



The City of Hickory

Request for Qualifications

City of Hickory
Safe Streets for All Comprehensive Safety
Action Plan

Request Number 24-021



CITY of HICKORY Request for Qualifications

Project Title:

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SECTIONS WITHIN THIS REQUEST

- a. Notice and Contact Information
- b. Statement of Qualifications - Details
- c. Statement of Qualifications - Content Requirements
- d. Sample SOQ Evaluation Form
- e. Special Terms and Conditions

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Notice is hereby given that the City of Hickory is conducting a qualification-based selection process to retain a proponent for professional planning services to produce a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan Safety.

The City of Hickory invites interested firms/teams to submit a written Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) relating to this solicitation. Proponents are invited to review the information and to submit their SOQ in accordance with the criteria established within this RFQ. A Project Screening Committee will evaluate firms'/teams' qualifications and experience with similar projects. The City will rank the submittals before selecting the best-qualified firm/team. The firm/team determined to be best qualified through review of the submitted will be selected for negotiations to complete the project. Should negotiations become unsuccessful, the second-ranked firm/team will be invited to enter negotiations.

Written questions regarding this RFQ must be received by June 14, 2024, no later than 3:00 PM. Email questions are acceptable but must contain the wording **"City of Hickory SS4A Comprehensive Safety Action Plan"** in the subject line. Questions may then be responded to as an amendment to this document and posted to the solicitation within an anticipated three (3) working days after the questions deadline. Oral statements or instructions shall not constitute an amendment to this RFQ.

All submittals must be received by the deadline specified herein. Any submittals received after the due date and time specified will not be considered. The City of Hickory reserves the right to reject any or all submittals, or to withhold awarding a contract for any reason it may determine, and to waive or not to waive any informalities in any submittal. **Contact with City Council, City Manager's Office or other influential individuals to the selection process regarding this RFQ is expressly forbidden and shall be grounds for immediate rejection from the process.** All information regarding the content of the specific submittals will remain confidential until sealed proposals are opened.

POINT OF CONTACT

Karen Dickerson, Infrastructure Grants Manager | kdickerson@hickorync.gov | (828) 323-7488

SUBMITTALS Must be received before the deadline

Deadline: July 1, 2024 3:00 PM	Mail: City of Hickory-Public Services PO Box 398 Hickory, NC 28603	Deliver: City of Hickory-Public Services 1441 9 th Ave NE Hickory, NC 28601
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NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. "The Owner" means officers or employees of the City of Hickory.
- B. "Proponent" means the person or firm/team responding.
- C. "Statement of Qualifications" or "SOQ" means the submission received from a Proponent in response to this RFQ.
- D. "Request for Qualifications" or "RFQ" means the entire document, including all of the documents and any addenda thereto issued before the RFQ closing time.

II. BACKGROUND

The City of Hickory (population 43,490 in 2020) received \$200,000 in grant funding from the fiscal year 2023 Safe Streets for All (SS4A) initiative to develop a comprehensive Safety Action Plan. This plan should support Vision Zero and the holistic Safe Systems Approach developed by the Federal Highway Administration. This effort should aim to reduce roadway fatalities significantly, employ cost-effective safety strategies, involve a broad range of stakeholders, leverage innovative technologies, and build an evidence base to guide future action. The SS4A plan will enable the City to conduct an in-depth assessment of its existing infrastructure, policies, and community needs to reduce the 20 fatalities in the last five years on City streets and roads. The resulting action plan will inform the identification and implementation of key projects and strategies, focus on examining safety challenges, and incorporate equity considerations to develop a safety action plan that addresses the safety needs.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The goal of this Comprehensive Safety Action Plan is to provide strategies and actions to reduce transportation-related injuries and fatalities while supporting the US Department of Transportation's National Roadway Safety Strategy and the federal goal of zero roadway deaths using the Federal Safe Systems Approach. This approach includes the principles of safer people, safer vehicles, safer speeds, safer roads, and Safer post-crash care.

Therefore, the City of Hickory is seeking a qualified firm to conduct the necessary studies to complete this comprehensive safety action plan. Qualified firms will need to:

Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment that thoroughly reviews existing street safety conditions with transportation experts, city planners, and community leaders. The proponent will also collect and analyze accident data to identify high-risk areas, behaviors, and user groups, evaluate the current infrastructure, and analyze safety-related data. This process will enhance the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists by identifying high-risk areas and implementing evidence-based interventions, such as traffic calming measures, improved signage, and infrastructure upgrades. The City completed an updated Bike and Pedestrian Strategic Plan in 2020 that should inform the new safety action plan.

Analyze equity considerations: The proponent will seek expert input and public feedback from a broad range of perspectives to ensure that all residents, regardless of socioeconomic background, age, or physical abilities, have equal access to safe streets and public spaces. The proponent will conduct an equity analysis to identify underserved communities, access barriers, and street safety outcome disparities. To hear the many voices in the community, proponents will engage with community-based organizations, neighborhood associations, and diverse stakeholders throughout the planning process. A cross-collaboration of multiple City departments, such as City Council, City

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Management, Public Works, Planning, Police, and Fire, will assist with understanding equity concerns and how they affect the safety of citizens of Hickory. A review of FARS data shows that many fatalities in roadway accidents occur in underserved census tracts as defined by the USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer tool.

Develop a strategic framework: The proponent will use the risk assessment results to identify potential infrastructure improvements, behavior change campaigns, and community engagement projects to reduce the risk of roadway fatalities. The Safety Action Plan will identify and prioritize projects and strategies to address safety impact, promote equity, and focus on additional safety contexts, initially through low-cost, high-impact actions enabling immediate improvements. The proponent will focus on broader factors impacting safe streets, including land use patterns, transportation modes, demographic needs, and social aspects to inform more comprehensive solutions.

By researching and prioritizing technologies to improve roadway safety and promoting equitable access to safe streets, the City will achieve its roadway safety goal in all areas. The comprehensive understanding gained from this project will inform targeted interventions and policy recommendations for the underserved census tracts and the entire City.

This action planning process is funded through the fiscal year 2023 Safe Streets For All (SS4A) discretionary grant program. This program, which is part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), supports local initiatives to prevent the death and injury of users of city streets and roads, including motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

The Comprehensive Safety Action Plan developed through this consultative process will outline the City of Hickory's processes to prevent transportation-related injuries and deaths. The Safety Action Plan should include all aspects developed by the US Department of Transportation to apply for additional implementation grant funds. **These aspects can be found in Table 1 on pages 6 and 7 in the SS4A 2023 NOFO: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/ss4a/fy23-nofo> and in the Self-Certification Eligibility Worksheet: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/ss4a/self-certification-worksheet>.**

- Project Management: The proponent will manage the action plan study process and coordinate all plan documentation, public and stakeholder engagement activities, and data collection. The proponent will be the main point of contact for this project and will provide regular updates through e-mail, telephone, and in-person meetings. The project manager will provide monthly progress reports of work completed, accurate project invoicing, and upcoming milestones.
- Stakeholder and Public Engagement: The proponent will develop and implement a comprehensive stakeholder and public engagement process for the Safety Action Plan. There should be a specific emphasis placed on equity considerations and disadvantaged communities as outlined by the SS4A NOFO. Stakeholder and public engagement should include the following:
 - Steering Committee of community members and residents of diverse backgrounds to guide the planning process. The proponent will lead and facilitate up to three (3) steering committee meetings, beginning with a Steering Committee kick-off meeting.
 - Identification of groups that are economically or socially disadvantaged as well as those that are disproportionately impacted by traffic risks. The proponent

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will develop and lead engagement activities for these groups to gain insightful feedback on traffic-related issues.

- Communication plan to inform residents and stakeholders of engagement activities involved in creating the Safety Action Plan.
 - A minimum of three (3) public engagement events to gain input and feedback on plan development.
- Data Collection: The proponent will review existing street safety conditions, policies, and safety ordinances with transportation experts, city planners, public works and public safety staff, and community leaders. This data should include existing plans and development code review, existing conditions mapping analysis, and existing conditions field review.
 - Safety Analysis: The proponent will also collect and analyze accident data to identify high-risk areas and road features, crash types, behaviors, demographics, and user groups, evaluate the current infrastructure and structural issues, review environmental health concerns, and analyze safety-related data. A review of best practices in transportation safety from municipalities of similar size should also be provided.
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 - Transportation Equity Evaluation: An analysis of transportation systems, services, infrastructure, and processes that support safe, reliable, and intuitive multimodal options that are accessible to all populations. Recommendations should be prepared to ensure equity in the planning process, including strategies to reduce socioeconomic disparities experienced by underserved and underrepresented communities.
 - Develop a Comprehensive Safety Implementation Matrix: The proponent will develop a clear outline for prioritizing safety improvements in the City of Hickory. The Implementation Plan's prioritization metrics shall include measures such as safety impact, equity, and project costs. The implementation matrix will identify potential projects, strategies, and recommendations for improved transportation safety and develop cost estimates for all projects. The matrix will also include regular maintenance and update cycles to stay in compliance and in line with safety best practices. The implementation matrix will include information on all road and street users, such as motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, public transit riders, and micro-mobility users, to ensure a high level of equity in the Safety Action Plan. This process will also incorporate public input and include recommendations for how to engage the public on an ongoing basis. The matrix will also develop future data collection and monitoring following the Safety Action Plan adoption for ongoing safety improvements. Considerations should be made for fiscal and staff capacity required to achieve traffic safety goals and meet SS4A objectives after plan adoption. A project readiness timeline for each strategy and project should be included for short-term (0-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years), and long-term (10+ years), as well as the development of a Vision Zero achievement timeline for the City.
 - Administrative Draft/ Final Plan: The consultant will prepare an administrative draft of the Safety Plan for staff and steering committee review prior to finalizing the document. The final draft should be visually appealing, easy to read, and available in digital and print formats.

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- Executive Summary and Fact Sheet: The consultant shall develop an executive summary and fact sheet to easily communicate high-level planning document takeaways. The summary should include graphics and plan highlights, be visually engaging, and be available in digital and print formats.
- Deliverables: Following completion of the planning process, the consultant will provide the County with the final planning document in digital format that will be made publicly available. All data and study products collected during the planning process must also be included. The proponent must provide three (3) bound print copies of the final planning document and present the plan to the Hickory City Council for approval and adoption of the Safety Action Plan and Vision Zero Strategy.

IV. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- A. No contact shall be made with Hickory City Council, as this will be grounds for dismissal of the RFQ submittal.
- B. All questions should be submitted in writing to the Point of Contact listed above.
- C. SOQs will be received prior to the deadline in person at City of Hickory Public Services or by mail (information at beginning of RFQ).
- D. SOQs submitted via fax or email are not acceptable and will not be considered.
- E. Proponents will be evaluated on experience and qualifications. Project fee-related information is not requested and will not be used in the evaluation process. Receiving project fee related information will be grounds for dismissal of the RFQ submittal. Firms/Teams shall submit their standard rates for positions involved in the Project.
- F. Clearly indicate on the envelope the name of the Proponent and the name of the Project for which the SOQ is being submitted.
- G. Refer to the section SOQ Content Requirements for detailed instructions.
- H. There will not be a pre-proposal conference for this project.
- I. There will not be a public opening of the SOQs with Proponents present.

V. COST OF SUBMISSION AND OWNERSHIP OF SOQ

- A. The City of Hickory is not responsible for any costs incurred by Proponents in preparing, submitting, or presenting their SOQs.
- B. Except as otherwise provided in this RFQ, all SOQs become the property of the City upon submission and will not be returned.

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS - CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

This proposal's purpose is to demonstrate the qualifications, competence, and capacity of the consultant seeking to provide comprehensive services specified herein for the City of Hickory in conformity with the requirements of the RFQ. This section specifies in detail the form and minimum content requirements for information required to be submitted in each SOQ. Proponents may, at their discretion, include additional information that they consider relevant to ensure a full and proper evaluation, provided that the specified maximum allowable number of pages is not exceeded.

I. SUBMITTAL FORMAT

- A. Original four (4) bound copies and a PDF provided on a flash drive are required for each submittal. The material should be in sequence and related to the solicitation. The sections of the submittal shall be tabbed to match SOQ and be clearly identifiable. Failure to include all requested information will result in the proponent being non-responsive and may result in the rejection of the proponent's submittal.
- B. Cover letter expressing interest in the available project. It should also identify the principal and secondary individuals as points of contact for any future correspondence and be a maximum of two pages.
- C. Page size of the SOQ shall be 8 ½" x 11" with a minimum font size of 10. A maximum of two (2) 11" x 17" pages will be allowed (one (1) page if double-sided). Note: this will count towards the page limit.
- D. No more than 20 pages single-sided or 10 pages double-sided. Note: divider tabs (if used), Cover Letter and Table of Contents do not count towards the page limit and shall not include pertinent information to be evaluated.

II. SOQ CONTENT

Please provide the following in this order:

- A. Cover Letter/Letter of Interest (does not count toward page limit; two (2) page maximum)
 - 1. Principal and secondary contact for the project, including mailing address, email, phone numbers, and appropriate license numbers. At least one of these individuals shall have the ability to negotiate Contract conditions for the Proponent.
 - 2. Provide a statement of interest, including a narrative describing the firm's unique qualifications and answering the specific question, "Why should the City select your firm/team for this project?"
- B. Table of Contents Page (does not count toward the page limit)
- C. Firm Profile
 - 1. Provide general information about the Proponent, which need not be specific to this RFQ. Include a history of the firm, years in business, office locations, number of staff, types of services provided, and specialist areas of expertise. Indicate the office location from which services will be provided. This includes any sub-consultants.
 - 2. Statement that the Proponent is licensed to provide required professional services in the State of North Carolina.
 - 3. Statement (confirmation) of current general liability insurance as required to provide services.

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- D. Experience and Qualifications of the Proposed Team
1. Provide a minimum of three similar projects (completed within the last five years) for which your team was responsible and which you consider to be a demonstration of your team’s design ability.
 2. Please provide a minimum of three (3) unique municipality references (should references in item D (1) above be duplicated, you may provide a reference without a project).
 3. Submit the qualifications of the team and explain why your team is especially well qualified to perform the required services.
 - a. Provide the experience of the proposed team on similar projects. Identify the type and location of similar work to illustrate work quality and the role of each proposed team member. Show how the experience relates to the categories outlined.
- NOTE: Projects used as examples of similar work shall be clearly noted if the work was done by individuals while employed by other firms. The only projects that you may claim without attribution are those projects actually produced by your firm/team. Improper or misleading credit for projects, in our view, is an adverse reflection on a firm’s integrity and may be grounds for rejection of those projects from your experience or record or dismissal of the entire RFQ submittal.
- E. Experience and Qualifications of Proposed Team Members (this information will count toward the page limit).
1. Provide an organizational chart demonstrating your team’s leadership, key team members and any proposed sub-consultants along with project roles.
 2. Provide experience and qualifications of key team members via resumes, who will be responsible for this project (with any critical sub-consultant). Include work experience, education, licenses, registrations, or certifications applicable to the proposed work.
 3. Identify team experience on similar projects and the extent of team involvement, including time commitment.
 4. Indicate the office location of each team member.
- F. Project Approach
1. Proponents shall provide a description of their approach, including any information that may differentiate your team. Your approach should include (not necessarily in this order), at a minimum, the following:
 - a. Technical approach identifying the major tasks to be accomplished relative to the requested study tasks and expected product as outlined in this RFQ.
 - b. Project management approach, including assigning personnel (man-loading) to a project of this size, duration, and how such relates to the proposed scope of services (including sub-consultants)
 - c. Project cost estimating
 - d. Stakeholder engagement and management
 - e. Budget and schedule control
 - f. Quality management
 - g. Your expectations of the City during the planning process
 - h. Timeline for completion of the requested services, including all public outreach and stakeholder meetings, identifying milestones for the development of the project, and completion of individual tasks.



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- G. Interview
 The City reserves the right to schedule interviews if necessary to choose a firm. If selected for an interview, the firm/team shall present the project vision and preliminary thoughts as part of the interview presentation.

III. TIMELINE OF SELECTION PROCESS

Submittals must be received no later than 3:00 PM on Monday, July 1, 2024. Please submit any questions regarding the RFQ to karendickerson@hickorync.gov by 3:00 PM on Friday, June 14, 2024. Responses to the questions will be posted to the City’s procurement website within three days. If needed, interviews will be held between July 17 and July 24, 2024. The City anticipates the plan kicking off in August 2024. The plan development process, including plan adoption, is anticipated to occur over 18 months from the contract execution and project kickoff dates.

Schedule Item:	Date:
Submittal Period:	June 3 - July 1, 2024 (3:00 PM)
Question Period Deadline:	June 14, 2024 (3:00 PM)
City of Hickory Period of Review	July 1 - July 12, 2024
Interviews:	July 17 - July 24, 2024 (if needed)
Contract Award & Project Kickoff:	August, 2024

IV. CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS

Because the project is funded by grants from the United States Department of Transportation, the consultant must comply with federal grant-mandated requirements to be included in the proponent contract.

Change orders adding to the scope of work are not permitted unless the City of Hickory initiates the work topic.



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SAMPLE OF EVALUATION FORM

The City of Hickory will rate submitted SOQs based on, but not limited to, the criteria below:

Overall Firm Experience	30%
Project manager and key team members - experience and qualifications	30%
Past Performance with similar projects (budget, schedule, etc.). Project references specific to this type of service, including experience in providing these services to local governments.	20%
Technical Approach, including experience with stakeholder methods and management.	20%

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SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

I. SOFTWARE COMPATIBILITY: For the purposes of aiding the Proponent in the performance of their obligation under this Contract, the City shall furnish upon request all relevant data in the City’s possession and shall direct City officers, agents, and employees to render all reasonable assistance to Proponent in connection with Proponent’s performance under this Contract. The provision of such aid, assistance, information or services as received from the City shall in no way relieve the Proponent from obligations under this Contract. The City does not warrant the compatibility of City furnished data, either electronic or in any form, with the Proponent’s software. All costs associated with data conversion or software upgrades and conversions shall be borne by the Proponent.

II. INSURANCE PROVISIONS

COVERAGE AFFORDED	LIMITS OF LIABILITY
Workers Compensation	Statute
Employer’s Liability	\$100,000
Commercial General Liability	\$1,000,000 - Bodily Injury
Insurance	Combined Single Limit
Including: A. Products & Completed Operations B. Blanket Contractual C. Premises-Operations-Personal Injury	\$100,000 Property Damage
Professional Liability	\$3,000,000 (minimum)
Insurance (Errors and Omissions) (See Special Conditions)	Combined Single Limit

The following automobile liability insurance coverage will also be required for all professional service contracts which include surveying and/or construction surveillance.

Comprehensive Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000 - Bodily Injury
Insurance Including: non-owned, and hired vehicles	Combined Single Limit \$100,000 Property Damage

III. KEY PERSONNEL: It is essential that the Proponent provide adequate experienced personnel, capable of and devoted to the successful accomplishment of work to be performed under this Contract. The Proponent agrees to assign specific individuals to the key positions. The Proponent agrees that once assigned to work under this Contract, key personnel shall not be removed or replaced without written notice to the City.

If key personnel are not available for work under this Contract for a continuous period exceeding five (5) calendar days or are expected to devote substantially less effort to the work than initially anticipated, the Proponent shall immediately notify the City, and shall, subject to the concurrence of the City, replace such personnel with personnel of substantially equal ability and qualifications.

Selected Proponent must be able to appropriately staff the project within ten (10) days of City Council award.

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- IV. OTHER CONTRACTS:** The City may enter into Contracts for additional work related to this project. The Proponent shall fully cooperate with other contractors, design firms, and with City employees to accommodate such other work. The Proponent shall not commit or permit any act that interferes with the performance of such work by other contractors.
- V. COMPENSATION AND METHOD OF PAYMENT:** In consideration of the performance of the services described in the Scope of Services, the City shall pay the Proponent in accordance with the negotiated contract rates, and the Proponent shall charge the City only in accordance with those same rates. The City will pay the Proponent following the submission of deliverables, as per contract, and of itemized invoice(s). Each itemized invoice must bear a written certification by an authorized City representative confirming the services for which payment is requested.