

# **Downtown Sanford Small Area Plan**

**City of Sanford, NC**

## **Request for Qualifications**

**Please see follow up Q&A as Addendum (p.10)**

**DATE OF ISSUE: Monday, March 6, 2023**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The City of Sanford is seeking proposals from qualified professionals to prepare a Downtown Sanford Small Area Plan. This plan will serve as a comprehensive guide for development which will foster economic growth and encourage high quality land development within the Downtown Municipal Service District (MSD) and surrounding area. Downtown Sanford has an opportunity to transform itself into a burgeoning center for the City with a balanced mix of uses that will help create a better sense of place by bringing more activities around the clock, reducing single-use peak traffic, and helping create more dynamic public spaces.

Current land use designations, zoning, and other regulations, however, may be hindering an optimal land development pattern. The consultant should recommend a realistic pattern of development, with building typologies and land uses based on current market research and regional context to allow for better long-term development outcomes. The Plan should also contain acceptable ways to coordinate public actions with private investment and redevelopment/reuse decisions that help to realize a robust and attractive downtown.

### **HISTORY**

Incorporated in 1874, Sanford is named after C.O. Sanford, a railroad civil engineer instrumental in the building of the rail lines through the area that formed the foundation of what became the Downtown of the City of Sanford. As a result of the railroad, over the next few decades downtown became the epicenter of industrial manufacturing in the region. More workers meant the need for more housing which occurred primarily east of Downtown for the industrialist owners in more ornate Victorian homes while workers resided in nearby mill villages. More residents also meant the need for more goods and services in the form of commercial development focused on the streets fronting the railroad, Chatham Street on the east side and South Moore Street on the west.

That all changed in 1914 when the Wilkins-Ricks Company went outside this congested area, building a substantial brick store on South Steele Street, one block removed from the smoke and grit of the railroad. Others in the business community soon followed and shifted their attention to underdeveloped lots on Steele and Carthage streets. With the construction of US 1

completed in the early 1920s, Downtown Sanford soon became a popular stopover for an ever-growing number of motorists. Construction work on a six-story brick and limestone-faced "sky scraper", known as the Wilrik Hotel began in May 1924. The Hotel Wilrik and the equally grand Carolina Hotel, which joined it downtown in the late 1920s, catered to the travelers who streamed through Sanford on their seasonal migrations to and from Florida. As a result of economic growth, demand for quality-of-life opportunities soon followed. The Temple Theatre built in 1925 by Mr. Robert Ingram, Sr. (owner of Sanford Coca-Cola Bottling) located half a block from the railroad station became a frequent stop for the shows and the stars of vaudeville. Between the 1910s and 1940s a new type of housing consisting of bungalows, Foursquares, and "period cottages" started to fill up areas to the north, south, and west of Downtown. The portion south of Downtown was known as Wall Street, a prominent African American neighborhood consisting of black owned businesses and residences, much of which it still does today. After World War II, an automobile centric development pattern began to occur west of Endor Street (now Horner Blvd.) with gas stations, bank buildings, and medical facilities.

Downtown's prosperity continued until the 1970s, when the flight of major department stores from downtown to the newly created suburban mall occurred. Complimentary small businesses, such as soda shops, hardware stores, and theaters, which were so dependent upon the mass of people generated by the major stores, were left to flounder on their own. Pedestrian traffic grinded to a halt, businesses closed, vacancy rates soared, owners deferred maintenance on the buildings due to low rental income, buildings began to deteriorate and were boarded up, and crime and vandalism abounded. Downtown was no longer the place to be and the neighborhoods that surrounded downtown followed, as single-family homes were turned into rental housing for absentee landlords. It would take three decades for downtown to recover. Today Downtown Sanford is on the cusp of a new era of development; the Small Area Plan should be a reflection of Sanford's past while recognizing its future.

## **RECENT/UPCOMING STUDIES AND PROJECTS**

Sanford last adopted a [Downtown Master Plan](#) in 2011, primarily focused on the public realm which led to several successful implementation activities, including streetscape, off-street parking improvements, and a wayfinding signage program. More recently, the county wide "[PlanSanLee](#)" [Land Use Plan](#) was adopted in late 2018, which established broader policies and goals for Downtown. While it established a vision of development in and around Downtown at a high level, a Small Area Plan will provide more specific guidance for private land use decisions including but not limited to where restaurants & retail shops, office space, maker districts, diverse housing options, and civic uses should be located.

Another recently completed study was Sanford's [Complete Street Feasibility Study for Carthage Street/Charlotte Avenue](#) which recommended a road diet along Carthage Street/Charlotte Avenue to reduce automobile speed, add on-street parking and bike lanes, increase pedestrian safety, and beautify the streetscape. It along with other NCDOT roadway projects on the STIP ([see map](#)) will have a significant impact on downtown in the future.

Sanford may also be along the possible potential S-Line rail corridor; the S-line would link Sanford to not only the greater Raleigh region but further north the Washington D.C area. As part of the assessment process, the City in partnership with NCDOT and other communities are about to finalize a [S-Line Transit-Oriented Development Study](#) which will better prepare the participating communities in the areas of their communities near the anticipated rail stations.

In addition, the City has several special projects underway, such as the Sanford Marketplace, Microbility Hub Feasibility Study, and the Microtransit Pilot Project that should be incorporated into recommendations from the Plan. The [Sanford Marketplace](#) will be a daily venue market for the Sandhills region, selling locally grown foods and goods right in downtown. The [Microbility Hub Feasibility Study](#) will provide preliminary engineering and NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) compliance for the siting of a potential train station serving both the S-Line and Amtrak as well as surrounding infrastructure to support integrated mobility services. Last, Sanford was just awarded funding for a 3-year [Microtransit](#) Pilot Project, which will offer a subsidized flexible, on-demand transit service that will operate within a defined service zone, which includes downtown.

The Small Area Plan should synthesize these existing documents and upcoming studies/projects in its recommendations.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Downtown Sanford Small Area Boundary**

- Using the Downtown Sanford MSD as a base (see attached), determine geographic areas that should be considered in the study
- Delineate the boundaries of the Downtown Sanford Small Area Plan based upon this analysis

### **Data Analysis**

- Analyze current socio-economic data trends and projections for the determined Downtown Sanford Small Area

### **Land Use**

- Determine the existing mix of land uses within the Downtown Small Area Boundary as a benchmark for the city's evaluation of the Small Area Plan
- Illustrate the ideal near-term conceptual buildout of Downtown based upon capacity with a horizon of 20 years.
- The consultant should determine the ideal mix of land uses within the buildout including how many residential units need to be added/deleted, office square footage that needs be added/deleted, retail square footage that needs be added/deleted, and other uses as needed (i.e. hotel, institutional/art, etc.)

- The residential component should include the recommended type of housing, including but not limited to detached single family housing, townhouses, market-rate apartments, senior living, student, affordable housing units, etc.
- Identify the ideal locations of the mix of uses within the Small Area Plan
- Achievement of these figures will be used in reevaluation of the Small Area Plan in the future

### **Zoning/Enforcement**

- Identify current obstacles in zoning regulations that may be inhibiting economic investment and business expansion
- Recommend new planning tools and zoning regulatory measures that encourage and/or mandate specific uses, produce the desired physical form (including appropriate scale and building height, building typologies, setbacks, etc.), enhance the built environment, entice investment, and manage change in ways which benefit a community.

### **Urban Design**

- Introduce and recommend exterior urban design and architectural standards for new development and infill within the Downtown Small Area Plan

### **Open Space/Public Realm**

- Although the City and County have recently made improvements to the Downtown streetscape/parks and plans are underway for more improvements, the Small Area Plan should recognize the interrelationship between successful open space and buildings by advocating for more open space/public realm spaces. Where appropriate, the consultant should identify possible new street locations, multi-modal connections, infrastructure improvements, and open space, such as plazas, parklets, and sidewalks.

### **Points of Emphasis**

Besides the general scope above, the study should incorporate these key topics as well.

#### Historic District

Currently, some of the properties within the study area are regulated by a local Downtown Sanford Historic Overlay District and there is often confusion between it, the Central Business Zoning District and the Municipal Zoning District. As such, determining which architectural standards rules apply where can be confusing and deemed unfair. The Consultant should provide analysis and critique of the current local historic ordinance language versus universal design standards for all properties within Downtown MSD.

#### Hotels/Places of Assembly

The City has been approached by several parties interested in developing hotels and other large places of assembly. Subsequently, the City recently conducted a Hotel Study which indicated that Downtown could accommodate a 100-room hotel with a 500-1000 sq ft. meeting space. The consultant should explore alternative siting options for the hotel and/or large places of assembly based upon its location to complimentary land uses and availability for development.

### Parking

Currently, the City of Sanford has several off-street parking lots that provide parking to employees, residents, and the general public; however, interest in hotel facilities and other places of assembly may warrant more off-street parking. The consultant should identify other opportunities for off street parking lots to purchase or lease, and/or possibly consolidate them with already owned public lots. The consultant should then prioritize parking lot projects in order of importance based upon location, need and cost.

### Housing

Residential uses are key to supporting development in the Downtown. Redevelopment of existing properties and new infill also provides diversification of residential product type, since most of the City's existing residential inventory in and around downtown is comprised of older single-family homes and subsidized apartment complexes. Expanding residential choices will help nurture a well-balanced sustainable community; nevertheless, a development strategy that respects the integrity of the neighborhoods that surround the Downtown is a topic that will also require careful attention in the Plan.

### S-Line Rail

As alluded to earlier NCDOT is looking at Sanford as a potential rail stop for commuter rail service to Raleigh and intercity passenger service from Florida to New York. The consultant should address how Downtown can take advantage of this potential transportation investment by coordinating the findings from the S-Line Transit-Oriented Development Study and potentially the Microbility Hub Feasibility Study (if the timing coincides) along with their own analysis into an appropriate land use mix recommendation, including the desired end state as envisioned through the planning process.

### Integrating the 2 Downtowns

Finally, Downtown is bisected into two parts by the four-lane HWY 421 (Horner Blvd). The eastern section, built from the late 1900s through 1940, is primarily the traditional Downtown that people envision with buildings having zero setbacks and pedestrian friendly infrastructure while the western part of Downtown is dominated by a car-focused single-use development, a reflection of its development history since 1950. As such there is often a jarring disconnect between these two sections of Downtown not only physically but from a land use and even marketing perspective. The consultant should provide recommendations on how the City can better weave these unique districts to form a more cohesive atmosphere and vibe.

## **Outreach and Civic Engagement**

- Facilitate work sessions through stakeholder meetings, including but not limited to the Downtown Sanford Inc., Sanford Historic Commission, Sanford Appearance Commission, Sanford Parks Committee, Sanford Area Growth Alliance, and adjacent downtown neighborhood organizations.
- The submitted proposal should identify the proposed method(s) for soliciting public input and feedback on the various aspects and issues identified in the plan. The proposal should indicate the number of sessions recommended, as well as the rate if additional sessions are identified as necessary or desirable by the Department.
- The Department also desires to keep interested parties engaged with the process. The proposal should identify recommended means for communications and updates with the use of web sites, social media, and other methods.
- A minimum of bi-weekly updates, primarily via e-mail or telephone/video and occasionally in-person, to update City staff on project status, discuss issues, and review drafts.
- Public hearing presentations of Final Draft of Small Area Plan to the City of Sanford City Council and Planning Commission

## **City Responsibilities**

1. City of Sanford Long Range Planner will serve as project point of contact.
2. City will furnish readily available plans, drawings, surveys, and GIS data.
3. City will provide meeting venue for meetings and/or information gathering sessions.

## **CONTENT AND FORMAT OF QUALIFICATIONS**

The entire RFQ submittal package shall not exceed ten (10) pages (excluding previous work samples). Proposal documents should provide a straightforward, succinct description of the consultant's capabilities to complete anticipated scope of project assignments. Emphasis should be on completeness, clarity of content, and conveyance of the information requested by the Department. The requirements stated do not preclude the consultants herein from including additional reports, functions, and costs as deemed appropriate.

The submittal shall include, **but not be limited to** the following:

- 1. 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 Sanford should select your firm for this work.
- 2. Firm Profile:** The RFQ 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 resume. The profile should also clearly convey the

qualifications and experience of the consultant(s) in developing and facilitating downtown revitalization projects and/or master planning efforts.

**3. Consultant Qualification Information:** Current workload, including a list of current projects, identified by name and size and anticipated completion date.

**4. Project Manager Experience, Expertise and Commitment:** The City requires a strong project manager with extensive land use and 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 project manager 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.

**5. 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 the PDF format or website links and **do not** count towards the ten (10) page maximum for the RFQ. 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.

**6. 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 RFQ 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 Sanford. 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.

**7. 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.

**8. Familiarity with the City of Sanford and Lee County:** Please list any active relevant projects in Sanford and Lee County, North Carolina. Please list any completed relevant projects in Lee County, North Carolina within the past ten (10) years.

**9. Cost proposal Fee Schedule:** The final budget for this study has not yet been determined. For purposes of putting together your fee proposal, your proposal should include the following cost information: the lump sum project cost; a breakdown illustrating the costs of various deliverables and when those deliverables will be made during the given timetable; the number of meetings/site visits included in the project cost; and the firm's fee schedule for additional work. The Department desires a professional services contract with a not-to-exceed fee for the required services. The contract will provide for monthly billing on a time and materials basis for the services provided. Ten percent of the total contract amount will be withheld pending satisfactory completion of services. In addition, the contract will include language to allow the project to be terminated by joint agreement of the parties with full compensation being made to the consultant for the expenses incurred and work completed to termination date.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The Committee, comprised of city staff and the Director of Downtown Sanford, Inc. will review the qualifications. The Committee will review qualifications based on the technical criteria outlined in this RFQ. A short list of consultants may be asked to make presentations to the Planning Staff. The Committee will make a recommendation of the consultant prior to the final selection and award by the City Council.

## **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND TIMETABLE**

To be considered, one (1) original and four (4) copies of the proposal must be submitted. The original must be unbound. In addition, one electronic version of the proposal must be included in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. The electronic version of the proposal must be an exact copy of the original hard copy proposal. Failure to submit in the manner prescribed may cause the proposal to be rejected. The electronic version must be received by **5:00 pm on Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>**, with the subsequent hard copies by mail or hand delivery soon after:

David Montgomery  
Long Range Planning  
City of Sanford  
115 Chatham St.  
Sanford, NC 27331

Proposals arriving after the date and time will remain unopened and will be disqualified. Questions regarding the proposal may be directed by email to:

David Montgomery  
[david.montgomery@sanfordnc.net](mailto:david.montgomery@sanfordnc.net)

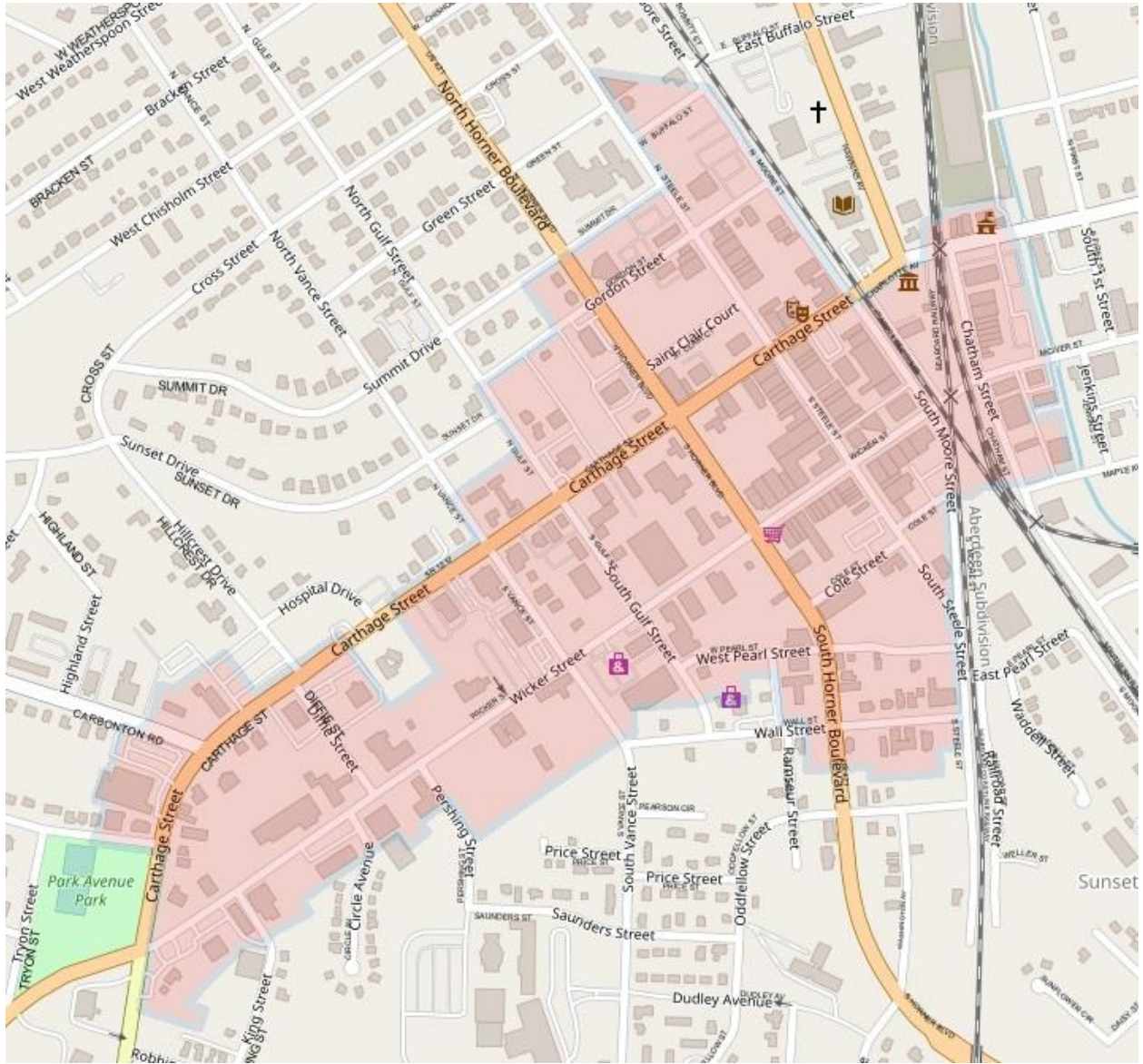
Questions must be received by **March 22nd**. All questions and answers will be posted on the City of Sanford's website <http://sanfordnc.net/> by **March 24th**.

## **RESERVATIONS**

Respondents to this RFQ 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 the City 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 RFQ. The City of Sanford reserves the right to reject any and all RFQ 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 Sanford.



# MSD MAP



## ADDENDUM

The following is the questions we received from interested parties on the Downtown Small Area Plan and the City's responses. Questions are in no particular order and some questions have been consolidated.

- Can you describe the desired level of community engagement that is anticipated, in terms of: Number of rounds of engagement, Preference for virtual, in-person, and/or hybrid events, Targeted outreach to specific community demographics

The consultant could probably handle initial stakeholder meetings with Downtown Sanford Inc., Sanford Historic Commission, Sanford Appearance Commission, Sanford Parks Committee, Sanford Area Growth Alliance in a virtual format or 1-2 hour in person increments on a designated day(s). In terms of neighborhood meetings (Rosemount McIver Park, East Sanford, Wall Street), and meetings with merchants and property owners, you should anticipate having to conduct initial night meetings for those groups.

In terms of follow up once the Rough Draft Plan is completed you should anticipate 2 drop-in sessions, one in the day and one in the evening for feedback.

- In item #3 of the Content, it indicates "list of current projects identified by names and size..." Can you please clarify what is meant by 'size'? Is this in reference to the population of the community, the budget for the project, the anticipated work hours, or something else? Anticipated work hours/load of local staff that might be involved with the Sanford project
- What is the anticipated start date for this project? Summer 2023
- Should the consultant provide the anticipated number of months to finish this project as a portion of the progress chart in Item #7 (of the Proposal content) or does the City have an anticipated timeline and/or 'project completion schedule'? Yes, the consultant should provide the anticipated number of months to finish this project as a portion of the progress chart in Item #7.
- Section 2: Firm Profile of the Content and Format of Qualifications requests resumes for each proposed team member. Do these resumes count towards the 10-page limit, or can we include them in an appendix? No, the resumes will not count towards the 10-page limit and can be included in an appendix.
- As this is a qualifications-based submittal, and the final budget has not yet been determined, would it be allowable to omit Section 9: Cost proposal Fee Schedule for this

initial submittal? Please do not omit Section 9: Cost proposal Fee Schedule. The City has allocated an initial \$75,000 for the project, but this is a placeholder. We want to get a true sense in the current environment of what a project of this scope would cost.

- Will or may this project run over two fiscal cycles to allow flexibility in funding? Possibly