



**Request for Qualifications:
County of Camden Comprehensive Plan**

County of Camden 330 East Hwy 158
PO Box 190
Camden, NC 27921

RFQ Release Date: April 9, 2025
RFQ Due Date: May 9, 2025

Purpose

The County of Camden (further referred to as “the County”) is soliciting Statements of Qualifications for services from qualified firm(s) or a team offering comprehensive planning, future land use map planning services. The County desires to have a well-organized comprehensive plan, which will include a future land use map identifying key areas for focused development and an updated future land use map. The plan should be developed out of extensive and innovative public engagement opportunities. It should be forward thinking and address the anticipated growth without compromising the community character, foster economic development, and recognize and build upon the County’s rural character and agricultural economy. The plan document should be well-organized, succinct, and easily understood by citizens and property owners.

The County will select a qualified multi-disciplinary planning team based on proven excellence in completing projects that involve the following elements:

- Comprehensive Planning
- Land-use Planning and Design
- Land Conservation
- Placemaking

The top firm should have experience with involving the public, including but not limited to, holding public meetings, using social media and online tools and surveys, applying public facilitation techniques, and other innovative, creative, and effective engagement methods. The top firm should also have experience in communicating alternatives and recommendations through visual tools, such as Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, or InDesign or other graphic design software.

The Community

Camden County, North Carolina is a rural County with a strong agricultural economy located in the northeast part of North Carolina. The County is bordered to the north by the Commonwealth of Virginia, Currituck County to the east, Pasquotank and Gates Counties to the west, and the Albemarle Sound to the south. No formally incorporated municipalities are located in Camden County. To that end, the County incorporated in 2006 and is the only County to have done so in North Carolina. The County has three historic townships creating small community centers in the north, mid-county, and the south. They are South Mills, Camden, and Shiloh. The County consists of approximately 150,557 acres or 242 square miles. The Dismal Swamp State Park and the Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge cover a large land area in the north part of the County and contain the Dismal Swamp Canal. The North River Game Land covers large swaths of land in the southern portion of the County.

Although outside the state borders, Camden County’s economy draws from the Hampton Roads region. As part of the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Statistical Area, the County has experienced intense growth pressures over the last twenty years. The 2020 Census indicated a population of 10,355 and the 2023 population estimate was 11,137. The County’s primary north-south corridor is NC HWY 343, and the County is bisected by HWY 158 running east-west. There is approximately 9.5 miles of US HWY 17 (Future I-87) that carries traffic in the northern part of the County.

The current land uses in the County include agriculture, detached single family homes and subdivisions of the same, a modest commercial presence, and a small industrial park on US HWY 17. The County has two wastewater treatment plants, an RO plant, and three convenience sites for solid waste. There are two volunteer fire departments, a sheriff’s office, and EMS in the County as well.

Camden County has a commission-manager form of government. There are five commissioners, one from each township and two at-large seats.

Existing Planning Documents

The County has adopted the following planning and land use documents:

- 2035 Camden County Comprehensive Plan
- 2019 Unified Development Ordinance
- Camden County Future Land Use Map
- Camden County US Hwy 17 Corridor Plan
- Camden County Transportation Plan
- South Mills Small Area Plan
- Camden County Storm Water Utility Business Plan
- Camden County Stormwater Drainage Design Manual

Expectations of the Consultant & Scope of Work

It is the County's expectation that the selected consultant will utilize their experience and drive this process. The County is expecting a complete draft of a Comprehensive Plan inclusive of recommendations and updates. The respondent shall submit a proposed general process for the project using past experience and best practices in similarly sized or situated communities. Interagency coordination will be required. Coordination with other affected public agencies including, but not limited to, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the State Parks, and the Albemarle Regional Planning Organization will be the responsibility of the selected consultant with assistance from staff. Once a contract has been approved by the County's Board of Commissioners, key County personnel will be available for input, consultation, inquiry, and review of all aspects of the planning effort. It is not envisioned that County staff will be directly responsible for any work elements other than those specifically described herein.

Thus, the County will require the expectations outlined below be met and identified within the consultant's statement of qualifications in response to this RFQ. The final scope of work will be coordinated with the County staff and the selected consultant.

1. Services to be performed by the Consultant

- a. Overview and Existing Information Review
 - i. Meet with the County staff members to collect and review available information and the methodology to be utilized in the development of the Comprehensive Plan, including any existing plans, projects, studies and agreements, as well as any additional information that may influence or impact the planning process.
- b. Data Collection and Analysis
 - i. The Consultant shall analyze historic, current, and projected data pertaining but not limited to: housing, population, employment, economic indicators, and land use statistics. Data should be organized by five-year increments and be used by the consultant to identify major characteristics and shifts that will affect the County during the planning horizon.
- c. Citizen Participation
 - i. A detailed citizen participation process shall be proposed by the consultant that is patterned after successful experiences the respondent had in prior plans they have prepared. The proposed approach should be very inclusive and incorporate innovative approaches to drawing diverse groups and ideas into the planning process. The respondent will be an integral part of the citizen participation process and will be expected to attend and participate in all meetings.
 - ii. The citizen participation process may involve multiple approaches including, but not limited to: leadership interviews, community meetings, use of print and social media, and online communication.
 - iii. The goals of the Citizen Participation task are to:

1. Educate involved parties about the Comprehensive Plan's role and importance to the community.
 2. Disseminate information to interested and involved parties.
 3. Provide effective and efficient mechanisms for gathering public input on various issues.
 4. Engage the community and build consensus throughout all phases of the planning process.
- d. Goals and Objectives
 - i. The consultant shall develop a comprehensive and concise set of goals and objectives to guide decisions during the planning period.
 - e. Future Land Use Plan
 - i. The consultant shall evaluate the current land use and shall make recommendations for a new Land Use Plan map.
 - f. Impacts of Regional Growth
 - i. The consultant shall review regional growth and offer recommendations for the County.
- 2. Implementation**
- a. Specific strategies shall be proposed that detail the resources and actions necessary to implement any recommendations made to the Plan. The consultant shall recommend actions to maximize the benefits and minimize negative reactions to the preferred development pattern. The respondent shall propose strategies to address the findings and recommendations of the various project tasks. All recommended implementation strategies shall be prioritized and presented in a format that can easily be tracked and updated.
- 3. Deliverables**
- a. The County expects several deliverables during the course of this project, as opposed to one deliverable being produced in the form of a single, final document at the end of the process. Deliverables will be both digital and hard-copy in format. The content of these deliverables will be determined during contract negotiation.
- 4. Timeline Requirements**
- a. The work shall be completed in a reasonable amount of time to provide for thorough public involvement, but not so long that the County misses opportunities to implement the goals and strategies of the plan.
- 5. Reporting and Communication**
- a. The Consultant will meet periodically during the on-site field work process with the County Manager, Planning Director, Planning Staff, and members of the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners to discuss issues, concerns, preliminary findings and recommendations.
 - b. The consultant will provide regular updates to the County regarding process on the analyses and recommendations and request any additional information or direct needs to complete the project on time and within budget.
 - c. Prior to publishing the final report, the consultant will meet with the County Manager, Planning Director, Planning staff, members of the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners to review the draft report and recommendations to be presented to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners for consideration and adoption.
- 6. Other Considerations**
- a. All working papers, reports, and records relating to the work performed under the Professional Services Agreement will be property of the County of Camden and will be delivered upon completion. This includes passwords to any social media accounts created as part of the engagement efforts.
 - b. The consultant will be required to attend at least two Planning Board meetings and Board of Commissioners meetings to present the Comprehensive Plan and answer any questions either body may have regarding the study or recommendations.

Statement Content

Responses must adhere to the requirements outlined in this section. The original statement of qualifications and each subsequent copy must be submitted on paper, properly bound, and appropriately labeled in the following order:

1. **Introduction:** Please provide a cover letter and introduction including the name and address of the organization with the name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the contact person who will be authorized to make representations for the organization. An Executive Summary shall be provided with an overview of the statement of qualifications, its highlights, and the approach to successfully completing this project.
2. **Project Approach:** Please provide a description of the approach to developing Camden's Comprehensive Plan the consultant would undertake to meet the County's expectations of a consultant and the plan, as well as a thorough task plan that addresses the scope of services.
3. **Innovative Techniques or Methodology:** Please provide a discussion of any innovative techniques or methodology that the consultant will use in this study that have a proven history of providing responsive and cost-effective results on similar studies.
4. **Scope of Work and Schedule:** Please discuss each task outlined in the "Expectations of the Consultant & Scope of Work" section above. Include a scope of work and schedule of completion.
5. **Qualifications:** Please describe the firm's resources, experience and capabilities as follows:
 - a. Provide an outline of the firm's background, qualifications, and ability to perform the scope of services required. Identify any sub-contractors proposed for the project.
 - b. Provide a list and/or organizational chart to identify the person(s) who will be primarily responsible for contact with the County.
 - c. Identify all key project personnel, their relationship to the project, relevant qualifications and experience, and their level of effort toward completing all needed tasks. Include a description of specific projects similar to this request and the specific task performed by the project personnel.
 - d. Provide a brief outline of the firm's current workload, staffing and ability to meet the schedule and deadlines described in this RFQ.
6. **References:** Please provide at least three (3) successfully completed projects of a similar nature, preferably with at least (1) of the references being with municipalities in North Carolina. Each project listed shall include the name of the agency, project manager, phone number, and description of work performed. Consulting projects currently underway may be submitted for consideration.

Submittal Requirements

To be considered, please submit ten (10) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy via electronic delivery of your qualifications to:

County of Camden
Attn: Erin Burke
330 East Hwy 158
PO Box 190
Camden, NC 27921

The electronic copy can be emailed to eburke@camdencountync.gov

Qualifications (hard copies and an electronic copy) must be received by **12:00 PM EST May 9, 2025**.

Statements of qualifications that are late or incomplete will not be considered. Firms accept all risks for late delivery of qualifications regardless of fault.

Questions regarding this request may be directed to Erin Burke, County Manager:
eburke@camdencountync.gov

Method of Evaluation

A Selection Committee (Committee), comprised of elected and appointed officials and County staff, will be formed. The Committee will review and identify the firm(s) that have satisfied the requirements of the RFQ and have the qualifications that best fulfill the County’s needs. All statements of qualifications will be afforded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion and revision. Any such modification may be permitted after submission and before award to obtain the best and final offer at the discretion of the County. The Committee may invite one or more selected firms to a presentation and interview prior to a final selection. When conducting negotiations, the County will not disclose information from responses submitted by competing firms. The Committee will consider the following criteria when evaluating responses:

1. Experience of firm(s) with projects of a similar size and scope;
2. Experience working with rural communities with high growth pressures;
3. Qualifications and experience of the proposed team and location of team members;
4. Responsiveness to RFQ and quality of the submittal;
5. Proposed approach to project and schedule for completion;
6. References on past work efforts;
7. Knowledge of Camden County and the northeast North Carolina region; and
8. Any other experience or criteria deemed applicable to the project.

Selection Timeline

RFQ Issued:	April 9, 2025
RFQ Q&A Posted on Camden County Website:	April 23, 2025
RFQ Responses Due by 12:00 PM EST:	May 9, 2025
Firm Shortlist Selection:	May 14, 2025
Firm Interviews:	May 23, 2025
Firm Selection:	June 2, 2025
Contract Approval:	July 7, 2025

Award and Contract

The County may review the statements of qualifications received at any time after the submission deadline. The County anticipates entering into a contract with the selected firm to execute the proposed work. This RFQ does not commit the County to award a contract to, or pay any costs incurred by, a firm responding to this RFQ. The County reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified firms, or to cancel this request for qualifications if it is in the best interest of the County to do so.

After the firm selection, there will be a period of negotiation between the County and the firm to confirm the final scope of work and costs. The County will confirm the selected firm once the contract has been executed by the firm and the County Manager and/or the Board of Commissioners.

If the County and the selected firm are not able to reach agreement on the scope and terms of a contract, the County retains the right to dismiss the selected firm and negotiate with the next most qualified firm. The County retains the right to repeat this process until a contract is successfully negotiated or the County ends the negotiation for the project.

Miscellaneous Provisions

1. **Ownership of responses:** Upon delivery, all statements of qualifications will become the property of the County.
2. **Ownership of materials:** The County will have access and ownership of all materials created as part of this process. A proprietary exclusion will need to be approved by the Project Manager prior to utilization in the process.
3. **Right to reject/modify:** The County may, at its sole discretion, reject any or all responses or waive any irregularities without disqualifying the response. The issuance of this RFQ does not bind the County to award a service agreement for services described herein.
4. **Public disclosure of all responses:** Once received, all responses shall become the property of the County. All responses shall become a matter of public record and shall be regarded as public records.

County of Camden 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, the County reserves the right to:

1. Award this contract in whole or in part, in the best interest of the County and further reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses.
2. Request clarification or supplemental material it feels necessary to make a qualified judgment to the firm's ability to perform the work.
3. Amend the RFQ schedule or issue amendments to the RFQ at any time; to modify or incorporate additional steps in the evaluation process in the interest of having a thorough and comprehensive body of information to make a selection.
4. Cancel or reissue the RFQ, to reject any or all responses, to waive any irregularities or informalities in the selection process, and to accept or reject any item or combination of items.

This RFQ does not obligate the County of Camden to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services.

The County will not reimburse the firm for any of the costs involved in the preparation and submission of responses to this RFQ or in preparation for and attendance at subsequent interviews.

Request for Qualifications Authorization Form

The undersigned certifies that they have fully read this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an update to the County of Camden Comprehensive Plan. The undersigned further states that they have carefully examined the criteria for the Comprehensive Plan, and all other information furnished in the RFQ, and make this response accordingly. The undersigned declares that they are making this response solely based upon their own knowledge and that they are duly authorized to submit this statement of qualifications. Undersigned affirms that in the event they are awarded the Comprehensive Plan project, that they will enter into a Consulting Agreement with the County to perform the work in accordance with the terms for updating the Comprehensive Plan as specified in the Request for Qualifications.

Signature of Duly Authorized Representative Date

Printed Name

Business Name

Business Address

Telephone Number

Email Address