

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

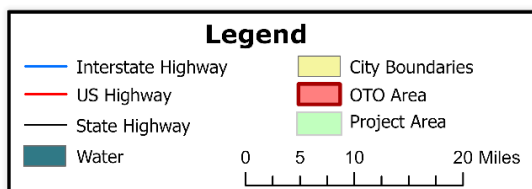
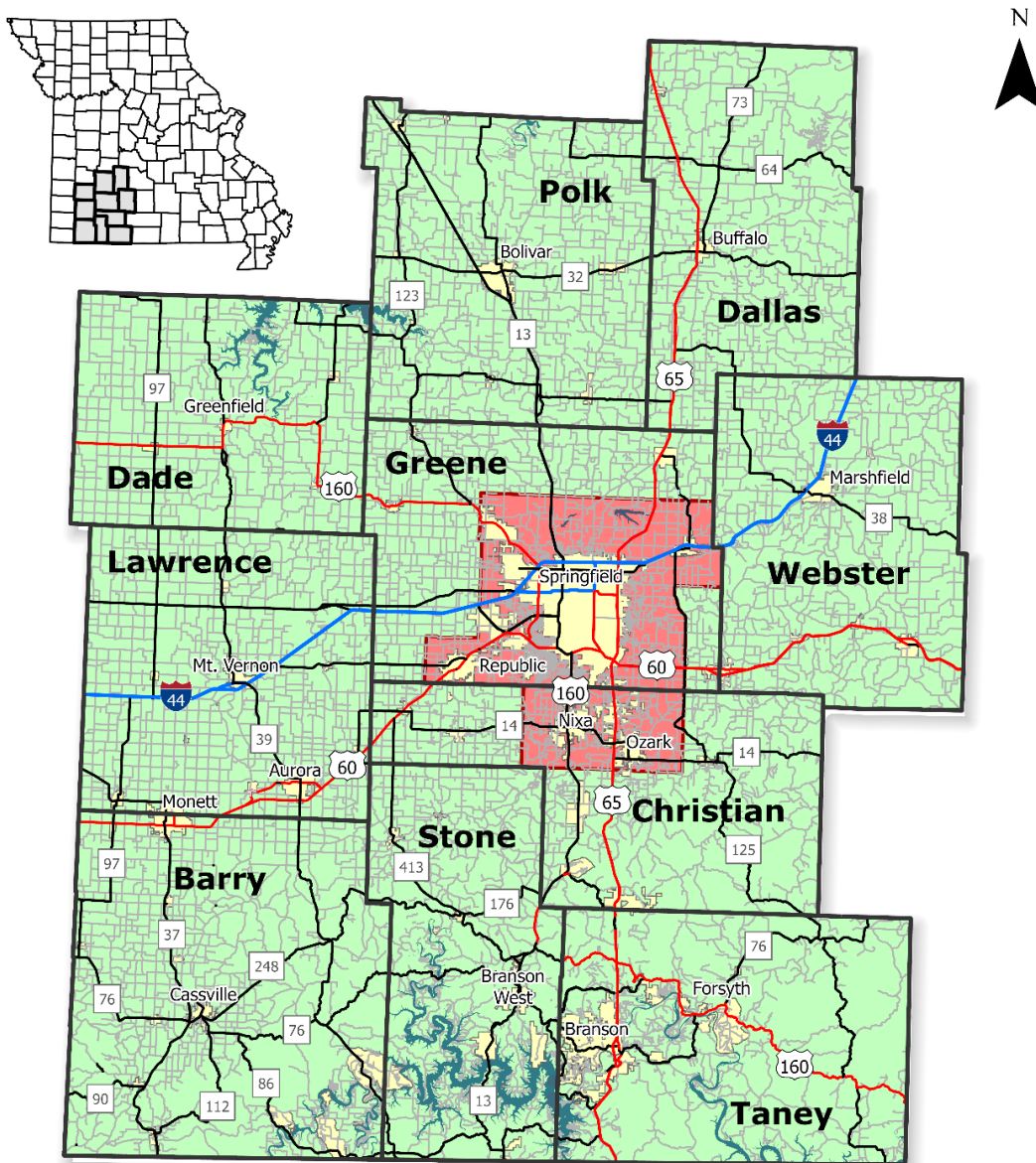
PROFESSIONAL PLANNING SERVICES:

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Submissions Due: Monday, August 25, 2025 5:00 PM CST

The Southwest Missouri Council of Governments (SMCOG) requests qualifications for professional planning services to assist in the development of a Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan for the organization's ten-county region. This project is partially funded with Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant funds.

Project Location: The ten Missouri counties of Barry, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Greene, Lawrence, Polk, Stone, Taney, and Webster counties. The project location will exclude the metropolitan jurisdiction of Springfield Metro Area which is under the Ozarks Transportation Organization's jurisdiction and action plan.



Project Background:

SMCOG is a Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and an association of local governments and stakeholders located in Springfield, Missouri and has jurisdiction over a ten-county area in Southwest Missouri, including Barry, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Greene, Lawrence, Polk, Stone, Taney, and Webster counties. SMCOG is the federally designated Economic Development District (EDD) for Southwest Missouri and provides transportation planning services to the rural part of the region while cooperating with the MPO regarding transportation needs within the TSA.

SMCOG's region is identified by its iconic, scenic views of the Ozark Mountains, natural springs and karst geologic features, agricultural and mining resources, and popular tourist destinations, such as the City of Branson as well as our recreational lakes and lush state parks. Excluding the jurisdiction served by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO), SMCOG's region is home to nearly 350,000 citizens, many of which reside in urban or suburban areas. However, the majority of SMCOG's geographic region is comprised of rural and isolated small communities that understandably encounter a variety of developmental hindrances when it comes to establishing and implementing roadway safety initiatives. Unfortunately, many of these communities are also disproportionately impacted when compared to larger, urban areas and may be limited by the financial, environmental, workforce, and educational resources readily available.

Major highways in the region include I-44, Rt. 65, Rt. 60, Rt. 13, and Rt. 160, with I-44 and Rt. 60 recognized as the top 2 priority freight corridors for the state. Additionally, Historic Rt. 66, which is recognized as a National Scenic Byway and is a major tourist attraction, passes through the SMCOG region. Due to the region's vast distribution of population, many rural communities utilize local road networks in which access to major highways may require several miles of travel. The roadway conditions and safety measures enforced in these rural networks are often overlooked, which subsequently contributes to a large number of total traffic fatalities and serious injuries within our jurisdiction.

SMCOG's 10-county jurisdiction is partially shared by OTO, which was previously awarded an SS4A Planning grant for the Springfield metropolitan area in FY22. SMCOG's regional safety action plan will be complimentary to OTO's plan and include all roadways and communities outside of the OTO boundary.

SMCOG is dedicated to improving road safety within its 10-county jurisdiction and will achieve this through various approaches, including data analysis, critical planning, infrastructure assessments, behavioral interventions, public engagement, and operational strategies. These approaches will enable SMCOG to develop an effective safety action plan that will prevent fatalities and severe injuries involving all road users.

Purpose:

The purpose of the project will be to develop a regional safety action plan for SMCOG's 10-county region (excluding the OTO jurisdiction) with the ultimate goal of saving lives and preventing serious harm for all users of the transportation system. SMCOG intends to enhance and inform the action plan through supplemental planning and demonstration activities, further described below. There is not a current safety action plan available or under development for the region. SMCOG is committed to developing a regional safety action plan that improves safety for all users of the transportation system, including non-motorists. The SMCOG Regional Safety Action Plan will be instrumental in contributing to the statewide Save-MO-Lives initiative and the nationwide Vision Zero Plan as well as serve as a model for rural regions across the country.

The development of a regional action plan will significantly benefit the SMCOG region through the analysis and identification of high-risk traffic areas, prioritization of roadway safety needs and goals, engagement of the public and strategic stakeholders, and development of projects aimed to reduce fatal and serious traffic accidents. Data collected for the action plan will be used to identify the highest-risk areas in each of our 10 counties which will then be closely analyzed through supplemental planning road safety audits. Once completed, the SMCOG Regional Safety Action Plan will serve as the guiding principle to implement defined and data-driven strategies to strengthen our regional approach to improving roadway safety and eventually eliminating roadway fatalities.

Scope of Work:

SMCOG will act as the project lead and will be responsible for the facilitation of regional safety action plan development. The regional safety action plan will include public and stakeholder engagement, equity considerations, in-depth data safety analysis of existing roadway conditions, identification of high-risk areas, consideration of

systemic and specific safety needs, identification and prioritization of strategic goals and projects to improve roadway safety, assessment of current transportation policies, guidance for local municipal policy updates, and implementation planning. The supplemental and demonstration activities will consist of road safety audits as well as radar speed assessments.

Road Safety Audits (RSAs), to be conducted by SMCOG with partnership assistance from MoDOT and a contracted consultant, will be systematic evaluations of existing road infrastructure and proposed improvement projects in addition to high-level inspections of road sections experiencing frequent and severe traffic accidents. These audits will be conducted near the completion of the SMCOG Regional Safety Action Plan and will be studied to identify potential safety issues in our region's road network and to propose measures that can drastically reduce motor-vehicle-involved accidents. Through careful evaluation of data, the consultant will propose RSA locations for each of SMCOG's 10 counties. The audits will identify weak zones and hazards in road design, layout, and operation. The audit results will shape our action plan's overall prioritized goals and projects.

SMCOG will also purchase three pole-mounted radar speed signs to be attached to existing utility or sign posts along high-risk routes to warn motorists of their speed and help remind travelers to slow down. The smaller radar speed signs can be used to collect unobserved data and enforce slower speeds in previously hard-to-reach high-risk traffic areas. Prior to, during, and after the radar speed sign assessment, SMCOG will measure the beneficial impact of radar speed signs by deploying our in-house radar traffic counter. Unlike the radar speed sign, SMCOG's traffic counter does not provide a visual speed display to motorists. By analyzing data collected with SMCOG's traffic counter, we can examine how drivers respond to speeding with and without the visually displayed speed signs present.

Analysis of the data will identify key safety challenges, such as high-risk intersections, inadequate pedestrian/cyclist infrastructure, and driver behavior contributing to accidents. Within the action plan, we will prioritize the planned implementation of low-cost, high-impact interventions such as targeted enforcement, traffic calming measures, improved signage, and enhanced lighting at high-risk locations. SMCOG may work with the consultant to identify possible engineered solutions that could improve the safety of identified high-risk locations.

It is anticipated that a minimum of 80% of the consultant's work can be performed remotely, however, SMCOG does expect the selected firm will visit the region and attend in-person meetings throughout the project period as needed.

SMCOG's Scope of Work (SOW) will include the following:

- Facilitate safety action plan development.
- Conduct all public and stakeholder engagement and outreach.
- Coordinate local committees of residents and key stakeholders for each RSA area.
- Conduct roadway safety audits in the highest-risk areas for each of our 10 counties.
- Conduct NEPA environmental review for speed radar assessment locations.
- Install three pole-mounted speed radars and radar traffic counter to examine how drivers respond to speeding with and without the visually displayed speed signs present.
- Facilitate committee feedback to inform potential solutions for areas with identified safety concerns.
- Coordinate with consultant to identify possible engineered solutions for areas in the most need of safety improvement for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Components to be included in the consultant's Scope of Work (SOW):

- Provide professional planning services to draft a Regional Safety Action Plan for the 10-county SMCOG region. The Plan will serve as a ready-to-implement guide with defined and data-driven strategies that will improve roadway safety throughout the region.
- Create and maintain a project website with project-specific and SMCOG branding.
- Conduct an in-depth data safety analysis of existing roadway conditions, identify high-risk areas, and determine systemic and specific safety needs.
- Identify and prioritize strategic goals and projects to improve regional roadway safety.

- Develop and implement a strategic outreach and communications plan in coordination with SMCOG. This effort should engage regional stakeholders, inform the public about the transportation system, and highlight SMCOG's role in regional planning. The consultant will facilitate outreach efforts, create accessible and engaging content, and distill key safety data into shareable, easy-to-understand formats to ensure broad awareness and support for the Regional Safety Action Plan.
- Propose RSA locations for each of SMCOG's 10 counties.
- Assess current transportation policies and guidance for local municipal policy updates.
- Develop creative outreach efforts and deliver strategic communications throughout the project period. Outreach and communications should be integrated throughout the planning process, not just as standalone tasks, using creative, multi-platform messaging and inclusive, audience-tailored strategies. The consultant is encouraged to apply behavioral and cultural frameworks such as the Positive Culture Framework or other evidence-based models to foster meaningful, values-driven conversations around transportation safety. Final deliverables should include a communications toolkit or embedded campaign recommendations to support ongoing safety awareness and implementation efforts beyond plan adoption.
- Participate in community engagement activities and the development of outreach materials throughout Plan development.
- Specialized services including, but not limited to, implementation planning, assistance in the development of Road Safety Audits, and the analysis of audit and speed radar assessment findings.

Proposed Project Timeline:

- Months 1-3: Consultant onboarding, data gathering, identify baseline measurables, develop project area base maps, finalize planning process framework, identify project stakeholders and other participants. Assess and analyze regional crash data.
- Months 4-6: Conduct site visits to identify specific and general roadway safety priorities, meet with stakeholder groups and partner agencies. Conduct robust public engagement (e.g. regional telephone town hall, online survey, etc.)
- Months 7-12: Draft the Regional Safety Action Plan, determine radar speed assessments and road safety audit test locations, form RSA committees within each county, review case studies and best practices, identify funding resources and financing strategies, establish community safety goals and projects.
- Months 13-14: Draft plan available for review and comments. Promote the plan to gain regional public comments and gain support for plan elements.
- Month 15: Publish and distribute regional safety action.

Qualifications:

The selected firm will provide planning services to complete a draft of the SMCOG Regional Safety Action Plan with assistance from SMCOG staff throughout Plan development.

Information provided to SMCOG in response to this RFQ must include at a minimum:

1. The specialized experience and technical competence of the firm with respect to transportation planning or related work. In addition to a written response providing this requested information, supplemental documents such as previously completed plans or portfolios of work may be provided as an attachment or via a website link.
2. The capacity and capability of the firm to perform the work in question, including specialized services, within a period of sixteen months beginning in September 2025.
3. The past record of performance of the firm with respect to such factors as control of costs, quality of work, and ability to meet schedules.
4. Demonstrated experience in designing and executing effective communication and outreach strategies within the context of regional transportation planning.

5. The firm's proximity to and familiarity with the area in which the project is located. Particular emphasis will be placed on demonstrated knowledge of the regional transportation network, including key safety concerns, travel patterns, and stakeholder dynamics.
6. References from previous clients of related work with the firm within the past five years.
7. Documentation of compliance with E-Verify requirements.
8. Anticipated timeline of project completion.

Submissions:

The firm will be selected based on the above qualifications. Through the grant funding awarded under the SS4A Program, \$200,000 is available for the requested contractual services. SMCOG may negotiate a contract rate with the selected firm based on experience and qualifications. The above information should be submitted no later than **August 25, 2025, 5:00 PM CST via physical mail OR email:**

via mail or parcel services to:

**SMCOG
c/o MSU-CRPM
901 S. National Ave.
Springfield, MO 65897**

or via email to KelsiBurton@MissouriState.edu

Questions regarding this Request for Qualifications should be provided in writing no later than **5:00 PM CST, Thursday, August 14, 2025** to SMCOG via email at KelsiBurton@MissouriState.edu or via postal mail to the address referenced above. Responses to questions will be provided in the form of an addendum to this RFQ to be distributed via email to all solicited firms and posted to the SMCOG website no later than Monday, August 18, 2025.

Request for Qualifications Schedule:

Post Request for Qualifications (RFQ):	July 23, 2025
Final Questions Due:	August 14, 2025
Responses to Questions Provided:	August 18, 2025
Submissions Due:	August 25, 2025
Selection of Highest-Ranking Firms:	September 1, 2025
Notification of Selection:	September 12, 2025
Project Start Date:	September 22, 2025

Additional Information:

These services are to be administered and overseen by SMCOG for the duration of the project. This planning project is partially funded by U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant funds. The remainder of the project's funding is provided by SMCOG in the form of local cash match and in-kind match contribution. SMCOG, as the grant recipient, will be responsible for administering and overseeing the development of the safety action plan. SMCOG will work with the most qualified and responsible firm to finalize a cost and scope that will meet all expectations for the project objectives.

SMCOG will begin evaluating responses to this request on August 26, 2025 and may conduct phone or virtual interviews with the highest ranking firms beginning on September 1, 2025. SMCOG will notify all respondents once a firm has been selected. SMCOG will schedule a meeting with the selected firm following the notification of selection for any applicable contract negotiations and to discuss the firm's role and responsibilities in the overall project. SMCOG anticipates having an executed contract with the selected firm no later than September 22, 2025.

The Southwest Missouri Council of Governments is an Equal Opportunity Employer and invites the submission of qualifications from minority, women, disadvantaged, and Section 3-owned firms. The selected firm is not required to be certified as one of the above entity classifications. The selected firm will be required to pass the state's debarment check prior to contract execution.

All documents submitted in response to this RFQ become the property of SMCOG, and as such public records which may be subject to public review.