



TITLE: Swannanoa Small Area & Recovery Plan

DATE ISSUED: April 24, 2025

DUE DATE: May 15, 2025

TIME: 2:00 PM ET

Department: Buncombe County Planning & Development

## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Pursuant to the General Statutes of North Carolina, statements of qualification will be received for the following:

### PLANNING CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE SWANNANOA SMALL AREA & RECOVERY PLAN

The Buncombe County Planning Department is seeking proposals from qualified vendors for specified tasks related to the development of the Swannanoa Small Area & Recovery Plan (hereafter referred to as 'Swannanoa Plan'), including technical expertise in recovery and resiliency planning. The Swannanoa Plan will guide future growth, development, conservation, disaster recovery, and future resilience in the Swannanoa area as a result of robust public engagement. The Swannanoa Plan will serve as both a physical plan and policy guide and will be used by elected officials and appointed boards, staff, community members, and others who are charged with making decisions that impact how Swannanoa will grow or be maintained in the future.

Statements of Qualification will be accepted until **2:00 PM ET, on May 15, 2025** for the above-named item by email to [nina.alexander@buncombecounty.org](mailto:nina.alexander@buncombecounty.org). Buncombe County encourages submittals from minority businesses by providing certified minorities an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of the RFQ process.

Request for Qualifications Authorized by:

Ron Venturella

Procurement Manager

## A. Purpose

In 2023 Buncombe County Government adopted its first long-range Comprehensive Plan, which identified several communities in need of further planning through the creation of Small Area Plans. One of those areas was the Swannanoa Corridor and historic Beacon Village. In September 2024, Tropical Storm Helene significantly impacted Western North Carolina, causing catastrophic flooding, landslides and wind damage. The Swannanoa area experienced some of the most significant impacts, particularly from flooding. As a result, the planning process for the Swannanoa Plan has been prioritized to begin in 2025.

The purpose of the planning process is for Buncombe County to complete an existing conditions study, hazard vulnerability assessment, recovery plan, and identify goals, policies, and actions for the future growth and conservation of the area. The draft Swannanoa Plan is anticipated to be adopted in September of 2026. Buncombe County's Long Range Planning Division Manager and Senior Planner will act as the Project Managers for the process.

## B. Project Area

Swannanoa, North Carolina (see also Swannanoa Township). An unincorporated area located in the eastern portion of Buncombe County, NC, between the incorporated boundaries of the City of Asheville and the Town of Black Mountain.

## C. Tentative Project Timeline

July 2025	Completion of draft Existing Conditions Study
July 2025	Project Kickoff week
August 2025	Public meeting week - Community SWOT Analysis
October 2025	Public meeting week – Vision and goal identification
December 2025	Public meeting week – Vision Map Design Charette
January 2026	Public meeting week – Policies and actions identification
April 2026	Commissioner review of vision, goals, policies, actions
May 2026	Draft Plan document complete
June 2026	Public meeting week – Feedback on draft Plan document
September 2026	Commissioner adoption of the Swannanoa Plan

## D. Project Components

The Swannanoa Plan will include an existing conditions study, hazard vulnerability assessment, recovery recommendations, and a plan for the area that incorporates resilience goals, policies, and actions. The planning process will include robust community engagement, coordination with community-led planning processes, a Technical Expertise

Committee, Steering Committee, and oversight by the County Planning Board and Board of Commissioners.

## E. Scope of Vendor Work

A Planning Consulting firm is requested to perform specific tasks to assist County staff. Consultant tasks are expected to include:

1. Attending periodic meetings with staff on process and progress. These would be held virtually if the consultant is not located in the area.
2. Reviewing and finalizing the design of public engagement polls and activities.
3. Providing recommendations on trauma-informed community engagement.
4. Providing recommendations on best practices in small area and resiliency planning.
5. Identifying options for recovery and resilience goals, policies, and actions based on the existing conditions study, hazards vulnerability assessment, Helene impact data, and public input data.
6. Identifying options for overall vision themes, goals, policies, and actions based on best practices and public input data.
7. Updating the goals, policies, and actions after the final public input phases.
8. Providing feedback on the draft Swannanoa Plan document.

## F. Proposed Contract Term: 14 months (July 1, 2025, to August 31, 2026)

## G. Submittal Requirements:

Applicants shall provide the following information in PDF format. All submittals are limited to a maximum of up to 12 pages (not including resumes or sample plans), which should be provided in the following order:

- a) Title Page to include the company name, address, phone number and authorized representative.
- b) Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your firm as it relates to the Scope of Work outlined in this document.
- c) List the names, titles, and qualifications of each of the key personnel who will be assigned to complete the Scope of Work, and briefly explain what role in the process each person will have.
- d) Identify all subcontractors you intend to use for the Scope of Work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate: (1) what products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor, and (2) what percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

- e) List at least three (3) client references (public and private) of similar size for whom you have provided services in the past three (3) years. Provide telephone numbers, emails, and contact names for references.
- f) Provide a copy or link to a plan on which the vendor completed significant work within the last two (2) years, and describe what aspects of the plan the vendor worked on. Please indicate which of the proposed key personnel assigned to the Scope of Work were involved in the plan provided.
- g) Provide information about your capacity to complete the project on time and within budget.
- h) Provide a brief overview of the vendor's experience in the areas listed below. Staff understand that vendors might not have experience in all areas.
  - a. Drafting recommendations and identifying best practices for the creation of a Small Area Plan
  - b. Working in Western North Carolina or similar mountainous communities
  - c. Land use planning in the State of North Carolina
  - d. Disaster recovery and resilience planning
  - e. Flood mitigation strategies
  - f. Regulation of steep topography
  - g. Nature based solutions for hazard mitigation
  - h. Streetscape/street activation
  - i. Adaptive reuse
  - j. Brownfields redevelopment
  - k. Greenway/pedestrian infrastructure

## H. Qualifications

Applicants will be evaluated in conjunction with the anticipated needs of the County and information provided by the applicants as well as information obtained from references, persons, or other sources identified by the applicant or otherwise known by the County. Interviews are not anticipated; however, additional information may be requested. Buncombe County may select multiple firms for the referenced work, followed by negotiations for service fees, including hourly rates and not-to-exceed amount for the projects.

The evaluation criteria to be used for vendor selection is as follows:

- Experience and Qualifications of key personnel (Section H:b and c)
- References (Section H:e)
- Innovation and Creativity based on Vendor's example projects (Section H:f)
- Capacity to complete the project on time and within budget (Section H:g)
- Related Project Experience (Section H: h)

## I. Vendor Selection Schedule

4/24/25 – County issues RFQ  
5/1/25 – Vendors submit written questions  
5/8/25 – Provide response to vendor questions  
5/15/25 – Deadline for Vendors to submit qualifications  
5/29/25 – Contract Award  
7/1/25 – Contract effective date

## J. Contact Information

Any questions about the submittal process should be directed to Nina Alexander by email [nina.alexander@buncombecounty.org](mailto:nina.alexander@buncombecounty.org). In the subject line, state, “Swannanoa Small Area & Recovery Plan RFQ Questions.”