

Buncombe County Recreation Services

REQUEST for LETTERS of INTEREST (RFLOI)

**Enka Heritage Trail
Planning, Engineering, and Design Services**

TITLE: **Enka Heritage Trail (EB-5824 Hominy Creek Greenway)**
ISSUE DATE: **November 15, 2019**
SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: **December 16, 2019**
ISSUING AGENCY: **Buncombe County Recreation Services**

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) shall be pre-qualified by the Department to perform all of the work codes listed below for the County. Work Codes required are:

- 00024 BRIDGES – SPANS UNDER 200'
- 00032 CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS
- 00063 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS/FINDINGS OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS
- 00070 EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL DESIGN
- 00132 LANDSCAPE AND STREETScape DESIGN
- 00171 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
- 00192 RIGHT OF WAY APPRAISALS
- 00194 RIGHT OF WAY NEGOTIATORS
- 00199 ROUTE LOCATION SURVEYS
- 00243 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES SURVEYS AND STUDIES
- 00247 TRAFFIC CONTROL PLANS

- **00269 URBAN ROADWAY DESIGN**
- **00270 UTILITY COORDINATION**
- **00280 WETLAND AND STREAM DELINEATION**
- **00287 WETLAND, STREAM, AND BUFFER PERMITTING**
- **00294 GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING SERVICES AND SPECIALTY SERVICES**
- **00316 MULTI-USE TRAIL DESIGN, SURVEY & LAYOUT**
- **00361 BOUNDARY SURVEYING**
- **00362 EASEMENT SURVEYING**
- **00433 TIER 1-BASIC HYDROLOGIC AND HYDRAULIC DESIGN**
- **00434 TIER II-COMplete HYDROLOGIC & HYDRAULIC DESIGN**

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

This RFLOI is to solicit responses (LETTERS of INTEREST, or LOIs) from qualified firms to provide professional consulting, planning, engineering, and design services for the Enka Heritage Trail.

Introduction

Buncombe County Recreation Services (BCRS) is receiving Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP) funding for preliminary engineering and right of way acquisition of a proposed a multi-use path (greenway) along Sandhill Road from Enka Lake Road to Warren Haynes Drive approximately adjacent to Hominy Creek.

The expectations of this project are two-fold. First, this project approach needs to address the project area and present engineering/ constructions plan of the greenway/multi-use trail that will travel throughout the proposed study area. This regional concept plan will be used to promote public support, and illustrate the trail's regional transportation benefits for grant application and funding appeals. This is an early stage deliverable that will be used to provide project context and to provide the baseline for public engagement. Much of this work has already been engaged through previous feasibility studies and design efforts. The selected firm will compile this body of work into a preliminary baseline document that will inform the preferred alignment providing information on known project constraints, land easements, necessary points of connectivity, etc.

Secondly, the project will deliver context-sensitive pre-construction engineering and design documents, addressing specific challenges and obstacles for any given design development and preliminary engineering and shall include (but not be limited to):

- Acquisition of right-of-way and easements;
- Construction designs that are appropriate to the environmental character of the immediate surrounding area;
- Feasible alignments with alternate options where needed or available, and possible connecting segments to potential trail users and destinations ;
- Environmental analysis and permitting (including NEPA, US Army Corps of Engineers, state permitting, and local permitting);
- Wetland and stream determinations;
- Delineations;
- Gateway elements at key locations to mark the corridor's unique identity;
- River overlooks/rest areas at scenic vista points;
- Stream crossings;

- Technical information regarding interfaces with other transportation infrastructure including rail;
- Cost estimates for construction and maintenance; and
- Recommendations for implementation, including phasing of trail through logical segments or community sectors.

The 2018 feasibility study conducted by AECOM for the segment of the proposed greenway extending along Sandhill Road from Enka Lake Road to Warren Haynes Drive should be used to inform the work product. The resultant product from this study should take into account the connection with Enka Intermediate School, the Buncombe County Sports Park, Bob Lewis Ball Park, and Sand Hill-Venable Elementary School and should be generally compatible with the previous feasibility study.

Parts of the greenway will be located in the regulatory floodway and floodplain of the Hominy Creek.

This project is funded in part by a North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Transportation Improvement Program grant and thus must follow the requirements outlined by NCDOT for consultant selection and project review.

As part of this project, the PEF will prepare and secure a Nationwide Permit (NWP) or Individual Permit (IP). The Consultant will use wetland, stream bank, and permit data – USACE 404 and DWQ 401 data. The Consultant shall conduct any public meetings and coordinate with US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and NC Department of Natural Resources Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) to obtain an IP or NWP. The PEF will also be responsible for securing all necessary permits and engineering products necessary to ensure permitting requirements through FEMA and the Buncombe County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (as well as any other local, state, or federal permits required relative to construction in FEMA designated flood zones).

In addition, the Consultant shall coordinate with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services to obtain all necessary environmental documentation letters. Other agencies that will have to be contacted include, but are not limited to the, Army Corps of Engineers, Cherokee Nation, Duke Power Company, North Carolina Department of Transportation, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Metropolitan Sewerage District, PSNC Gas, and other pertinent utilities.

BCRS staff will assist in data collection and preparatory work as well as facilitating public involvement and communications with local advisory boards and stakeholder bodies identified by Buncombe County.

Background, Scope of Work and Goals

Background

Buncombe County has been a destination for outdoor enthusiasts who have enjoyed the region's trails and outdoor recreation for more than a century. As demand was growing for a countywide, comprehensive approach to greenways and trails planning, Buncombe County, through a variety of partnerships, undertook the effort to develop a Greenways and Trails Master Plan in 2011 and 2012, which the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners adopted during their September 4, 2012 meeting. Buncombe County's unincorporated areas are growing and urbanizing at a rate faster than the growth and urbanization of the municipalities within its boundaries. There is a growing expectation for facilities that provide for movement of pedestrians and bicyclists, not just for recreational purposes but as an alternative transportation

option for traveling to work and for running errands, for relieving stress and offsetting the effects of obesity, for attracting new businesses and to make communities more livable and marketable. We envision a system of connected trails for public usage to foster and promote tourism, economic development, health, recreation, diverse and safe transportation options, sustainability, and to connect with our community so everyone can enjoy and experience the cultural heritage and beauty of Buncombe County. The Enka Heritage (Hominy Creek Greenway), one of the eight priority corridors identified in the Buncombe County Greenways and Trails Master Plan, is the corridor that begins in West Asheville near Sand Hill Road and terminates near the Hominy Valley Park with access to nearby Public use areas.

AECOM completed a feasibility study on 2 miles of the proposed 7 mile corridor in July of 2018.

BCRS has been awarded a grant through the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act through the Surface Transportation Block Grant – Direct Appropriations to fund a pre construction/ pre engineering project for an approximate 2-mile section of the trail. The grant requires 20% in matching funds which will be provided by BCRS.

Our vision is a multi-use path that provides connectivity within the project area spanning from West Asheville near Sand Hill Road and terminating at the Hominy Creek Park.

The beneficial impacts of this path are numerous:

Connectivity

- The plan provides a bike and pedestrian trail that will connect multiple jurisdictions, including the potential of connecting Hominy Valley Park, Enka High School, Hominy Valley Elementary, Enka Intermediate School, Biltmore Lake, Enka Library, ABTECH Enka Campus, Buncombe County Sports Park, Enka Youth Sports Complex, Southeastern Container, New Belgium, Wicked Weed, Jacob Holm, All Star Trophy and Sports, Blue Ridge Parkway Association, Enka Post Office, Colbond, Mountain Credit Union, American Recycling-Western NC, Ingles, Asheville Mini Storage, and Sand Hill Venable Elementary.
- The complete Enka Heritage Trail creates connections between a number of key employers and tourism destinations as well as providing access to County parks and existing cultural and recreational institutions.

Economic Development

- The trail will help generate tourism throughout the entire area.
- The trail will provide key points of connection between areas of interest in terms of economic development including Hominy Valley Park, Enka High School, Hominy Valley Elementary, Enka Intermediate School, Biltmore Lake, Enka Library, ABTECH Enka Campus, Buncombe County Sports Park, Enka Youth Sports Complex, Southeastern Container, New Belgium, Wicked Weed, Jacob Holm, All Star Trophy and Sports, Blue Ridge Parkway Association, Enka Post Office, Colbond, Mountain Credit Union, American Recycling-Western NC, Ingles, Asheville Mini Storage, and Sand Hill Venable Elementary.
- The trail will facilitate further expansion of existing recreational interest in the County and fostering additional business opportunities.

Traffic Relief

Implementation of the Buncombe County 2012 Greenways and Trails Enka Heritage Trail greenway plan may also address some of the issues identified in the NCDOT Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2008 Final Report for the FBRMPO and Rural Areas of Buncombe and

Haywood County. This report states, “the area surrounding the proposed greenway is growing rapidly and expected to continue to experience substantial growth in the coming years with volumes nearly doubling from 2005 to 2030.” As reflected in section A10 of this report, the area is in need of bicycle and pedestrian improvements to help offset the growing traffic in the area.

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 December 16, 2019 at 5pm.

**The address for electronic deliveries is: josh.oconner@buncombecounty.org
Cc: karla.furnari@buncombecounty.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

Buncombe County Recreation Services is soliciting proposals for the services of a firm/team for the following contract scope of work:

The project includes preparation of a pre-construction/pre-engineering summary of greenway alternatives for portions of the Enka Heritage Trail. The limits of the Enka Heritage Trail analyzed in this project spans from Enka Lake Road to Warren Haynes Drive following along Sand Hill Road.

The summary will consider alternative alignments and identify the existing preferred alignment for the horizontal placement of the greenway along the full length of the study area. The general alignment alternatives will be based on publicly available information from the Buncombe County Greenways and Trails Master Plan and the previous feasibility study. The existing

AECOM feasibility study and documentation from surrounding landowners will also be used as inputs. The intent of the summary document is to capture the existing investments made into the conceptual design of the project while also creating a legacy document that can be used as a future reference for the justification of design choices. BCRS will assist in the preparation of this document. The document will serve as a point of initiation for public engagement. The amount of labor devoted to the preparation of the summary document is expected to be minimal given that it fits within the data gathering phase of a project of this nature.

At the conclusion of this project, the selected firm will present BCRS with all design and permit documents necessary to advance the project to construction. The expectation is that the project will be able to move seamlessly between the design and construction activities. Buncombe County has received significant funding for the implementation of the Enka Recreation Destination Project (of which the Enka Heritage Trail is a significant component) and expects to advance to construction immediately upon conclusion of the design.

All necessary construction drawings to meet local, state, and federal permitting requirements are included in this scope of work. The typical cross sections will be based on descriptions included in the Master Plan, for example typical sections may include a 12' or 10' Asphalt path, and 3-8' walking trails. The resultant cross-section should also articulate adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

The project will deliver context-sensitive pre-construction engineering and design documents, addressing specific challenges and obstacles for any given design development and preliminary engineering and shall include (but not be limited to):

- Acquisition of right-of-way and easements;
- Construction designs that are appropriate to the environmental character of the immediate, surrounding area;
- Feasible alignments with alternate options where needed or available, and possible connecting segments to potential trail users and destinations ;
- Environmental analysis and permitting (including NEPA, US Army Corps of Engineers, state permitting, and local permitting);
- Wetland and stream determinations;
- Delineations;
- Gateway elements at key locations to mark the corridor's unique identity;
- River overlooks/rest areas at scenic vista points;
- Stream crossings;
- Technical information regarding interfaces with other transportation infrastructure including rail;
- Cost estimates for construction and maintenance; and
- Recommendations for implementation, including phasing of trail through logical segments or community sectors.
- Anticipated construction schedule
- Low Bid Process for securing a construction firm under relevant NC DOT and FHWA requirements.

1. Project Initiation

1.1 Data Inventory – NCDOT and/or Buncombe County will provide GIS data and updated aerial photography for the study area. The selected firm will utilize existing available data to investigate current conditions, topography, NWI wetlands and streams, roadway connections, existing bicycle and pedestrian accommodation and other elements that will contribute to the design of the proposed greenway. This data will be illustrated in a figure.

1.2 Meetings – Staff members from the selected firm will attend necessary meetings with the project Steering Committee and Buncombe County staff to develop a detailed understanding of the project objectives, history, challenges and opportunities. The selected firm will present the data inventory developed in Task 1.1. The development of, and coordination with, the Steering Committee will be the responsibility of Buncombe County.

Deliverables: Data inventory figure, meeting agenda, and meeting summary.

2. Greenway Schematic Design

2.1 GIS Base Map –The selected firm will develop a detailed base map that includes, parcels, topography, roads, National Wetlands Inventory, Natural Heritage Program features, recreational features, hydrology and other relevant available data. This data shall be provided by NCDOT, the City of Asheville or Buncombe County. This file will be converted to Microstation format for use as the base mapping for the functional design.

2.2 Alternatives Analysis – The selected firm will develop a maximum of three potential alignment alternatives for routing the greenways through the study area. In addition to GIS analysis, the selected firm will pull deed records and plats to determine if easements are present. These alternatives will consider property acquisition opportunities and challenges, topography, floodplain impacts, economic development and the overall trail user experience. A matrix will be developed that compares each alternative.

2.3 Draft Functional Design – The selected firm will develop functional designs for one alternative. This level of design will show the alignment of the greenway, edges of pavement or improved trail, approximate slope stakes, permanent and temporary construction easements/right of way, location of any required structures, and connections to adjacent roadway network. Slope stakes will be estimated by developing cross sections at 200' intervals in most areas and 50' intervals in areas with steep grade changes and sharp horizontal curves. No super elevation information will be included in the functional stage. The draft design will be submitted to Buncombe County for two review cycles.

2.4 Final Functional Design – The selected firm will revise the functional design schematic based on three review cycles by Buncombe County to develop a final schematic submittal. The final functional design is defined as a preliminary set of 60% construction drawings used for fundraising, negotiating easements, or as an exhibit in planning/public engagement documents.

The results of this work shall provide the County with an engineered design. This will include illustrating the specific alignment of the greenway including specific construction details such as grading, sediment and erosion control, storm water and associated permitting. The design shall meet all local, state, and federal design regulations.

2.5 Cost Estimate – The selected firm will develop a rough order of magnitude quantity estimate for the preferred alternative based on functional design. The estimate will quantify the major items that will be included in the trail, including trail surface, clearing and grubbing, earthwork, approximate cross drain/culverts, bridge structures (cost per square foot), and erosion control (per acre). The selected firm will provide a spreadsheet in a tabular format that contains the pay item number, pay item description, quantity and unit of the pay item, and its unit price, which will be used to estimate a total price for each unit quantified. Some items will be estimated as a lump sum percentage of construction. Buncombe County may use this to develop an estimate for the probable construction cost as plans are advanced from functional to preliminary design.

2.6 Property Acquisition – Based on functional design drawings, the selected firm will develop a summary of the required property for the preferred alternative. This summary will: 1) list

potentially impacted properties, 2) identify the property owner, 3) identify the area needed for acquisition through survey, and 4) recommend an acquisition method (i.e., fee, easement).

2.7 Interagency Coordination – As part of this project, the PEF may need to prepare and secure a Nationwide Permit (NWP) or Individual Permit (IP). The Consultant will use wetland, stream bank, and permit data – USACE 404 and DWQ 401 data. The Consultant shall conduct any public meetings and coordinate with US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and NC Department of Natural Resources Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) to obtain an IP or NWP.

In addition, the Consultant shall coordinate with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services to obtain all necessary environmental documentation letters. Other agencies that will have to be contacted include, but are not limited to the, Army Corps of Engineers, Duke Power Company, North Carolina Department of Transportation, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Metropolitan Sewerage District, PSNC Gas, other utilities and Buncombe County Planning and Development.

Deliverables: Base map, Comparative matrix, Digital version of the draft and final functional drawings (Microstation/Geopak/pdf), five hard copies of the final functional drawings, Cost estimate, Property acquisition list, and further scope. The functional design plan and profile sheets will consist of roll plots at a 1"=100' scale.

2.8 Construction Ready Design and Permitting Documents– At the conclusion of this project, BCRC and the design firm will work to coalesce input on the functional design into construction ready design drawings and permit documents. The specifications on these documents will be driven by each relevant permitting agency.

The selected firm will revise the draft functional design, in accordance with comments made through three review cycles, to develop the final functional design. The following are anticipated components of the final study product:

- Site evaluation of trail alignment options; trail layout and design;
- Structural Design for Under-crossing Culverts
- Wetland delineation and hydraulic evaluations and 401/404 Certification; D. Subsurface evaluation and testing for structural elements and trail sub-grade conditions;
- Water course cross sections of the streams and rivers, where necessary, to support the preparation of a No Rise Certificate, Certified Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) or Letter of Map Revision (LOMR);
- A hydraulic analysis is needed to evaluate the potential impacts of the greenway alignment through the structures on this corridor and determine horizontal and vertical alignments and bridge structure cross-sections that will meet North Carolina Floodplain Mapping Program (NCFMP) regulatory requirements set by FEMA.
- Required permit/approvals from agencies/municipalities including but not limited to: NC Department of Natural Resources Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ), Cherokee Nation, US Army Corps of Engineers (USAE), E&SE Permitting, and North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources, Land Quality Section (NCDEMLR); Public Utilities;
- Coordination with utilities, including any necessary relocation;
- Preparation of appropriate plans, specification and Construction Documents for the greenway trail, structures and associated amenities.

2.9 Bid Package Documentation – The design firm will present BCRS with the information necessary to let the project in accordance with NC DOT and FHWA requirements.

Deliverables: The selected firm will provide a digital version of all deliverables and five print copies of any required deliverable products (as requested by BCRS).

3. Public Involvement

3.1 Steering Committee Meetings – In addition to the project initiation meeting, the selected firm will attend three meetings with the Steering Committee and Buncombe County. This meeting will be arranged and facilitated by Buncombe County. The selected firm will present the three alternative alignments as well as a matrix that compares each alternative. At this meeting, the selected firm will work with the Steering Committee to identify which of the three alternatives best meets the Steering Committee’s vision for the project.

3.2 Public Meetings – The selected firm will attend at least one open house format meeting with the public to include members of the Steering Committee and Buncombe County. No formal presentation will be made by the selected firm. The purpose of the meeting will be to solicit input regarding design drawings (created to at least 50% completion). This open house meeting will be arranged (i.e., venue established, meeting advertised, etc.) by Buncombe County. The selected firm’s role and responsibilities are limited to those tasks specifically stated in this scope of work.

Deliverables: The selected firm will prepare a meeting agenda and a summary of the Steering Committee meeting. The selected firm will prepare mock ups for a maximum of three display boards, one handout and one comment form for the public meeting. Final versions of these materials will be provided for the public meeting. The selected firm will prepare a summary of the comments made during the public meeting.

4. Project Management

4.1 Progress Reports – The selected firm will prepare monthly progress reports that include a percent complete for Tasks 1 through 4 above and will identify any outstanding and/or unresolved issues involving the project. Also include updated critical path schedules with each report and as needed by County staff. Progress reports shall be accompanied by access to draft work products available at the time of the report.

4.2 Project Administration – The duration of the project is assumed to be a maximum of twelve months. The selected firm will report directly to BCRS. The selected firm is to administer the contract and to ensure that all work is performed in accordance with the contract requirements.

The PEF will be responsible for providing personnel with the appropriate skills and qualifications to ensure contract compliance. The PEF will be directly responsible for oversight of the project for the County. The PEF shall indemnify and save harmless the County for claims and liabilities resulting from negligence, errors or omissions of the PEF; including, but not limited to, the engineers, technicians or sub consultants.

Goals for the Project

Please note that it is **not** a goal of this project to provide language on the general benefits of greenways or to provide justification for a regional trail. Buncombe County has a greenway and park master plans in place which prioritize this particular regional trail concept and cover the generalities and basics of greenways planning and its potential benefits. Rather, this project should result in a technical document to determine trail placement options, costs, and design needs and solutions for this **specific** regional trail to be built out. Local planners and leaders will use this project to illustrate the desirability of trail construction and the solutions for overcoming barriers and design issues for this trail to be implemented. The resulting documents will be used to obtain permits and authorization to advance to construction under the FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant Program and is expected to be inclusive of any relevant local, state, and federal requirements for construction. It will also be used to work with stakeholders and local land owners to secure needed easements for trail segments as identified in the document.

PROPOSED CONTRACT TIME: 9 months with up to two 3 month extensions

PROPOSED CONTRACT PAYMENT TYPE: LUMP SUM

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

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 Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. Any firm proposing to use corporate subsidiaries or subcontractors must include a statement that these companies are properly registered with the NC Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. 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. The firm must have the financial ability to undertake the work and assume the liability. The selected firm will be required to furnish proof of Professional Liability insurance coverage in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000. The firm must have an adequate accounting system to identify costs chargeable to the project.

The proposed method of payment for this contract is lump sum.

The selection of a private engineering firm to provide preliminary design, environmental documentation, professional design and right of way documentation on this specific project will be handled in accordance with the following process:

- Submission by the private engineering firm of a Letter of Interest (LOI).
- BCRS will short list private engineering firms to a minimum of three firms.
- Pre-interview meeting and oral interview at the option of BCRS.

- BCRS will select a private engineering firm to provide the Planning and Design Services.

All submittals become property of Buncombe County upon submission. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the consultant. Buncombe County reserves the right to reject any and all submittals received as a result of this solicitation, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities to cancel the LOI solicitation in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of Buncombe County. This solicitation of submittals in no way obligates Buncombe County to award the contract.

Buncombe County will work with the selected firm or firms to finalize the scope of work, the project budget, and the final contract. In the event that Buncombe County is unable to reach agreement with the selected consultant firm regarding scope of work and/or cost, one of the other submitters may be chosen.

The selected consultant shall maintain a file containing all correspondence pertaining to the project and shall document the minutes for all meetings held pertaining to the project. All documents and plans, in either paper or electronic format, shall be the property of Buncombe County upon completion of the project or termination of the contract.

The selected consultant shall submit and maintain a schedule with specified milestone dates for the project. The schedules must allow for necessary review periods for all parties involved with the project. The selected consultant shall submit invoices with a written status report on each project to the grant coordinator of BCRS, who reserves the right to request supplemental information to ensure appropriate project progress.

All LOIs are limited to **Fourteen (14)** 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.

ELECTRONIC SUBMITTALS ARE REQUIRED. All LOI's should be presented in a Microsoft Word document or Adobe Acrobat Portable Document File document.

Letters of interest containing more than 14 pages will not be considered.

Private engineering firms are invited to have letters of interest for furnishing Planning and Design Services to the County by **5:00 p.m. on December 16, 2019**. **Letters of interest received after this deadline 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 of 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 U.S.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 NCDOT's Prime Form RS-2 and/or Sub consultant Form RS-2.

Form RS-2 forms may be accessed on the NCDOT website at <https://apps.dot.state.nc.us/quickfind/forms/Default.aspx>.

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

Real-time information about firms doing business with the NCDOT and firms that are SPSF certified through North Carolina's Unified Certification Program is available in the Directory of Transportation Firms. The Directory can be accessed by the link on the Department's homepage or by entering <https://partner.ncdot.gov/VendorDirectory/default.html> in the address bar of your web browser.

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

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.

Even though specific DBE/MBE/WBE goals are not required for this project, the Department of Transportation is committed to providing opportunity for small and disadvantaged businesses to perform on its contracts through established Department goals. 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.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Firms submitting LOIs to perform the preliminary engineering and environmental documentation on this specific project will be evaluated based upon certain considerations. The following considerations, with the weighted importance, will be utilized to select a minimum of three firms from those submitting an LOI:

1. EXPERIENCE ON SIMILAR PROJECTS 35%

- Capability to perform work.
- Demonstrated experience in specialized areas of Greenways and Transportation Planning.

2. EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRM 20%

- Qualification of the Firm members.
- Key personnel's professional background and expertise.
- Experience within the region on projects of a similar scale and nature.

3. PROJECT APPROACH 15%

- Interest in undertaking the project.
- Understanding of the project's unique characteristics.
- Demonstrate a clear and defined scope of work.
- Provide a clear timeline.

- Ability to carry out a series of public meetings and address important stakeholders.

4. **WORKLOAD AND SCHEDULE 15%**

- Ability to commit resources.
- Current and projected workload.

5. **PAST PERFORMANCE 15%**

- References submitted with proposal.
- Ability to meet schedules and budgets.

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 **Josh O’Conner – BCRS Director and Cc: Karla Furnari – Project Manager** 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 - Cover/Introductory Letter

The Introductory letter should be addressed to Josh O’Conner and 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 or submitting information with letter of interest;
- 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 including an email address and telephone number for the firm’s contact person.

Chapter 2 - Evaluation Factors

This section is limited to 4 pages and should contain information regarding evaluation and other factors listed in the advertisement such as:

- A brief synopsis of the firm’s previous Planning and Design Services experience that is focused to the type of project advertised for services [performed within last three (3) years];
- The number of employees within the firm;

- A brief description of the firm's approach to performing Planning and Design Services for this work, including the firm's understanding of their responsibility with regard to safety, contract administration, environmental responsibility, claims, and project delivery;
- The proposed personnel to be assigned to the work by discipline, their availability date on the project.
- Identify project personnel/subconsultants' qualifications and experience as related to this work;
- Unique qualifications of key team members; and
- Any innovative approaches to be used.

Chapter 3 - Supportive Information

This section is limited to 8 pages and should contain the following information:

- Capacity Chart/Graph (available work force);
- Organizational chart indicating personnel to be assigned by discipline;
- Resumes of key personnel;
- Names, classifications, and location(s) of the firms' North Carolina employees and resources to be assigned to the advertised work; and

Note: If a project team or subconsultant encounters personnel changes, or any other changes of significance dealing with the company, BCRS 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.

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** to 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](#)

SUBMISSION OF LETTER OF INTEREST

Private engineering firms are invited to have letters of interest for furnishing Planning and Design Services to the County by **5:00 p.m.** on **December 16, 2019**. **Letters of interest received after this deadline will not be considered.**

Firms submitting letters of interest are encouraged to carefully check them for conformance to the requirements stated above. If Letters of Interest (LOI) do not meet ALL of these requirements they will be disqualified. No exception will be granted.

Josh O’Conner
828 250-6703
josh.oconner@buncombecounty.org

Karla Furnari
828 250-6705
karla.furnari@buncombecounty.org

Any questions concerning the advertisement should be directed to Josh O’Conner or Karla Furnari.

If you feel information provided is inadequate to submit a letter of interest, please contact Josh O’Conner or Karla Furnari.

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 **December 9, 2019**. The last addendum will be issued no later than **December 12, 2019**.

SUBMISSION SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES (All dates are subject to change).

RFLOI Release – **November 15, 2019**

Deadline for Questions – **December 9, 2019**

Issue Final Addendum – **December 12, 2019**

Deadline for LOI Submission – **December 16, 2019**

Shortlist Announced * - **January 2, 2020**

Interviews (if required) the week of **January 13, 2020**

Firm Selection and Notification ** - **January 20, 2020**

Anticipated Notice to Proceed – **February 3, 2020**

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

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