

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

## **Planning Services**

### **Isothermal Bike Plan**

*(Cleveland, McDowell, Polk and Rutherford Counties)*

**Proposals due by October 3, 2016**

**Requested By:**



**Isothermal Planning & Development Commission**

**111 W. Court St.**

**P.O. Box 841**

**Rutherfordton, NC 28139**

**Posted August 31, 2016**

## OVERVIEW

The Isothermal Planning & Development Commission (IPDC) seeks the professional planning services of a qualified consultant to develop an Isothermal Regional Bicycle Plan (hereinafter “Plan” or “Project”). The Project is funded by a grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) and will be administered by IPDC. IPDC is the council of governments for North Carolina’s Region C, which is located in the western part of the State and includes the entire project area. IPDC provides technical assistance to the local governments in our region and facilitates partnerships toward regional goals. The DBPT seeks to integrate bicycle and pedestrian safety, mobility and accessibility into the overall transportation program.

The Project covers Cleveland, McDowell, Polk and Rutherford counties. The Project shall focus on transportation facilities but should also include connections to existing or potential recreational bicycle resources and other points of interest. The overall goal of the Project is to provide a framework for NCDOT and local governments to enhance bicycling as a mode of transportation for residents and visitors alike, improving access, connectivity, and safety. Additional goals may include promoting healthy active lifestyles, diversifying the regional economy, developing tourism resources, and promoting the region as a destination. The Project will identify key routes, connections, opportunities, and obstacles, and it will prioritize areas for future implementations.

**Qualified primary and/or sub-consultant firms shall be pre-qualified by the NCDOT to perform the following work: 00315 Municipal and Regional Planning Studies. A consultant or team that is not pre-qualified to perform the above work code shall be disqualified.**

## DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES REQUESTED

### a. Develop a Public Involvement Strategy

- Form a steering committee (with assistance from IPDC)
- Hold a kick-off meeting with IPDC staff, NCDOT, and the steering committee
- Organize recurring, regularly-scheduled steering committee meetings, as needed
- Host a Project website that provides up-to-date information about the Plan and serves as a method for receiving input from the public. Infographics, maps, brochures, meeting materials and the Plan will be posted on the website
- Develop an instrument to evaluate resident and visitor perceptions on destinations, obstacles and opportunities for bicyclists
- Develop an online survey to determine the area’s general needs and concerns surrounding bicycling and walking in the region
- Hold at least 8 public open house meetings (minimum of two in each county in the study area) with presentations, handouts and/or displays to assist with public communication, understanding and input
- Codify and summarize all the comments from the public engagement sessions

- Conduct at least four final public meetings (one in each county in the study area) for adoption of the Final Regional Bicycle Plan by all four county governing boards. Additional meetings may be needed if municipalities or MPOs/RPOs within the study area also wish to adopt the Plan
- The consultant will present the Final Plan to the RPO's Transportation Advisory Committee for endorsement and/or approval

**b. Develop the Regional Bicycle Plan**

- The Plan should be loosely based on the NCDOT template found at <https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrant/Documents/Full%20Template%20for%20Bicycle%20and%20Pedestrian%20Plans.pdf>. However the Plan should be tailored to the Isothermal region and include sections specific to each of the counties. A modified outline should be presented to the IPDC, NCDOT, and the steering committee for approval prior to developing the Plan
- Existing conditions analysis – inventory and analysis of existing planning efforts, conditions (facilities, roadway characteristics, barriers, etc.), programs, and policies
- Conduct a suitability analysis of existing road infrastructure for bicyclists using research-backed criteria. As examples, this may include AADT, percent truck traffic and/or paved shoulder width.
- Review development standards of various jurisdictions in the region and develop model municipal code and policy language for elements including complete streets, bicycle parking, and safe routes to schools, enabling the region to maximize bicycle/pedestrian improvements in conjunction with new development, redevelopment, and corridor improvements
- Collect and summarize information on local, regional, state, and federal legislation relevant to bicycle and pedestrian funding, regulation/enforcement, and implementation.
- Review of the area's Comprehensive Plan policies to determine if existing policies adequately provide for the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the region
- Collect and prepare maps including, at a minimum, the following GIS layers: bike facilities (bike lanes, etc.), sidewalks, greenways/multi-use paths, ADA compliant points, proposed infrastructure, crashes, AADT, priority areas of need, and traffic attributes. IPDC can assist with providing existing GIS data layers, as needed
- Identify gaps and analyze areas of potential interconnectivity in the region and within certain municipal jurisdictions
- Provide discussion of the economic and health impacts of providing an interconnected biking system in the Isothermal Region

**c. Coordination and Reporting**

- Provide monthly reports to the IPDC to summarize Project progress, potential obstacles, and upcoming activities. Include update on schedule and budget
- Meet at least monthly with the IPDC staff, either on-site or via phone, to ensure the Project is proceeding in a manner consistent with the requested services

- Meet with IPDC staff prior to all steering committee meetings and public meetings to review materials and information to be presented

**d. Deliverables**

- Meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes and other meeting materials (maps, presentations, handouts, displays, etc...)
- Digital copies of all maps in ArcGIS (MXD) (map package) format, all collected data, and all newly created data, which must adhere to NCDOT-DBPT geodatabase format with metadata included
- Ten bound hard copies of the Comprehensive Isothermal Regional Bicycle Plan plus one copy for each adopting municipality (not all in the study area are expected to adopt), to be bound and printed on 8.5x11 paper with 11x17 fold-out maps as well as additional 8.5x11 maps of detailed areas as needed with an executable table of contents suitable for digital distribution
- The Final Regional Bicycle Plan should include the following elements:
  - 1) A Project list with planning-level cost options for the top projects. The list will include detailed information on costs, design, and scope
  - 2) Design guidelines toolkit for bicycle and pedestrian signage, streetscape features, ADA requirements, crosswalks, etc...
  - 3) Implementation matrix and action plan highlighting the best practices and strategic approaches to address the elements and recommendations within the Plan
- A minimum of five supplemental brochure-style documents, one for the entire study area and one each for Cleveland, McDowell, Polk and Rutherford counties providing route maps, distance between destinations, and educational information, suitable for public distribution
- Ten copies of each of the supplemental brochure-style documents plus one copy for each adopting municipality (not all in the study area are expected to adopt). Print-ready electronic files of the supplemental documents should also be provided, prepared with Adobe Illustrator or similar professional level software for optimal printing quality and manipulation
- Two digital media devices containing a catalogue of all electronic files used to produce the Plan, including a fully assembled, bookmarked pdf version of the final Isothermal Regional Bicycle Plan, all Microsoft Office files, image files, and ESRI Version 10.0 or higher geodatabase layers containing all geographic data compiled and created
- A project website maintained regularly and containing all relevant documents, meetings, dates, etc.

**PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS**

**a. Deadline**

Proposals must be received by 5:00 PM eastern time on October 3, 2016.

**b. Submittal Instructions**

Four copies of the proposal should be mailed or delivered to:

**Isothermal Planning & Development Commission**

**ATTN: Karyl Fuller**

**P.O. Box 841/111 W. Court Street**

**Rutherfordton, NC 28139**

**c. Project Contact**

The point of contact for the Project is Karyl Fuller, Senior Planner for IPDC. Prospective applicants may make inquiries to obtain clarification of the requirements contained in this Request for Proposals (RFP). All inquiries must be submitted in writing by email to the following address: [kfuller@regionc.org](mailto:kfuller@regionc.org) .

**d. Proposal Format**

Proposals should be limited to 25 numbered pages. Please include a cover letter that identifies a contact person and all contact information. The following format is not required but is encouraged to provide consistency between proposals, aiding in evaluation and comparison. If the format is modified please include the following information at a minimum.

- 1) Project Approach** Describe your team’s approach to successfully delivering the Project. Provide details on how each task will be completed. Include any recommendations for maximizing effectiveness and efficiency.
- 2) Relevant Project Experience** Provide a summary of your experience with similar projects, including location and client contact information. Specify the services provided, the office location from which the work was performed, and staff members’ responsibilities. Web links to recent plans and past work, if available, may be included in addition to Project summaries.
- 3) Project Team** Provide an organizational chart identifying all staff assigned to the Project, including any sub-contractors, defining roles, responsibilities, and task assignments of each member for the duration of the Project.
- 4) Qualifications of Personnel** Provide relevant experience and qualifications of all personnel assigned to the Project.
- 5) Scope of Work** Provide an outline for keeping the Project on schedule and within budget. Include projected workloads and staff availability, as well as a projected schedule for completion of significant milestones and the draft and final Plan.
- 6) References** Provide contact information for at least three references for clients familiar with your work.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals should address all aspects of the RFP and clearly express an understanding of the requirements and qualifications to conduct these services in a thorough and efficient manner. Evaluation of proposals will be performed by IPDC and NCDOT. Proposals will be evaluated on the firm’s ability to meet the requirements of this RFP. Some evaluation criteria, among other factors, will include:

1. Project approach and demonstrated understanding of the goals for the Plan
2. Familiarity with and understanding the nature and challenges of the region and stakeholders
3. Creative approaches for products that can be easily updated and utilized after the completion of the Project
4. Qualifications and availability of staff assigned to the Project

Candidate firms may be asked to present their proposal to IPDC staff before the final selection is made. Final selection and contracting will be subject to approval by IPDC and NCDOT.

**NOTE: Qualified primary and/or sub-consultant firms shall be pre-qualified by the NCDOT to perform the following work: 00315 Municipal and Regional Planning Studies. A consultant or team that is not pre-qualified to perform the above work code shall be disqualified.**

### TENTATIVE PROJECT SCHEDULE

In order to ensure high-quality products, adequate time for review and revisions will be scheduled and included in the contractual agreement. All meeting materials (maps, presentations, handouts, displays, etc.) will be submitted for review prior to scheduled meetings. The Draft Regional Bicycle Plan will be due approximately 14 months of Notice to Proceed, and the Final Regional Bicycle Plan and all deliverables will be due within 19 months of Notice to Proceed. Timelines for reviews and revisions will be detailed in the contractual agreement. The following schedule is provided as a guideline only.

August 31, 2016	Request for Proposals advertised
October 3, 2016	Proposals due to IPDC
October 2016	Selection and Contracting
November 2016	Notice to Proceed
Winter 2016/17	Public Open House Series I
Spring 2017	Public Open House Series II
December 2017	Draft Regional Bicycle Plan due
April 2018	Preliminary Final Regional Bicycle Plan due
June 2018	Final Regional Bicycle Plan due

### ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- a. All proposals become the property of IPDC upon submission and will only be returned at IPDC's option. Any restrictions on the use of the data contained within must be clearly stated in the Proposal itself
- b. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a Proposal is the sole expense of the consultant. IPDC is not liable for any costs prior to issuance of a signed contract
- c. IPDC reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals, to consider alternatives, to waive irregularities and to re-solicit a Request for Proposals
- d. IPDC reserves the right to cancel the RFP in part or in its entirety. This solicitation of Proposals in no way obligates IPDC to award a contract
- e. IPDC makes no guarantees to any proposing firm until such time IPDC approves the negotiated contract
- f. IPDC will provide information and assistance in this Project where available. IPDC will be the primary point of contact with all county and municipal governments

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

IPDC complies with all civil rights provisions of federal statutes and related authorities that prohibit discrimination in programs and activities receiving federal and state financial assistance. Therefore, IPDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, national origin, religion or disability, in the admission, access to and treatment in IPDC's programs and activities.