



**Land Use Plan Update for the
Town of Cramerton, North Carolina
Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**

Issued By: Town of Cramerton

Planning Department

Issued: October 1, 2020

Proposals Due: November 6, 2020

1. Introduction

The Town of Cramerton, North Carolina (“Town”) is seeking submittals from qualified planning professionals (individual firms or teams of consultants) for an update of the Town’s Land Use Plan (“the Plan”). The Town is interested in firms capable of providing professional services including, research, analysis, mapping, public engagement/visioning and document preparation.

The Land Use Plan Update will be used by Town staff, government agencies, economic development entities, elected officials, citizen appointed boards and commissions, developers, property owners, and residents as a guide for future land use development, capital investments and growth management decisions over the next 10 years. The Plan will serve as the primary policy document to guide decisions related to growth, quality of life, and capital investments. The Plan will provide clearly stated strategies for development that will help to prioritize key projects for implementation by both the public and private sectors. The document will include text, maps, figures, and renderings to clearly convey the strategies of the Plan. These strategies should also be clearly outlined in an implementation matrix that will guide and inform the annual budgeting process, including public investments consistent with the plan’s vision. Continued strong residential and non-residential growth throughout the Town make preparation of the Land Use Plan a vitally important document for guiding the growth and development of Cramerton and the surrounding community for the next 10 years.

2. Community Background

Located in southeastern Gaston County, the Town of Cramerton celebrated its centennial in 1915. Per the 2010 Census, the Town has a population of 4,165. Based on population estimates from the Office of State Budget and Management, the estimated population as of July 1, 2019 is 5,609. Beautiful mountains and the banks of the Southfork River highlight the topography of this small community. A turn of the century “model mill village” built by Stuart Cramer has become one of the premiere residential communities in the Charlotte-Metro area. Cramerton has transitioned from mill village to residential community over the years since Cramer’s vision of a “model mill village” and has become a “place to call home” for many Charlotte-Metro area commuters. The Town of Cramerton is located in east Gaston County only 15 miles from center city Charlotte. A stretch of NC route 74/29 (Wilkinson Blvd.) is within the Town limits and Interstate 85 is within a five minute drive. Cramerton boasts several unique amenities within the region including a mountain golf course, public island park in the Southfork River, a Frisbee disc golf course, and a quaint downtown area with village green.

3. Project Background

Through the application of its adopted comprehensive land use, transportation, small area plans, and Land Development Code, the Town of Cramerton has cultivated a balanced, sustainable land development pattern that will accommodate planned growth, efficiently utilize public infrastructure, and protect rural and environmental resources. Cramerton has experienced unprecedented growth and change in the last 5 years. The rate of population growth began to increase in the 2000s and accelerated further in the 2010s.

In 2011, the Town commissioned a Land Use Plan which has been used for the last 9 years to guide land use decisions. In 2015, the Town joined with the City of Belmont on the Build a Better Boulevard Plan to guide development along Wilkinson Boulevard between the two towns. Based on the results of the Build a Better Boulevard Plan, two small area plans were commissioned: the Wilkinson South Small Area Plan in 2016 and the Market Street Small Area Plan in 2019. These plans anticipated the additional growth pressures that the Wilkinson Boulevard corridor will experience in the coming years due to expanding Charlotte growth as well as the potential extension of the CATS Silver Line light rail into Gaston County.

Outlined below is a list of adopted plans, which along with the Town of Cramerton Land Development Code, have long-range planning implications for Cramerton:

Town Adopted Plans and Policies

- Town of Cramerton Land Development Code 2004
- Town of Cramerton Greenway Master Plan 2007
- Town of Cramerton Pedestrian Master Plan 2008
- Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan 2010
- Town of Cramerton Land Use Plan 2011
- Build a Better Boulevard Plan 2015
- Town of Cramerton Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2017
- Town of Cramerton Bicycle Plan 2018

Town Adopted Small Area Plans

- Wilkinson South Small Area Plan 2016
- Market Street Small Area Plan 2019

4. Scope of Work

The following Scope of Work is intended to guide preparation of the Land Use Plan Update for the Town of Cramerton This list indicates the “minimum” level of content for the plan. The Town expects that the Final Scope of Work for the plan will be modified to reflect suggestions by the consultant/team chosen to prepare the plan.

PHASE I

- Background Research and Analysis – Undertake data collection and analysis of key socioeconomic and geographic data, including population, housing, commercial and industrial development, land use, natural resources, transportation, utilities, public (including recreation) facilities and historic assets. Review and assess all previous long range plans (prepared by the Town and other agencies) and prepare a summary document detailing relevance and applicability of the previous plans. Review of “Land Development Code (LDC)”, associated development regulations and zoning map. **Deliverables:** *Summary Report and mapping of data; summary report of prior applicable studies, plans and development regulations.*
- Public Engagement – The Town desires a creative, and far-reaching public input strategy. Including, but not limited to, stakeholder meetings, social media, and other creative input mechanisms. Develop a comprehensive public engagement strategy in coordination with Town staff to solicit input from a broad cross- section of Town residents, business owners and other stakeholders (including Town Board, Town staff and citizen boards and commissions) to inform the comprehensive planning process and serve to identify specific “Focus Areas”, which will guide the plan’s preparation.

As a starting point, the Town requests that the plan update address the following “Focus Areas”, in addition to any others identified during the public engagement process:

- 1. Growth Management** (strategies and policies that ensure growth and development occurs within the capacity of the Town’s infrastructure and service capacity);
- 2. Transportation** (ensuring that growth occurs within the capacity of the transportation

system to handle);

3. Redevelopment (strategies for repurposing and revitalizing older areas of Town and promoting infill; including Downtown);

4. Land Use (strategies to ensure highest and best use of land)

Deliverables: *Multi-faceted public engagement process utilizing social media, surveys, other digital platforms, community outreach and other means to insure a comprehensive and robust level of public input, which will serve to guide development of the plan's vision and goals.*

- Plan vision and goals – Oversee and manage “visioning” process to develop overall vision statement for the Town of Cramerton Land Use Plan Update, including vision statements for each of the plan elements along with goals to guide implementation of this vision. **Deliverables:** *Vision statement for Land Use Plan Update and individual plan elements, along with goals for each plan element.*

PHASE II

- Draft Plan - Based on public engagement process (under guidance of planning staff) prepare “*Draft Land Use Plan*”. At a minimum, the plan shall include an Executive Summary, introduction, vision, goals and objectives, along with policy recommendations to guide land use development, environmental protection and preservation of historic and cultural resources for each of the plan elements. Plan should also address recommendations for regulatory changes, including zoning and the Land Development Code content, as well as suggested modifications to the development plan review/entitlement process. Plan shall also include charts, tables, illustrative drawings, graphics, maps and other supporting documentation, including population projections, build out scenario and preferred land development pattern. **Deliverables:** *Draft Land Use Plan.*
- Plan Implementation Strategy – Comprehensive implementation strategy shall be developed to guide implementation of Land Use Plan. The strategy will identify staff and capital resources necessary to implement the plan, along with a timetable and prioritization ranking. Consideration to be given to integration of Land Use Plan and coordination with the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). **Deliverables:** *Plan Implementation Strategy.*
- Final Plan – Preparation of Final Plan document, including appendices and maps in hard-copy (10 copies) and digital formats. **Deliverables:** *Final Plan (hard copy & digital formats), along with all electronic files.*

5. Coordination with Town Staff

Oversight and guidance for preparation of the Land Use Plan Update will be provided by Planning Department staff, under the direction of the Planning Board and Town Board.

6. Time Frame

The Town anticipates the following timetable for completion of the Land Use Plan Update, with key dates noted below. A final schedule will be adopted as part of the contract between the Town and consultant chosen to prepare the plan.

Preliminary Land Use Plan Schedule:

| Action | Date |
|---|-------------------|
| RFQ Issued | 10/1/2020 |
| RFQ Responses Due | 11/6/2020 4:00 PM |
| Firms Short-listed | 11/30/2020 |
| Firm Interviews | 12/2021 |
| Selection of Firm | 1/2021 |
| Contract Approval by Town Board of Commissioners | 2/2021 |
| Project Start | 2/2021 |
| Project Completion (Plan Adoption by Town Board of Commissioners) | 9/2021 |

7. Request for Clarification & Additional Information

Any request for clarification or additional information of a technical nature regarding this RFQ shall be submitted in writing and directed to:

Joshua Watkins, AICP
Planning Director
Town of Cramerton
155 North Main Street
Cramerton, NC 28032
Email: jwatkins@cramerton.org
Office: 704- 879-7637

8. Submittal Format and Content

The Statement of Qualifications should be presented in the following general format:

- 1) *Transmittal Letter:* Designated contact person with address and telephone number.
- 2) *Project Manager:* Identify project manager and describe their experience related to this project. Provide client references for project similar in scope. Discuss the experience of this project manager with other members of the project team.
- 3) *Project Team and Sub-Consultants:* Identify other team members and sub consultants and their relative experience. Discuss the role of key team members. Specify the percentage and type of work that will be performed by each team member and any sub-consultants. This information will become part of the contract with the selected firm.
- 4) *Firm Qualifications:* Discuss the firm's work on projects similar in size and complexity. Quality assurance should be addressed. Indicate firm's history of meeting established schedules. In addition:
 - Lead consultant's office should be located within driving distance of the Town. Consultant's office must have appropriate support staff for a project of this size and complexity; please identify the office size and number of staff and percentage of time to be devoted to project. Consultant should identify a team matrix of all personnel working on project, including office location and specialty.
 - Consultant should demonstrate experience on at least (3) similar projects, preferably within the past five (5) years.
 - Consultant shall discuss their experience and strategy with public engagement and outreach to the community during the Project.
- 5) *Project Approach:* A concise narrative that presents the services a firm would provide detailing the approach and deliverables.
- 6) *Project Timeline:* A timeline for the preparation and implementation of the tasks/activities being proposed per the Scope of Work detailed in this RFQ.

Evaluation of Statements of Qualifications

Responses submitted by consultant firms and/or teams will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Experience of firm(s) with projects of a similar scope and scale;
2. Qualification and experience of the proposed team and location of team members;
3. Current workload and firm workload capacity;
4. Responsiveness to RFQ and quality of the submittal;
5. Proposed approach to project and schedule for completion;
6. Performance assessments and/or references on past work efforts;
7. Knowledge of the Town of Cramerton and surrounding region;
8. Any other experience or criteria deemed applicable to the projects.

11. Short-List, Interviews and Selection

The Town will review Qualification Statements and prepare a short list of candidates to interview. The short-listed firms will be notified by phone and/or email by November 30, 2020, with interviews scheduled before the end of December. Notification may not be sent to firms not short-listed. After selection by the Town, a final contract will be negotiated with the selected firm(s). It is anticipated that a final contract will be signed by no later than the end of February 2021.

12. Negotiating Offers

If a contract cannot be negotiated with the best qualified firm, negotiations with that firm shall be terminated and initiated with the next best qualified firm.

13. Submission Requirements

Firm(s) interested in being considered for this project should submit three (3) bound copies and one (1) electronic version via email or flash drive of their Statement of Qualifications no later than 4:00 p.m. on November 6, 2020.

14. Delivery of Proposals

Proposals are due no later than 4:00 pm EST on November 6, 2020. Proposals should be delivered to the attention of:

Joshua Watkins, AICP
Planning Director
Town of Cramerton
155 North Main Street
Cramerton, NC 28032
Email: jwatkins@cramerton.org
Office: 704- 879-7637