

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
CONSULTING SERVICES FOR UPDATE TO  
COMPREHENSIVE PARKS MASTER PLAN**

**RFQ 25-1012**



**catawba county**

**MAKING. LIVING. BETTER.**

**Date of Issue: December 17, 2024**

**Qualifications Due: January 28, 2025**

**Time: 3:00 p.m. ET**

**Issued for:**

**Catawba County Parks System  
25 Government Drive  
Newton, North Carolina 28658**

**Issued by:**

**Catawba County Purchasing Manager  
25 Government Drive  
Newton, North Carolina 28658  
(828) 465-8224**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Catawba County (hereinafter “County”) is soliciting the submittal of qualification statements from experienced consulting firms (hereinafter “Firm”) interested in providing the necessary services to update the County’s Comprehensive Parks Master Plan. Catawba County’s most recent Parks Master Plan was produced in 2015. Considering the unprecedented growth of the County’s Park system and local municipal parks, greenways, and urban trail systems in recent years, the County is seeking to update the 2015 Master Plan for Catawba County Parks.

## **BACKGROUND**

Established July 3, 1999, with the opening of Riverbend Park in Conover, the Catawba County Parks system (CCPS) includes Bakers Mountain Park and St. Stephens Park in Hickory and Mountain Creek Park in Sherrills Ford. Catawba County Parks is celebrating its 25th anniversary throughout FY24-25.

Encompassing nearly 1,500 acres of preserved natural habitat designed for passive recreation, Catawba County Parks allow visitors to immerse themselves in Catawba County’s great outdoors. Amenities include a combined 45 miles of hiking and biking trails, dog parks, playgrounds, picnic shelters, fishing piers, pickleball courts, mountain bike pump tracks, a mountaintop observation deck, and paddling access to the Catawba River and Lake Norman.

Staffed by professional park rangers, Catawba County Parks are open 362 days per year with seasonally adjusted hours to maximize available daylight. Information about Catawba County Parks and the other 50-plus municipal parks across the county is available at [CatawbaCountyParks.org](http://CatawbaCountyParks.org).

## **RFQ SCHEDULE**

The table below shows the *intended* schedule for this RFQ. Catawba County will make every effort to adhere to this schedule.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>
Issue RFQ	County	December 17, 2024
Submit Written Questions	Firms	January 13, 2025 by 5:00 PM
Provide Responses to Questions	County	January 15, 2025 by 5:00 PM
Submit Qualification Statement	Firms	January 28, 2025 by 3:00 PM
Contract Award	County	TBA
Contract Effective Date	County	Upon execution

**Qualification Statements must be submitted no later than 3:00 PM on January 28, 2025. No submittals will be accepted after the deadline.**

Once the submittals have been reviewed, the County reserves the right to shortlist Firm(s) and request that the Firm(s) conduct a presentation and be interviewed by the selection committee.

**RFQ QUESTIONS**

Written questions shall be emailed to [tinawright@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:tinawright@catawbacountync.gov) by the date and time specified above. Firms should enter “RFQ # 25-1012 – Questions” as the subject for the email. Questions received prior to the submission deadline date, the County’s response, and any additional terms deemed necessary by the County will be posted in the form of an addendum to the Catawba County website, <https://www.catawbacountync.gov/county-services/purchasing/bid-notices/> and shall become an Addendum to this RFQ. No information, instruction or advice provided orally or informally by any County personnel, whether made in response to a question or otherwise in connection with this RFQ, shall be considered authoritative or binding. Firms shall rely *only* on written material contained in an Addendum to this RFQ.

**SUBMISSION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

The qualifications statement must be submitted with **two (2) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy on flash drive**. When responding to this RFQ, please follow all instructions carefully. Please submit your qualifications according to the outline specified. Failure to follow these instructions may be considered a non-responsive submission and may result in immediate elimination from further consideration. The qualifications statement should be sent to the address indicated in the table below.

<b>Mailing address for delivery of qualifications via US Postal Service</b>	<b>Office Address of delivery by any other method (hand delivery, overnight, or any other carrier)</b>
RFQ No: 25-1012 Catawba County Government Center Attn: Purchasing Department Post Office Box 389 Newton, North Carolina 28658	RFQ No: 25-1012 Catawba County Government Center Attn: Purchasing Department 25 Government Drive Newton, North Carolina 28658

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All qualifications shall be physically delivered to the office address listed above on or before the submission deadline in order to be considered timely, regardless of the method of delivery. **This is an absolute requirement.** All risk of late arrival due to unanticipated delay—whether delivered by U.S. Postal Service, courier or other delivery service is entirely on the Firm(s). It is the sole responsibility of the Firm to have the qualifications physically in this Office by the specified time and date of opening.

Catawba County reserves the right to reject any and all submittals. This submittal request is neither a contractual offer nor a commitment to purchase services. The County assumes no contractual obligation as a result of the issuance of this request, the preparation or submission of a qualifications statement by a Firm, the evaluation of statements or final selection.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

### **PROJECT ADMINISTRATION**

The Consultant will manage the project and coordination of any sub-consultants and all project activities, including meetings with staff and stakeholder groups. The Consultant will identify a project lead to act as the direct point of contact for county staff.

Throughout the project, the Consultant will be responsible for the following:

- Establishment and facilitation of the Master Plan development process and timeline.
- Creation of maps necessary for the project, including working maps and maps of future proposed amenities. (Existing county data layers will be provided to the Consultant as needed.)
- Electronic copies of all flyers, hand-outs, and other materials used to announce events and/or gather input from the community (in both pdf and native formats).
- Materials and staffing needed for community engagement activities. (County staff will also be involved in engagement activities.)
- Creation of any online and other engagement tools used for the project.
- A minimum of bi-weekly updates, primarily via e-mail or telephone/video and occasionally in-person, to update County staff on project status, discuss issues, and review drafts.

### **PROJECT KICK-OFF**

The Consultant will facilitate a kick-off meeting with key County staff to receive available information related to the project, identify and discuss any technical and policy issues, coordinate staff/Consultant responsibilities, and refine the project schedule. Following this meeting, the Consultant will provide the following:

- A meeting summary report identifying and summarizing issues and opportunities discussed during the meeting.
- A structured outline of the Master Plan development process, deliverables identifying the responsible parties, and related timeline.

### **RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION**

The Consultant will research and gather information to inform plan development. This may include, but is not limited to, Community Engagement (see next section) and the following:

- An inventory and analysis of CCPS and its relation to other existing public outdoor amenities in Catawba County. The analysis should consider the purpose, geography, visitation, access, existing condition, programming, existing gaps, and potential needs of all identified amenities over the next 10

years, with comparisons to national benchmarking tools as appropriate. Maps illustrating the locations and types of amenities, as well as pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access to amenities, should be included.

- An assessment and analysis of CCPS's current level of amenities, programs, staffing, services, policies and maintenance in relation to present and future goals, objectives and directives.
- A community-wide statistically valid community needs assessment survey on CCPS facilities and amenities. The return rate should accurately represent a sampling of the population, including vulnerable populations, so that an analysis can be segmented by race, gender, age and other demographic groups.
- An analysis of demographic data, trends and characteristics of the community and how those trends and characteristics may impact current and future CCPS use.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

As part of the Resource and Data Collection phase, the Consultant will be responsible for conducting community engagement to gather community input on the plan. This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Identification, description, and implementation of a comprehensive strategy and methodology for community involvement in this Master Plan development process including, but not limited to, online surveys, focus groups, and at least 4 in person events.
- The establishment of engagement goals and periodic review results to determine if goals are being met, adjusting engagement methods to increase engagement as needed.
- Implementation of innovative, well-organized and directed activities, techniques and formats that will ensure an open and proactive public participation process. These methods should solicit quality input from as many people as possible, including under-resourced populations and users and non-users of the services and facilities.
- Serving as professional facilitators to gather specific information about services, use, preferences and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Written records and summaries of the results of all public processes and communication strategies that can be shared with the public.
- Presentation of information for informed decision making for CCPS, County leadership, and/or the Board of Commissioners.

### **PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

Using the data gathered from the research and community engagement phases of the Master Plan process and input from key County staff, the Consultant will develop a Master Plan that includes strategies, priorities and an analysis of budget support and funding mechanisms for short, mid and long-term CCPS recommendations. This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- A summary of outdoor amenity assets and gaps in the county and related recommendations for CCPS.
- A summary of all research and community engagement activities and their relevance to recommendations for CCPS.
- Prioritized recommendations for staffing, maintenance, renovation and operations of CCPS.
- Prioritized recommendations regarding the future development of new park amenities and potential land acquisition opportunities for CCPS.
- Recommendations on collaborative partnerships and other solutions to minimize duplication or enhance opportunities for collaborative partnerships with CCPS.
- Identification of projected impact of future trends on existing CCPS parks and potential service shortfalls.
- Recommendations for development of CCPS programming based on CCPS vision statement and demand analysis.
- Development of maps, charts, graphs, data visualizations, other graphic illustrations, and PowerPoint presentations as needed to support the plan and its presentation to the appropriate audiences.

## **CONTENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENT**

Respondents must carefully read the information in this “Contents of Qualifications Statement” section and submit a complete Qualifications Statement responding to each request for information. Incomplete Qualifications Statements will be considered non-responsive and are subject to rejection.

Qualifications shall be submitted on 8-1/2 x 11 paper, side bound with Table of Contents and reference tabs for key sections. Qualifications Statements shall be limited to 30 pages, printed front and back.

The qualification statement must be submitted with two (2) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy on flash drive.

Qualification Statement must include all of the following information:

### **1. Introduction – Letter of Transmittal**

- Summarize in a brief and concise manner the Firm’s understanding of the scope of work and make a positive commitment to perform the work in a professional and timely manner.

### **2. Firm Information**

- Provide company name and business address, including telephone, email address, and website address.

- The type of company (individual, partnership, corporation, etc.) listing the names of all partners, principals, etc. Please include any subsidiaries, if applicable.
- Provide year established. Include former company name(s) and year(s) established and identify the state in which the firm was organized or incorporated.
- List name, title, address, and telephone number of the company's authorized negotiator. The person identified must be empowered to make binding commitments for the company.

### **3. Qualifications of Firm – Key Personnel**

Please provide:

- Statement of qualifications of the firm and its key personnel who will be assigned to work with the County, include current workload and percentage of availability of key personnel.
- List of previous and current clients for work similar to this scope of work within the past ten (10) years. Include names and location of project, brief description and firm's key personnel's involvement.
- List any professional training and experience, especially in relation to the type and magnitude of work required for this particular scope of services.
- List any licenses or certifications related to the scope of work described in this Request for Qualifications.
- Firm staff resumes that show experience in or staff assigned to this project including their specific qualifications and experience on projects of similar scope.
- Describe teams' experience conducting public meetings and the method proposed for soliciting public input.
- Provide a summary of any litigation, claim(s), or contract dispute(s) filed by or against the Firm in the past five (5) years that are related to the services that the Firm provides in the regular course of business. The summary shall state the nature of the litigation, claim, or contract dispute; a brief description of the case; the outcome or projected outcome; and the monetary amount involved. If no litigation claim(s) or contract dispute(s) have been filed by or against the Firm in the past five (5) years, please state that.
- List any regulatory or license agency sanctions. If no license sanctions against the Firm, please state that.

### **4. Project Management/Approach**

Please provide:

- General work plan that demonstrates the consultant's complete understanding of the scope of work.
- Describe the Firm's approach to and/or method of cost control and project scheduling. Include project timeline for referenced projects from execution of contract to plan adoption.
- Hourly billing rates charged by your Firm for each position type.

## 5. References – Past Performance and Existing Contracts

Please provide:

- Complete Attachment A: Reference Disclosure Form and submit with qualifications.

### **EVALUATION METHOD - SELECTION PROCESS**

Catawba County will use the following selection process. This process is designed to ensure that consultants are selected in a fair and uniform manner, those selected for work are qualified and experienced in the professional services desired, and to ensure that every qualified consultant has the opportunity to be considered for providing professional services to Catawba County.

A Selection Committee will evaluate responses to this Request for Qualifications and determine the most qualified applicants. Upon receipt of the packages from respondents, the Selection Committee will review using a scoring program that has been determined by the committee and detailed below. Past performance will be scored based on responses from the references submitted by the responder and/or the experience of Catawba County staff with particular firm's past performance. Only one reviewer will contact any given reference.

The Selection Committee will use the total point scores to rank the prospective Firms. The Selection Committee will determine a list of the most highly qualified Firms based upon the ranking scores.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The Content of Qualifications Statement, as referenced above, shall be evaluated as follows:

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Project Understanding and Methodology:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General work plan that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the services requested.</li><li>• Description of how the team plans to address the needs of the County.</li><li>• Demonstrate the ability to engage the County and the project stakeholders in an open public process.</li><li>• Response offers a sound approach that accomplishes the goals within the proposed project timeline.</li></ul>	<b>30</b>
<b>Firm Qualifications and Experience:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• History of the Firm.</li><li>• Firms' ability to provide a solution that conforms to the specifications included in this RFQ.</li><li>• Previous and pending litigation.</li></ul>	<b>15</b>

<p><b>Project Team Qualifications and Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplines, qualifications, certifications, and demonstrated abilities of the team members.</li> <li>• Complete and comprehensive organizational chart or similar explanation of team members’ roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Team member resumes and unique qualities as they relate to this RFQ.</li> <li>• Workload and availability.</li> </ul>	<b>25</b>
<p><b>Relevant Project Experience and References:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant and successful experience with similar government parks planning development, design and public engagement.</li> <li>• Track record of “on-time and on-budget projects.”</li> <li>• References.</li> </ul>	<b>25</b>
<p><b>Organization and Clarity of Proposal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly and effectively outlines the project team’s qualifications and ability to successfully meet the needs of the County.</li> </ul>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>100</b>

**FIRM INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS**

The successful Firm will be required to provide the County with Certificates of Insurance meeting the County’s insurance requirements as specified below. Failure to provide the required insurance will result in cancellation of the selection and the County will have the right to enter into an agreement with the Firm with the next highest ranking. Firm shall maintain at all times during the term of this Agreement, at the Firm’s sole expense:

1. Commercial General Liability Insurance

Firm shall maintain Commercial General Liability insurance written on an occurrence basis, including coverage for products and completed operations liability, contractual liability, liability from independent contractors, property damage liability, bodily injury liability, and personal injury liability with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$1,000,000 annual aggregate. The aggregate limit shall apply separately to each location. The limits may be satisfied by a combination of primary and excess insurance.

2. Professional Liability Insurance

Firm shall maintain Professional Liability insurance with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per claim and \$1,000,000 aggregate.

3. Business Automobile Insurance

At all times while the Firm's representatives are conducting on-site work, the Firm shall maintain Automobile Liability insurance for any owned, hired, rented, or borrowed vehicle with a limit of not less than \$500,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage liability. The limit may be satisfied by a combination of primary and excess insurance.

4. Workers Compensation & Employers Liability Insurance

At all times while the Firm's representatives are conducting on-site work, Firm shall maintain statutory Workers Compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of North Carolina. Firm shall also maintain Employers' Liability insurance with limits of not less than \$500,000 per accident and \$500,000 each employee for injury by disease.

5. General Requirements

- a. Catawba County shall be named as an additional insured under Firm's automobile and general liability insurance. In the event of a loss arising out of, or related to the Firm's services performed under this Agreement, Firm's Liability insurance shall be primary (pay first) with respect to any other insurance which may be available to the County, regardless of how the "other insurance" provisions may read.
- b. The Firm's Workers Compensation insurance must contain a waiver of subrogation in favor of the County.
- c. Firm shall be responsible for insuring all of its own personal property, improvements, and betterments.
- d. All insurance policies put forth to satisfy the above requirements shall require the insurer to provide a minimum of sixty (60) days' notice to the County of any material change in coverage, cancellation, or non-renewal.
- e. All insurance put forth to satisfy the above requirements shall be placed with insurance companies licensed to provide insurance in the state of North Carolina. Any deductibles or self-insured retentions in the required insurance shall be subject to approval by the County.
- f. Prior to beginning the work, Firm shall provide written evidence of insurance as requested by the County to confirm that these insurance requirements are satisfied. Firm agrees to indemnify County if any of the insurance policy's listed in the Certificate of Insurance do not contain, at a minimum, the coverage amounts listed on the Certificate of Insurance. Firm agrees to provide complete copies of policies if requested.

Failure of Firm to provide timely evidence of insurance, or to place coverage with insurance, or to place coverage with insurance companies acceptable to the County, shall be viewed as Firm's delaying performance entitling the County to all appropriate remedies under the law including termination of the contract.

**ATTACHMENT A  
REFERENCE DISCLOSURE FORM**

Firm shall provide information regarding experience in work similar to this scope of work by listing FIVE (5) RECENT CLIENTS, ONLY ONE OF WHICH MAY BE A CATAWBA COUNTY GOVERNMENT LISTING. References should be clients of a similar scale to the services requested in this RFQ.

1. COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERSON TO CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PROGRAMS/MODULES IN USE: \_\_\_\_\_  
YEAR IMPLEMENTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
SERVICE DATES:  
BEGINNING \_\_\_\_\_ END \_\_\_\_\_

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2. COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERSON TO CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PROGRAMS/MODULES IN USE: \_\_\_\_\_  
YEAR IMPLEMENTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
SERVICE DATES:  
BEGINNING \_\_\_\_\_ END \_\_\_\_\_

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3. COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERSON TO CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PROGRAMS/MODULES IN USE: \_\_\_\_\_  
YEAR IMPLEMENTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
SERVICE DATES:  
BEGINNING \_\_\_\_\_ END \_\_\_\_\_

4. COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERSON TO CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PROGRAMS/MODULES IN USE: \_\_\_\_\_  
YEAR IMPLEMENTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
SERVICE DATES:  
BEGINNING \_\_\_\_\_ END \_\_\_\_\_

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5. COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERSON TO CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PROGRAMS/MODULES IN USE: \_\_\_\_\_  
YEAR IMPLEMENTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
SERVICE DATES:  
BEGINNING \_\_\_\_\_ END \_\_\_\_\_

END OF ATTACHMENT A

**ATTACHMENT B  
INTENT TO PROPOSE  
RFQ NO: 25-1012**

**This form should be e-mailed to [TinaWright@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:TinaWright@catawbacountync.gov) to ensure you receive all addenda issued for this RFQ.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ a representative of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ confirm that we intend to submit

a response for **RFQ No: 25-1012 – Consulting Services for Update to Comprehensive Parks Master Plan:**

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

END OF ATTACHMENTS