

French Broad River MPO

REQUEST for LETTERS of INTEREST (RFLOI)

CONTRACT TYPE: Pedestrian Plan

TITLE: Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan
ISSUE DATE: **November 18th, 2024**
SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: **January 20th, 2025**
ISSUING AGENCY: **French Broad River MPO**

SYNOPSIS SUBCONSULTANTS ARE PERMITTED UNDER THIS CONTRACT.

This contract shall be partially reimbursed with Federal-aid funding through the North Carolina Department of Transportation (hereinafter referred to as the Department). The solicitation, selection, and negotiation of a contract shall be conducted in accordance with all Department requirements and guidelines.

The primary and/or subconsultant firm(s) (if Subconsultants are allowed under this RFLOI) shall be pre-qualified by the Department to perform any Combination of the Discipline Codes listed below for the French Broad River MPO. Discipline Codes required are:

- **141 – Multimodal Transportation Planning**
- **45 – Corridor Planning**
- **315 – Municipal & Regional Studies**
- **410 – Multimodal Connectivity Planning**
- **498 – Public Involvement in the Transit/Transportation Planning Process**
- **31 - Cartography**

WORK CODES for each primary and/or subconsultant firm(s) (if Subconsultants are allowed under this RFLOI) SHALL be listed on the respective RS-2 FORMS (see section 'SUBMISSION ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS').

Proposed Contract Scope Summary

Buncombe County is located in the mountain region of western North Carolina. The County is committed to developing a robust, equitable walking environment that will continue to meet the County's mission:

- We promote a healthy, safe, well-educated, and thriving community with a sustainable quality of life.
- We provide effective and efficient government our residents can trust.
- We deliver needed service through a responsive work force committed to excellence, integrity, and teamwork.

The Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan will support Buncombe County's 2043 Comprehensive Plan. The Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan will focus on several deliverables to meet the County's short- and long-term needs related to pedestrian planning including:

- **Comprehensive pedestrian network plans.** The study will develop a comprehensive pedestrian network plan for the entire County.
- **Project and prioritization recommendations.** This consists of a prioritized project list and associated funding strategies for pedestrian infrastructure improvements within unincorporated areas of Buncombe County.
- **Policy and implementation recommendations.** This consists of recommendations for new policies (e.g. SS4A, SRTS, etc.) and implementation strategies for pedestrian access facilities in Buncombe County.

Project Area

The Project Area is the entirety of unincorporated Buncombe County. The plan will address coordination with important stakeholders, local municipalities, surrounding counties, and adjacent communities.

Client Project Managers

This project is a collaborative effort of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization and Buncombe County. The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of the partner agencies.

- **French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):** Project Management, Project Oversight, and Fiduciary Agent. Contract agreements, invoicing, and payments to be handled by the Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC). LOSRC is the lead planning agency for the French Broad River MPO.
- **Buncombe County:** Stakeholder and Community Engagement Liaison – Buncombe County Planning Department, Community Development Division.

All project management communications will include the designated representative of both agencies. The County project manager has the final say over their agencies' respective plan elements.

Letter of Interest Requirements

This RFLOI is to solicit responses (LETTERS of INTEREST, or LOIs) from qualified firms to provide professional consulting services for the:

Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan.

Electronic LOIs should be submitted in .pdf format using software such as Adobe, CutePDF PDF Writer, Docudesk deskPDF, etc.

LOIs SHALL be received **ELECTRONICALLY** no later than 5pm, January 20th, 2024.
The address for electronic deliveries is: mpo@landofsky.org

LOIs received after this deadline will not be considered.

Except as provided below any firm wishing to be considered must be properly registered with the Office of the Secretary of State and with the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors. Any firm proposing to use corporate subsidiaries or subcontractors must include a statement that these companies are properly registered with the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors and/or the NC Board for Licensing of Geologists. The Engineers performing the work and in responsible charge of the work must be registered Professional Engineers in the State of North Carolina and must have a good ethical and professional standing. It will be the responsibility of the selected private firm to verify the registration of any corporate subsidiary or subcontractor prior to submitting a Letter of Interest. Firms which are not providing engineering services need not be registered with the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors. Some of the services being solicited may not require a license. It is the responsibility of each firm to adhere to all laws of the State of North Carolina.

The firm must have the financial ability to undertake the work and assume the liability. The selected firm(s) will be required to furnish proof of Professional Liability insurance coverage in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000.00. The firm(s) must have an adequate accounting system to identify costs chargeable to the project.

SCOPE OF WORK:

The **French Broad River MPO** is soliciting proposals for the services of a firm/team for the following contract scope of work:

1. Project Initiation & Management:

Task 1.1: Project Kickoff Meeting

Conduct a kickoff meeting with key stakeholders, including county officials, county staff including transportation, long-range, and parks planners, community representatives, and potential partner organizations.

Task 1.2: Stakeholder Identification

Identify and engage stakeholders, including community members, local businesses, schools, and advocacy groups.

Task 1.3: Project Management

Hold bi-weekly meetings with project managers from the MPO and Buncombe County to work through project logistics and the preparation of materials.

Task 1.4 Steering Committee Meetings

Work with the project steering committee to draft proposals and recommendations as well as vet draft sections of the Pedestrian Plan.

Task 1.5 Quarterly Reports & Invoicing

The consultant will provide quarterly reports to the Project Management Team that outlines the tasks that have been completed and tasks that have made progress. This will include invoices to

be processed through the MPO.

2. Background Research and Data Collection:

Task 2.1: Existing Conditions Assessment

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing pedestrian infrastructure, land use, and transportation networks in unincorporated areas of Buncombe County, and connections to facilities in incorporated areas.

Task 2.2: Plan Review

Review pedestrian- and transportation- related planning documents adopted at the local and regional level to identify related appendices and assure alignment with related efforts.

Task 2.3: Data Collection

Gather data on and utilize GIS mapping to identify high-priority areas. GIS Layers and data sets may include:

- Existing bike, pedestrian, and transit facilities, including funded pedestrian, transit (bus stop), street, and intersection projects.
- Pedestrian and transit access facilities gap analysis, including unfunded bike, pedestrian projects, transit, street, and intersection projects from relevant municipal and County plans.
- Transit routes, frequency, ridership, and related information
- Existing streets layer with lanes, intersections, right-of-way width, speed limit, signals (RRFBs, PHBs, etc.), classification, emergency routes, speed humps and other traffic-calming treatments.
- AADT from NCDOT or the MPO.
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle crash data.
- Existing Land Use, Buildings, Structures, Utilities layers.
- ACS / Census demographic data
- Priority Development Areas and Equity Opportunity Areas from the 2043 Comprehensive Plan.
- Destinations, such as schools, parks, grocery stores, convenience stores, drug stores, etc.

3. Community Engagement:

Task 3.1: Outreach Materials

- Develop and help distribute outreach and promotional materials to inform the public about the planning process and invite feedback.
- Translate all outreach materials into Spanish including online surveys, comment forms, handouts, social media posts, and other documents as needed.

Task 3.2: Public Meetings and Workshops

Conduct public meetings and workshops in targeted growth and demographically relevant areas to gather input from community members regarding pedestrian needs, safety concerns, and preferences.. The Consultant should provide information on where in the project schedule the meetings take place and the nature of the public meetings.

Task 3.3: Surveys and Online Engagement

Develop and implement survey tools to reach a broader audience and collect diverse perspectives on pedestrian priorities.

Task 3.4: Documentation and Analysis

- Document all public engagement efforts conducted, measure people reached, measure input collected, and evaluate effectiveness.

- Analyze public input to inform comprehensive network recommendations and prioritization of projects.

4. Pedestrian Network Analysis:

Task 4.1: Safety Audit

Conduct safety audits for existing pedestrian infrastructure to identify hazards, lack of continuity, and recommend improvements.

Task 4.2: Identification of Priority Areas

Analyze existing and collected data to identify priority areas for pedestrian infrastructure improvements based on safety, equity, connectivity, and community needs and priorities.

Task 4.3: Pedestrian Network Design

Develop conceptual designs for existing pedestrian networks in priority areas, considering sidewalk locations, walking patterns, network continuity, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and key destinations.

5. Prioritization of Network Gaps and Transit Access

Task 5.1: Pedestrian Network Gap Layer

Create a pedestrian access network gap layers in GIS based on an analysis of existing pedestrian facilities and future funded facilities.

Task 5.2: Project Prioritization

- Building on the information collected through data analysis and public engagement, establish and share a prioritization process considering factors such as safety, connectivity, demand, equity, public input, and feasibility.
- Facilitate a prioritization session with stakeholders to review and finalize a prioritized list of network gaps.

6. Implementation Recommendations:

Task 6.1: Development Ordinance Review

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- Identify gaps in existing development ordinances related to pedestrian infrastructure and propose updates to require sidewalks in certain areas.
- Recommend adjustments to development ordinances to enhance pedestrian safety, considering elements such as sidewalk widths, buffer zones, and street design.

Task 6.2: Policy Recommendations

- Develop policy recommendations to guide future investments in pedestrian infrastructure and ensure new developments contribute to the pedestrian network.
- Clarify private development responsibilities for construction of new pedestrian infrastructure on public and private roads.

Task 6.3: Funding Strategies

- Identify potential funding sources, including federal grants, state programs, and local funds.
- Recommend strategies to secure funding for prioritized projects including total project funding and local match.

Task 6.4: Maintenance Requirements

- Provide cost projections for maintenance needs over the life of County owned facilities.
- Identify best practices for cost sharing for upkeep of pedestrian facilities.

7. Draft Pedestrian Plan:

Task 7.1: Plan Drafting

- Draft the Pedestrian Plan, including an executive summary, goals, objectives, strategies, and an implementation plan.

Task 7.2: Internal Review

- Conduct an internal review of the draft plan with key stakeholders, including steering committee.
- Incorporate internal feedback as needed and prepare a final draft for public input.

8. Public Presentation and Feedback:

Task 8.1: Public Presentation

Present the draft Pedestrian Plan to the public through community meetings and online platforms. Gather feedback on the proposed strategies and priorities.

Task 8.2: Revision

Revise the plan based on public feedback, ensuring it aligns with the community's needs and expectations.

9. Final Pedestrian Plan:

Task 9.1: Finalization

Incorporate public feedback and finalize the Pedestrian Plan document.

Task 9.2: Submission

Submit the final Pedestrian Plan to Buncombe County officials for approval.

10. Monitoring & Evaluation:

Task 10.1: Monitoring and Evaluation

Establish a process for monitoring project implementation and evaluating the effectiveness of the Pedestrian Plan over time.

This comprehensive approach ensures that the Pedestrian Plan is rooted in community needs, supported by robust data, and aligned with the goals of Buncombe County. It sets the stage for safer, more walkable communities with well-defined pedestrian infrastructure.

PROPOSED CONTRACT TIME: 9-12 Months

PROPOSED CONTRACT PAYMENT TYPE: LUMP SUM

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

All LOIs are limited to **fifteen pages (not including resumes) (15)** pages (RS-2 forms are not included in the page count) inclusive of the cover sheet and shall be typed on 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, single-spaced, one-sided.

Fold out pages are not allowed. In order to reduce costs and to facilitate recycling; binders, dividers, tabs, etc. are prohibited. One staple in the upper left-hand corner is preferred.

LOIs containing more than **30** pages will not be considered.

Firms submitting LOIs are encouraged to carefully check them for conformance to the requirements stated above. If LOIs do not meet ALL these requirements they will be disqualified. No exception will be granted.

SELECTION PROCESS:

Following is a general description of the selection process:

- The LGA's Selection Committee will review all qualifying LOI submittals.
- For Limited Services Contracts (On-Call type contracts), the LGA's Selection Committee **MAY**, at the LGA's discretion, choose any number of firms to provide the services being solicited.

- For Project-Specific Contracts (non-On-Call type contracts), the LGA's Selection Committee MAY, at the LGA's discretion, shortlist a minimum of three (3) firms to be interviewed. IF APPLICABLE, dates of shortlisting and dates for interviews are shown in the section SUBMISSION SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES at the end of this RFLOI.

In order to be considered for selection, consultants must submit a complete response to this RFLOI prior to the specified deadlines. Failure to submit all information in a timely manner will result in disqualification.

TITLE VI NONDISCRIMINATION NOTIFICATION

The LGA in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 US.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all RESPONDENTS that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit LETTERS of INTEREST (LOIs) in response to this ADVERTISEMENT and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

SMALL PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRM (SPSF) PARTICIPATION

The Department encourages the use of Small Professional Services Firms (SPSF). Small businesses determined to be eligible for participation in the SPSF program are those meeting size standards defined by Small Business Administration (SBA) regulations, 13 CFR Part 121 in Sector 54 under the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The SPSF program is a race, ethnicity, and gender-neutral program designed to increase the availability of contracting opportunities for small businesses on federal, state or locally funded contracts. SPSF participation is not contingent upon the funding source.

The Firm, at the time the Letter of Interest is submitted, shall submit a listing of all known SPSF firms that will participate in the performance of the identified work. The participation shall be submitted on the Department's Subconsultant Form RS-2. RS-2 forms may be accessed on the Department's website at [NCDOT Connect Guidelines & Forms](#).

The SPSF must be qualified with the Department to perform the work for which they are listed.

PREQUALIFICATION

The Department maintains on file the qualifications and key personnel for each approved discipline, as well as any required samples of work. Each year on the anniversary date of the company, the firm shall renew their prequalified disciplines. If your firm has not renewed its application as required by your anniversary date or if your firm is not currently prequalified, please submit an application to the Department **prior to submittal of your LOI**. An application may be accessed on the Department's website at [Prequalifying Private Consulting Firms](#) -- Learn how to become Prequalified as a Private Consulting Firm with NCDOT. Having this data on file with the Department eliminates the need to resubmit this data with each letter of interest.

Professional Services Contracts are race and gender neutral and do not contain goals. However, the Respondent is encouraged to give every opportunity to allow Disadvantaged, Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (DBE/MBE/WBE) subconsultant utilization on all LOIs, contracts and supplemental agreements. The Firm, subconsultant and subfirm shall not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability or sex in the performance of this contract.

DIRECTORY OF FIRMS AND DEPARTMENT ENDORSEMENT

Real-time information about firms doing business with the Department, and information regarding their prequalifications and certifications, is available in the Directory of Transportation Firms. The Directory can be accessed on the Department's website at [Directory of Firms](#) -- Complete listing of certified and prequalified firms.

The listing of an individual firm in the Department's directory shall not be construed as an endorsement of the firm.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All prequalified firms who submit responsive letters of interest will be considered.

In selecting a firm/team, the selection committee will take into consideration qualification information including such factors as:

1. 25% = Relevant Experience
2. 30% = Team Personnel
3. 35% = Project Approach
4. 10% = Proposed Schedule

After reviewing qualifications, if firms are equal on the evaluation review, then those qualified firms with proposed SPSF participation will be given priority consideration.

SUBMISSION ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

The LOI should be addressed to **Tristan Winkler, MPO Director** and must include the name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the prime consultant's contact person for this RFLOI.

The LOI must also include the information outlined below:

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Introduction should demonstrate the consultant's overall qualifications to fulfill the requirements of the scope of work and should contain the following elements of information:

- Expression of firm's interest in the work;
- Statement of whether firm is on register;
- Date of most recent private engineering firm qualification;
- Statement regarding firm's(') possible conflict of interest for the work; and
- Summation of information contained in the letter of interest.

Chapter 2 - Team Qualifications

This chapter should elaborate on the general information presented in the introduction, to establish the credentials and experience of the consultant to undertake this type of effort. The following must be included:

1. Identify recent, similar projects the firm, acting as the prime contractor, has conducted which demonstrates its ability to conduct and manage the project. Provide a synopsis of each project and include the date completed, and contact person.

2. If subconsultants are involved, provide corresponding information describing their qualifications as requested in bullet number 1 above.

Chapter 3 - Team Experience

This chapter must provide the names, classifications, and location of the firm's North Carolina employees and resources to be assigned to the advertised work; and the professional credentials and experience of the persons assigned to the project, along with any unique qualifications of key personnel. Although standard personnel resumes may be included, identify pertinent team experience to be applied to this project. Specifically, the Department is interested in the experience, expertise, and total quality of the consultant's proposed team. If principals of the firm will not be actively involved in the study/contract/project, do not list them. The submittal shall clearly indicate the Consultant's Project Manager, other key Team Members and his/her qualifications for the proposed work. Also, include the team's organization chart for the Project / Plan. A Capacity Chart / Graph (available work force) should also be included. Any other pertinent information should also be listed in this section.

Note: If a project team or subconsultant encounters personnel changes, or any other changes of significance dealing with the company, NCDOT should be notified immediately.

Chapter 4 - Technical Approach

The consultant shall provide information on its understanding of, and approach to accomplish, this project, including their envisioned scope for the work and any innovative ideas/approaches, and a schedule to achieve the dates outlined in this RFLOI (if any project-specific dates are outlined below).

PROJECT MILESTONES and DATES to be included as well.

APPENDICES-

CONSULTANT CERTIFICATION Form RS-2

Completed Form RS-2 forms SHALL be submitted with the firm's letter of interest. This section is limited to the number of pages required to provide the requested information.

Submit Form RS-2 forms for the following:

- **Prime Consultant firm**
 - Prime Consultant Form RS-2 Rev 1/14/08; and

- **ANY/ALL Subconsultant firms** be, or anticipated to be, utilized by your firm.
 - Subconsultant Form RS-2 Rev 1/15/08.
 - In the event the firm has no subconsultant, it is required that this be indicated on the Subconsultant Form RS-2 by entering the word “None” or the number “ZERO” and signing the form.

Complete and sign each Form RS-2 (instructions are listed on the form).

The required forms are available on the Department’s website at:
<https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/consultants/Pages/Guidelines-Forms.aspx>

[Prime Consultant Form RS-2](#)

[Subconsultant Form RS-2](#)

All submissions, correspondence, and questions concerning this RFLOI should be directed to **Hannah Bagli** at hannah@landofsky.org.

IF APPLICABLE, questions may be submitted electronically only, to the contact above. Responses will be issued in the form of an addendum available to all interested parties. Interested parties should also send a request, by email only, to the person listed above to be placed on a public correspondence list to ensure future updates regarding the RFLOI or other project information can be conveyed. Questions must be submitted to the person listed above no later than **January 6, 2025**. The last addendum will be issued no later than **January 13, 2025**.

SUBMISSION SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES

RFLOI Release – **November 18, 2024**

Deadline for Questions – **January 6, 2025**

Issue Final Addendum – **January 13, 2025**

Deadline for LOI Submission – **January 20, 2025**

Shortlist Announced * – **January 27, 2025**

Firm Selection and Notification ** – **February 3, 2025**

Anticipated Notice to Proceed – **March 3, 2025**

* Notification will **ONLY** be sent to shortlisted firms.

** Notification will **ONLY** be sent to selected firms.