



# Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

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## Metropolitan Planning Organization

### Request for Qualifications

#### UPDATE OF THE LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGION NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) is seeking a consultant to update our Multijurisdictional Lower Connecticut River Valley Region Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. The product will be a multijurisdictional state and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved, and RiverCOG and individual municipally adopted plan. The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments hosts the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, responsible for regional transportation planning. The Lower Connecticut River Valley's transportation infrastructure is especially vulnerable to natural hazards and these plans will, identify vulnerabilities and mitigation that can occur to reduce risk. The consultant selection and contracting process will comply with Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) guidelines.

### Project Description

This NHMP update will be for 15 municipalities Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Lyme, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Lyme, and Portland. The towns of Old Saybrook and Westbrook are updating their NHMP on their own via a separate process. The consultant will ensure a timely and approved review by the State of Connecticut State Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEHMS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and ensure, shepherd and finalize the adoption of the plan by each of the 15 participating municipalities and RiverCOG. The existing regional NHMP plan can be found at <https://www.rivercog.org/plans/natural-hazard-mitigation-plan/>

### The Region

The 15 Lower Connecticut River Valley Region municipalities are in south central coastal Connecticut. The Lower Connecticut River Valley region is 443 sq. miles and surrounds the last 36 miles of the Connecticut River before it flows into Long Island Sound. The region includes approximately 20 miles of coastal shoreline (this includes Old Saybrook and Westbrook at the west side of the mouth of the Connecticut River who are separately updating their existing plans). The population of the region as a whole in 2022 was 175,244. The population of the participating communities in 2022 was 157,936. Eleven of the participating municipalities lie on the banks of the Connecticut River, three are coastal and one, Old Lyme, sits on the east side of the mouth of the Connecticut River, is both riverine and coastal. The region's largest municipality is the City of Middletown, located in the north of the region along the banks of the Connecticut River with a population close to 48,000 in 2022. The regional population has stayed relatively steady, with small increases primarily in Middletown.

Proximity to the water has been a critical factor in the development of the Region. Waterpower for industry derived from streams led to their early population growth and industrial villages. These industrial villages became town centers and are especially vulnerable to flooding due to storms of increasing intensity since they are located close to watercourses. The areas of highest residential densities and commercial activity lie along the Connecticut River and adjacent to Long Island Sound, and as a result are most prone to the adverse impacts of hurricanes and other wind and rain events. The region is heavily forested at 59% of surface area. Trees, particularly those that are dead or weakened by invasive insects, pose a significant threat to infrastructure (roads and utilities) and to the public during storms.

Significant transportation infrastructure runs along the coast in the form of Northeast Corridor rail line and the I-95 Interstate Highway which connects New York to Boston. Interstate I-91 runs through the northwest corner of the Region in the towns of Cromwell and Middletown, and the Connecticut Rte. 9 expressway connects the region from I-95 in Old Saybrook through Cromwell to Hartford and to Interstates 84 and 691. Regional transit facilities, including three Shore Line East commuter railroad stations and Estuary Transit District bus facilities are also at risk to natural hazards. Electric M-8 train cars and a new fleet of electric buses are of particularly vulnerable to power outages caused by natural hazards.

### **Requirements**

Firms wishing to be considered for the study must submit an electronic Statement of Qualifications, exclusive of SF330, along with an electronic version in PDF format capable of being e-mailed to the selection committee. The selected firm (s) must meet federal, state, RiverCOG, and municipal affirmative action and equal opportunity employment practices. Prime consultants should engage a good faith effort to include, DBE designated firms as part of their proposed work effort and DBE consultants encouraged to apply. It is possible CTDOT will have a set-aside for DBE. The percent is unknown at this time, but in the past the setaside has been 5%.

In an effort to assist the selection committee, we request interested firms provide a qualification statement based on the following format:

#### *Introduction*

Provide an introduction to your firm, indicating the primary office location for the performance of this project, the type of firm, and areas of specialization. This section should also identify the proposed project director, as well as the subconsultant or associated firms who will participate in your project team(s). Provide a contact person for the interview with phone, email. Briefly summarize the most relevant qualifications, specialized capabilities and any other significant information relating to the composition of your team.

#### *Firm experience*

Past successful project experience will be a key selection factor. This section should specifically identify experience in similar studies, and work with COGs or regional planning agencies; familiarity with CT DEMHS, FEMA, and Connecticut Department of Transportation procedures; ability to present information, alternatives, and ideas in text and graphic formats for municipal dissemination, and evolving methods and practices for creating innovative solutions for the natural hazards identified in this project. Please also identify any innovative or creative approaches that have been advanced in the areas of public outreach; community-oriented problem identification; computer modeling and visualization of alternatives; and FEMA compliant and fundable mitigation.

A detailed project approach is not required in this submission; however, summary information relating to the approach used in similar studies may be provided as an indication of your overall qualifications.

#### *Project Team Qualifications*

Identify a Project Manager who will serve as the primary contact for RiverCOG staff and will direct overall consultant and sub-consultant efforts and allocation of resources. You may provide up to eight (8) resumes total for those key staff members (including both prime consultant and subconsultant staff) who will perform leading roles within each study effort and up to three (3) additional resumes may be included to identify specialized staff members who will be available as a resource to the project team. Resumes for key staff should be in a one-page format and should identify years of experience, years with the current firm, and specific roles and assignments for the study. An organization chart should also be provided indicating the structure of the project team and Project Manager. This chart may include an identification of additional supporting staff, as appropriate. The Project Manager and team leaders should be current full-time employees of either the prime consultant or their respective subconsultant firms.

#### *General Requirements:*

Federal SF 330 – The submission must include a Standard Form SF 330 for the prime consultant.

News Releases – Written approval by RiverCOG will be required prior to any public disclosure regarding this proposal, or any other subsequent awards.

Signature Requirements – Proposals must be signed by a duly authorized official of the firm. Consortiums, joint ventures, or teams. A submitted proposal will not be considered unless it is established that all contractual responsibility rests solely with one contractor or one legal entity, which shall not be a subsidiary or affiliate with limited resources. Each proposal should indicate the entity responsible for execution on behalf of the proposal team.

Addenda and Supplements – In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of these instructions, a supplement will be posted to <https://www.rivercog.org/publicnotices/> and applicants are free to amend or replace an already-submitted proposal up until the RFQ submission deadline.

Rejection Rights – RiverCOG retains the right to reject all proposals and to re-solicit if deemed to be in their best interest to do so.

Cost of Proposal Preparation – No reimbursement will be made for any costs incurred for the preparation of an RFQ response or participation in the consultant selection process.

RFQ Response to be in Effect – Each proposal shall state that it is valid for a period of not less than 120 days from the date of receipt.

Project Staff – After the execution of a contract, the consultant shall receive written permission from RiverCOG to change consultant team staff, staff responsibilities, or subconsultant working on this project.

Contracting – Selection is dependent on the execution of a mutually-acceptable contract.

### **Selection Procedures and Award**

Following receipt of qualifications statements, the consultant responses will be screened by a selection committee and prospective firms will be interviewed per Connecticut DOT “Consultant Selection Requirements”. Prospective firms will be contacted to set up interviews for the week of June 16, 2025. Consultant agreements will be approved by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Connecticut Department of Transportation, and RiverCOG.

No agreement for this work shall be executed until all approvals and funding is in place. Work hours and fees will be developed after firm selection is made.

### **Additional Information**

A preliminary scope of services is attached. RiverCOG reserves the right to not award the study as noted above, in whole or in part, even if a firm has been recommended by the selection committee and reserves the right to cancel this RFQ.

Any RFQ questions should be submitted in writing to Margot Burns at [mburns@rivercog.org](mailto:mburns@rivercog.org) and answers will be posted to <http://rivercog.org/currentRFQ.html>.

Statements of qualifications marked “RiverCOG NHMP Update” must be received by RiverCOG June 16, 2025. Statements should be delivered to Margot Burns at [mburns@rivercog.org](mailto:mburns@rivercog.org) or electronic media may be sent to RiverCOG, 145 Dennison Road, Essex, CT 06426. Responses received late may not be considered.

**UPDATE OF THE LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY  
REGION NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN**  
*Preliminary Scope of Work*  
*May 2025*

An experienced natural hazard mitigation planning consultant, with assistance from RiverCOG staff will:

- Review the current 2021 regional plan with 15 municipal annexes and relevant hazard mitigation planning initiatives that have taken place since the 2021 regional NHMP plan adoption, review needed improvement to GIS mapping of regional and municipal mitigation actions and strategies and critical facilities, and review current information to update natural hazards identification and risk information including climate change factors.
- Guide a regional committee of at least one stakeholder from each municipality, currently the CEO (but they may select a participant of their choosing) through 2 meetings. The committee will be utilized to guide and oversee the evaluation of the existing plans to create the multijurisdictional multi hazard plan with 15 municipal annexes.
- Meet with each of the 15 communities' municipal planning, public works, and emergency management staff for a total of 15 municipal meetings to evaluate the 2021 natural hazard mitigation plan annexes with respect to their strengths, weaknesses, and utility. Evaluation will include existing plans, mitigation project lists, mitigation accomplishments, existing mitigation needs, natural hazards that have been experienced since the last update, and any significant changes that have occurred in the communities since the plan's adoptions along with the five-year natural hazard projections for the Region.
- The consultant will review the goals and mitigation projects of the existing plan with the above listed entities to determine their relevance to changing circumstances in each municipality as well as changes in State and Federal policies and insure the update is addressing current and expected future conditions; will evaluate the risk assessment portion of the plans to determine if the information is in need of updating; will review critical facility information for each municipality to assess if changes and updates are required; and will provide a status report for each municipal plan update that will inform the regional committee in its guidance and review of the presented multijurisdictional multi hazard regional update and its 15 municipal annexes.
- Complete relevant data review and complete draft update of the existing 2021 regional plan and its annexes including necessary mapping of identified potential mitigation projects and critical facilities.
- Create a public involvement strategy that will include 2 regional/municipal public meetings and other strategies as recommended to include a relevant survey and a project website for posting of relevant material, media releases, surveys, etc..

- Finalize the plan after public comment and RiverCOG staff review for submittal to CT DEMHS and FEMA for review.
- Submit the plan and complete State and FEMA review process resulting in an approved hazard mitigation plan that complies with the regulatory requirements of 44 CFR Part 201 and 44 CFR Part 206. f
- Will attend 15 municipal public meetings for plan adoption and 1 RiverCOG public meeting for regional adoption.
- Hazards to be evaluated Include coastal storms, drought, dam/levee break, earthquake, fire, flood, hurricane, severe ice storms, severe snow storms, tornados, tropical cyclones, tsunamis, windstorms, invasive species, and other natural hazards as determined through consultant outreach to the municipalities.

### **Expected Work to be Completed**

Task 1: Assemble, Review, and Evaluate Existing NHMPs and other Existing Conditions Data and climate change factors with RiverCOG and municipal support.

Task 2: Conduct municipal interviews with officials, commissioners, and community leaders to determine the status of existing mitigation projects and identify significant changes in hazards since the last plan. This should include National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) maps updates and inclusion of RiverCOG's recently completed Flood Susceptibility data with RiverCOG and Municipal Support. The first round of municipal interview meetings will be conducted in advance of the start of this project. Detailed summaries of those meetings will be provided.

Task 3: Create and implement a municipal public involvement strategy (municipal public meetings, website, media releases) with RiverCOG and municipal support.

Task 4: Create Draft Plan – Analysis, mapping and identification of mitigation strategies with RiverCOG and municipal staff.

Task 5: Plan, coordinate, and hold regional public involvement meetings presenting draft plan and receiving comments / posting to websites / media releases / printed copies on view at public libraries and town halls with RiverCOG and municipal staff support.

Task 6: Complete state and FEMA review and RiverCOG and municipal adoptions, including public meetings held by the municipalities and RiverCOG with municipal and regional staff.