



**COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN  
REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF  
QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSAL**

Prepared by  
Benson Planning Department  
October 2020  
Benson, North Carolina

## **I. PURPOSE**

The Town of Benson (further referred to as “the Town”) is soliciting Requests for Qualifications from qualified firm(s) or a team offering comprehensive land use planning and future land use map services. The Town desires to have a well-organized comprehensive plan, which will include a future land use map identifying key areas for focused development that solicits, engages and incorporates community input into a user-friendly document to help guide growth in the Town in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes 160D.

The Town seeks to identify qualified consultants who have experience preparing comprehensive plans and land use maps; economics; sustainability; engaging the community; soliciting and incorporating community input; knowledge of Johnston County, North Carolina; North Carolina land use law; experience with developing and carrying out creative outreach methods; facilitation of public meetings; compilation and analysis of information; GIS capabilities; innovative and user-friendly documents and interactive web-based documents; quality design graphics; presentations to boards and council; and attainable recommendations for implementation of goals.

RFP responses must satisfy the minimum criteria outlined within the scope of work within this document to be responsive to this solicitation. Any modifications or enhancements proposed beyond the identified scope of work outlined within this document must be clearly and concisely identified, including providing separate estimated cost detail for each task or modification. The successful consultant or team must demonstrate previous similar project expertise, technical capabilities of proposed staff, a solid understanding of the proposed scope of work and issues, and possess sufficient technical and staff availability to develop the Town’s Comprehensive Land use Plan within the expected project timeline.

Responses to this RFP must be received by the designated Town of Benson Project Manager, Erin Joseph, by **4:30 pm EST on December 2, 2020**. The Town anticipates completing and adopting the plan twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months after a notice to proceed is issued and the proposed timeline submitted should reflect that adoption date.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The Town of Benson is a small community located in southeastern Johnston County. Per the 2010 Census, the Town has a population of 3,311. Based on population estimates from the Office of State Budget and Management, the estimated population as of July 1, 2019 is 3,556. The Town has experienced a significant amount of growth in recent years, both residentially and commercially, due to its proximity to Raleigh. Benson is located within 30 minutes of Downtown Raleigh along Interstate 40 and Interstate 95. This location offers convenient access to the Research Triangle Park region while offering a lower cost of living and operation within the region. To manage the growth, the Town periodically undertakes planning studies in different parts of town to understand the infrastructure needs, to plan and build such infrastructure to meet the demand in a growing community.

The Town currently relies on the Town of Benson Comprehensive Land Use Plan started in January 2009 and adopted in May 2010. The Comprehensive Plan is a key policy document for the Town to be used by staff, government agencies, elected officials, property owners, residents and developers to help guide growth.

The new plan will provide clear and predictable guidance to developers, stakeholders, and citizens. It will help maintain collaborative and respectful relationships within the community and surrounding

neighbors, and establish policies and priorities for coordinated development, infill, and redevelopment. Furthermore, it is essential that the land use section and transportation section work in concert.

### III. SCOPE OF WORK

The following Scope of Work is intended to guide preparation of the Land Use Plan Update for the Town. 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. Identify development regulations that impact development in Benson. Review of “Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)”, 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 to identify specific “Focus Areas”, which will guide the plan’s preparation. Present to the Town Board project updates at major milestones (e.g. formation of vision statement, completion of existing conditions analysis, etc.), provide update to Planning Board, attend and present at the Town Board adoption meetings and attend steering committee meetings.

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 Benson Comprehensive 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 Comprehensive 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 Unified Development Ordinance content, as well as suggested modifications to the development plan review process. Plan shall also include charts, tables, illustrative drawings, graphics, maps and other supporting documentation, including population projections, build out s scenario and preferred land development pattern. **Deliverables:** *Draft Land Use Plan.*
- Plan Implementation Strategy – Comprehensive implementation strategy shall be developed to guide implementation of the 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.

<b>Preliminary Land Use Plan Schedule: Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
RFQ Issued	11/1/2020
RFQ Responses Due	12/2/2020 4:30 PM
Firms Short-listed	12/30/2020
Firm Interviews	1/2021
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)	2/2022

## **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:

**Erin Joseph**

Planning Director  
Town of Benson  
303 E. Church Street  
Benson, NC 27504  
Email: [ejoseph@townofbenson.com](mailto:ejoseph@townofbenson.com)  
Office: 919.894.3553 ext. 231

**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.

7) *Project Cost Estimate:* The Town of Benson is requesting a detailed cost estimate for the work to be completed based on the information provided by responders. This estimate is **non-binding and for informational purposes only, and is not part of the selection criteria**. The cost estimate should be presented in a tabular or spreadsheet format that includes the proposer's name and contact information. Cost estimate information is to be packaged as a separate document from the main proposal and included within the same mailing package when submitted to the town. The project cost estimate document should be attached as separate electronic document (PDF) along with the proposal document as it is submitted electronically to Town's Project Manager.

## **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 Benson 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 December 30, 2020, with interviews scheduled before the end of January. 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 4:30 p.m. on December 2, 2020.

### **14. Delivery of Proposals**

***Proposals are due no later than 4:30 pm EST on December 2, 2020.*** Proposals should be delivered to the attention of:

#### **Erin Joseph**

Planning Director

Town of Benson

303 E. Church Street

Benson, NC 27505

Email: [ejoseph@townofbenson.com](mailto:ejoseph@townofbenson.com)