

**NOTICE TO CONSULTANT ENGINEERS  
REGARDING A REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST**

**July 7, 2025  
(Project Management Division)**

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer, seeks to retain the services of professional engineering consulting firms (Consultant) to provide expertise for the following: Item 1 - I-65 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study; Item 2 – Downtown Nashville Loop PEL Study; and Item 3 – Chattanooga I-24 Corridor PEL Study, as described below. The method of payment shall be lump sum or cost plus fixed fee. Fixed fee is calculated using the following formula: Fixed fee = (Direct salary + Overhead based on the most recently approved field and/or office indirect cost rate) x (fixed fee rate as determined by the Fixed Fee Calculator). Payment of the fixed fee will be based on the actual labor costs rather than the estimated labor costs used for the basis of the agreement.

The Department's Program Management Consultant (PMC) will provide day-to-day oversight, management and performance assessment of the selected consultants for the executed contracts. TDOT's PMC is not eligible to pursue any Item under this solicitation or be part of a team pursuing any Item under this solicitation.

Items may be withdrawn if anticipated funding does not become available.

**Item 1**

**Project Description and Location:**

Provide services for a PEL Study on the I-65 Corridor from SR 155 (Thompson Lane) in Davidson County, Tennessee south to SR 99 (Bear Creek Interchange) in Williamson County, Tennessee. Refer to Attachment A for a location map.

**Scope of Services:**

In accordance with the TDOT 2022 Congestion Action Plan and the Transportation Modernization Act (TMA), specifically leveraging innovative funding and financing mechanisms, there is a need to determine a potential Choice Lanes Network in the Nashville region. There is also a need to identify/develop high-priority cost-effective safety and operational improvements in this study corridor. The Consultant shall develop a PEL Study that complies with statutory PEL requirements for the I-65 Corridor, with tasks that include, but are not limited to the development of the following PEL planning products:

- Agreement from FHWA on the PEL approach
- Assist with public Involvement and Agency Coordination Plan, including engagement with local (Metropolitan Planning Organization, cities, etc), state/federal agencies, and tribes
- Previous/Relevant Studies Technical Report
- Baseline Conditions Technical Report, including Environmental, Traffic and Engineering

- Purpose and Need Technical Report
- Alternatives Screening Methodology
- Alternatives Screening Analysis
- PEL Questionnaire
- PEL Report

The Consultant shall use an iterative process to screen alternatives, and based on the results, recommend alternative(s) and the recommended environmental classification type to advance project(s) into the NEPA phase. The Consultant shall detail an approach and the tasks necessary to complete the PEL process and obtain approval or acknowledgement from FHWA. The Consultant shall also provide project management activities.

## **Item 2**

### **Project Description and Location:**

Provide services for a PEL Study on the Downtown Nashville Loop, limits as follows:

- I-65, I-24 and I-40 – the “Inner Loop” in Downtown Nashville
- I-65, from State Route (SR) 155 (Thompson Lane) to the Inner Loop
- I-440, from I-65 to I-24/I-40
- I-24, from Inner Loop to north of I-24/I-65 interchange (north of Downtown Nashville – approximate exits 44A and 88, respectively)
- I-40, from the Inner Loop to SR 45 (Old Hickory Boulevard)

Refer to Attachment A for a location map.

### **Scope of Services:**

In accordance with the TDOT 2022 Congestion Action Plan and the Transportation Modernization Act (TMA), specifically leveraging innovative funding and financing mechanisms, there is a need to determine a potential Choice Lanes Network in the Nashville region. There is also a need to identify/develop high-priority cost-effective safety and operational improvements in this study corridor. The Consultant shall develop a PEL Study that complies with statutory PEL requirements for the Downtown Nashville Loop, with tasks that include, but are not limited to the development of the following PEL planning products:

- Agreement from FHWA on the PEL approach
- Assist with public Involvement and Agency Coordination Plan, including engagement with local (Metropolitan Planning Organization, cities, etc.), state/federal agencies, and tribes
- Previous/Relevant Studies Technical Report
- Baseline Conditions Technical Report, including Environmental, Traffic and Engineering
- Purpose and Need Technical Report
- Alternatives Screening Methodology
- Alternatives Screening Analysis
- PEL Questionnaire

- PEL Report

The Consultant shall use an iterative process to screen alternatives, and based on the results, recommend alternative(s) and the recommended environmental classification type to advance project(s) into the NEPA phase. The Consultant shall detail an approach and the tasks necessary to complete the PEL process and obtain approval or acknowledgement from FHWA. The Consultant shall also provide project management activities.

### **Item 3**

#### **Project Description and Location:**

Provide services for a PEL Study on the Chattanooga I-24 Corridor from the Georgia State Line to and including the I-75 Interchange. Refer to Attachment A for a location map.

#### **Scope of Services:**

In accordance with the TDOT 2022 Congestion Action Plan and the Transportation Modernization Act (TMA), specifically leveraging innovative funding and financing mechanisms, there is a need to determine a potential Choice Lanes Network in the Chattanooga region. There is also a need to identify/develop high-priority cost-effective safety and operational improvements in this study corridor. The Consultant shall develop a PEL Study that complies with statutory PEL requirements for the Chattanooga I-24 Corridor, with tasks that include, but are not limited to the development of the following PEL planning products:

- Agreement from FHWA on the PEL approach
- Assist with public Involvement and Agency Coordination Plan, including engagement with local (Metropolitan Planning Organization, cities, etc.), state/federal agencies, and tribes
- Previous/Relevant Studies Technical Report
- Baseline Conditions Technical Report, including Environmental, Traffic and Engineering
- Purpose and Need Technical Report
- Alternatives Screening Methodology
- Alternatives Screening Analysis
- PEL Questionnaire
- PEL Report

The Consultant shall use an iterative process to screen alternatives, and based on the results, recommend alternative(s) and the recommended environmental classification type to advance project(s) into the NEPA phase. The Consultant shall detail an approach and the tasks necessary to complete the PEL process and obtain approval or acknowledgement from FHWA. The Consultant shall also provide project management activities.

TDOT's target date for commencement of consultant services is October 2025 for all

three items. Each Item will be awarded under a separate contract, for a total of three contracts. No one consultant will be allowed to prime more than one Item.

When applicable in the scope of services, a Consultant may assist in evaluating certain goods and services and making recommendations to the State under the services provided. Under no circumstances may a professional services contract be utilized to procure goods, services, or assets for use by the State that are not project related and/or required for the performance of engineering and design related services, including software and hardware.

When support services are anticipated in the performance of a Consultant contract, they may include providing the appropriate level of staff as outlined by disciplines defined in scopes of services generated under this contract. It is expected that the scope of services for these future work orders may require the selected Consultant to make some of their staff available on-site within TDOT Headquarters and/or the regional offices as required.

Requirements in applicable legislation, guidance, and policies must be satisfied in the performance of this contract. TDOT public engagement standards and policies are outlined in [TDOT's PI Plan](#). PEL legislative requirements include but are not limited to: [Statutory PEL Authority \(23 USC 168\)](#), [Regulatory PEL Authority \(23 CFR 450\)](#), [Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users \(SAFETEA-LU\)](#), [Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century \(MAP-21\)](#), as well as the [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act \(FAST Act\)](#). Additional guidance and supporting initiative for the PEL process include but are not limited to: National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) [Planning and Environment Linkages: Review of Statutory Authority and Case Law](#), [PEL in Practice: Examples from Discussions with States](#), [PEL – Questions and Answers](#), [Guidance on using Corridor and Subarea Planning to Inform NEPA](#), [FHWA PEL Questionnaire](#), and the [FHWA Every Day Counts \(EDC\) Initiatives](#).

Firms may request consideration by submitting a proposal. Proposals must be submitted electronically (PDF format) as follows: For Item 1, include “**Item 1: I-65 PEL Study**” in the subject line of the email to Jon.Storey@tn.gov. For Item 2, include “**Item 2: Downtown Nashville I-65 Loop PEL Study**” in the subject line of the email to Jon.Storey@tn.gov. For Item 3, include “**Item 3: Chattanooga I-24 Corridor PEL Study**” in the subject line of the email to Michael.Odonnell@tn.gov.

A pre-submittal meeting will be conducted for the Items on July 15, 2025, from 10:30am to 12:pm CST at Region 3 Auditorium, 6601 Centennial Boulevard, Nashville, Tennessee. The pre-submittal meeting will be mandatory for consultants submitting as the prime on any of the Items. During this meeting, TDOT will provide information regarding the I-65 PEL Study, Downtown Nashville Loop, and Chattanooga I-24 Corridor delivery goals, anticipated scope, and potential risks. There is no limitation on the number of participants. This presentation will be recorded, and participants will be provided the opportunity to ask questions during the allotted time. Any information provided by TDOT shall be considered as informational only and is subject to change. The meeting presentation and a list of attendees, including contact information, will be posted to the [Professional Services webpage](#) following the meeting.

All proposals (Form DT-0330 Part II) must be received on or before **4:00 p.m. (Central Time)**

**August 7, 2025.** For additional details regarding items 1 and 2, please contact Mr. Jon Storey at (615) 741-8676 or by email at [Jon.Storey@tn.gov](mailto:Jon.Storey@tn.gov). For additional details regarding item 3, please contact Mr. Michael O'Donnell (423) 634-8622 or by email at [Michael.Odonnell@tn.gov](mailto:Michael.Odonnell@tn.gov).

All firms must be pre-qualified or have a completed prequalification form filed with the Department by the first submission deadline. The proposal shall specifically identify any sub-consultants, and any sub-consultant shall be one that is prequalified by TDOT to perform the specific tasks required. Prequalification procedures, list of prequalified firms and DBE's, TDOT's standard procurement policy, and additional information, including the Prequalification Form (DT-0330, Part 1), can be found at: [Consultant Information \(tn.gov\)](https://www.tn.gov/consultant-information). A pending prequalification status will be acceptable. **Please include a valid email address and phone number for the point-of-contact.**

## **Evaluation Process**

### **Phase I Evaluation**

This phase will be eliminated for this advertisement.

### **Phase II Evaluation**

For firms submitting proposals (Part II of the DT-0330 form) during Phase II evaluation, the criteria that will be considered are:

<b>Criteria and Relative Weights</b>		
i.	Team capability and relevant work experience (Sections C, D, & E).	20 %
ii.	Past work experience in the required disciplines (Sections F & G).	20 %
iii.	Technical approach (as explained in Section I).	30 %
iv.	Amount of work under contract with TDOT Preconstruction, if applicable.	5 %
v.	Past performance evaluations on TDOT Projects, if available.	10 %
vi.	Oral Interview (see note a. below)	15 %

- a. All teams submitting proposals will be scheduled for an oral interview in Nashville the week of August 18, 2025, which will be a mandatory part of the selection process. Separate interviews will be held for each item listed in the advertisement. Interview teams will be expected to have the primary members of the prime and subconsultant teams present; team attendees shall be limited to five (5) members total. The structure of the oral interview will be as follows:

- 1) Presentation (30 minutes)

Summarize the proposal and describe the consultant's ideas and unique resources, including key personnel and their respective experience working on PELs. This is the part of the interview where the proposer needs to communicate to the selection panel why it should be chosen. What strategies and abilities does the proposer bring to this work that makes it the best candidate? Limit the presentation to the most critical points of the proposal and focus on what your team can bring to the table and why.

- 2) Question and Answer Session with the Selection Panel (15 minutes)

The questions asked in this session will include both standard questions for all proposers and specific questions relative to each proposer's proposal and presentation.

The interview presentation and question/answer scoring will each account for 50% of the Oral Interview total scoring and be based on the following criteria:

- a) Project Understanding
- b) Project Approach and Innovations
- c) Project Management
- d) Communication Skills

Section E shall be no more than 10 pages. Section F shall include no more than 5 relevant PEL studies or equivalent planning studies. The proposal package shall contain no more than 30 pages including front and back cover. Section H will not count toward the 30-page limit.

Following Phase II evaluation, a number of firms no less than two\* greater than the number of contracts being awarded, and that are deemed most qualified by the Consultant Evaluation Committee (CEC) will be recommended to the Commissioner for each Item listed above in alphabetical order for Phase III evaluation.

\* In instances where less than the minimum required number of qualified consultants respond with proposals, or where the evaluated proposals do not result in a sufficient number of qualified firms, the Department may proceed with evaluation and selection if it is determined that the solicitation did not contain conditions or requirements that arbitrarily limited competition.

### **Phase III Evaluation**

From the list of firms determined by the CEC to be the most highly qualified firms to perform the solicited services, the Commissioner will rank the firms in order of preference for each item

### **Post Selection**

TDOT will then negotiate with the firm(s) deemed to be most highly qualified in rank order. Before the invitation of a cost proposal is made, a mutual understanding of the scope of services and all technical and administrative requirements of the proposed undertaking will be established with the prospective Consultant. This may be done by conference, phone, or correspondence as determined appropriate by TDOT. Instructions will be given regarding the method of compensation and the documentation needed to justify the proposed compensation.

Evaluation proceedings will be conducted within the established guidelines regarding equal employment opportunity and nondiscriminatory action based upon the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, creed, age, and disability. Interested certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms as well as other minority- and/or women-owned firms are encouraged to respond to all advertisements by TDOT. For more information on DBE certification, please contact the Civil Rights Office Small Business Development Program at (615) 741-3681. Details and instructions for DBE certification can be found at the following website:

<https://www.tn.gov/tdot/civil-rights/small-business-development-program.html>.

Butch Eley  
Commissioner

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