

# Request for Proposals

Town of Elkin Comprehensive Land Use Plan &  
Unified Development Ordinance





**Date Issued**

September 1, 2020

**DUE DATE**

October 2, 2020 by noon

**Submission of 5 hard copies and 1 electronic copy (PDF)  
Should be delivered to:**

Town of Elkin  
Attention: Sarah Harris, Town Planner  
226 North Bridge Street  
Elkin, NC 28621  
(336) 258-8906

**Or mailed to:**

P. O. Box 857  
Elkin, NC 28621

**Questions on RFP should be sent in writing by email to:**

Sarah Harris  
[sharris@elkinnc.org](mailto:sharris@elkinnc.org)

## **I. PURPOSE**

The Town of Elkin is requesting proposals from interested consulting firms to update our existing Land Use Plan and Zoning ordinances. The Land Use Plan was originally adopted in 2000 and was readopted in 2010. While there have been additions and modifications throughout the years, our zoning ordinances have not gone through a full review or an update since their creation. The Town would like an update from traditional style Zoning to a Unified Development Ordinance that keeps it relevant - enhancing what is working well, addressing current and future needs, incorporating additional planning goals, and revising it to a modern planning horizon. The Town feels it is time to comprehensively review and update its land use regulations so that they can be more easily understood by the community, so they are consistent with state and federal statutes, and up to date with contemporary zoning and subdivision practices. We are looking for two deliverables, a Land Use Plan and Unified Development Ordinance.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The Town of Elkin was established in 1889 and is centrally located within the Yadkin Valley Wine Region in the western corner of the Piedmont, North Carolina. The town covers approximately 6.3 square miles with an estimated population of 4,057 according to the most recent Census Bureau estimate. This 'viticulture ambiance' permeates much of the town's marketing, in-migration and business attraction efforts, and compliments our redevelopment and industrial investment direction. Elkin was built on the North Carolina legacy industries of textile and furniture, and is now embracing diversification efforts through supporting tourism and outdoor recreation amenities, namely trail development and walkability, as attractors to new business, investment and entrepreneurs. We would like our gateways, streetscapes, commercial development, planning and ordinances to all fall in line with meeting the visual and planning expectations of a trail town, pedestrian-friendly viti-cultural area destination, and rural small town.

The development of the Elkin land use plan was undertaken to help provide guidance and direction for the future growth of Elkin as it entered the 21st century. Adopted in 2000 and readopted in 2010, the plan process included an analysis of existing conditions that impact land use development, current and projected population trends, the development of land use goals, policies and implementation strategies, and the adoption of the completed plan and future land use map. At the time of the plan's first adoption, Elkin had just experienced a significant slowing in population growth and was beginning to experience a more diversified economy. Based on the current land uses, the Town recognized a need to provide opportunities for infill development, encourage development within existing town limits, discourage low-density sprawl, protect the historic districts, provide more diverse-housing, protect sensitive natural resources, identify commercial activity nodes, and improve community appearance. The analysis of existing conditions and population trends led to the development of a set of goals and policies intended to address specific issues identified during the analysis. One of the key goals to come out of this study was to encourage new residential development with adequate access to utilities within the planning jurisdiction, with innovated subdivision and site design that protects environmentally sensitive areas. Policies associated with this goal include discouraging low-density residential development that is reliant on septic and well systems,

and focusing on infill development within the town limits. A separate but related goal also focuses on housing, and encourages the development of higher-density unrestricted residential with adequate utilities, development standards, and environmental responsibility. Another goal focuses on encouraging commercial and industrial growth that contributes to the local economy but also contributes aesthetically to the community's appearance. Policies to help support this include developing a set of appearance standards for new nonresidential development that are based on community elements that are unique to Elkin. Other goals focus on transportation improvements, including development standards for the NC 268 Bypass, sidewalks, overall community appearance, parks and recreation, environmental protection, and intergovernmental cooperation. In addition to the goals, policies and implementation strategies set forth in the Land Use Plan, the plan also includes a future land use map that geographically depicts a future development pattern than seeks to achieve the goals and policies. This map depicts a 20-year planning horizon and projects preferred locations of different land use types. The land use map is relatively similar to the current development patterns in Elkin, with commercial districts concentrated in the downtown area and along major roads, office and institutions concentrated around the hospital complex, industrial areas along the Yadkin River and Interstate 77, and residential areas throughout the rest of the planning area.

The zoning ordinances were originally adopted in January 18, 1979 and has not gone through a full review or update since their inception. Recently updated ordinances are available on the Town of Elkin's website featured in the Planning Department.

A listing, though not exhaustive, of significant influencing plans or documents include (in chronological order):

- Town of Elkin Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2020)
- Town of Elkin Comprehensive Master Plan (2020)
- Economic Development Strategic Plan (2018)
- Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail Master Plan (2016)
- Towns of Elkin and Jonesville Water Supply Protection Plan (2015)
- Town of Elkin Recreation, Parks & Greenway Plan (2014)
- Mountains-to-Sea State Trail Sub Section Plan (2014)
- Towns of Elkin and Jonesville Comprehensive Transportation Report (2012)
- Town of Elkin Land Use Plan (2010)
- NC Small Town Economic Prosperity Demonstration Project (2008)
- Town of Elkin Greenway Master Plan (2007)

### **III. EXPECTATIONS OF CONSULTANT**

Throughout the process the selected consultant will be expected to utilize their experience to drive the process. To achieve this goal, the Town of Elkin will require the following expectations to be identified within the consultant's proposal.

- A.** Initial meeting with Town staff to review a project timeline, schedule meetings and begin the process of data acquisition.
- B.** Review all existing plans, maps, documents, data and other materials relevant to the project. The Town will provide all available existing documentation to the consultant.

- The consultant will study and consolidate applicable materials in the Plan and UDO.
- C. Conduct meetings with key elected and appointed officials, stakeholder groups, and the general public. The selected consultant will lead stakeholder outreach and participation efforts.
  - D. Plan and implement an extensive stakeholder and public outreach process using a range of methods to inform and involve stakeholders, citizens organizations and the general public. Address the public hearing process and meeting with Town staff, citizen groups, applicable advisory committees, school districts, local units of government, and other entities deemed relevant to the development and implementation the Town of Elkin sees fit.
  - E. Develop Plan goals, objectives and implementation strategies based on technical data and public input.
  - F. Draft materials for review and comment by the Town in accordance with a schedule developed at the beginning of the planning process.
  - G. Confirm the final Plan and UDO conforms to existing North Carolina General Statutes including NCGS 160D.
  - H. Analyze consistency of current Town ordinances and polices in relationship to the Plan goals and objectives as well as other related plans.
  - I. Prepare draft documents for public review and comment, and present to the Planning Board and Town Commissioners. The plan and UDO should be presented in a format and language that is user-friendly and easily understood by the general public with images, graphics, charts, etc.
  - J. Prepare final draft documents and present at all associated meetings and public hearings for adoption of the Plan and UDO.
  - K. Provide at least weekly updates, primarily via-email or telephone and occasional in-person, to update Town staff on project status, discuss issues and review drafts. Periodic written status reports and status update presentations may also be required to the Planning Board and Town Commissioners.

#### IV. SCOPE OF SERVICES

##### Land Use Plan

- A. **Project Meetings:** The consultant is expected to meet regularly with staff. When appropriate, these meetings may be via telephone or in-person. The consultant will meet with the Planning Board to collect input and provide updates. In addition, the consultant will solicit input and feedback from the Planning Board, a Town named stakeholder group, and Board of Commissioners to provide interim reports, presentations, updates to each as required and appropriate, and attend and present the Plan's formal adoption by the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners.
- B. **Public Engagement and Communications:** Public participation is essential to this planning effort and must include an outreach and public participation process designed to engage the public and specific stakeholders in visioning the future of the Town. Significant public input will be required throughout the process. We anticipate that a number of public meetings will be held in order to see the opinions and view of the public at large, report on progress as the plan develops, solicit comments on specific ideas or concepts, and identify problems or barriers that must be acknowledged and overcome. Public involvement in the planning process and acceptance of the final plan is critical to the success of this effort and respondents should explain their approach and public participation plan in detail in their responses.

- C. Plan Development:** The consultant will serve as the primary drafter of the plan and shall perform research and develop materials for the Plan, including but not limited to:
- a. A baseline review of existing plans and relevant information, including the plans and documents listed under the Background, current codes and policies, demographic and census data, and other information relevant to the required plan elements.
  - b. Develop an inventory and assessment of issues and opportunities based on work with staff, Planning Board and the public participation process.
  - c. Develop a vision for the Town of Elkin that will serve as a focal point for goals, policy, and strategy decisions.
  - d. Draft the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Planning Board review, Board of Commissioners adoption, and CRC State Certification.
  - e. Provide digital, editable, working and twelve (12) printable copies of all final documents including reports, maps, and final plan.
- D. Plan Content:** The Plan document will include assembling and analyzing data regarding existing conditions within the established planning area and utilizing that data to develop policies, actions, and an implementation plan to guide future development and decision making over a 25-year time frame. It is anticipated the Plan will include the following content:
- a. Community Assessment: Population, housing, demographic, and economic trends, and projections.
  - b. Natural resources, Resiliency, and Hazard Mitigation
  - c. Historic, Cultural, and Heritage Preservation and Enhancement
  - d. Land Use and Community Design- Existing land use and framework for place-based neighborhoods, nodes, and transects
  - e. Housing: Review of housing needs and trends and recommendations that will create strong neighborhoods that support lifelong housing needs.
  - f. Transportation- Bicycle and Pedestrian facility recommendations, collector street network, street infill recommendations, and recommendation for applications of street types.
  - g. Implementation- Specific goals and policies to implement each element of the Plan.
  - h. Produce updates maps, charts, and graphics in the plan.

### **Unified Development Ordinance**

- A. Conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the land use regulations and develop a Unified Development Ordinance, including assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the existing regulations in terms of structure, organization, clarity, ease of use, existing zoning districts and district standards, regulations of general applicability, definitions, and all procedures.
- B. Identify and recommend for inclusion, text, and procedures that have not been identified by Town staff in the professional opinion of the selected firm and should be addressed to ensure a complete and effective ordinance that meets local needs.
- C. Identify and correct any internal inconsistencies, omissions or errors, including grammatical and other issues in the plans.
- D. Ensure that the UDO conforms to generally accepted land use law and principles as well as state and federal statutes and case laws. This includes language to ensure adherence to all 160D requirements.

- E.** Create, to the fullest extent possible, a user friendly, simplified, clear and easily understood UDO, including:
- a.** Revise vague, unclear or confusing language and ensure that language, terms and intent are consistent from one section to another.
  - b.** Ensure the essential words used in the text of the document are defined in the Definitions section and revise incorrect or inadequate definitions.
  - c.** Incorporate best practice with an eye to conservation, sustainability, water and land stewardship.
  - d.** Revise sections of the ordinances that are in conflict with other sections, have unintended impacts on other sections or are overly complex.
  - e.** Recommend improvements to the layout of the ordinance.
  - f.** Consolidation of the Land Development Ordinances, Subdivision Ordinance, Storm Water and Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.
  - g.** Create the Table of Permitted Uses and Development Standards which result in a more modern and comprehensive list of permitted uses tailored to the Town's zoning districts and development climate. The Town Planner has started a Table of Permitted uses that will need to be finished and the Town recently adopted an updated residential matrix chart.
  - h.** Prepare a new zoning map that corresponds with any new zoning districts.
  - i.** The firm will be required to attend and facilitate public hearings with the Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, residents, and other stakeholders and prepare multiple drafts of the proposed code and ordinance for review and comment.

Town staff will be available to assist the firm to facilitate the process however, it is expected for the firm to take the initiative in leading the process. Town staff will assist in meeting arrangements, advertising public meetings, workshops and hearings and other logistics. Staff will also work closely with the firm by reviewing any work product before it is submitted to any reviewing body or presented to the public.

## **V. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS**

The following materials must be received by the submittal deadline for a proposal to be considered. However, during the selection process, the Town reserves the right to request additional information or to seek clarification from the consultant/firm, or to allow for correction of errors and/or omissions. The submittal requirements are as follows:

- A. Project Overview**
  - a.** General Information: Provides a brief overview of firm, including qualifications to execute the contract, and company mission or statement of beliefs.
  - b.** Project Understanding: A summary of the consultants understanding of the projects as described in this RFP.
- B. Qualifications**
  - a.** Personnel Qualifications:
    - i.** Identification of lead project manager and their contact information.
    - ii.** Name, proposed role, hourly rate, anticipated time commitment to the project and biography of each team member.
  - b.** References:
    - i.** Include a list of at least three municipal clients for which you have

conducted comprehensive planning, visioning, community engagement and/or land use analysis. Experience in working with municipalities in North Carolina is preferred.

**c. Proposal:**

- i.** Proposal Overview: Provide specific approaches, methods and assumptions that will be utilized to accomplish each task.
- ii.** Proposed Work Plan and Schedule: Provide a proposed work plan with schedule based on months of project (ex. December 1, December 2), divided into phases identifying key tasks, milestones, approximate dates, project deliverables and rouse needs.
- iii.** Community Engagement Plan: Describe at least three approaches for providing innovative, effective stakeholder engagement and public participation. These alternatives should represent different levels and styles of Involvement, and complexity. Provide examples of how your firm would conduct public and stakeholder that would capture input that is representative of all of the Town’s residents. Proposal should identify and address alternate methods of public engagement considering restrictions due to COVID-19.
- iv.** Budget: Identify cost estimate for completing each of the elements in the “Expectations of Consultant” and “Scope of Services” sections of this RFP. Itemized cost estimates may include more than one area in these sections provided the combination of the elements is logical or overlapping. Also identify and other anticipated budgetary needs including incidentals. Identify total not to exceed project cost.

**VI. SUBMITTAL FORMAT & DEADLINE**

Interested firms shall submit five (5) paper copies and one electronic copy (PDF) of the complete proposal either in person to the Town of Elkin Planning Department or mailed to:

Town of Elkin  
Attn: Sarah Harris, Town Planner  
PO Box 857  
Elkin, NC 28621

Complete submittals must be received no later than noon (12:00 pm) October 2, 2020.

**VII. SUBMITTAL REVIEW SCHEDULE**

Staff will begin the review process following the submission deadline and determine if interviews are needed in order to finalizes selection among top candidates. Upon selection, the Consultant will be contacted to finalize the contract, fee structure and project timeframe. Final approval will be given by the Town of Elkin Board of Commissioners.

**VIII. METHODS OF EVALUATION & SELECTION**

Prior to making an award determination, the Town of Elkin may conduct consultant interviews. Interview may be conducted virtually if necessary.

- A.** Firm experience/reputation/workload: experience of the firm in similar work and record of successful results of that work. Also considered will be the firm’s

ability to take on additional work, demonstrated understanding on the Town's goals and purposes of the project, specific management approach, how well the firm's ability to offer the breadth and quality of services required for this project. Additionally, the firm's successful experience performing other services for the Town on past and current projects may be considered.

- B. Qualifications of the personnel assigned to this project team: The Town will give considerable weight to the individuals qualifications of the project team members will actually do most of the work on the project. Consideration will include qualifications of key personnel, project team member's individual experience and other qualifications, project manager's experience, sub-consultant's (if applicable) individual experience and qualifications.
- C. Schedule: Consideration will be given the firms availability to complete the plan updates within a reasonable time frame.

## IX. DISCLAIMERS

**Town Obligation:** There is no expressed or implied obligation for the Town to reimburse firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this request.

**Late Submissions:** Any proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted or considered.

**Withdrawal of Proposal:** Respondents may withdraw all or any portion of a proposal at any time during and after the review and award process, up to the ratification of an agreement between the Town and the designated firm.

**Withdrawal of Request for Proposal:** The Town retains at all times the right to cancel or withdraw this RFP, to refuse to accept a proposal from any respondent and to modify or amend any portion of this RFP. Notification will be provided to all consultants involved in RFP process.

**Applicable laws shall apply:** The contract awarded shall be governed in all respects by the laws of North Carolina, and the consultant awarded the contract shall comply with applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

**Equal Opportunity:** It is the policy of the Town of Elkin to maintain a systematic, consistent recruitment program, to promote equal employment opportunities, and to identify and attract the most qualified applicants for employment with the Town. This policy is to be achieved by announcing all position vacancies, by evaluating all applicants using the same criteria, and by applying testing methods through the Local Job Service Office (employment Security Commission). Selection decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliations, non-disqualifying handicap, or age. The Town will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities in the application process, as requested, unless to do so causes undue hardship.

**Confidentiality:** RFP responses will become public record and, therefore, are subject to public disclosure once a contract is awarded.

**Contract:** The Contract will be awarded to a single Firm. The Contract for services will begin at 12:00 pm in October 16, 2020. The contract will be reviewed by the City Attorney.

## **X. QUESTIONS**

All questions pertaining to this Request for Proposals (RFP) shall be submitted in writing no later than (October 1, 2020 by 5:00 pm). Questions may be emailed to [sharris@elkinnc.org](mailto:sharris@elkinnc.org).