

# Request for Proposals Downtown Elon Master Plan



**TOWN OF ELON**

DEEP ROOTS • NEW HORIZONS

**Proposals Due by  
November 19, 2021 at 5pm**

**Town of Elon  
104 S. Williamson Ave.  
Elon, NC 27244**

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**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
DOWNTOWN ELON MASTER PLAN  
SCOPE OF SERVICES & PROPOSAL**

**1. Purpose**

The Town of Elon is seeking the services of a qualified economic development, urban design and planning firm, or team of firms, to provide professional services for the development of the Town of Elon Downtown Master Plan.

**2. Schedule and Submittal**

Issued:

Written questions due: November 5, 2021 by 5:00 PM

Addendum issued (if needed): November 9, 2021 no later than 5:00 PM

Proposals Due: November 19, 2021 no later than 5:00 PM

**3. Written Questions**

Questions or comments regarding this RFP (except to inquire about the number of addenda issued) must be in writing and received by the Town of Elon no later than 5:00 PM, October 15, 2021. Written questions are to be emailed to [kpatterson@elon.gov](mailto:kpatterson@elon.gov) . Prospective bidders shall respond via email with their intent to submit their proposals so they may receive any forthcoming addenda. The Town shall not be obligated to answer any questions received after the above specified deadline or any questions submitted in a manner other than as instructed above.

**4. Background**

The Town of Elon, working with a consultant, developed and approved a Downtown Master Plan in January of 2014. After six years, the action steps of the plan have been completed and the environment of Downtown Elon has changed. The original Downtown Master Plan was aimed at identifying the downtown area, creating a new zoning district, amenities, and developing a downtown department structure for the Town. Now is a time to take a fresh look and develop a workable plan to encourage commercial, mixed use, and residential development of the area.

The Town of Elon, in partnership with community leaders, has established a goal for Elon to attract and retain businesses, visitors, residents, and developers. Currently, we have businesses and individuals that would like to locate in Elon but have no commercial or retail space available for them and a limited supply of residential opportunities to either rent or purchase. In order to meet the goals of the Town and be able to enhance business and residential offerings, we must focus on improvement of our Downtown. This project builds upon former planning efforts, but most importantly will put forth an updated downtown plan that creates a unified vision for the development and redevelopment of Downtown Elon in the near term and future. The starting point is building a solid vision for Downtown Elon. To build this vision correctly, input and buy-in from citizens, business owners, property owners, government officials, and all other related entities and institutions involved will be key. The vision should look to build into the future and

embrace our diverse culture, rich history, and unlimited potential.

The Downtown Plan should: establish a guiding vision for the expansion of the commercial core in downtown Elon; provide ample opportunities for stakeholder engagement; work with the downtown advisory board and others on the Downtown Plan; analyze the commercial, retail, and residential markets and identify needs and opportunities; based off the analysis, complete a site-specific development opportunity analysis for the most impactful opportunity; recommend and prioritize strategies and projects for place-making and public spaces; and provide a plan for implementing recommendations.

## **The Site**

The location of what is currently considered Downtown Elon, based off the 2014 plan, consists of eight blocks bounded by the following streets: W Haggard Avenue, Manning Avenue, W Lebanon Avenue, and N Williamson Avenue. Within the eight blocks are 27 businesses, one permanent resident, and single-family homes or townhomes being used as student rentals. Downtown is located directly across the street from Elon University. However, the downtown area is deemed by residents, students, and visitors to include properties outside this identified area and includes properties located along W Haggard Avenue to St. John's Street and the remainder of W Lebanon Avenue from Manning Avenue to Church Street, which should be included in the plan. Additionally, included in the site should be the current locations of the US Post Office and Town Hall and recently purchased land for a new Police Station.

## **5. Scope of Service**

The plan will become an official policy document of the Town of Elon. The plan will facilitate the direction, type, location, and scale of new development and associated Downtown improvements for the next ten years with a focus on achievable outcomes over the next five years. Included recommendations around infrastructure may result in substantial changes to Downtown initiatives, with a renewed focus on context-sensitive urban design. The plan should prescribe a realistic and timely guide for creating positive change.

The consulting firm selected for this assignment will work closely with Town staff and an advisory committee to prepare the plan. The plan should examine and include best practices from communities of similar composition with thriving Downtowns adjacent to a university, while paying homage to the uniqueness of Elon. While the final scope of services will be developed in conjunction with the firm selected for this project, the following are major work components and elements expected to be provided.

The combined Downtown Master Plan will include the following critical elements:

- Downtown vision and development goals - Develop guiding principles that will inform plan recommendations and implementation.
- Commercial market assessment and recommendations - Inventory and analyze the current retail and services business mix. Identify business needs, opportunities, and implementation strategies. Analyze and report the potential change to property tax value per acre based off of recommendations.
- Residential market assessment and recommendations - Inventory and analyze the current housing stock. Identify housing needs, opportunities, and implementation strategies. Analyze

and report the potential change to property tax value per acre based off of recommendations.

- Opportunity site analysis - Inventory obsolete, vacant, or underutilized sites. Provide recommendations for potential development/redevelopment. For the highest-priority recommendations, include illustrative drawings or renderings that will inform stakeholders and potential investors of the envisioned character of improvements.
- Land Development Ordinance (LDO) - Review the LDO, including any sections that reference or impact development in downtown. Recommend amendments, as appropriate, to support the Plan's vision and goals.
- Public spaces and uses - Recommend and prioritize place-making and capital improvement projects such as streetscape improvements, sidewalks and bike paths, public gathering and event spaces, and public art. Review and confirm transportation recommendations and cross-sections from the Pedestrian, Lighting, and Bike Plan, as well as other documents and previous visioning efforts. Review the locations of Town Hall, the Post Office, and Police Station and determine where they could be located in the downtown area.
- Provide suggestions on the types of public art that will enhance the recommendations within the plan i.e. sculptures, murals, etc.
- Parking recommendations (downtown core only) - review the 2017 Downtown Elon parking study and then assess future needs based on growth in demand, redevelopment scenarios and/or changes to building or land use, and anticipated changes in technology and travel modes. Recommend strategies including both demand management and increased or modified parking supply to meet future demand. Strategies should include the consideration of structured parking and, if recommended, suggest potential locations.
- Provide maps showing the downtown Elon footprint, specific locations coinciding with key recommendations, locations of public gathering/event spaces, civic buildings, and locations for public art.
- Implementation Plan - Create an action plan for key recommendations and suggested funding mechanism(s).

Interested firms are encouraged to propose a recommended approach and project deliverables to address the critical elements set forth. The approach must include an innovative stakeholder engagement process and a plan for establishing and working with an advisory committee as part of plan development. At a minimum, deliverables are anticipated to include:

- Work plan and schedule
- Innovative public engagement plan, materials, and facilitation
- Regular progress meetings and reports
- Phased implementation plan
- Digital copy of all reference data and preliminary study documents
- PowerPoint presentation of the plan for promotional purposes
- Print ready digital copy of the plan for the purpose of public relations, marketing and recruitment with typical sections, maps, drawings and renderings, architectural standards, and strategies as necessary to enable the implementation of the plan
- Electronic maps and GIS data
- Funding plan/options

## **6. Projected Timetable**

The study process should be completed and approved within eight to ten (8-10) months of the date of the notice to proceed (NTP). The parking inventory is needed as an initial stand-alone deliverable within three (3) months of NTP. Interested firms should propose a schedule for the services and deliverables to be provided that addresses milestones and review periods.

## 7. Proposal Submittal Requirements

Proposals are limited to 15, 8 ½” x 11” pages. Proposals must be submitted in electronic (pdf) format. Interested firms are encouraged to use succinct writing and supporting tables or graphics in the proposal submittal. The proposal shall include the following:

- Introductory letter expressing interest in providing the requested professional services, an acknowledgment of the firm’s eligibility to perform such services (including all subconsultants), a statement citing any potential conflicts of interest, and contact information including an email address for the primary point of contact.
- Identification of project personnel and their role in the proposed project, including an organizational chart, demonstration that assigned staff have availability to undertake the work required, and tailored biographical information for key staff members.
- Understanding of the project elements and recommended approach, deliverables, and schedule of tasks and milestones.
- Identification of similar work performed within the past seven years including points of contact (name, email, phone number) for references and identification of the roles of assigned project personnel on referenced similar work.
- Description of relevant work experience, capabilities, and expertise which qualify the personnel assigned to this project to undertake the project.

## 8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated and a consultant will be selected based on the following criteria:

- 50% - Qualifications and experience of the firm, assigned project personnel, assigned project manager, and subconsultants to perform the type of work required.
- 30% - Project approach that clearly and thoroughly demonstrates a familiarity with the project and process required.
- 20% - Performance of the firm, assigned project personnel, and its subconsultants on similar and/or previous projects.

North Carolina firms qualified to do the work will be given priority consideration. A North Carolina firm is a firm that maintains an office in North Carolina staffed with an adequate number of employees judged by the Town to be capable of performing a majority of the work required.

## 9. Form of Submission

An electronic document of the proposal in pdf format is the only allowable format. Please email to: [kpatterson@elon.gov](mailto:kpatterson@elon.gov)

Upon receipt of your proposal, an email response will be provided.

Proposals must be received no later than **5 p.m. on Friday, November 19, 2021** to be eligible for consideration.

Questions and/or discussions with staff prior to firm selection are not permitted.

The Town of Elon will select the most qualified and responsive firm based on the combined evaluation of three staff members and a member of the Downtown Advisory Board. The Town reserves the right to schedule interviews if needed after evaluating proposals. All firms submitting proposals will be notified the next business day following the date of selection, anticipated to be within 10 business days of the submittal deadline.

The firm(s) selected will be notified by **email**. Notification will also be sent by email to firms not selected.

## **10. Terms and Conditions**

- A. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the agency of the conditions contained in this request for proposal unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between the Town and the agency selected.
- B. The Town reserves the right without prejudice to reject any or all proposals, to waive any non-material irregularities or informalities in any RFQ, to accept or reject any item or combination of items, and to request additional clarification of qualifications.
- C. All proposals received become the property of the Town and information included therein or attached thereto, shall become public record upon their delivery to the Town. Any information deemed by the bidding agency to be protected as a trade secret shall be submitted separately in a sealed envelope along with a statement supporting this assertion.
- D. Any and all costs associated with the preparation of a response to this request are the responsibility of the bidder and are not to be passed on to the Town.
- E. IRAN DIVESTMENT ACT CERTIFICATION. Contractor hereby certifies that Contractor, and all subcontractors, are not on the Iran Final Divestment List (“List”) created by the North Carolina State Treasurer pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-6A-4. Contractor shall not utilize any subcontractor that is identified on the List.
- F. The contractor affirms that they are registered with and participate in the Federal work authorization program, E-Verify as it relates to their company and mandated by law in North Carolina by G.S. 160-20.1