enterprises subcontracting opportunities on a contract awarded under this RFQ. Therefore, Respondent should attempt to meet the contract goals of 15% for Minority Business Enterprises and 5% for Woman Business Enterprises participation. Failure to meet these requirements will affect the evaluation of Respondent's proposal.

6. Americans with Disabilities Act

a. The Respondent specifically agrees to comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. and 47 U.S.C. 225).

7. Contract Terms/Clauses

a. A sample contract that the RDA expects to execute with the successful Respondent is provided in Attachment B. It is the RDA's expectation that the final contract will be substantially similar to the sample contract provided.
b. The mandatory contract terms are as follows:
    i. Authority to Bind Contractor;
    ii. Boilerplate Affirmation Clause;

iii. Duties of Contractor, Rate of Pay, and Term of Contract;
iv. Compliance with Laws;
v. Insurance;
vi. Drug-free Workplace Provision and Certification;
vii. Employment Eligibility Verification (E-Verify);
viii. Funding Cancellation;
ix. Ethics;
x. Indemnification;
xi. Governing Laws;
xii. Non-discrimination clause;
xiii. Condition of Payment;
xiv. Telephone Privacy;
xv. Penalties/Interest/Attorney's Fees;
xvi. Termination for Convenience; and
xvii. Non-collusion and Acceptance.

Any or all portions of this RFQ and any or all portions of the Respondent's response may be incorporated as part of the final contract.

Attachment A: Further Project Information

Phase I — US 12 Corridor Vision and Technical Study will establish a long-term vision for the corridor and identify the roadway, mobility, streetscape, land use, environmental, placemaking, economic development, and implementation strategies needed to realize that vision. The successful consultant will be expected to develop a compelling regional experience that connects Indiana Dunes National Park, Indiana Dunes State Park, the Marquette Greenway, South Shore Line stations, lakefront communities, downtowns, beaches, ecological resources, industrial landscapes, and other cultural and recreational destinations.

This work should treat US 12 not merely as a roadway but as the organizing spine of a larger regional destination. Particular emphasis will be placed on strengthening connections to the Indiana Dunes National and State Parks, completing the Marquette Greenway as a signature corridor component, improving multimodal connections to South Shore Line stations, developing community gateways, enhancing visitor amenities, and creating opportunities for corridor and community revitalization.

Phase I will also establish the economic case for coordinated corridor investment. Building upon Northwest Indiana's distinctive character, the study will incorporate REMI economic modeling to evaluate how investments in tourism, trails, community destinations, and corridor revitalization can increase visitation, support local businesses, stimulate private investment, and make US 12 a significant regional economic development driver. The study should also help position the region to pursue major public, private, and philanthropic investment, including strategies to address the approximately $40 million remaining funding need to complete the Marquette Greenway and to secure additional investment for visitor amenities, environmental stewardship, and community revitalization.

Phase II — Scenic Byway Designation will build upon the corridor vision and recommendations established in Phase I by addressing the technical requirements and actions necessary to achieve Indiana Scenic Byway designation and position the corridor for potential future federal designation. This work will define the proposed corridor geography and document its intrinsic qualities while integrating the transportation, safety, land use, environmental, parking, access, and multimodal recommendations identified through Phase I. Phase II will establish a clear roadmap for designation, long-term corridor management, and future advancement of the Scenic Byway initiative.

The long-term ambition is to create something far more meaningful than a highway passing through the nation's 61st national park and Indiana Dunes State Park. The RDA seeks to establish US 12 as a destination in its own right, a defining regional experience that connects communities, landscapes, industry, recreation, and culture; expresses Northwest Indiana's unique Sand and Steel identity; and achieves recognition and economic impact comparable to that of nationally recognized destination corridors such as the Blue Ridge Parkway.

2. Project Goals and Deliverables

The US 12 Scenic Byway Initiative aims to establish a clear, technically grounded strategy to improve the corridor as a transportation asset, multimodal connection, regional destination, and catalyst for

investment. The study should provide the RDA and its corridor partners with a coordinated set of recommendations that can guide future infrastructure, mobility, placemaking, land use, and implementation decisions.

While Scenic Byway designation is an important long-term objective, the study should focus on how US 12 functions today, where targeted improvements are needed, and how to establish a practical framework for future investment.

The study should accomplish the following:

Establish a Comprehensive Understanding of the Corridor

Evaluate existing transportation, roadway, safety, civil infrastructure, multimodal, environmental, land use, access, parking, and visitor conditions to identify key needs, constraints, and opportunities, including seasonal and peak-period conditions that materially affect corridor operations, park access, parking, circulation, or the visitor experience.

Develop a Long-Term Transportation and Infrastructure Vision

Establish a coordinated vision for roadway, intersection, safety, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, parking, access, and supporting infrastructure improvements appropriate to the varied conditions along US 12.

Strengthen Connections to Regional Destinations

Improve connections between US 12 and Indiana Dunes National Park, Indiana Dunes State Park, the Marquette Greenway, South Shore Line stations, lakefront communities, beaches, commercial districts, and other regional destinations.

Support Placemaking, Community Development, and Investment

Identify strategic locations where gateways, streetscape, public realm, land use, redevelopment, and other place-based improvements can reinforce transportation investments, strengthen community identity, support local businesses, and improve the visitor experience.

Establish a Clear Path to Implementation

Translate the corridor vision into prioritized projects, planning-level costs, potential funding sources, responsible partners, and near-, mid-, and long-term implementation actions. The study should also establish the technical foundation in a corridor management plan necessary to pursue Indiana Scenic Byway designation and position the corridor for potential future federal designation.

Key Deliverables

The final study is anticipated to include:

- Existing Conditions and Corridor Needs and Opportunity Assessment;
- US 12 Transportation, Infrastructure, and Multimodal Improvement Strategy;
- Indiana Dunes State Park Access Strategy:
- Regional Connectivity and Marquette Greenway Strategy;

- Targeted Placemaking, Gateway, and Land Use Recommendations;
- REMI Economic Impact and Investment Analysis;
- Prioritized Implementation, Funding, and Partnership Strategy;
- Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan, Designation Framework, and Roadmap
- Final US 12 Scenic Byway Corridor Technical Study Document