

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Downtown Masterplan



City of Kinston, North Carolina
Lenoir County

Date of Issuance: December 5, 2025
Submission Deadline: January 26, 2026

Submit To:
Elizabeth Blount, Planning Director
City of Kinston
207 E King Street
P.O. Box 339
Kinston, North Carolina 28502

Please submit via UPS, FedEx or in person and include
Proposal No. P25-01 on the outside of the envelope.

1. Introduction

The City of Kinston is soliciting proposals from qualified consulting firms to develop a comprehensive **Downtown Master Plan** that will provide strategic direction, actionable steps, and a clear implementation framework for the redevelopment, revitalization, and repurposing of the downtown area.

The Downtown Master Plan will serve as a guiding document to promote economic vitality, enhance aesthetics, encourage private investment, and improve accessibility and quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors.

2. Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the Downtown Master Plan include:

- Establishing a clear vision and strategic direction for downtown redevelopment.
 - Identifying opportunities for revitalization, adaptive reuse, and infill development.
 - Promoting a vibrant and inclusive downtown environment through design, policy, and programming.
 - Encouraging investment and economic development while preserving Kinston's historic character.
 - Enhancing accessibility, connectivity, and pedestrian experiences.
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3. Scope of Work

The consultant shall provide professional planning and design services that include, but are not limited to, the following components:

1. **Assessment & Analysis**
 - Evaluate existing conditions, including land use, infrastructure, circulation, and building conditions.
 - Conduct an accessibility analysis to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement.
 - Review existing plans, zoning regulations, and development policies relevant to downtown.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement & Community Outreach**
 - Design and facilitate stakeholder surveys, public workshops, and focus group discussions.
 - Engage downtown property owners, residents, businesses, and community organizations.
 - Summarize community priorities and integrate them into the plan's goals and strategies.

3. **Redevelopment & Revitalization Strategies**

- Identify redevelopment opportunities, catalytic sites, and investment priorities.
- Recommend programs and incentives to promote downtown revitalization.
- Develop policies to address abandoned and neglected non-residential properties.
- Provide phased projects and achievable short-, mid-, and long-term goals.

4. **Urban Design & Aesthetic Improvements**

- Propose design concepts for streetscapes, open spaces, and public art.
- Recommend architectural and design guidelines to enhance downtown's visual appeal.
- Incorporate sustainable and inclusive design principles for the existing streetscape.
- Provide connectivity for pedestrians in neighboring areas

5. **Implementation & Action Plan**

- Provide a prioritized implementation matrix, including estimated costs, funding sources, and responsible parties.
- Identify partnerships, grant opportunities, and strategies for maintaining long-term momentum.

4. **Deliverables**

The consultant shall provide the following deliverables:

- Comprehensive Downtown Master Plan document (digital and print-ready formats).
- Executive summary and presentation materials for the City Council and other stakeholder meetings.
- Public engagement summary report.
- GIS maps, renderings, and visual concepts illustrating key recommendations.

5. **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals should include the following information:

- **Cover Letter** introducing the firm and outlining interest in the project.
- **Project Understanding and Approach** describing how the consultant will meet project goals.
- **Proposed Scope and Work Plan** detailing tasks, milestones, and deliverables.
- **Project Team and Qualifications**, including resumes and relevant experience.
- **Schedule** with key milestones and anticipated completion date.
- **Cost Proposal** with itemized fees and estimated expenses. The total project budget for this Downtown Masterplan is not to exceed \$60,000. Firms should ensure their proposed scope and pricing align with this budget.
- **References** from at least three comparable municipal projects.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, and select the proposal deemed most advantageous to the City.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of project goals and community needs.
 - Experience with downtown planning, urban design, and economic revitalization.
 - Quality of proposed approach, methodology, and deliverables.
 - Qualifications and experience of project personnel.
 - Proven success in stakeholder engagement and implementation planning.
 - Cost competitiveness and overall value.
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7. Submission Information

Submission Deadline: Monday, January 26, 2026 at 4:00 PM (local time)

Submit Proposals To:

City of Kinston – Planning Department
Attn: Elizabeth Blount, Planning Director
207 East King Street
P.O. Drawer 339 (or P.O. Box 339)
Kinston, NC 28502
Email: Elizabeth.Blount@kinstonnc.gov
Phone: 252-939-3269

Late or incomplete proposals will **not** be considered.

8. Schedule (Tentative)

Milestone	Date
RFP Issued	Friday, December 5, 2025
Deadline for Questions	Monday, December 29, 2025
Proposal Submissions Due	Monday, January 26, 2026
Consultant Interviews (if needed)	Week of February 2, 2026
Selection and Contract Award	Thursday, February 19, 2026
Present to Boards	Week of March 2, 2026
Project Kickoff	Monday, March 23, 2026
Project Completion	Wednesday, December 1, 2026

9. Additional Information

All questions regarding this RFP should be directed in writing to Elizabeth Blount at Elizabeth.Blount@kinstonnc.gov (with a cc to planning@kinstonnc.gov).