Request for Qualifications

Independent Consultant to Develop and Manage a Feasibility Study RFP Process Studying the South County Mall (St. Louis County, MO) Site For Redevelopment Into A Sports Tourism Facility

Proposals to be addressed to:

Explore St. Louis
Custodian of Records
701 Convention Plaza, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63101

Solicitation information

RFQ number: 1026-A
Issue Date: October , 22, 2026
Questions Due: October 28, 2026 5pm Central Time
Response Due: November 5, 2026 5pm Central Time
Submit electronically to: Custodian of Records (SFrierson@ExploreStLouis.com)

Purpose and project background

Explore St. Louis (ESL), acting on behalf of St. Louis County, seeks a qualified, independent consultant to serve as its procurement advisor and representative for the development and administration of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an updated feasibility and market impact study of a possible sports tourism facility at the South County Mall site in St. Louis County, Missouri.

The selected consultant will help ESL define the study scope, conduct a competitive solicitation, evaluate proposals, recommend a study team, support contract negotiations, and oversee the study through final delivery. The consultant selected under this RFQ will manage the process and review the study team's work; the separately selected study team will perform the feasibility analysis.

A prior concept study was completed several years ago. Market conditions and project assumptions have changed sufficiently to warrant a fresh evaluation. The study must test current demand, competitive conditions, site suitability, financial feasibility, tourism benefits, and community implications. The working name South County Event Center (SCEC) does not establish an approved facility concept, program, ownership structure, funding plan, or development commitment. Likewise, there is interest in specific sports such as youth hockey, but no predetermined use has been deemed preferred or acceptable.

ESL seeks an evidence-based decision about whether, and under what conditions, a project should advance. The process must allow recommendations to proceed, modify the concept, defer, or not proceed. ESL does not own or control the site; ESL would potentially be involved

in marketing the facility, just as it does for other sports facilities in the region. Site access and the availability of prior studies will be confirmed during project initiation.

Scope of Consultant Services

Project initiation and decision framework

- Conduct a kickoff meeting with ESL, County representatives, other parties deem essential in planning this process; review available prior studies, site information, project assumptions, and relevant market materials. Identify information gaps, limitations, and necessary third-party expertise.
- Meet with property owner to evaluate specific details that will be needed by proposers.
- Meet with members of the local community, as deemed appropriate by ESL and/or St. Louis County.
- Recommend a project leadership and evaluation structure, including roles, decision authority, stakeholder participation, scoring procedures, confidentiality practices, and conflict disclosures. ESL will appoint participants and retain all selection authority. Ultimately, St. Louis County will exercise final authority for the process to proceed.
- Develop a work plan, schedule, communications protocol, decision log, risk evaluation and study acceptance criteria. Establish the questions the study must answer, and the evidence required to support recommendations.

Development of the feasibility study RFP

- Prepare an RFP suitable for ESL review and approval, including background, scope, deliverables, required methods, proposer qualifications, schedule, fee proposal format, evaluation criteria, interview process, and proposed performance requirements.
- Define a coordinated study scope covering the relevant topics and information needed. Distinguish required work from optional technical investigations, identify how subcontracted expertise will be managed, and estimate likely costs of required work.
- Specify independent data validation, preliminary financial models (if necessary), desired outcomes (measurable or otherwise), and a final recommendation tied to decision criteria.
- Develop a qualified prospective proposer list and outreach plan broad enough to encourage competition. Coordinate procurement and contract provisions with ESL staff and counsel; obtain ESL approval before publication.

Solicitation administration and selection support

- Coordinate publication and outreach through ESL-approved channels. Maintain a solicitation calendar, inquiry log, and procurement record. Draft written responses and addenda for ESL approval and equal distribution to prospective proposers.
- Facilitate a preproposal meeting or site visit if authorized. Coordinate proposal receipt, completeness review, evaluator orientation, scoring, reference checks, and shortlist interviews. Preserve individual evaluations and the basis for recommendations.
- Assess proposed methods, staffing, independence, schedule, deliverables, fees, and exclusions. Present a written comparison and selection recommendation; support scope and fee negotiations with ESL's preferred study team.
- Assist ESL and counsel in documenting the study agreement, milestone payments, acceptance standards, data rights, and remedies for incomplete work. The consultant may not bind ESL, award a contract, or authorize spending.

Required subjects for the study RFP

The selected consultant will translate the following subjects into a practical, integrated RFP. These are requirements for the separately procured study, not a direction for the RFQ consultant to perform the underlying analysis. Respondents may recommend refinements and identify specialist services needed.

A) Market demand and competitive position

Assess current and projected demand by sport, event type, geography, season, and customer segment. Examine existing, planned, and proposed competing facilities; realistic event capture; participant travel patterns; and local versus nonlocal use. Validate methods to evaluate demand with event rights holders, organizers, potential users, and other relevant buyers.

B) Site suitability and facility alternatives

Evaluate the site's suitability for sports tourism uses, including access, parking, transportation, lodging proximity and capacity, utilities, land use constraints, site control, and development dependencies. Compare reasonable facility programs, scale, phasing, adaptive reuse and new construction where applicable. Identify other factors that must be addressed, either before, during or upon completion of the RFP (e.g. environmental, structural, engineering, traffic, entitlement, or other due diligence required before investment).

C) Development costs and financial feasibility

Guide ESL on approximate development costs, based on market trends or comparable projects.

D) Tourism alignment

Evaluate potential alignment within the visitor economy and, where possible, what competitive advantages or disadvantages are applicable.

E) Ownership operations and implementation

Evaluate feasible ownership, governance and financing models. Identify localized conditions or factors that could affect any decision to advance.

Deliverables

Study oversight and decision support

- After ESL awards the study contract, facilitate a study kickoff and confirm methods, data requirements, stakeholder interviews, schedule, reporting, and acceptance standards.
- Monitor milestones, budget, and scope; maintain an issue log; and provide written progress reports at least every two weeks. Identify deficiencies promptly and recommend corrective action. Obtain ESL's written authorization before any scope, schedule, or fee change.
- Review draft analyses and models for consistency, completeness, support for assumptions, demand validation, cost realism, and treatment of downside risk.

Challenge unsupported conclusions and coordinate responses to consolidated ESL comments. Identify matters requiring additional specialist review.
- Facilitate presentations and decision meetings. Submit an independent assessment of the study's findings, limitations, unresolved risks, and recommended next steps. Recommend acceptance or correction of study deliverables; final acceptance ultimately remains with St. Louis County.

Required consultant deliverables

- Project charter and work plan, stakeholder and evaluation structure, schedule, information gap assessment, and decision framework.
- Complete draft and final study RFP package, proposer outreach list, evaluation forms, scoring guidance, interview questions, and proposed study acceptance checklist.
- Solicitation record, including inquiries, proposal review materials, evaluation results, and a documented selection recommendation.
- Negotiation memorandum and recommended study scope, fee, deliverable schedule, and contract performance provisions.
- Progress reports, milestone reviews, and written assessment of the final study.
- Final decision briefing and complete project archive, including correspondence, procurement records, and review memoranda.

Qualifications and submission requirements

- Consultant must provide written assurance of no financial involvement in this project nor its economic outcome.
- Consultant must provide written assurance of no financial or ownership stake in any company that will be competing in the RFP process.
- Demonstrate successful management of competitive consultant procurements and experience with sports tourism facilities, feasibility studies, operating economics, and public or destination-related decision processes. Must be able to evaluate market research, financial models, tourism impacts, facility operations, and development risks. Identify any subcontractors needed to cover these disciplines. Practical operations and owner's representative experience are desirable; development or construction experience alone is insufficient.
- Provide a fee proposal, rates, expenses, and payment milestones.
- Knowledge of sports tourism industry and trends.
- Familiarity with Sports ETA; existing relationship preferred.

Independence and conflicts of interest

- The selected consultant must act solely in ESL's and/or St. Louis County's interests and disclose actual, potential, or apparent conflicts at submission and throughout the engagement. Disclose relationships, compensation, ownership interests, and current or recent engagements involving the site owner, project proponents, potential study proposers, developers, operators, financiers, or other parties that could influence the assignment.
- The consultant, its affiliates, and its personnel or subcontractors working on this engagement may not propose for, participate in, or receive compensation from the separately procured feasibility study. No compensation may depend on a favorable

feasibility finding, project approval, financing, development, or a subsequent contract award. Referral fees and undisclosed commissions are prohibited. Any interest in later development or operating work must be disclosed; ESL may require safeguards, recusal, or exclusion where necessary to protect independent advice and fair competition.

Statement of qualifications

Submit one searchable PDF, not exceeding 15 pages excluding resumes, references, and required disclosures. Organize the response as follows:

- Cover letter: Legal firm name, address, primary contact, authorized signatory, and confirmation of availability and independence.
- Firm and team: Relevant capabilities, proposed project manager, key personnel, responsibilities, time commitments, subcontractors, and concise resumes. Identify who will perform the work and any competing workload.
- Comparable assignments: Three to five recent projects with relevant information related to the South County Mall Study.
- Approach and schedule: Proposed methods, milestones, stakeholder engagement, quality controls, study review approach, risks, and recommended refinements to this scope. State expected ESL staff support and data needs.
- Disclosures: Relevant conflicts and proposed safeguards; state “none” where applicable.

6 Evaluation selection and engagement terms

Evaluation criteria

ESL will review responsiveness and independence before scoring. The following criteria apply to responsive statements of qualifications:

Criterion	Weight
Comparable sports tourism and feasibility advisory experience	25%
Competitive procurement and owner’s representative experience	20%
Proposed approach and understanding of the assignment	25%
Key personnel expertise capacity and availability	20%
References and demonstrated results	10%

ESL may shortlist firms, request clarifications, conduct interviews, and contact references. Interviews, if held, will inform final scoring under these same criteria. ESL will document its ranking and seek a mutually acceptable scope, schedule, and fee with the highest-ranked firm. If negotiations are unsuccessful, ESL may end negotiations and approach the next-ranked firm. Qualifications must remain valid for 120 days after the submission deadline.