

# **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

## **Business Plan and Market Analysis**



**SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative, Inc.**

**Lewisburg, PA**

**Issued December 15, 2016**



The SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative, Inc. (referred to hereafter as the “Cooperative”) has issued this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to Consultants who may be selected to participate in preparation of a Business Plan and Market Analysis to help define and support Cooperative operations. This work is supported through a grant provided to the Cooperative by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The following sections describe characteristics of the Cooperative, further define the project need and scope, and describe proposal submittal requirements and the selection process.

### **I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COOPERATIVE, PROJECT NEED, AND SCOPE OVERVIEW**

#### **1.1 The SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative, Inc.**

Although Pennsylvania is one of the largest natural gas producing areas in the world, many areas of the state have not had ready access to this resource for heating and power generation. This situation is especially evident in central Pennsylvania, where lack of existing natural gas delivery infrastructure and cost of providing potential service has constrained economic development and consumer access to cost-effective energy options.

To address this need, the nonprofit SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative, Inc. was formed as a 501(c)(12) corporation on June 9, 2016 through the sponsorship and participation of Centre, Clinton, and Mifflin Counties, along with the SEDA-Council of Governments, which serves eleven counties in central Pennsylvania. The Cooperative is headquartered in Lewisburg, PA.

The defined mission of the Cooperative is to

*Establish new or upgraded natural gas service to central Pennsylvania businesses and residents in an environmentally responsible and cost-effective manner to promote economic growth, cost savings, and the use of cleaner energy sources in areas where such service is not currently available.*

Objectives of the Cooperative include:

- Plan, Design, Build, and Maintain Delivery Infrastructure,
- Seek Available Project Funding,
- Facilitate Economic Growth,
- Deliver Safe and Reliable Utility Service,
- Provide Cost Savings and Competitive Rates,
- Address Local Needs,
- Maintain Financial Viability and Promote a Self-Sustaining Revenue Stream for New Services,



- Consider New and Evolving Technology,
- Be a Responsible Steward of Resources.

The Cooperative's goal is to facilitate provision of new or upgraded natural gas service by working with partners including state and federal agencies, local governments, natural gas distribution companies, and other entities to identify potential projects and leverage funding sources to implement natural gas infrastructure projects.

The Cooperative's approach offers several potential advantages for developing new natural gas service. Working together on a regional basis provides a strong, coordinated approach for procuring project funding. In addition, the Cooperative can own and operate natural gas infrastructure and delivery systems similar to how an electric cooperative delivers its product. A Cooperative is owned and operated by members who receive service, and who can provide direction and guidance for continued operations and new projects. The Cooperative does not exist to compete with existing natural gas distribution companies and providers, but to complement their operations and promote or establish new service where not currently provided.

The Cooperative has three possible roles for natural gas project development and implementation:

- The Cooperative designs, develops, implements, owns, operates, and maintains natural gas delivery infrastructure in perpetuity, with significant work likely to be contracted out through a third party;
- The Cooperative functions as above, but at some point during the operations and maintenance stage sells all or portions of a natural gas system to an operator such as a natural gas distribution company;
- The Cooperative works together with a natural gas distribution company to plan and develop delivery infrastructure that from the beginning is owned and operated by a natural gas distribution company.

Any or all of these roles may all be adopted depending upon individual project circumstances.

### **1.2 Project Need and Scope Overview**

The purpose of creating a Business Plan and Market Analysis for the SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative is to build upon SEDA-COG's Regional Gas Utilization Initiative (RGUI) Phase 1 and 2 studies (the Phase 1 report can be downloaded at <http://www.seda-cog.org/transportation/Pages/RGUI.aspx>) to support development of natural gas infrastructure projects. In those studies, several priority Targeted Investment Areas (TIAs) were identified for possible expansion of natural gas services in each of SEDA-COG's 11 member counties. Ballpark cost estimates and phasing plans were created for these priority TIAs in each county (see Appendix A for example). The Business Plan and Market Analysis will serve as a "road map" for natural gas project implementation in selected priority TIAs based upon the institutional,



organizational, financial, and regulatory issues and steps required for startup and operation of the Cooperative and its resulting natural gas delivery infrastructure. The Business Plan and Market Analysis can also provide a focal point for presenting project funding proposals to prospective sources so that pricing, cash flow, return on investment, need for capital, and market strategies can be better defined and communicated to potential investors and sponsors.

Some topics to be addressed should include:

- How will the Cooperative be staffed and managed?
- Where will the natural gas to be delivered come from?
- Where will the money to procure or build infrastructure come from?
- How much will the natural gas cost to procure and deliver?
- What is the impact of new tariff programs of the natural gas delivery companies that promote development of new service?
- What delivery options are most appropriate for particular situations where the Cooperative may provide service?
- How much natural gas will customers purchase, and what will it cost to them?
- Will income cover the costs of operating the Cooperative, and how will that income be realized?
- What future steps to ensure long-term financial viability of the Cooperative need to be taken and when?

The Cooperative intends to work with a team of chosen consultants to examine best practices that fit the Cooperative's structure and needs and who will recommend specific desirable actions to be implemented. The team will be assembled at the direction of the Cooperative's Board of Directors and supporting staff from SEDA-COG. The result of the team's work will be an overall, integrated plan for the next 5 to 10 years that will also serve as a template for developing future contract work tasks.

The Cooperative decided to approach completion of the Business Plan and Market Analysis as an RFQ as the first phase of several steps that will support development, implementation, and maintenance of Cooperative-owned or sponsored natural gas delivery infrastructure. The Business Plan and Market Analysis will also contain many diverse aspects and topics, and the Cooperative wishes to retain firms having a high level of expertise in one or more areas. We recognize that firms who may be highly qualified in one or more relevant areas (such as gas buying and pricing) might not be experienced in other relevant areas (such as customer marketing and system maintenance). Therefore, the Cooperative is asking firms to submit their proposals through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process, where proposals may be evaluated according to best fit for certain areas of expertise. In this manner, more than one firm may be selected to participate in the work that will culminate in completion of the Business Plan and Market Analysis. In addition, firms that are pre-qualified under the RFQ may then be eligible for award of succeeding work orders related to design, development, and delivery of project infrastructure, should additional grant funding be provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission and/or other public agencies.



Copies of this Request for Qualifications may be downloaded in PDF format from the SEDA-COG Web site at <http://www.seda-cog.org/transportation/Pages/RGUI.aspx>. Alternately, an electronic or printed version of the RFQ may be obtained from SEDA-COG after **December 15, 2016** by written or e-mail request to:

SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative Business Plan and Market Analysis RFQ Request  
c/o SEDA-COG  
201 Furnace Road  
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837  
E-mail: [BP-MA-RFQ@centralpagas.org](mailto:BP-MA-RFQ@centralpagas.org)

The deadline for proposers to respond to this Request for Qualifications is **February 1, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time**. See Section 4.1 for full submittal instructions.

## 2. CONTRACT DELIVERABLE

The final deliverable of the work by each selected Consultant will be completion of an assigned section (or sections) of the Business Plan and Market Analysis as outlined in Section 3 that will promote integration with other new content. The Cooperative will be responsible for integration, compilation, and dissemination of the final product, and will retain all ownership rights of the content.

## 3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

### 3.1 Consultant Scope

The Cooperative desires selected Consultants to complete sections of the Business Plan and Market Analysis that correspond with (but are not limited to) the following Work Orders and example desired content listed. Note that the Cooperative reserves the right to entirely or partially perform and complete one or more of the Work Orders, and will assimilate and integrate the completed work order report deliverables into a single final Business Plan and Market Analysis.

- **Work Order 1 - Market Analysis:**
  - *Projected number of customers, by category (residential, commercial, industrial), for priority projects in each county, information about which will be provided by the Cooperative;*
  - *Average expected monthly usage per customer class;*
  - *Possible price per unit of sales, by customer class;*



- *In areas where the Cooperative will serve a new community (or communities), a willingness-to-pay survey and economic benefit analysis is normally a required part of market analysis. Provide a long-term (usually 10-year) projection of demand/expansion plan based on data concerning population growth trends, industry risk, and other factors. Present a table summarizing the initial and long-term demand.*
  
- **Work Order 2 - Gas Supply:**
  - *Cost of gas (delivery infrastructure, transmission, customer charges);*
  - *Details on pricing structure and commitments from gas producer/transmission companies for energy quality, price, and availability;*
  - *Opportunities for identifying aggregation of user demand to result in better pricing;*
  - *Agreements concerning the delivery of gas to projects and customers, including pricing and financial terms. A contingency plan for alternative or additional power sources could be useful to discuss.*
  - *Suitability of and amortization/ cost economic analysis of possible hardline extensions vs. virtual pipeline solutions.*
  
- **Work Order 3 - Distribution System Design:**
  - *Engineering and construction standards to be used in project design;*
  - *Types of major system components, the number of units typically required, and their cost.*
  
- **Work Order 4 - Management Plan:**
  - *Customer membership requirements*
    - *Support services and programs that could be provided to customers in addition to natural gas service;*
    - *Membership costs and fees options – including facilitation and annual fees.*
  - *Management requirements*
    - *Recommended additional staff positions, descriptions, responsibilities, and compensation programs;*
    - *Funding options.*
  
- **Work Order 5 - Operational Plan:**
  - *The plan for operating the Cooperative on a day-to-day basis, including:*
    - *Customer inscription and service;*
    - *Connections and disconnections;*
    - *Meter reading and billing;*



- *Accounting and finance;*
- *Purchasing and inventory;*
- *Maintenance and repair;*
- *Loss control and prevention;*
- *Engineering and planning;*
- *Recommendations for maintaining satisfactory relationships with state and federal regulatory agencies.*
- *Additional topics could include:*
  - *Stating of operational philosophy, including priorities and targets for issues such as employee training and supervision, emergency response time, inventory levels, supplies and materials quality, cost containment, safety, customer complaints, and system reliability;*
  - *Major programs, according to the priorities of individual projects:*
    - *For example, in the case of an initial build-out reaching only a small portion of the market, the Business Plan and Market Analysis should describe the operational aspects of member subscriptions and line extensions to reach additional customers.*
- **Work Order 6 - Marketing Plan:**
  - *The Cooperative's philosophy with regard to marketing – relationships it wants to have with customers, industry and the community at large;*
  - *Within the Cooperative or with consultant assistance, where the function and responsibility for this function lies;*
  - *Funding levels and sources;*
  - *Initial focus:*
    - *Pricing targets, segmented at a minimum by consumer class;*
    - *Proposed rate structure and natural gas buying best practices approaches and options;*
    - *How the program might change focus as the distribution system matures and new needs, hurdles, and opportunities arise, including potential resulting changes including integrating the marketing effort with billing and customer service, or initiating new programs such as loss reduction, incentive tariffs, and equipment sales.*
  - *On the ground marketing efforts directed to potential customers:*
    - *Residential, commercial, industrial.*
  - *Cost-benefit studies;*
  - *Potential for appliance conversion programs – strategies and justification, costs and benefits.*
- **Work Order 7 - Financial and Economic Analysis:**
  - *A careful, detailed analysis of projected potential operational and delivery project costs, benefits, challenges, risks, and assumptions:*



- *Recommendations for potential use of a computer-based model to compare project expected cash receipts against cash outflow for representative delivery projects. (Typically, financial projections for utilities are modeled over a minimum 10-year horizon):*
  - *Income;*
  - *Pro forma cash flow;*
  - *Sources/uses of funds statements;*
  - *Indicators of project viability and attractiveness (such as internal rate of return and cash return on equity).*
- *Major assumptions and parameters to be included:*
  - *Construction and system build-out periods;*
  - *Terms on project debt/equity;*
  - *Sales growth;*
  - *Cost of natural gas and rates for service;*
  - *Operation and maintenance expenses.*
- *The model should analyze multiple scenarios:*
  - *Impact of changes in key variables on the bottom line (sensitivity analysis) or identifying the values key variables must hold in order for revenues to cover costs (breakeven analysis).*
- *Model output:*
  - *Summary tables and accompanying narrative:*
    - *Description of central findings, addressing key items such as earnings, cash flow, investment return indices, and project risks;*
    - *How output can support economic analysis of each proposed delivery project.*
- *SWOT and/or gap analysis.*
- **Work Order 8 - Project Implementation:**
  - *Representative “strategic to do list” for the Cooperative for a representative delivery project;*



- *List or Gantt chart of steps and milestones planned for typical project implementation, with focus on the construction period:*
  - *Schedule should extend at least until system product delivery begins.*
- *List of key project tasks, assignment of responsibilities, and realistic estimates of task completion times.*

Consultants should expect to conduct on-site and telephone interviews with the Cooperative Board and related staff, as well as with relevant parties that may contribute to information that will be incorporated into the Business Plan and Market Analysis. Appropriate references and contact information should be provided for these interviews, and written summaries should be prepared to be included as appendices in each final work order deliverable document.

Please note that there can be some flexibility for Consultants to refine and edit the proposed document work order structure/topics; specific ideas can be discussed in RFQ responses if desired.

The Cooperative also asks that respondents identify and provide any useful Business Plan and Market Analysis examples from other comparable entities, including those prepared by the Consultant or other parties.

### **3.2 Cooperative Role for Business Plan and Market Analysis Project**

Members of the Cooperative Board of Directors, Committees, and support staff will perform the following roles in this project:

- Evaluate RFQ responses through an appointed committee, select consultants;
- Conduct scoping and progress meetings with consultant;
- Complete selected Work Orders without Consultant assistance if it is determined to be the best approach;
- Coordinate and attend information gathering interviews and meetings with Cooperative Board of Directors and committees, the Cooperative's legal counsel, the Consultant, and relevant third parties, including gas buyers and providers, design and engineering firms, maintenance operations companies, government regulators, funding agencies, and others as required.
- Cooperatively develop appropriate areas of content for Business Plan and Market Analysis; and
- Review, edit, provide feedback for consultant-developed areas of content for Business Plan and Market Analysis.

The Cooperative will be responsible for assembling and integrating the final content of the Business Plan and Market Analysis, and reserves the right to retain final editorial control of the document.



## 4. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

### 4.1 Submittal Requirements

Firms interested in performing the above services are asked to submit **one (1) original hardcopy proposal, three additional (3) hardcopies, and one (1) electronic copy (PDF format)** of their sealed proposal, clearly marked as “**Business Plan and Market Analysis**” by **February 1, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.**, to Cooperative offices at the address provided below. E-mailed proposals, late submittals, and faxes will not be accepted. The Cooperative reserves the right to determine the acceptance status of all submissions.

Proposers should be clear, concise and direct in their submissions. Responses shall be in narrative form and shall include the information required in this RFQ. Elaborate or lengthy proposals beyond those needed to provide a clear response to all requirements are discouraged. Unclear, incomplete, or inaccurate documentation may be rejected. Preparers should use 11-point type, single spaced for the main body of the proposal.

The Cooperative reserves the right to seek additional information or clarifications from any proposers, and may elect to interview any or all of the proposers in person or by telephone conference call.

All costs of proposal preparation shall be borne by the proposer. The Cooperative shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by proposers in the preparation and/or submission of proposals.

Proposals may be withdrawn by written request of the authorized representative of the proposer on letterhead at any time prior to the submission deadline.

All proposals and other material submitted will become the property of the Cooperative and may be returned only at the Cooperative’s option. All proposals submitted become public information and may be reviewed by anyone requesting to do so at the conclusion of the evaluation process.

Proposals should be submitted to:

Don Kiel, Secretary  
SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative, Inc.  
201 Furnace Road  
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837



### 4.2 Specific Project Terms and Conditions

- If the proposer intends to utilize subconsultants, the organization of the project team, roles and responsibilities of individual members, and résumés of individuals who will conduct the work must be provided. List any Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)/Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)/Woman Business Enterprise (WBE) status as applicable. The prime Consultant from each team will be required to assume the responsibility for all services offered in the proposal whether or not directly performed by the prime Consultant. Further, the prime Consultant will be the sole point of contact for the Cooperative with regard to contractual matters.
- The proposed project team shall be approved by the Cooperative. The Cooperative must approve any changes in the project team after the proposed team is selected to perform work.
- Consultant report documents that are specific to the assigned work orders are due by **July 16, 2017**. Any requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the Cooperative for consideration. The final Business Plan and Market Analysis document is to be completed by **September 1, 2017**. See Section 4.3 for the full project schedule.
- Contract type will be lump sum to be awarded on a work order basis to Consultant(s) for a total project amount not to exceed **\$50,000.00**.
- The Cooperative will reimburse each selected Consultant within 30 days of receipt of payment to the Cooperative by the Appalachian Regional Commission, the project sponsor.
- The contract may be subject to availability of requested funds from other governmental bodies. If such funds are not distributed by said governmental bodies to the Cooperative, this agreement shall terminate, and each Consultant shall hold the Cooperative harmless for any loss or liability arising out of the contract award cancellation because of non-receipt of the funds.
- The Cooperative shall also have the right to terminate each Consultant contract at any time upon thirty (30) calendar days' written notice to the point of contact in the event the efforts are to be abandoned for any reason, indefinitely postponed, or if the Consultant or Consultant team becomes unable to perform the work. Furthermore, the Cooperative shall have the right to terminate Consultant services immediately when, in the judgment of the Cooperative, such services are unsatisfactory, the Consultant has failed to abide in all respects by the conditions of the Agreement, or for the convenience of the Cooperative if the Cooperative determines termination to be in its best interest. Each Consultant firm or team shall be compensated for the actual cost of services satisfactorily rendered up to the date of the termination notice.
- Each selected Consultant shall be required to maintain professional liability insurance. Proposals must specify the carrier and include coverage limits of no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence. The successful applicant or applicants shall provide a certificate of insurance evidencing such insurance.



### 4.3 Project Timeline and RFQ Questions and Responses

Milestone dates for the RFQ and project are shown below. The Cooperative reserves the right to adjust the schedule dates as necessary.

<u>MILESTONE</u>	<u>COMPLETION DATE</u>
<b>Proposal Process</b>	
Release RFQ	12/15/2016
Written questions and comments due	1/8/2017
Receive proposals	2/1/2017
Evaluation & prioritization	2/14/2017
Consultant selection (Notice To Proceed)	2/14/2017
<b>Project Tasks</b>	
Initiation meeting	3/8/2017
Investigations	6/17/2017
Consultant reports	7/16/2017
Follow-up meetings	8/8/2017
Final Business Plan and Market Analysis report	9/1/2017

As part of the RFQ process, questions may be submitted in e-mail form only through **January 8, 2017** to [BP-MA-RFQ@centralpagas.org](mailto:BP-MA-RFQ@centralpagas.org). Unauthorized contact regarding this RFQ with the Cooperative's Board of Directors or staff may result in disqualification. Following submittal of questions, the Cooperative will provide written responses within one week at <http://www.seda-cog.org/transportation/Pages/RGUI.aspx> along with any revisions or updates to the RFQ.

### 4.4 Proposal Content:

Each proposal must include the following:

- A letter of interest/cover letter/executive summary, which must be no more than two (2) pages in length and include contact information and signature of an individual authorized to bind the firm. **Please clearly note which work order(s) for your firm or team wishes to be considered.** (Note: one page is one side of an 8½" x 11" paper.)
- A statement of qualifications and résumés that describe the proposer's experience in conducting similar work, including any subcontractors. Résumés should be limited to one page, limited to those individuals that may participate in the project, and list the physical office location of those employees. A company organizational chart also should be included. The total length of this section should be no more than twelve (12) pages.



- Listing of any DBE/MBE/WBE qualifications for the state of Pennsylvania (as prime contractor and for any subcontractors).
- A professional reference listing and description of at least three (3) but no more than five (5) similar client projects along with telephone numbers and names of contact persons. This section should be limited to one (1) page in length for each reference.
- If available, at least one (1) sample document of similar work performed by the proposer.
- A description of project experience and approaches proposed for all work orders in the Business Plan and Market Analysis scope for which the Consultant wishes to be considered. This section should be limited to no more than five (5) pages in length.
- A statement acknowledging the proposer's willingness to meet Cooperative requirements for maintaining professional liability insurance.
- Itemized cost schedule (i.e., hourly personnel rate, travel expenses, etc.) for additional services that the Cooperative may request.

#### **4.5 Review, Evaluation, and Consultant Selection**

During its evaluation of the proposals, a selected team of those to be involved in the project will consider the following factors in selecting the most qualified proposers. Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria (note that the list below is neither weighted nor prioritized):

- Experience with similar projects and background needed to prepare the required deliverable;
- Experience with the Pennsylvania PUC, Pennsylvania Public Utility Code, and clients in the utility/natural gas industry;
- Overall quality of the proposal and understanding of the proposed scope;
- Current workload and the capacity of the proposer to perform the work in the required time frame;
- Subcontractors to be utilized for completion of the services;
- Inclusion of creative and innovative approaches to recommended options for funding and ownership mechanisms;
- Proposer's DBE/MBE/WBE status;
- Other factors, if any, specific to the project.

The Cooperative Board will also review and evaluate the information received from all proposers, and approve final awards. Each proposal will first be reviewed and analyzed to determine overall responsiveness and completeness. Failure to comply with the instructions above may result in the proposal being deemed non-responsive and may, at the discretion of the Cooperative, be eliminated from further consideration.



The Cooperative reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, waive informalities and irregularities in proposals received and to accept any portion of any proposal at any time during the evaluation process if deemed in the best interests of the Cooperative. The Cooperative also reserves the right to cancel all solicitations requested under this notice, and/or to re-advertise solicitation for these services.

Submission of the proposal will signify the proposer's agreement that its proposal and the content thereof are valid for 180 days following the submission deadline and will become part of the contract that is negotiated between the Cooperative and the successful Consultant team.

The entities selected as the apparently successful Consultants will be expected to enter into a contract with the Cooperative. At the appropriate juncture, each selected consultant will be invited to enter into contract negotiations with the Cooperative. In the event that any or all of the contract negotiations are deemed unreasonable, the Cooperative may choose to negotiate with other proposer(s) or team(s) of proposers and proceed accordingly. Negotiations of a contract will be in conformance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and procedures. The negotiated cost and pricing data, once agreed to by the Cooperative and the Consultant, shall form the basis for a billing/payment provision.

As noted in the proposed schedule, the Cooperative intends to hold a project kickoff meeting within three weeks of selection of Consultants/Notice to Proceed. The Cooperative will conduct regular weekly or biweekly status conference calls with the selected Consultant team (individually or as part of a group) during the project time period.

#### **4.6 Compliance with Regulations**

The Cooperative is committed to compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of applicable civil rights statutes, executive orders, regulations, and policies, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and 49 CFR Part 26. The Cooperative hereby notifies all proposers that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this agreement, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to the invitation, and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex in consideration of an award.

#### **4.7 General Conditions, Reservations, and Disclaimers**

In addition to any other conditions, reservations, or disclaimers set forth in this RFQ, the following section lists general conditions, reservations, and disclaimers which apply to this RFQ and project deliverables.

- The Cooperative reserves the right to extend any submission deadline should doing so be in the interest of the Cooperative. Proposers shall have the right to revise their proposals in the event that a deadline is extended. In the event a deadline is extended, the Cooperative shall provide notice to proposers.



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- The Cooperative reserves the right to withdraw this RFQ at any time without prior notice. The Cooperative reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
- If an inadequate number of proposals are received or the proposals received are deemed to be non-responsive, the Cooperative may, in its sole discretion, reissue the RFQ or execute a sole-source agreement for the services sought in this RFQ with any individual or entity.
- Proposers may not make any changes or additions after the deadline for receipt of proposals. The Cooperative reserves the right to request additional information or documentation from proposers as it deems necessary or appropriate.
- The Cooperative reserves the right to verify information in any response or proposal.
- The Cooperative may require on-site or telephone interviews with any proposer.
- The Cooperative reserves the right to waive minor defects in any response or proposal.
- All documentation prepared as part of this project will become the property of the Cooperative. The Cooperative may make all deliverables available to the general public without any proprietary notices of any kind.

### 4.8 Communications Protocol

The following communications protocol shall apply throughout the RFQ process.

- Each proposer shall receive the same information concerning the RFQ at substantially the same time as all other proposers. Announcements, changes, responses, etc. will be posted at <http://www.seda-cog.org/transportation/Pages/RGUI.aspx>.
- To ensure fair and consistent distribution of information, all proposer questions submitted in written form via e-mail will be answered in a "Q&A" format on the Cooperative's Web site. No individual answers or responses will be given.
- This RFQ does not represent a commitment or offer by the Cooperative to enter into an agreement with a proposer or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response or proposal. The proposer assumes all costs associated with responding to this RFQ.
- Should any question arise as to the proper interpretation of the terms and conditions contained in this RFQ, the decision of the Cooperative shall be final.

APPENDIX A

Example Priority Targeted Investment Area Cost Estimate and Phasing Map

