



## Community and Economic Development

602 West Ridgeway Street

Warrenton, NC 27589

(PH) 252-257-3115 (FX) 252-257-1083

---

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Warren County Comprehensive Development Plan (2023-2043)

August 9, 2021

---

STATEMENT OF NEED .....	2
BACKGROUND .....	2
PROPOSAL SUMMARY .....	3
SCOPE OF SERVICES .....	4
THE PROCESS .....	4
DESIRED PLAN ELEMENTS .....	4
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DELIVERABLES .....	6
EVALUTATION CRITERIA .....	6
LEAD & SPONSORING AGENCIES .....	7
PRELIMINARY TIMELINE .....	8
REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION AND INFORMATION .....	8
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS .....	8
VENDOR CERTIFICATION .....	9
COUNTY CONDITIONS .....	9

## STATEMENT OF NEED

Warren County is seeking proposals from qualified consulting firms to prepare a Comprehensive Development Plan (2023-2043). The County intends to interview consultants before negotiating a contract for the project with the selected firm. Qualified firms will be capable of providing professional services including research, analysis, mapping, public engagement and visioning, and document preparation. Qualified firms will design a methodology based largely in public engagement.

The existing Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Warren County-2022) was adopted in 2002 with few updates since. There have been significant changes to the area since then, including the implementation of countywide zoning in 2019.

The Comprehensive Development Plan (2023-2043) will be forward thinking and will align with the County's values and strategic goals; it will address anticipated growth in a way that preserves community character, takes a community-minded and strategic approach to economic development, and recognizes the County's natural assets. The Comprehensive Development Plan will be functional and intentional and will provide tools for the County to make strategic investments and plan for the next twenty years with implementation broken down by short-, intermediate-, and long-term strategies.

## BACKGROUND

With a population of approximately 20,000, Warren County has experienced an increase in building permits for new construction as well as an influx of solar farms as of 2015 and several proposed projects in 2020 and 2021 that have generated great interest and concern from surrounding communities to those proposed projects.

Warren County is in the north/northeast area of North Carolina at the border with Virginia; within an hour's drive of Raleigh (55 miles), Durham (58 miles), only 99 miles from Richmond and 205 miles from Washington, DC. Interstate 85, a major north/south transportation route, bisects the County in the north/northwest area providing major highway access for commercial and commuter travel. The nearest major international airport is in Raleigh (Raleigh-Durham International), 60 miles south, and there is a spur of the CSX rail line from Vance County.

The geographic characteristics of Warren County according to the U.S. Census Bureau, has it encompassing a total area of 444 square miles (1,149 km<sup>2</sup>). This includes 429 square miles (1,110 km<sup>2</sup>) of land area and 15 square miles (39 km<sup>2</sup>) of its area covered by water (3.40%) with major surface waters including Lake Gaston, Kerr Lake, and an extensive hydrologic system of creeks and streams (part of the Roanoke River and Tar-Pamlico River Basins). Topography is classified as having rolling hills, moderately steep slopes along water drainage-ways, and an average elevation of 451 feet above sea level.

Identified as rural, Warren County has three incorporated towns: Warrenton (county seat), Norlina, and Macon; the County's population lives in communities no larger than 1,500 people (inclusive of the three incorporated municipalities). Historically, the main source of revenue for its economy is agriculture, even with the advent of technology-related industry and the outgrowth of development from the Raleigh-Durham area. With development from the Raleigh-

Durham area, both from the south (near Franklin County) and north (lake areas of Kerr Lake and Lake Gaston) moving closer to Warren County the County Commissioners have moved forward to update the County Comprehensive Development Plan, which was adopted in 2002 (from its original adoption in 1976) and again to review the County's resources and needs to update the plan again as of 2021. In doing so, this will serve to ensure that development occurs in a manner that best benefits the County, as well protecting it from the negative effects of development such as overburdened infrastructure and damage to natural resources.

## PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The intent of this RFP is to enable Warren County to evaluate vendor experience, qualifications, and capabilities for developing and implementing a countywide comprehensive development plan. Through active citizen involvement, it is the County's desire to engage a firm that will allow us to plan for new growth in a thoughtful manner that will preserve the character of the County's rural areas, while allowing for sustainable new growth. Below are a few examples of the larger themes that Warren County seeks to address in this plan:

- I. Identifying target growth areas and encouraging investment in targeted areas
- II. Creating sustainable infrastructure, to possibly include any and all of the following:
  - Transportation/connectivity, water and sewer, schools and government facilities, broadband in unserved areas, natural gas
- III. Highest and best use of land
  - Community input on types of growth needed and desired
  - Growth management techniques
    - Illustrate County cost to revenue ratio for each type of development: residential, commercial, recreational, agricultural, and industrial
    - Promoting development that maximizes existing and proposed infrastructure improvements
- IV. Overall vision and design
  - Protecting the County's natural environment
    - Analyzing economic impact of the County's natural impact and the future impact of conservation efforts vs. development efforts
    - Parks, trails, and open space to enhance resource planning and protection.
    - Develop a plan to enhance the current zoning districts and improve to a more current format/content.
    - Develop a plan to create a Unified development Ordinance (UDO) that includes all County land use ordinances into one document.
    - Encouraging developments that promote healthy lifestyles
  - Transit-oriented development for future S-Line corridor
  - Bolstering municipalities and commercial hubs/downtowns
  - Economic Development
    - Identify areas for target housing/residential growth
    - Identify growth opportunities for the outdoor economy

- Incorporation of economic and tourism/agritourism development plans
- Identify unmet needs in zoning ordinances and code enforcement to meet future trends in economic development
- Ensuring all areas within Warren County have appropriate opportunities and qualities of life

## SCOPE OF SERVICES

### THE PROCESS

The consultant will work with County planning staff to modify the work schedule and timeline. The consultant will work with County staff to ensure that the development plan process methodology includes public engagement. The consultant will assist in the organizing of the Steering Committee; will facilitate all meetings, provide data, mapping and analyzes on all topics; and will assist the Steering Committee in developing strategic recommendations; the selected consultant will develop a draft plan for review and revision by the Steering Committee. The consultant and the Steering Committee will finalize the Comprehensive Development Plan and submit it to the Planning Board and Warren County Board of Commissioners for comment and subsequent adoption. The implementation process will then begin by County Staff.

Should the Committee receive no responses to this RFP or no responses considered to be reasonable, the Committee will contact no less than three firms in which it believes has competency and capabilities to perform the expected scope of services. The contacted firms will be provided an opportunity to submit a response from which the committee will select the most qualified candidate firm.

### DESIRED PLAN ELEMENTS

- Background
  - History, preferably coordinated with local resources, including settlement patterns and historic sites; will also provide history on important, significant, and relevant movements in the community (i.e. economic justice/PCB movement, the Soul City project, etc.)
- Community profile
  - Existing and projected demographic and socio-economic profile and anticipated impacts (including aging populations and related service provision).
  - Evaluation of existing housing stock by type, age, size, value, etc.
  - Housing affordability, accessibility, choice, and communities.
  - Profile of existing employment base, by type.
  - Profile of existing nonresidential development by type, age, value, etc.
  - Profile of potential residential recruits.
  - Comparisons with other communities in the region, North Carolina, and U.S.
  - Public health considerations – aging population, mobility, obesity.
  - Coordination with Warren County Schools.
  - Public Safety – incorporation and review of hazard mitigation plans.

- Public utilities/infrastructure
  - An evaluation of existing public utilities, including privately-owned public wastewater utilities.
  - An analysis of septic and sewer capacity as it pertains to the growth of the County.
  - Water systems planning in terms of local priorities, development patterns, and regional water supply plans.
  - Description of municipal systems and recommendations for future infrastructure planning.
  - An analysis of broadband infrastructure needs for both commercial and housing development.
- Land use
  - Evaluation of existing land use policies and regulations.
  - Development of current and future land use maps.
  - Review of adjoining jurisdictions' land development plans.
  - Identification of high growth zones and area-specific land use recommendations.
- Economic development
  - Conduct area planning around Triangle North Warren location
  - Focus on I-85 growth opportunities
- Agriculture
  - Analysis of County food systems, including food deserts.
  - Suitable soil and water resources evaluation.
  - Develop a growth strategy consistent with the County's significant agricultural base.
  - Develop a Strategic Farmland Map that will assist in identifying areas for farmland protection.
  - Incorporates locations of Voluntary Ag Districts
- Capital improvement/County facilities  
Consistency with the County's adopted Capital Improvement Plan and a recommended incorporation strategy.
- Parks and recreation
  - Assessment of associated plans and recommendation for coordinating greenway and park development within the County, municipalities, and state park facilities.
  - Review of regional parks and greenway plans.
- Environment
  - Description of Warren County's environmental resources including land quality, vegetation, hydrology, soils, and geology.
  - Water resource review and incorporation of regional water resource planning documents.
  - Review of air quality and water quality standards. Review current water quality health status and impaired waters.
  - Identification of natural areas and wildlife habitats of the County.
  - Mindfulness of Warren County's environmental history with the PCB protests of the 1980's.
- Transportation/mobility
  - Incorporation of existing plans and North Carolina Department of Transportation plans.

- Multimodal transportation considerations, including linear parks and greenways, as well as equestrian.
- Coordination of regional transportation plans and consideration for regional issues and impacts.
- Incorporates location related to regional airports, and even possibly looks at past use of the airport in Warren County.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DELIVERABLES

Comprehensive Development Plan deliverables to include (but not limited to):

- Questionnaires, maps (to be coordinated with County staff), progress reports, and other tools for community involvement, including an internet component to disseminate information and solicit community input and comments throughout the process.
- Coordination and facilitation of initial public meetings, including community visioning, and public hearing on final draft before the Board of Commissioners.
- Final plan document including appropriate goals, objectives, implementation strategies, maps, illustrations, and all necessary background information and appendices.
- Action plans for integrating the implementation strategies into ongoing planning, evaluation, and budgeting processes for both capital and operating budgets.

## EVALUTATION CRITERIA

Submitted responses will be based on qualifications and experiences creating comprehensive development plans and regulatory/implementation frameworks of plans. Responses should include a list of people or agencies that have first-hand knowledge of you or your company's ability to perform in projects similar to the project proposed by Warren County.

The following criteria will be considered in evaluation of the submittal and the recommendation of consultants by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee:

- Capabilities and previous experience in comparable projects and specialized experience and technical competence of the consultant.
- The firm's general approach and demonstrated understanding of the project. Although the County has identified the general nature of services required, the consultant is given leeway toward the approach to the methodology to provide the proposed services.
- Evaluation of past projects with special attention paid to projects conducted with local government and municipalities. Factors evaluated include quality of work, cost control, and demonstrated ability to meet scheduled deadlines. Ability of the firm to meet the project schedule and remain within the budget will also be evaluated.
- Capacity of the candidate to perform the work in a timely manner and affirmatively respond to the inquiries and schedule of the County and dedicate the appropriate personnel as the schedule dictates.

- Familiarity with Warren County. The firm would need to understand existing conditions/local context.
- Qualifications of individuals who will have direct involvement in tasks on this project.
- Examples of graphics and facilitation tools or techniques that will be used, including experience facilitating with highly engaged citizens in rural and developing communities.
- A detailed description of proposed sessions and expected outcomes for participants
- Ability to offer a creativity/willingness to be innovative with solutions that equip Warren County with sound policies for managing future growth/development while preserving our rural assets.
- Firm's efforts to employ small businesses, woman-owned businesses, and minority-owned businesses in sub-contracting efforts.

The following weights are assigned to evaluation components; the steering committee will use these weights as a guide in their evaluation of RFP submissions.

Proposed work plan (including general approach and methodology): **30** points

Plan for public engagement: **25** points

Qualifications, capacity, and experience: **20**

Fee proposal: **25**

## LEAD & SPONSORING AGENCIES

Warren County Community & Economic Development staff will serve as the project lead from a contractual standpoint and a project management standpoint, but the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will play a large role in the leadership that guides that development of the study, along with the Board of Commissioners and Planning Board.

All submissions will be reviewed by a 10-member Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. This committee includes (but is not limited to):

- County Manager
- Director (1) and Assistant Director of Community & Economic Development (1)
- Director of Public Utilities (1)
- 1 members of the Planning Board
- 1 member of the Economic Development Advisory board
- 1 member of the Board of Adjustments
- 1 member of the Historic Preservation Commission
- Director *or* Assistant Director of Community Services (1)
- Director of Emergency Services (1)

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will be formed by County Community & Economic Development staff.

## PRELIMINARY TIMELINE

This project is intended to be completed within 8 months of the finalization of a contract and notice to proceed is issued.

The County anticipates the following timetable for the completion of the Comprehensive Development Plan with key dates noted below. A final schedule will be adopted as part of the contract between the County and the firm chosen to prepare the plan.

Warren County must adopt a comprehensive plan or land-use plan by July 1, 2022 to maintain zoning per NC G.S. 160D-501(a); the County must adopt a plan or a plan update following the procedures used for a legislative decision per G.S. 160D-501(c).

Action	Date
RFP issued	August 9, 2021
RFP responses due	September 10, 2021 by 5 pm
Firms short-listed	September 17, 2021
Firm interviews	September 20-24 2021
Selection of firm	September 27, 2021
Contract approval by the Warren County Board of Commissioners	October 4, 2021
Project start	October 2021
Project completion	June 2022

## REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION AND INFORMATION

Warren County Community and Economic Development Department

Charla Duncan, Director and Senior Assistant to the County Manager  
([charladuncan@warrencountync.gov](mailto:charladuncan@warrencountync.gov))

252-257-3115

## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The County is requesting proposals be in no later than **September 10, 2021 at 5:00 PM** to the address below and with the following requirements:

- No more than 20-pages, single-sided (Project Approach)
- 10 hard copies

- 1 electronic copy by email
- Additional, generic information (such as brochures) about your firm may be submitted as background information

**Warren County Community and Economic Development Department**

**ATTN: Charla Duncan, Director and Senior Assistant to the County Manager**  
([charladuncan@warrencountync.gov](mailto:charladuncan@warrencountync.gov))

**602 W. Ridgeway Street**

**Warrenton, NC 27589**

## VENDOR CERTIFICATION

The submittals shall be deemed a representation and certification that the proposing vendor:

1. Has carefully read and fully understands the information provided by Warren County in this RFP;
2. Is financially solvent and has the capability to successfully undertake and complete the responsibilities and obligations of the proposal submitted;
3. Represents that all of the information contained in the submittals is true and correct;
4. Did not in any way collude or conspire with any other parties, directly or indirectly, in regard to the amount, terms, or conditions of this submittal;
5. Acknowledges that Warren County has the right to make any inquiry it deems appropriate to substantiate or supplement information provided by submitting vendors and hereby grants Warren County permission to make these inquiries; and
6. Acknowledges that any proposal cannot be modified after its submission for any reason.

## COUNTY CONDITIONS

All submitting firms or individuals shall comply with all conditions, requirements, and specifications contained herein, with any departure constituting sufficient cause for rejection of the submittal. However, Warren County reserves the right to change the conditions, requirements, and specifications as it deems necessary.

1. The submittal must be signed by a duly authorized official of the proposing organization or individual making submittal.
2. No submittals will be accepted from any person or organization that is in arrears for any obligation to Warren County, or that otherwise may be deemed irresponsible or unresponsive by County staff or the Warren County Board of Commissioners.
3. Warren County is not obligated to enter into any contract as a result of the RFP.

4. All prices quoted must be firm for a period of 90 (ninety) days following the submittal deadline.
5. Warren County reserves the right to reject any and all submittals or any part thereof and to select the most responsive submittal that is deemed in the best interest of Warren County.
6. Only one submittal can be awarded as the result of the RFP.
7. Warren County may approve or disapprove the use of specific proposed subcontractors in any proposals.
8. Warren County reserves the right to enter into an agreement with another submitting vendor in the event that the originally selected vendor fails to execute a contract with the County or defaults on their contract.
9. All submittals shall be prepared in a comprehensive manner as to content, but we do not require specific types of binders or promotional material for submissions. Promotional material will not be considered part of the submittal and will not affect the evaluation of submittals.
10. Warren County reserves the right to negotiate with any, none, or all of the submitting vendors.
11. All costs, including travel and expenses, incurred in the preparation of this submittal will be borne solely by the submitting company.
12. The County will not return submittal materials.
13. No agreements with any selected vendor shall be binding until a contract is signed and executed by the County Manager and authorized representatives of the vendor.