

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Open Land Use Model ~~UrbanSim~~ ~~Open Source~~ Software Development

Issuing Organization:	Zephyr Foundation
Date Issued:	August 4, 2026
Questions Deadline:	August 25, 2026, 5:00p PDT
SOQ Deadline:	September 16, 2026, 5:00p PDT
Submit To:	admin@zephyrtransport.org
Anticipated Pool Period:	November 2, 2026 - June 30, 2028, with option to extend

I. Introduction and Background

The Zephyr Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the state of the practice in travel analysis and transportation planning. Zephyr coordinates and supports the Open Land Use Model (OpenLUM) ~~UrbanSim~~ ~~Open Source~~ Project Management Committee (PMC), a collaborative of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) that support the maintenance and enhancement of open-source land use modeling tools, initially leveraging the open-source UrbanSim land use modeling platform.

UrbanSim is an open-source microsimulation framework for modeling urban development and land use change, and ~~to facilitate~~ ing the analysis of the interaction between land use and transportation. It is used by agencies worldwide to support long-range transportation and land use planning, scenario analysis, and equity assessment. The UrbanSim open source codebase is composed of a collection of repositories available at <https://github.com/UDST>, which are governed by a number of open-source licenses.

Through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ), the Zephyr Foundation and the PMC seek to identify a pool of qualified consultants ("Consultant Bench") to provide software development services for the Open Land Use Model project ~~UrbanSim~~ ~~Open Source~~ on an as-needed, task-order basis. This bench will be available to the PMC for software development, new feature implementation, open-source contributions, and related technical work for the period described in Section III. Proposers are invited to submit a Statement of Qualifications meeting the criteria identified in following sections of the RFQ.

Selection to the Consultant Bench does not guarantee award of any contract or task order. Work will be assigned at the PMC's discretion based on qualifications, available capacity, and fit to specific task needs.

II. Minimum Qualifications

Proposers must demonstrate all of the following minimum qualifications to be eligible for consideration. The Transmittal Letter must clearly indicate how the firm meets each requirement:

1. The proposed project manager must have direct working experience developing and applying regional land use forecasting models), and must have served in a similar capacity on a minimum of two (2) projects substantially similar in nature to the services described in this RFQ within the last five (5) years.
2. Each key team member (other than support staff) must have a minimum of five (5) years of work or academic experience on comparable land use modeling, software development, planning, development economics, or urban economics projects..
3. It is highly preferred that at least one team member has direct experience with the UrbanSim [open source](#) model system and the Urban Data Science Toolkit (UDST).
4. The proposing team must demonstrate experience with the following: Python software development (including pandas, NumPy, or equivalent scientific Python stack); open-source software contribution workflows using GitHub, and continuous integration and related testing procedures.

III. Scope of Work and Period of Performance

Scope of Work

All work will be assigned pursuant to PMC-initiated task orders that will include a specific scope of work, schedule, and compensation structure. Task orders may be deliverables-based or time-and-materials, as determined by the PMC. Consultants on the bench may be invited to submit brief informal proposals in response to task order solicitations; selection for individual task orders will be based on qualifications, capacity, and approach.

The following areas represent the anticipated range of work. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive, and Zephyr reserves the right to expand the scope of work over the bench period:

A. Core Platform Development

- Development of new model components and features ~~within the UrbanSim software framework~~
- Refactoring, optimization, and technical debt reduction in existing [open source](#) codebases
- Performance improvements, including runtime and memory management
- Maintenance and compatibility updates across core [open source](#) libraries and dependencies

B. Model Components and Extensions

- Residential and non-residential real estate price and rent modeling, including pro forma and feasibility approaches

- Developer model enhancements for infill, redevelopment, and affordable housing scenarios
- Household and employment location choice model development and estimation
- Accessibility integration, including ActivitySim logsums and [Open Land Use ModelUrbanSim](#) –travel model linkages
- Scenario and policy analysis tooling (zoning, TOD, affordable housing policies, development levies.)

C. Infrastructure and Testing

- Continuous integration and continuous deployment (CI/CD) pipeline development and maintenance
- Test coverage, documentation, and code quality tooling
- Cloud deployment, containerization, and execution environment management
- Data pipeline development, possibly including shared data schema/data model, for parcel, building, employment, and zoning inputs

D. Open-Source Contributions and Community Engagement

- Code review, issue triage, and pull request management on public repositories
- Contribution to documentation, tutorials, worked examples, and developer guides
- Participation in PMC technical working groups and coordination meetings
- Support for member agencies in understanding and applying new capabilities

Period of Performance

The initial bench period is anticipated to run for an approximately two year period from November 2, 2026 through June 30, 2028. At the PMC's discretion, bench contracts may be extended for up to three additional years. The schedule for completing individual work items will be established within each task order. Zephyr anticipates that task orders will typically be structured around 6-month development sprints, with defined roles for code development, code review, and overall project coordination.

Budget

Due to the task-order nature of this contract, it is not possible to specify a total contract value for any individual vendor. Zephyr anticipates providing approximately \$90,000 per year to support the overall development effort. This figure may be adjusted based on PMC membership, funding availability, and the annual work program developed by the PMC member agencies and Zephyr.

IV. Governance and Task Order Process

The [Open Land Use ModelUrbanSim-Open-Source](#) PMC will define an annual development roadmap. Informed by this roadmap, at the PMC's discretion and direction, Zephyr will develop and issue task orders to selected bench consultants. The PMC will maintain a shared code repository using GitHub. The GitHub issue tracker, pull request workflow, and project wiki will be used to manage task order work. All code developed under this bench must be contributed to the shared codebase in a manner consistent with the relevant open-source license and the PMC's contribution guidelines.

Zephyr reserves the right to invite brief informal proposals from multiple bench consultants prior to issuing a task order and to select based on the most compelling approach. Multiple firms may hold simultaneous bench contracts.

V. Pre-Submittal Conference and Questions

A non-mandatory pre-submittal conference will be held on August 18, 2026 at 10:00a PDT. Attendance information, including teleconference or video call details, will be distributed to firms that notify Zephyr of their interest in participating.

All questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing to admin@zephyrtransport.org no later than August 25, 2026. Questions and responses will be compiled and distributed as a written addendum to all parties who have expressed interest. Verbal responses to questions are not binding. Proposers are responsible for checking for any addenda at: <https://zephyrtransport.org/activities/urbansim-community/>.

VI. Selection Timetable

Milestone	Date
RFQ issued	August 4, 2026
Non-mandatory pre-submittal conference	August 18, 2026
Deadline for written questions	August 25, 2026, 5:00p PDT
Responses to questions / addenda issued	September 2, 2026
SOQ submittal deadline	September 16, 2025, 5:00p PDT
Interviews (if held)	September 22-23, 2026
Consultant notifications	September 29, 2026
Anticipated bench start date	November 2, 2026

All dates are approximate and subject to change. Zephyr will notify all interested parties of any changes.

VII. Submittal Instructions

Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) must be submitted electronically to admin@zephyrtransport.org by the deadline indicated above. Hard copy submissions will not be accepted. Please confirm receipt of your submission; if you do not receive confirmation within 48 hours, contact Joe Castiglione at joe.castiglione@zephyrtransport.org. Late submissions will not be considered.

Zephyr reserves the right to reject any SOQ that does not meet the format or content requirements described in Section VIII, or that does not provide sufficient information to evaluate the proposer under any one of the criteria described in Section IX.

VIII. Format and Content of Statement of Qualifications

SOQs must be organized in the following order. Page limits are noted where applicable and are firm unless otherwise stated. Deviations may result in disqualification at Zephyr's discretion.

A. Transmittal Letter (1 page)

The Transmittal Letter must be signed by an official authorized to bind the firm contractually. The letter must:

- Provide the name, address, and contact information of the submitting firm and any proposed subcontractors
- Identify the proposed Project Manager and confirm their availability for the full bench period
- Explicitly address how the firm meets each of the Minimum Qualifications in Section II
- Disclose any actual or apparent conflicts of interest with the Zephyr Foundation, PMC member agencies, or the proposed scope of work, and describe the plan for mitigation
- Indicate that the SOQ constitutes a firm offer for a period of 90 days from the submission deadline

B. Title Page

The Title Page must include: the RFQ title; the submitting firm's name, address, and telephone number; the name and email of the primary contact; the date; and the Federal Taxpayer Identification Number.

C. Table of Contents

A table of contents identifying each section and page number.

D. Overview and Summary (1 pages maximum)

A concise overview that conveys the firm's understanding of the work and the general approach to be taken, including:

- A discussion of the purpose and context of UrbanSim open source software development
- A summary of the firm's proposed approach to open source software development in a collaborative, open environment
- Any key assumptions or considerations that would inform the firm's approach

E. Firm and Personnel Qualifications (5 pages maximum)

This section must provide professional credentials and experience for the firm, any subcontractors, and all key personnel. The absence of specific information on any of the following will be considered non-responsive:

- Firm overview: size, structure, and primary areas of technical expertise
- Roles and names of key personnel proposed for UrbanSim-related work

- Experience with UrbanSim, UDST libraries, or comparable open-source land use modeling frameworks
- Software engineering practices: version control, testing methodology, documentation standards, and code review processes
- Experience with open-source contribution workflows and collaborative development across multiple stakeholders
- Any additional qualifications the firm believes are critical to success in this role

Standard resumes for key personnel must be included as an appendix and do not count toward the 5-page limit. Each resume should not exceed two (2) pages.

F. Relevant Project Examples (5 pages maximum)

Provide descriptions of up to five (5) relevant projects completed in the last ten (10) years that are substantially similar to the scope of work described in Section III. For each project, include:

- Project title, sponsoring agency/client, and year(s) of performance
- Project budget
- Description of the work performed and the firm's specific role
- Technologies, platforms, and tools used
- Name and contact information of the agency project manager (as a reference)
- Links to public repositories, documentation, or publications where available

G. References

Contact information for up to three (3) professional references with direct knowledge of the firm's technical work. References should be from clients for whom substantially similar work was performed within the last ten (10) years and should include: name, title, organization, phone number, and email address. References do not count toward page limits.

H. Resource Rate Schedule

Using the form in Appendix A, provide hourly rates for all labor classifications and key personnel proposed for the bench. Rates will be evaluated for reasonableness and will form the basis for compensation under any resulting task orders. Rates must remain in effect for the initial bench period, with any escalation methodology clearly described.

IX. Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

Minimum Qualifications Review

Zephyr will first verify that each SOQ meets the Minimum Qualifications set out in Section II. SOQs that do not meet the Minimum Qualifications will not be further evaluated.

Responsiveness Review

SOQs will be reviewed for general responsiveness and inclusion of all items required in Section VIII. Any SOQ that does not include sufficient information to permit evaluation under any one criterion will be considered non-responsive.

Evaluation Panel and Scoring

Responsive SOQs will be evaluated by the PMC, which is composed of agency representatives. The evaluation panel's determination will be within its sole discretion. SOQs will be scored on the following criteria:

Evaluation Factor	Weight	Max Points
Firm and key personnel expertise in UrbanSim -and open-source modeling	40%	40
Technical approach and software engineering practices	30%	30
Relevant project examples and references	20%	20
Reasonableness of hourly rates	10%	10
TOTAL	100%	100

Interviews

The evaluation panel may, at its option, invite short-listed firms for oral interviews prior to finalizing bench selections. The PMC reserves the right to make an award on the basis of written SOQs alone, without interviews. If interviews are held, oral communication skills and ability to discuss technical content will be evaluated.

Award

At the PMC's direction, Zephyr will notify all proposers of its selection decisions. The PMC reserves the right to select one or more firms for the bench, to reject any or all SOQs, to waive minor irregularities, to request additional information from one or more proposers, and to negotiate with any or all proposers. Selection to the bench does not guarantee award of any task order contract.

X. General Conditions

Costs of Preparation

All costs associated with the preparation and submission of an SOQ are the sole responsibility of the proposer. The Zephyr Foundation will not reimburse any costs incurred in responding to this solicitation.

Key Personnel

Key personnel identified in the SOQ are expected to remain on any resulting bench contract. Any proposed change in key personnel is subject to written approval by the Zephyr, at the direction of the PMC. Removal of key personnel without written consent may be considered a material breach of contract.

Conflicts of Interest

Proposers must disclose in the Transmittal Letter any actual or potential conflicts of interest with the Zephyr Foundation, ~~UrbanSim Open Source PMC member agencies, or the scope of work.~~

At the PMC's direction, Zephyr will evaluate disclosed conflicts to determine their effect on eligibility. A firm found to have an undisclosed actual conflict of interest may be disqualified.

Confidentiality and Public Records

Submissions may be subject to public disclosure requirements. Proposers who believe any portion of their SOQ contains proprietary information should clearly mark those sections and include a written statement identifying the basis for the claim of confidentiality. Zephyr will evaluate such claims and make a written determination. Proposed rates are not confidential.

Reservation of Rights

At the PMC's direction, the Zephyr Foundation reserves the right to: reject any or all SOQs; cancel this RFQ at any time; waive informalities or irregularities; issue addenda modifying any RFQ requirements; and negotiate with one or more firms simultaneously. This RFQ does not commit Zephyr to award any contract.

Open-Source Requirements

All work developed under any contract resulting from this bench must be contributed to the relevant open-source repository in a manner consistent with the applicable license and PMC contribution guidelines. Vendors agree that any code, documentation, or other deliverables produced under task orders will be licensed consistent with the existing UrbanSim open-source licensing framework.

Equal Opportunity

The Zephyr Foundation encourages submissions from firms of all sizes and types, including small businesses, minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and disadvantaged business enterprises.

Appendix A: Resource Rate Schedule

Provide hourly billing rates for all labor classifications proposed for this bench. Rates must remain firm for the initial bench period. If the firm proposes rate escalation in subsequent years, identify the escalation methodology (e.g., fixed percentage, CPI-based). Additional personnel may be added at Zephyr's approval.

Labor Classification / Key Personnel Name	Hourly Rate (Year 1)	Escalation (if any)
Project Manager	\$	
Senior Software Engineer	\$	
Software Engineer	\$	
Land Use Modeler / Model Analyst	\$	
Data Engineer	\$	
[Add classifications as needed]	\$	

Firm Name: _____

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name and Title: _____

Appendix B: SOQ Submittal Checklist

Use the following checklist to confirm your submittal is complete before submission. Incomplete submittals may be disqualified at Zephyr's discretion.

- Transmittal Letter (1 page, signed by authorized official, addresses Minimum Qualifications and COI)
- Title Page (firm name, contact info, Federal TIN, date)
- Table of Contents
- Overview and Summary (3 pages maximum)
- Firm and Personnel Qualifications (10 pages maximum)
- Key Personnel Resumes (appendix, 2 pages per person maximum)
- Relevant Project Examples (10 pages maximum, up to 5 projects)
- References (2–3, with full contact information)
- Resource Rate Schedule (Appendix A, completed and signed)
- SOQ submitted electronically to admin@zephyrtransport.org by September 16, 2025, 5:00p PDT

Questions? Contact admin@zephyrtransport.org.