

Advertised: July 28, 2021

**UPPER COASTAL PLAIN RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
(NASH COUNTY – LPA)**

REQUEST for LETTERS of INTEREST (RFLOI)

NEUSE RIVER TRAIL CLAYTON-SMITHFIELD CONNECTION STUDY

TITLE: NEUSE RIVER TRAIL CLAYTON-SMITHFIELD CONNECTION STUDY

ISSUE DATE: July 28, 2021

SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: August 11, 2021

ISSUING AGENCY: NASH COUNTY (UCPRPO)

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 NASH COUNTY. Discipline Codes required are:

- 260 – Comprehensive Transportation Planning Development
- 261 – Long Range Transportation Planning
- 316 – Multi-Use Trail Design, Survey & Layout

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').

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

The project consists of providing a detailed study to extend the Mountains to Sea Trail from the existing Clayton trail to the existing greenway trail in Smithfield in Johnston County. Additionally, the trail is co-located with the East Coast Greenway Trail.

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

LOIs SHALL be received ELECTRONICALLY ONLY no later than 5:00pm, August 11, 2021.

The address for electronic deliveries is: james.salmons@nashcountync.gov

The address for mailings is:

**Upper Coastal Plain RPO (Nash County)
Attn: James Salmons
120 W. Washington St., Suite 2110
Nashville, NC 27856**

The address for hand-deliveries is:

**Upper Coastal Plain RPO (Nash County)
Attn: James Salmons
120 W. Washington St., Suite 2110
Nashville, NC 27856**

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 **UCPRPO (Nash County)** is soliciting proposals for the services of a firm/team for the following contract scope of work:

The proposed Neuse River Trail Extension is a 15.6-mile corridor in Johnston County connecting existing greenways in Clayton and Smithfield. The proposed corridor follows NC-42 from Front St, south of Downtown Clayton, to Buffalo Rd, paralleling the Neuse River and Buffalo Rd to Smithfield Community Park and the terminus of the Buffalo Creek Greenway, a 3-mile trail connecting the park with Downtown Smithfield. The Neuse River Trail Extension is a critical missing link in the regional greenway network and is the proposed corridor for gap segments of the Mountains to Sea Trail and the East Coast Greenway.

The Mountains to Sea State Trail (MST) is North Carolina's flagship state trail. It stretches from Clingmans Dome on the Tennessee border to Jockeys Ridge State Park on the coast. The original route of the MST, which roughly follows the Neuse River from Wake County east to New Bern, is over 57% complete. The trail, from Johnston County east to Carteret County, has been envisioned as a multiuse path suitable for bicycles and pedestrians. Connecting existing segments in Clayton and Smithfield will provide a route, completely off-road, from Hillsborough to Smithfield.

Additionally, this segment is co-located with the East Coast Greenway (ECG) and will provide an off-road link for this national effort. The East Coast Greenway is a 3,000-mile walking and biking route from Maine to Florida that connects major cities, small towns, and parklands along the Eastern Seaboard. In North Carolina, the ECG route passes through the cities of Durham, Raleigh, Fayetteville and Wilmington and primarily follows the Neuse River and Cape Fear River corridors across the state. The ECG is currently 32% complete. The longest continuous stretch of completed trails is in North Carolina, which is comprised of the 72-mile span of greenways and trails through Durham, Wake and Johnston Counties. The proposed trail extension along the Neuse River aims to expand the connected greenway network in the region to over 90 miles, stretching from Durham to Smithfield.

The Neuse River Trail Extension between Clayton and Smithfield has long been identified as a priority trail project in the region and has been proposed in the following planning efforts:

- Johnston County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)
- Johnston County Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- CAMPO Southeast Area Study
- Town of Clayton Comprehensive Plan 2040
- Town of Smithfield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan
- Johnston County Mountains to Sea Master Plan

Several of these plans identified the need for detailed corridor planning to analyze routing alternatives, identify property acquisition needs, and produce cost estimates in order to advance the project.

As NC State Parks prioritizes its property acquisition needs for its parks and trails and as funding opportunities arise to pursue right-of-way along the corridor, a more in-depth analysis of the corridor is needed to advance the Neuse River Trail Extension into its next phase of project development. A feasibility study would evaluate the potential route scenarios along NC-42, Buffalo Rd and the Neuse River and most importantly, identify parcels for acquisition.

Nash County as the Lead Planning Agency (LPA), through the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization (RPO), will engage an NCDOT pre-qualified planning consultant to conduct a corridor study to determine the feasibility of constructing the Neuse River Trail extension (MST and ECG corridor) from the Town of Clayton to the Town of Smithfield, primarily along NC-42 and Buffalo Rd with routing alternatives along the Neuse River. The project will include:

- Committee, stakeholder and public engagement, including the development of a strategic engagement plan to coordinate with landowners, hosting steering committee meetings, stakeholder meetings and public meetings at regular intervals throughout the planning process, and coordinating with project partners: NCDOT, RPO and local government staff.
- Existing conditions analysis, including extensive GIS analysis with base mapping, parcel-by-parcel analysis, and examination of environmental features and topography.
- Alternative trail route scenarios with the identification of landowner and acquisition challenges, road and stream crossings, and environmental and permitting constraints.
- Preferred route development, including the development of acquisition strategies, planning-level cost estimates, and project phasing.
- Development of a final plan document with implementation action steps and funding resources.

The results of this study are intended to be incorporated into the bicycle and pedestrian components for the Johnston County Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Partners in this effort include:

- Upper Coastal Plain RPO
- Capital Area MPO
- Johnston County
- North Carolina State Parks
- Town of Clayton
- Town of Wilson’s Mills
- Town of Selma
- Town of Smithfield
- Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail
- East Coast Greenway Alliance
- NCDOT

This project will be funded using federal Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) funds. Nash County has budgeted \$150,000 for this study.

PROPOSED CONTRACT TIME: Within Fiscal FY21-22

PROPOSED CONTRACT PAYMENT TYPE: LUMP SUM

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

All LOIs are limited to **fifteen (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 fifteen (15) 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 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 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 sub firm 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. The proposed team qualifications and experience performing similar work = 35%
2. The team's understanding of the project study area, goals and objectives = 20%
3. The team's approach to the project such as technical analysis tools and technique = 30%.
4. The quality of the Team's proposal with concise description of tasks = 15%.

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 **James Salmons, UCPRPO 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).

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** (*If Subconsultants are allowed under this RFLOI*) to be, or anticipated to be, utilized by your firm.
 - Subconsultant Form RS-2 Rev 7/15/20.
 - 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 James Salmons at james.salmons@nashcountync.gov.

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 **August 4, 2021, by 3:00pm**. The last addendum will be issued no later than **August 6, 2021**.

SUBMISSION SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES

RFLOI Release – **JULY 28, 2021**

Deadline for Questions – **AUGUST 4, 2021 by 3:00 PM**

Issue Final Addendum if needed – **AUGUST 6, 2021 by 5:00 PM**

Deadline for LOI Submission – **AUGUST 11, 2021 by 5:00 PM**

Optional Interviews - the week of **AUGUST 23, 2021**

Firm Selection and Notification ** - **AUGUST 27, 2021**

Anticipated Notice to Proceed – **WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 6, 2021**

** Notification will **ONLY** be sent to selected firm(s).