



Request for Letters of Interest

for Timber Management Services along four highway corridors
under a Public-Private Partnership

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this Request for Expression of Interest

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is pleased to present this Request for Letters of Interest (RFLOI) to entities with experience in providing timber management services. Entities interested in responding to this request ("Respondents") are invited, on a non-binding basis to express their interest in the project and provide feedback on its features.

The purpose of this RFLOI is to generate responsive information that may help the Department understand the perspective of the industry and to confirm and/or refine the scope, and procurement approach for the Project. Respondents are informed that their submittals at this stage of the process will not lead to a short-list and other interested parties will not be precluded from participation in the future qualification process.

1.2. Project Description

The Project includes providing timber management within the MDOT Right of Way (ROW) along I-75 in the North Region, US-127 in the Bay Region, US-2 in the Superior Region, and US-131 in the Grand Region.

The four corridors that are being considered for partnering with a private entity to provide timber management services are as follows:

- The I-75 Corridor in the North Region is comprised primarily of a rural four-lane freeway, with a cross-sectional road bed per MDOT Geometric Guidelines for Freeways, varying from 38 to 54 feet in width. This includes 12' lanes, 10' outside shoulder width, and in most cases, an 8' median shoulder width. The corridor includes 134.1 route miles within the North Region and passes through 6 counties, including Ogemaw (15.3 miles), Roscommon (23.6 miles), Crawford (25.1 miles), Otsego (25.7 miles), Cheboygan (42.7 miles) and Emmet (1.7 miles). The overall ROW width varies from 200' to 900' within the corridor. There are 35 interchanges within the corridor.
- The US-127 Corridor in the Bay Region is comprised primarily of a rural four-lane freeway (with non-freeway portions in Gratiot County), with a cross-sectional road bed varying from 40 to 42 feet in width. This includes 12' lanes, 10' outside shoulder width, and typically, 7' median shoulder width. Typical median width is 70 feet. The corridor includes 78.1 route miles within Bay Region and passes through 3 counties, including Gratiot (26.7 miles), Isabella (26.4 miles) and Clare (25.0 miles). The overall ROW width varies however typically it is 300' total within the corridor. Within the corridor, there are 20 interchanges.
- The US-2 Corridor in the Superior Region from Rapid River to St. Ignace is comprised primarily of rural two-lane unlimited access with a cross-sectional road bed varying from 40 feet to 64 feet in width. This includes typically 12 foot lanes with an 8 foot outside shoulder width. In passing relief lane sections there are four, 12 foot lanes with the 8 foot shoulders. The corridor includes 127.0 route miles within Superior Region and passes through 3 counties, including Delta (25.4 miles), Schoolcraft (39.4 miles) and Mackinac (62.3 miles). The overall ROW width varies from 66 feet to 466 feet within the corridor. Some widths are unknown along the shore of Lake Michigan. The ROW widths here "vary" and appear to extend greater than 600 feet in some areas.
- The US-131 Corridor in the Grand Region is comprised primarily of a rural four-lane freeway, with a cross-sectional road bed approximately 42'. This typically includes 12' lanes, 10' outside shoulder width and an 8' median shoulder width. The corridor includes 50.8 route miles and passes through 3 counties, Kent (13.1 miles), Montcalm (13.1 miles), Mecosta (24.5 miles). The overall ROW width varies from 440 feet to 650 feet within the corridor.

MDOT is interested in receiving feedback from entities that would be interested in providing timber management services along the corridors. Additional services, beyond the current uses or areas, may be proposed, as long as it is allowed under applicable law.

1.3. Project Purpose

MDOT is interested in developing a self-funding timber management plan to achieve the following:

- Promote safe highway operation
 - Address Clear zone/clear vision encroachment
 - Remove dead, dying/diseased, dangerous trees
 - Enhance snow management functions
- Preserve and restore healthy forest ecosystems
 - Control for diseases & pests
 - Reduce wildfire risks
 - Preserve forest ecosystem benefits and values
 - Watershed protection
 - Habitat conservation
 - Air quality
 - Control storm water runoff
 - Carbon sequestration
- Protect & enhance corridor aesthetics
 - Protect/enhance scenic values and context [i.e. "Up North" image]
 - Roadside trees are a valuable "color tour" tourism resource
- Capture marketable timber value

1.4 Protecting the Public's Interest

The primary goal of the MDOT is to act in the interest of the public. The public's interest will be protected through the terms and conditions defined in the Contract with the Concessionaire. Items such as safety, security, length of the contract, operations and maintenance responsibilities, motorist mobility, public outreach and environmental compliance of project components will be outlined in the Concession Contract.

1.5 Anticipated Schedule

The following schedule shows the Project's key milestones and their anticipated timeframes:

Milestone	Date
Publish RFLOI	July 25, 2013
Receive RFLOI Responses	August 12, 2013
Evaluate RFLOI Responses	August 2013
Publish RFQ/RFP	October 2013
Execute agreement	December 2013

2. Submittal Instructions

2.1. Content

Respondents to this RFLOI are encouraged to provide the following information (to the extent relevant, based on the parts of this document the Respondent wishes to submit a response):

- *Contact Information* – Name and contact information (address, phone, fax, and e-mail) for the individual who will act as the Respondent's principal contact throughout the process for this particular RFLOI and description of the individual member of the Respondent's team with experience related to the objectives of the public private partnership as described in this RFLOI.
- *Company Information* – Brief description of the entity's line of business and experience in the delivery of infrastructure/real estate projects or provision of services under a public-private partnership model (e.g. design, build, finance, operate and maintain or operating contracts). Please also provide a description of the location of the entity and whether the entity is located in Michigan.
- *Responses to Questions* – Please provide responses to the questions asked in Section 2.2.

2.2. Questions Presented

- What type of services would you be interested in providing in relation to the timber management and for which corridors?
- What experience do you have with providing timber management services?
- What do you see as key considerations from your perspective in relation to:
 - Environmental clearance process
 - Mobility and work zone management
 - Seasonal tourism activity
 - Size of ROW
 - Other stakeholders
- Do you think a self-funded structure could be developed (e.g. through sales of timber) in the limited ROW? Are there other services or areas that could be added to enhance financial feasibility (e.g. adjacent land use and management)?
- What type of revenue sharing or compensation structure would you envision for such type of services?
- For what length of time would you be interested in providing the services?
- What performance metrics would you propose for the assessment of your work?
- Does your entity anticipate to self-perform or to partner with other entities, particularly local entities, to pursue the procurement of this Project?
- Please comment on any conditions precedent to initiation of the procurement that need to be addressed prior to your entity's engagement in the procurement process.

2.3. Schedule and Interaction with Respondents

Responses are due on August 12, 2013 by 3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Any questions regarding this RFLOI must be submitted in writing to Charlie Stein, Michigan Department of Transportation at steinc@michigan.gov. Responses to any inquiries/questions will be delivered via e-mail and may also be posted to the website.

MDOT reserves the right to continue interaction with Respondents as they deem appropriate, which may include conducting one-on-one meetings with participants, if such requests are received from the Respondents.

2.4. Format

MDOT requests that responses do not exceed 8 pages (8 ½" x 11"). Font should be a minimum of 12 point with pages numbered continuously.

2.5. Delivery

Respondents must provide their Letters of Interest via email to the following person by the previously stated deadline:

Name: Charlie Stein, PE

Title: Project Manager

Email: steinc@michigan.gov

Phone Number: 517-373-7339

Respondents are solely responsible for assuring that the MDOT receives responses by the specified delivery date and time at the address listed above. Respondents will receive an e-mail noting receipt of the RFLOI.

3. Limitations

3.1. Inquiry only – no contract

This RFLOI is an inquiry only and no contract or agreement will be entered into as a result of this process. By responding to this document or otherwise participating in this process, no contract or agreement will be formed and no legal obligation between the MDOT and Respondent will arise. Individual entities or teams that have not responded to this RFLOI shall not be precluded from participating in any future qualification processes in relation to the project.

The MDOT is under no obligation as a result of this process and may decide to proceed or not to proceed with the public private partnership based on responses to this RFLOI. The MDOT reserves the right to proceed with other contract procurement means.

3.2. Right to alter

The MDOT reserves the right to alter this document, including any conditions and criteria outlined in the RFLOI which may include, but is not limited to, deadlines for submissions. The MDOT reserves the right to cancel this RFLOI process at any time. Any notifications regarding alterations or cancellations of this document will be posted on the following website: <http://www.michigan.gov/ic>

3.3. Cost and Expenses – no RFLOI Reimbursement

Each Respondent is responsible for its own costs and expenses related to this process, including cost and expenses associated with preparing and submitting a response to this RFLOI, participating in the process, the provision of any additional information or attendance at meetings or interviews. No costs related to this RFLOI will be RFLOI reimbursable from the MDOT.

3.4. Ownership of submissions

The MDOT will be entitled to retain all submissions and any other documentation received or related in response to this RFLOI. The MDOT will not offer any pay or other compensation for submissions or documents received in response to this document.

3.5. Non-confidentiality of information

Respondents are advised that parts of the information included in the response documents may be presented to other branches of State Government. Also, it is brought to the Respondents attention that MDOT is subject to the Freedom of Information Act with respect to any documents or other records provided to MDOT and, by law, are subject to disclosure to the public upon request. Therefore, Respondents should consider responses to this RFLOI to be public documents.

3.6. Conflicts

Respondents should advise the MDOT of any potential conflict of interests they may have.