

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
CITY OF GRAHAM, DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Graham, a community of 15,000 residents, is located along Interstate 40/85 in central North Carolina. We are in the center of Alamance County, between the Triangle and Triad regions. Downtown Graham is positioned less than a mile off of the interstate, along Highway 87 (Main Street) which is maintained by the NCDOT. The intersection of Main Street and Elm Street (city maintained) is a charming example of an intact Landcaster Courthouse Square.

The City of Graham Planning Department is seeking a qualified, multi-disciplinary planning consultant firm to develop a Downtown Master Plan. Graham seeks the services of a team with considerable experience in citizen involvement/participation, visioning, planning, design and market analysis to develop the new plan. The study area includes approximately fourteen blocks and is defined as being: south of Market Street, west of Melville Street, north of McAden Street, and east of Holt Avenue, as well as the corridor of Highway 87 from the interstate (see attached map).

Commercial development during the last few years has generally concentrated to the east of the downtown, focusing on the interstate where approximately 145,000 average daily trips occur. However, the City wishes to take a proactive approach in developing a Downtown Master Plan to ensure that Graham maintains its small town atmosphere and historic character.

The Master Plan will guide and support downtown revitalization and redevelopment efforts, providing the foundation, detailed strategic vision, and direction for years to come. The primary objective of the Master Plan will be to build upon predetermined goals and objectives, and develop those goals and objectives into a “living” concept and strategic implementation plan. The vision, created with input from citizens and stakeholders, should provide for a complete downtown and enrich the court square as the focal point. This plan will serve as a tool to evaluate new development projects to ensure that our Downtown is the community that the citizens desire it to be. A detailed streetscape enhancement plan will be developed; streetscape functionality will be a high priority of the plan. Multi-modal transportation safety should also be clearly addressed in the plan. The planned enhancements will improve connectivity between Downtown, the surrounding residential neighborhoods, and Graham's connection to the Interstate along the Highway 87 corridor. The plan should also identify priorities, timelines and strategies to successfully market downtown and maintain existing businesses. We are also requesting an addendum which includes the stormwater analysis of the downtown, to include underground utilities that may have to be relocated as a part of the plan.

Much of Graham's downtown is contained within the historic district. As such, involvement of the Graham Historic Resources Commission should be expected. Graham is pursuing NC Main Street status, and has recently hired a new Downtown Development Coordinator. We've had new construction Downtown for the first time in over 40 years. New restaurants, residences, retail establishments, and offices are opening in what were previously vacant buildings.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR DEVELOPING THE MASTER PLAN

1. [The Graham 2035 Comprehensive Plan](#)
2. [The Graham Pedestrian Transportation Plan](#)
3. [The BGMPO Planning Reports](#)
4. A map of the proposed study area
5. [Creative Give Back Spurring Revitalization and Entrepreneurship Plan](#)

DESIRED PLANNING OUTCOMES, DELIVERABLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Graham is seeking proposals from qualified professionals to prepare a master plan and associated renderings detailing the land uses and design that should be pursued in the downtown area. The final product should contain a text document with typical sections, maps, drawings and renderings, architectural standards, and strategies as necessary to enable the Plan to be implemented.

All electronic and GIS data generated by the consultant will be given to Graham at the end of the project. For the purpose of reproduction and reuse by Graham, the selected consultant or team of consultants will provide electronic files with all text, images, presentations, research material, and GIS data used and/or created during the master planning process.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of the project is to prepare an overall downtown master plan for Graham that will increase safety, aesthetics, infrastructure allocation and utilization, and continued economic revival of the downtown. The master plan will be used to identify improvement opportunity areas of the downtown and identify a prioritization list for these improvements.

1. The plan will be a working document that can grow and evolve as Graham's vision evolves.
2. Graham's residents, boards, commissions, and leaders will all contribute to the creation of the master plan.
3. Provide an inventory of the existing downtown features such as the downtown streetscape, entrance signage, parks, etc.
4. Evaluate/analyze the physical characteristics of these areas and existing on-site improvements including:
 - a. Topography
 - b. Vegetation
 - c. Transportation corridors
 - d. Creek / stream /wetland corridors
 - e. Land use patterns
 - f. Open space areas
5. Inventory and analysis, along with local knowledge of history, development patterns, and economic diversity, will begin to form the master plan from which specific areas of the downtown can be targeted for improvements.
6. Target areas will be identified through public meetings to ensure the plan is addressing the specific needs of the current and future citizens.
7. The possible target areas of improvement, with cost estimates, including but not limited to:
 - a. Transportation amenity improvements, pedestrian, parking, wayfinding, and street furniture
 - b. Downtown streetscape improvements and cohesive design guidelines
 - c. Main Street, Court square, and side street landscape planting recommendations
 - d. Recommended maintenance improvements for hardscape areas of the downtown, including stormwater

8. The following outlines the approach to the project:
 - a. Assemble base mapping
 - b. Visit sites and photograph
 - c. Prepare a schematic downtown master plan indicating Graham's vision
 - d. Prioritize the areas for specific design improvements with a proposed timeline
 - e. Provide design recommendations for the specific areas
9. Continue to manage and grow the downtown master plan as it evolves and as Graham grows and evolves with the improvements. The project shall consist of identification, analyses and recommendations of the following:
 - a. A new Downtown Development Plan
 - b. Include design guidelines, building and structural elements, infill development, streetscape, drainage landscape design, and identify the location of utilities downtown, including cost estimates for burying existing powerlines
 - c. 3D images, color rendered illustrative plans, including before and after elevations of proposed streetscape changes
 - d. Review and evaluation of The 2035 Graham Comprehensive Plan
 - e. A comprehensive guide for development which fosters economic growth and encourages high quality land development including but not limited to: restaurants, retail shops, multi-family units, comfortable outdoor spaces, entertainment options, civic uses, etc.
 - f. Design an implementation strategy that will establish policy tools to be used by staff to insure that development results in the desired physical form
 - g. Recommendations for regulatory measures that encourage and/or mandate specific uses, appropriate scale, architecture and design
 - h. Identify the critical elements and key resources needed to implement a successful Downtown District and prioritize strategic initiatives
 - i. Create effective and innovative design concepts that will provide businesses and residents with a unique downtown that does not detract from the feel and character of Graham
 - j. Identify methods to maintain and strengthen existing tenants in the Downtown District
 - k. Identify funding sources and incentive programs which have proved successful in similar downtown projects
 - l. Creation of achievable implementation strategy for all recommendations

STORMWATER ADDENDUM

Given the specific nature of this portion of the plan, it was separated to be easier for firms to find subcontractors to complete this portion of the work. This piece is important, and it is expected that it will be addressed in all responses. The plan is expected to include the following:

1. Evaluation of existing stormwater conditions
2. Proposed stormwater solutions
 - a. Including underground piping as necessary, as well as green infrastructure where applicable. This may require locating underground utilities in order to determine the most efficient method of stormwater service
 - b. Proposed stormwater control measures should integrate with the Master Plan, and improve the pedestrian experience within the Court square

OTHER CONSULTANT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Complete Master Plan no later than one hundred eighty (180) days from Notice to Proceed
2. Consultant will attend and present at the following meetings:
 - a. Downtown Master Plan Project Committee (Committee) kickoff meeting
 - b. Public input meetings (2) with citizens
 - i. First, to create a vision statement and identify opportunities, challenges, strategies, and projects
 - ii. Second, to seek feedback on proposed plans, findings, and design recommendations
 - c. Submit and present Plan to the City Manager and city staff
 - d. Seek approval of the Plan from:
 - i. Committee
 - ii. Historic Resources Commission
 - iii. Planning Board
 - iv. City Council
3. Provide ten hardbound copies and one PDF copy of the Graham Downtown Master Plan
4. Provide Electronic copy of Plan that is compatible with Windows, Microsoft Office, and ESRI–ArcGIS; all elements of the plan must be editable
5. Provide PDF Version to be posted on city website

CITY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Graham Planning Director will serve as project point of contact
2. Graham will furnish readily available plans, drawings, surveys, and GIS data
3. Graham will provide meeting venue for meetings and/or information gathering sessions
4. Master Plan implementation

CONTENT AND FORMAT OF PROPOSALS

The entire RFP submittal package shall not exceed ten pages (excluding previous work samples). The submittal shall include, **but not be limited to** the following:

Introductory Letter: Provide a title sheet or equivalent which includes a short title for the proposed plan; names and business addresses of the organization that will conduct the work; name, title, mailing address and telephone number of the principal consultant; and a clear concise response as to why the City of Graham should select your firm for this work.

Firm Profile: The RFP shall include a brief profile of the consultant or consulting team. The profile should provide an area(s) of expertise overview. For consulting firms, each individual participating in the project should provide a personal profile and/or resume. The profile should also clearly convey the Proposals and experience of the consultant(s) in developing and facilitating downtown revitalization projects and/or master planning efforts.

Consultant Qualification Information: Include key staff resumes. Current workload, including a list of current projects, identified by name and size and anticipated completion date.

Team Experience, Expertise and Commitment: The City of Graham requires a strong team with extensive urban design planning and design-based zoning code expertise, skill at managing complex projects subject to political forces, and experience in public and stakeholder involvement. The team should show experience managing master planning and urban design studies. The team must be highly skilled at managing projects to ensure that they are delivered within scope, according to schedule, and

within budget. The proposal should also discuss how the project manager would ensure a high quality of work.

Experience: Cite previous studies that demonstrate the capabilities and expertise of the consultant(s) to undertake the project. Samples of previous studies/projects **should be** submitted in PDF format and **do not** count towards the ten page maximum for the RFP. List the contact information of three recent references familiar with the work that your company has completed. Preferably the references should correspond with the submitted work samples.

Scope of Work, Approach and Objectives of the Plan: Provide a detailed approach to this project with the inclusion of, but not limited to, the Scope of Work. Identify the overall approach and technical objectives guiding this planning effort. The approach stated in the RFP should reflect the proposing consultant's intent, creativity, and comprehensive understanding of the scope of work. The objectives should identify clearly and concisely the products of the Plan and convey a full understanding of the Committee's plan of work for Downtown Graham. This section will provide the consultant's approach and methodology to execute the Downtown Master Plan. The proposal may be creative and suggest alteration to, or enhancement of the scope of work and deliverables.

Ability of the consultant(s) to meet the expected project completion schedule: Provide bar type progress chart(s) to illustrate the scheduling and timeframe for planning activities and deliverables.

Cost proposal Fee Schedule: The final budget for this study has not yet been determined. Provide a fee schedule tied to the general scope of services itemized according to task. Tasks can be itemized as "optional," thereby presenting a menu from which Graham may prioritize services and which will allow flexibility in the project cost.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The Committee will review all proposals to determine compliance with the required elements. Proposals may be judged non-responsive and removed from further consideration if any of the following occur:

1. The proposal is not received timely in accordance with the terms of the RFP
2. The consultant does not meet the basic minimum requirements set forth in this RFP
3. The proposal does not follow the specified format and page limit

Criteria Value (%)

1. **Qualifications:** Degree to which consultant has completed similar projects or has background and expertise to complete this project. **20%**
2. **Understanding of the Project:** Degree to which the consultant understands the project, whether from experience with similar projects or from research. **20%**
3. **Approach to the Project:** Degree to which the consultant's proposed scope of work addresses the desires of Graham. **20%**
4. **Quality of Work:** Quality of the proposal and the evaluation of references from other projects done by the consultant. **20%**
5. **Personnel:** The qualifications and availability of the personnel to be assigned to the project. **20%**

TOTAL: 100%

City of Graham staff will review the proposals based on the technical criteria outlined in this RFP. A short list of consultants may be asked to make presentations. Graham will make the final selection of the consultant and award the consultant contract after all applicants have been considered.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND TIMETABLE

Proposals must be received no later than **8:00AM, Wednesday, October 31, 2018** to be eligible for consideration. Interested parties shall submit one PDF copy of their proposal to:

City of Graham

Nathan Page, Planning Director

npage@cityofgraham.com

P.O. Drawer 357 (MAIL)

201 S Main Street (DELIVERY)

Graham NC, 27253

Respondents accept all risk of late delivery of mailed responses regardless of fault. E-mailed or digitally linked submittals are accepted. The City of Graham assumes no obligations of any kind for expenses incurred by any response to this solicitation. Any questions regarding the request should be directed to Nathan Page, 336-570-6705, npage@cityofgraham.com.

It is anticipated that consultant selection and project initiation will occur based on the following schedule:

1. Review of Proposals – November 2018
2. Potential Presentations by Short-listed Firms – December 2018
3. Staff shares recommendations with City Council at monthly meeting – January 2019
4. Notice to Proceed with Study – January 2019
5. Anticipated Adoption of Downtown Master Plan by City Council – Fall 2019

Respondents to this RFP will not be discriminated against based on sex, race, creed or national origin in consideration of an award. The submitted proposal by the selected firm will become an attachment to the agreement signed by Graham and the selected firm. Price quotations and other time-dependent information must be valid for a minimum of one hundred and twenty (120) days from the closing date of this RFP. The consultant will be paid on a monthly basis upon receipt of proper invoices and progress reports. Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis for services actually performed. Ten percent of the total contract amount will be withheld pending satisfactory completion of services. The City of Graham reserves the right to reject any and all RFP submissions, to withdraw this solicitation at any time, and to award the contract to the company providing the scope of service deemed to be in the best interests of the City of Graham.

