

Iowa DOT Research Request for Proposal (RFP)

It is the intent of Iowa DOT Research to enter into agreement with the responsible bidder whose submitted proposal is the most advantageous, cost and other factors considered. Other factors include but are not limited to meeting or exceeding mandatory requirements, proposed staffing, and meeting required time schedule.

- Original RFP is posted at <https://iowadot.gov/research/Requests-for-Proposal>
- Questions should be submitted to the project manager, identified below.
 - Questions are due no later than 14 calendar days prior to the proposal due date. Questions and responses will be posted on <https://iowadot.gov/research/Requests-for-Proposal> no later than 7 calendar days prior to the proposal due date.
- Responses must be submitted in pdf form to Proposal.Research@iowadot.us
 - Use the following naming convention for the PDF submission:
 - **ResearchProposalNumber_Agency_PrincipalInvestigatorLastName.pdf**
- Responses must comply with the proposal guidelines in “Required Format for Iowa DOT Research Proposals.”

<https://iowadot.gov/research/Research-Process/Proposal-Deliverable-Guidelines>

- Additional requirements for project tasks, products, deliverables, schedules, implementation, technology transfer, and others are outlined in the Proposal Guidelines.

RFP #: [IHRB-3799](#)

RFP Title: Ongoing Evaluation of Full-Scale Unpaved Roads Research Test Sites

RFP Posted: May 15, 2026

Proposals Due: On or Before July 1, 2026 at 12:00 Noon Central Standard Time.

Project Manager: Vanessa Goetz, vanessa.goetz@iowadot.us, (515)-239-1382

Budget

- Funding limitations have been established. Proposed budgets shall not exceed \$75,000.
- Proposed budgets are not limited. They will be considered during the evaluation process.

Timeline

- Timing limitations have been established. Proposed timelines shall not extend beyond 12 months.
- Proposed timelines are not limited. They will be considered during the evaluation process.

Literature Review

- A Literature Review has been performed as part of project development and should not be included as a task in the proposal. The Literature Review is available for download here:
- A Literature Review has not been performed and may be included as a task in the proposal.

Data Management Plan

- Include a task in the proposal to develop a Data Management Plan (DMP); refer to [Iowa DOT's DMP guidance](#).
- A DMP is not required for this project.

Problem Statement

The Iowa Highway Research Board (IHRB) has conducted numerous unpaved road research projects in its history. These projects have a data collection and evaluation interval that is typically less than 5 years. Once completed, no additional data is collected and thus the long-term performance of the site is never fully known. Although the exact length of time needed to find the true performance data is often not a requirement of the research project, some form of long-term performance data would potentially give insight into life performance of these research sites. Most, if not all, of these sites have lost access to the sensors used in the original study.

This Phase I effort is intended as a reconnaissance-level, pre-scoping project. Its purpose is to reduce uncertainty, clarify site conditions, review available historical information, and provide the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Project Champion with a well-defined, realistic, and implementable Phase II scope. Phase I will not include extensive field testing, long-term monitoring, or full-scale data collection. Those activities are reserved for Phase II.

An outlined approach, or template, of what performance metrics merit evaluation, what data is going to be collected, the reasoning behind that data collection, and how it will be collected needs to be developed so that consistent data is collected. To disturb the sites today with new instrumentation is impractical. Phase I will not perform testing beyond basic observational assessment. This work will identify feasible, non-destructive, cost-effective testing methods that may be used in Phase II to assess how sites are performing since project completion. The project will aim to create a standardized method to use in the future for granular road test sites done in Iowa, regardless of the original project funding program.

Additionally, any work or materials put into a research site by the county after completion of the research project needs to be documented. The work performed by the county could be an indicator of the success, failure, or overall life of the project site. A sampling of county maintenance history should be collected through desktop review methods such as interviews, email inquiries, and review of county documentation. Extensive field verification or on-site record searches are outside the scope of Phase I. The proposed effort in this project is not intended to determine performance outcomes, but rather to define how performance should be measured in Phase II.

The sites are anticipated to be in various conditions since the end of their initial study. These conditions could range from excellent performance, to failed, or performing at an "end of life" level. Performance and cost, over time, are the two biggest issues an engineer needs to know when deciding on what action to take. Revisiting the sites would provide a better performance picture.

The list of possible sites to visit may be selected from past IHRB projects, such as TR-664, TR-656, TR-685, TR-704, TR-721, TR-725, TR-747, TR-769, TR-783, and TR-797.

This list is not all inclusive as other sites worth including in the follow up study may be discovered during the initial review. It is understood there are projects currently ongoing that may be finished with testing with no plan for future data collection. These new research sites may be included for consideration during Phase II.

Additional site recommendations will require review and feedback from the TAC to be included for longer term testing.

Objectives

- 1) Perform a literary review of proposed sites to understand the scope of the Phase II effort.

- 2) Identify testing and data collection needs and performance metrics to evaluate for Phase II. Include the scope and extent of the tests to be performed and data to be collected, feasible methods, equipment requirements, and expected cost range.
- 3) Limited travel to project sites may be included to obtain general site impressions, but not to conduct testing or comprehensive evaluations. These visits may be performed only if necessary for initial review and evaluation.
- 4) Provide a recommended Phase II roadmap, including site prioritization, testing methods, estimated costs and schedule options.

Minimum Project Tasks

In addition to tasks outlined in the proposal guidelines:

- 1) Identify sites to be included for evaluation.
- 2) Develop full-scale Phase II project scope in consultation with the TAC
- 3) Development of data collection template
- 4) Initial visits to project sites may be included for reconnaissance
- 5) Investigation and identification of county maintenance information via desktop review methods such as interviews, email requests, and document gathering. No field verification is expected.
- 6) Quarterly TAC meetings for updates on project progress

Deliverables

Include the minimum deliverables as outlined in the Proposal Guidelines. In addition, include the following deliverables:

- 1) Template for Data Collection
- 2) A Phase II Scope Recommendation and project roadmap including tentative site list, Level-of-Effort estimates, recommended testing methods, anticipated equipment needs, proposed schedule, and budget range options.
- 3) Site Condition Summary for each site evaluated, based on desktop review and any permitted reconnaissance visits.

Please be aware the Iowa Highway Research Board requires a presentation of the findings, final report and deliverables during their regular business meetings prior to the project and contract end date. Products, documents & deliverables will be reviewed for final approval during the meeting.

Additional Information

Changes or modifications to the template for data collection during Phase I are anticipated as the project team and TAC gain understanding of site conditions and refine feasible Phase II approaches. The PI shall make the TAC aware of potential changes to the template and the reasons why within a reasonable timeframe. This will allow the TAC time to review the changes to minimize the interference of data collection.

Phase I is intentionally limited to low-cost, non-invasive activities to reserve resources intended for Phase II, where the primary data collection and evaluation effort will occur.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Iowa DOT ensures non-discrimination in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any person who believes that they are being denied participation in a project, being denied benefits of a program, or otherwise being discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, low income and limited English proficiency, or needs more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact Iowa DOT Civil Rights at 515-239-7970 or by email at civil.rights@iowadot.us.