New Hanover County

Request for Proposals

Comprehensive Housing Study

Issue Date: January 17, 2020

Due Date: February 14, 2020

Mailing Address:

New Hanover County Finance Department
Attn: Lena Butler, Purchasing Supervisor
230 Government Center Drive, Suite 165
Wilmington, NC 28403
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I. Project Overview

A. Introduction
The New Hanover County Planning & Land Use Department is requesting proposals from qualified professional consulting firms and teams to conduct a Comprehensive Housing Study with a statistically valid public opinion study.

A Joint City of Wilmington, New Hanover County Workforce/Affordable Housing Ad hoc Committee was established in 2016 with a mission to recommend practices, policies, and programs to improve and increase the stock of available workforce housing in the region. One of their recommendations was to procure a comprehensive housing needs study and statistically valid opinion survey.

The Wilmington City Council and New Hanover County Board of Commissioners met jointly in 2019 to discuss the matter of workforce housing and the recommendations from the Ad hoc Committee’s effort to identify strategies to improve workforce housing in the region. At that meeting, the City and County established a 13-member Workforce Housing Advisory Committee comprised of professionals representing the following communities: Business/Education, REALTORS®, Development, Financial, Non-Profit housing, and the Chair of the Joint Community Relations Advisory Committee. The committee was tasked with developing a comprehensive workforce housing study and workforce housing opinion survey. Findings of the housing study and public opinion survey will be used as part of a public awareness campaign to inform the general public on the current state of housing affordability throughout the County, City and region. The campaign may address commonly held myths and perceptions about workforce and affordable housing. Additionally, the campaign may introduce recommendations and best practices to improve access to and availability of workforce housing.

The firm that is selected will work with the County’s Workforce Housing Planner and the Workforce Housing Advisory Committee throughout the process. The Workforce Housing Planner will assist with coordinating communication between and among the consultant and key stakeholders including, but not limited to, city and county staff, homebuilders, realtors, affordable housing developers, community-based organizations and others.

B. Background

New Hanover County is located in the rapidly growing southeastern coastal region of North Carolina. The County is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the East, the Cape Fear River and Brunswick County to the West, and Pender County to the North. It is the second smallest county in North Carolina by land area and the ninth most populous (out of 100).

Data from the North Carolina Office of State Budget Management projects an increase in population for New Hanover County, including Wilmington, from 233,595 in 2018 to 311,381 in
2037; a 33% increase adding almost 80,000 people. As the County continues to grow, additional data and analysis is needed to understand the challenges facing the County’s existing and future residents and outline the appropriate path to achieving our housing goals.

In order to set the general direction for this future growth, the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County created Comprehensive Plans in 2016. Currently, the City and County are updating their development regulations to be user-friendly, modern, and in-line with their Comprehensive Plan policy direction.

The City of Wilmington has been a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement community since 1975. Funding comes to the City’s Community Development Division, Community Services Department, in the form of an annual block grant administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). CDBG funds can be used with great flexibility to provide “decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities principally for persons of low and moderate income”. In addition to the CDBG funds, the City receives HOME Investment Partnership Program funds, also funded through HUD. The HOME grant is specifically for affordable housing. In fiscal year 19/20, the City received $957,054 in CDBG funds and $614,346 in HOME funds. In addition, the City allocates General Funds to fund housing programs as well as community partners working on public service, public facility, and owner-occupied housing repair programs.

New Hanover County is a non-entitlement community and does not receive an annual appropriation from HUD. The County is eligible to apply for state-allocated CDBG funding on a competitive basis. The County operates Water and Sewer Revolving Loans Program utilizing a dedicated loan fund for water and sewer infrastructure improvements in low-income households. New Hanover County Department of Social Services (DSS) administers a Low Income Energy Assistance Program and Cape Fear Public Utility Authority Assist to provide one-time financial aid for water bill payment. In addition, the County also allocates General Funds to outside agencies for housing and public service programs.

II. Reference Documents

Joint City of Wilmington/New Hanover County Workforce and Affordable Housing Ad Hoc Committee: Existing Conditions and Recommendations Report & Appendix
https://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/home/showdocument?id=5446
https://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/home/showdocument?id=5448

New Hanover County Comprehensive Plan
http://laserfiche.nhcgov.com/weblink/0/edoc/3270860/PlanNHC_LR.pdf

New Hanover County Unified Development Ordinance
https://planning.nhcgov.com/udo/home/
III. Scope of Services

The Comprehensive Housing Study shall provide an in-depth assessment of the significant characteristics of the current housing market, for both rental and homeownership, and the projected characteristics of that market for both unincorporated New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington.

The Housing Study should, at a minimum:

1. Give a detailed picture of the current housing market in New Hanover County, with specific attention to the age, size, location, tenure and price of homes.
2. Delineate the current housing stock, with special attention to demand and supply for different population groups, including the needs for persons with disabilities, elderly, various age groups, students, homeless, low and moderate income, single parent households, and female headed households.
3. Assess the impact of transportation costs on housing affordability in existing neighborhoods.
4. Identify barriers that affect housing affordability and/or the development of new workforce and affordable housing units.
5. Provide market trend information that will assist in decision-making for future developments.
6. Identify gaps between projected housing needs and projected supply;
7. Include a statically valid survey that includes the public’s perception of workforce and affordable housing in the community.
8. Utilize the data created to create a local toolbox.

All data provided shall be disaggregated by jurisdiction, as available. Provide comparisons to put data into context when appropriate using the following cities: Asheville/Buncombe, NC; Durham/Durham County, NC; and Greensboro/Guilford County, NC.

Summarize the existing conditions and describe trends.
- Examine and analyze characteristics and trends for the current housing stock and population;
  - Correlate housing supply with the Area Median Income (AMI), according to household size, at intervals of 30%, 50%, 60%, 80%, 100%, and above 120%, and with jobs by industry;
  - Determine the housing types (single-family, multi-family, townhomes, mobile homes, etc) and needs for different population groups (including persons with disabilities, elderly, various age groups, students, homeless, low and moderate income, single parent households, and female headed households);
  - Include the number of elderly/disabled living in homes that they own without sufficient income to maintain and/or repair them.
- Examine how transportation costs affect household locational decisions and how they affect demand and pricing in existing neighborhoods.
- Identify the barriers, including regulatory, that affect housing affordability and the development of new workforce and affordable housing units in New Hanover County, including the City of Wilmington.
- Provide an in-depth assessment of the significant characteristics of the current housing market, and the projected characteristics of that market.
- Analyze the relationship between housing costs and incomes, and how they have changed over the past ten years.
- Analyze and provide data on the other costs of living in New Hanover County such as groceries, health care, utilities, childcare, and entertainment, etc.

Project future needs.
- Project characteristics and trends for the future population;
- Project the housing types and needs for future population groups, including the needs for persons with disabilities, elderly, various age groups, students, homeless, low and moderate income, single parent households, and female headed households;
- Project future housing supply and needs based on existing land use policies, zoning and development trends, demographic trends and employment growth (in coordination with our economic development partners) for the next 5, 10, 15, and 20 years.
- Identify employment trends and AMI projections, according to household size, at the intervals previously identified for the next 5, 10, 15, and 20 years.
- Identify gaps between projected housing needs and projected supply for units by type of housing (single family, townhomes, multi-family, and number of bedrooms) according to income and size of household at the intervals previously identified.

Conduct a survey.
- Gather feedback from the community through a statistically valid public opinion survey to identify public perception of workforce and affordable housing in the community;
  o Provide a statistical analysis of the survey results;
  o Use the results to inform recommended implementation strategies;

Utilize the study and survey to create a toolbox of strategy options.
Solutions should be disaggregated by jurisdiction but also include partnership opportunities.
- Identify tailored strategies for the City and County, taking into consideration differences in population, authority, and resources;
  o Include strategies that are regulatory and non-regulatory;
  o Use traditional and non-traditional funding sources;
  o Address rental and ownership opportunities.
- Identify strategies that the City and the County can achieve collaboratively;
- Recommend targets for short term (1-3 years) and long term (4-10 years) post-study;
- Discuss if and how any of the strategies might counteract each other (i.e. How does strategy A impact strategy B?).

Alternative services and deliverables may be proposed on evidence of the need to meet the purpose of the RFP.

IV. Deliverables
The expectation is for the Consultant to prepare a report based on the findings of the study and survey. The report will include an executive summary. The report should be clear, concise, and visually appealing. Ideally, it will visualize the data points where possible and present information in an accessible format. An appendix shall accompany the report that will include supplemental and source data, methodology, and analysis.

Data and analysis will be provided in written and electronic formats in order to create an ongoing source for research and analysis on housing market trends. Uses of data should be documented and include a wide number of sources from local, regional, state, and national data sources.

The consultant shall present the final report and recommendations to the Workforce Housing Advisory Committee, City of Wilmington Council, and New Hanover County Board of Commissioners. Additional presentations may be negotiated as part of the contract.
V. **Budget**

The City of Wilmington and New Hanover County are operating on an appropriated fixed budget for the project. The work will be performed on a fixed price basis with a specific amount and payment program being determined through contract negotiations with the successful firm and will be based upon major milestones and/or identified tasks and subtasks.

VI. **Timeframe**

The anticipated project start with the new consultant is March 2020, with the final draft anticipated to be complete by September 2020.

VII. **Submission Requirements**

Submitted proposals must include the following information:

**Section 1: Cover Letter** - A cover letter expressing interest in working with New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington that includes a point of contact for the firm. The letter should include:

- A clear indication of the name of the consulting firm, mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address;
- A statement indicating that the firm is independent, properly licensed to practice in the state of North Carolina, and has no conflict of interests with regard to any other work performed by the consulting firm for the County and City.

**Section 2: Table of Contents**

**Section 3: Introduction/Summary** - Proposals should include an introduction and summary containing but not limited to:

- The company background;
- The names of key personnel to be assigned to the project, their role on the project, their titles, education, experience, and period of service with the team, including subcontractors, if any;
- A description of what disciplines are included within the consulting firm;
- Current workload.

**Section 4: Method of Approach** - Proposals should include:

- A narrative that presents the services the firm will provide detailing the approach, methodology, and deliverables, including the strategy used to achieve the project objectives, and scope of services;
- A description of the approach to be taken toward completing the project scope, including the process and any deliverables resulting from each task;
- Any proposed changes to the project scope, including additional recommended items;
- Additional related services should be incorporated into the proposal, if applicable
- Any tasks that will be subcontracted to other disciplines/consultants;
• Organizational chart and management approach, including the roles and responsibilities of any sub-contractor;
• Any additional information the consultant believes to distinguish their proposals from others.

Section 5: Comparable Projects- List at least (3) comparable projects in progress or completed, including references, with the following information:
• Contact name, phone number, and email address;
• Current status of the ordinance and the completion year, if applicable;
• Size and scale of the geographic area under jurisdiction of the ordinance;
• Scope of work performed for each;
• Link to each ordinance;
• Original estimate or project costs and actual project costs;
• Original estimated project completion schedule and actual completion schedule;
• Additional relevant information may be included.

Section 6: Timeframe- Proposals should include:
• How the work will be completed in an effective, timely, economical and professional manner;
• A proposed schedule for the entire process, including the approximate timeline for completing each of the individual tasks, meetings, presentations, deliverables, and final completion;
• An estimated time that would be devoted to this project.

Section 7: Proposed Fee- Provide the not to exceed cost for delivery of the Comprehensive Housing Study and Survey. Including a cost proposal consisting of:
• A cost breakdown of all expenses, including both direct and indirect fees;
• If the use of sub-consultants is proposed, a separate schedule of expenses must be provided for each sub-consultant;
• Identify the total cost for completing each work task and subtask in detail;
• Hourly rates and number of hours by task assigned to individual members of the team;
• A summary of estimated labor hours by tasks that clearly identifies the project team members and the number of hours performed by each team member by task;
• Proposals should be all-inclusive detailing your best offer.

VIII. Evaluation Criteria
The County and City will conduct a fair and impartial process for the selection of the consulting firm.

The Joint City of Wilmington/New Hanover County Workforce Housing Advisory Committee will be responsible for evaluating the proposals received in response to this RFP. The Committee will
recommend to the City and County the respondent with the best overall proposal for the project. Specific evaluation criteria, among other factors, will include:

Qualification and experience of the proposed team:
- History of the firm and its experience in similar projects
- Proposal of a qualified project manager with relevant previous experience
- Quality and availability of staff assigned to the project
- Creativity and relevance of past work

Understanding and knowledge about the project study area.

Proposed approach to the project:
- Responsiveness to project description
- Proposed distribution of work and time between team members
- Proposed time frame for the project
- Knowledge of technical requirements
- Technical analysis tools and techniques proposed
- Proposed scope of work and deliverables

Quality of proposal:
- Concise description of tasks, staff, and process proposed
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities of key team members

Responsiveness to other requirements
- The proposed design approach for the project, including, but not limited to, items provided in the Submission Requirements section
- Understanding of North Carolina statues and local economics, environment, and geographic conditions

Competitiveness and Completeness of Cost Proposal
- Reasonable allocation of human resources to project
- Cost Competitive within range of proposals submitted
- Sufficient detail to facilitate final cost negotiations to enable project to be complete with budget

Depending on the analysis of the submittals, personal interviews may be scheduled.

IX. Selection Process and Timeline
A. Addenda and Clarification of Specifications
Any and all questions regarding this RFP must be submitted to Lena Butler, Purchasing Supervisor, at lbutler@nhcgov.com. Any and all revisions to this RFP will be made only by written addendum
from New Hanover County. All questions should be submitted no later than January 31, 2020 at 5:00 PM.

Applicants may not have communications, verbal or otherwise, concerning this RFP with any personnel or boards from New Hanover County, other than the person listed in this section. If any Applicant attempts any unauthorized communication, the proposal may be rejected.

All Applicants who intend to submit a proposal on this project should send an email to lbutler@nhgov.com including pertinent contact information. This will ensure that you receive any addenda issued for this RFP; if applicable.

B. **Acceptance/Rejection of Proposals**

   The County and City reserve the right to accept and reject any or all statements of proposals submitted, in whole or in part. The County and City reserve the right to negotiate any and all elements of the proposal by and with any consultants it deems suitable to carry out this project. The County and City have no obligation to award work based off this RFP and reserves the right to re-advertise.

C. **Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 17, 2020</td>
<td>Issue RFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 31, 2020 by 5:00 PM</td>
<td>Questions Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14, 2020 by 5:00 PM</td>
<td>Proposal Submissions Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 4, 2020</td>
<td>Committee Review of Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 13, 2020</td>
<td>Final Selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Contract Awarded and Execution</td>
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X. **Submission Procedures**

   The proposal responses must be submitted as a comprehensive document or package. Please submit your proposal no later than 5:00 PM on February 14, 2020 to:

   New Hanover County Finance Department  
   Attn: Lena Butler, Purchasing Agent  
   230 Government Center Drive, Suite 165  
   Wilmington, NC 28403  

   All applicants are required to submit (2) hard copies and one (1) digital copy of the complete proposal by 5:00 PM on February 14, 2020. Late submissions will not be accepted.

   The cost for preparing the Proposal document are solely the responsibility of the respondent.
A. Trade Secret Confidentiality

Upon receipt of your proposal by New Hanover County, your proposal is considered a public record except for material which qualifies as "trade secret" under N.C. General Statute 132-1.2. After opening, your proposal will be provided to County staff and others who participate in the evaluation process, and to members of the general public who submit public records requests.

To properly designate material as trade secret under these circumstances, each Bidder must take the following precautions: (a) any trade secrets submitted by a Proposer must be submitted in a separate, sealed envelope marked "Trade Secret - Confidential and Proprietary Information - Do Not Disclose Except for the Purpose of Evaluating This Bid," and (b) the same trade secret/confidentiality designation must be stamped on each page of the trade secret materials contained in the envelope.

Do not attempt to designate your entire Proposal as a trade secret, and do not attempt to designate pricing information as a trade secret. Doing so may result in your Proposal being disqualified.

In submitting a Proposal, each Applicant agrees that the County may reveal any trade secret materials contained in such response to all County staff and County officials involved in the selection process, and to any outside consultant or other third parties who assist the County in the selection process. Furthermore, each Applicant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the County and each of its officers, employees, and agents from all costs, damages, and expenses incurred in connection with refusing to disclose any material, which the Applicant has designated as a trade secret.

B. Withdrawal of Proposals

Applicants may withdraw or withdraw and resubmit their proposal at any time prior to the closing time for receipt of proposals. NO proposal may be withdrawn after the scheduled closing time for receipt of proposals for a period of sixty (60) days.

C. Equal Opportunity

The non-discrimination clause contained in Section 202 (Federal) Executive Order 11246, as amended by Executive Order 11375, relative to Equal Employment Opportunity for all persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex or national origin, and the implementing rules and regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Labor, are incorporated herein.

The Applicant agrees not to discriminate against any employees or applicant for employment because of physical or mental handicap in regard to any position for which the employees or applicant is qualified. The Applicant agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment and otherwise treat qualified handicapped individuals without discrimination based upon their physical or mental handicap in all employment practices.
Pursuant to GS 143-48, New Hanover County encourages small contractors, minority contractors, physically handicapped contractors, and women contractors to submit proposals in response to this RFP.
XI. Minority & Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) Program Form

A. Authorized Representative
I HEREBY AFFIRM THAT:
I am [name] ___________________________________, [title] ________________________, and the duly authorized representative of [Business Name] ____________________________ and that I possess the legal authority to make this statement on behalf of myself and the Business for which I am acting.

B. Affirmation Regarding MWBE Program Acknowledgement and Compliance
I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:
I am aware of and intend to comply with the County’s MWBE Program. As such [check one]:

_____ The Business is certified as a woman- or minority-owned business by an accepted agency. (Attach proof certification)

_____ The Business is a woman- or minority-owned business but has not been certified by an accepted agency. (Attach document of ownership such as articles of incorporation, current business license, K-1 of the most recent business tax return)

_____ The Business is not a woman- or minority-owned business; however, the bidder acknowledges the MWBE policy and if it should become necessary to subcontract some portion of the work at a later date or obtain materials or services in conjunction with this solicitation, the bidder will institute good faith efforts to comply with all requirements of the MWBE program in providing equal opportunities to MWBEs.

Signature: _____________________________________________ Date: __________