A2. Wakefield Small Area Study

A2.1 Introduction

This project involves creating a new Small Area Study for the neighborhood of Wakefield in northeast Raleigh. A qualified multi-disciplinary team of planning and design experts will be selected based on proven excellence in preparing studies that encompass the following elements:

- Land use planning
- Public realm, including streetscape and urban form
- Connectivity and multi-modal transportation planning
- Greenways and parks planning
- Blueways and environmental planning
- Voluntary annexations and extension of extraterritorial jurisdiction

Consultant services will be required from the date of a fully executed contract through the subsequent 24-month period or the date of successful completion of the tasks and work products defined in this RFQ.

A2.2 Project Background

The Wakefield Small Area Study will respond to recent and upcoming changes planned to take place in and around the Wakefield area. The resulting plan should include policies to address potential land use focus areas, streetscape improvements, and balancing development in an urban watershed area.

The study area includes residential and commercial areas along Wakefield Pines Drive, Common Oaks Drive, and Falls of Neuse Road between the Neuse River and Capital Boulevard. The study area is located in northeast Raleigh around 12 miles from downtown and directly adjacent to Wake Forest. This area of Raleigh was annexed into the city in the 1980s, and most residential and commercial development in the area was built between 2000 and 2010. A map of the proposed study area is included in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Wakefield Study Area
The study area is bounded on the east by the intersection of two major transportation corridors - Falls of Neuse Road and Capital Boulevard. These are major north/south connectors within Raleigh and between Wake Forest and Raleigh. Improvements to these roads have been and continue to be made, particularly to expand capacity in the face of regional growth and commuting populations. The widening and realignment of Falls of Neuse Road, completed in 2011, converted the previously two-lane road to the four-lane median separated corridor that exists today between Raven Ridge Road and Fonville Road. Additional projects are on the horizon, including the Capital Boulevard Expressway project to convert Capital Boulevard (Route 1) north of I-540 to a limited-access highway and widening of a portion of Falls of Neuse Road from four- to six-lanes south of the project area between Durant Road and I-540.

Significant changes are also planned for transit service in the Wakefield area. The study area is currently served by just the GoRaleigh Wake Forest Loop (WFL) route, which connects the Wakefield Commons shopping area with the center of Wake Forest on 60-minute service. Implementation of Wake County Transit Plan, approved in 2016, would add all day, hourly transit service connecting the community with downtown Raleigh on Falls of Neuse Road.

Falls Lake, Raleigh’s main source of drinking water, is located to the west of Wakefield. The lake is a State park and Wake County zoning applied to the park limits development significantly to protect water quality. Within Raleigh, urban watershed overlays align with this goal. With the Neuse River forming the western boundary and other water features such as Richland Creek throughout, proximity to water shapes the study area and the appropriate planning.

The Wakefield study area directly abuts the Falls North Area Plan, which developed policies for a portion of Falls of Neuse Road, south of Wakefield, between Durant Road and Waterlow Park Lane. The Falls North Area Plan was adopted in 2006 and updated in 2018. The update focused on many of the same issues and changing conditions relevant to the Wakefield Small Area Study.

In consideration of this context, the Wakefield Small Area Study should focus on lessons learned from the implementation of the Falls of Neuse Road widening, opportunities created by planned transit service, land use policies consistent with the watershed designation, and identification of future land uses appropriate for remaining development sites.

A.2.3 Project Scope of Services

Task 1: Kick-off Engagement

The first task will be a meeting with the residents and stakeholders in the plan area to better define the issues.

Task 2: Market Analysis

A market consultant will identify remaining development sites in the plan area and analyze the market demand for common types of commercial and residential development. The analysis will look at competing commercial areas and identify any underserved market niches.

Task 3: Transportation Analysis

An inventory of current transportation conditions will be undertaken, including existing ADT volumes, volume over capacity for major roadway segments, and levels of service at key intersections. Existing data will be supplemented with counts where needed. Gaps in the sidewalk network, bike facility network, and block connectivity will be identified.
**Task 4: Land Use Analysis**

An inventory of built conditions surrounding the identified development sites will be undertaken, including such factors and land use, future land use designation, lot size, building height, and setbacks. City staff will take the lead in providing this information to the consultants.

**Task 5: Community Workshop**

The consultants will present the findings of the analysis conducted in Tasks 2 through 4 to the public and, with assistance from staff facilitators, will brainstorm land use options for the identified development sites, potential transportation improvements, and other policy options to address identified issues.

**Task 6: Draft and Final Report**

The consultants will develop draft recommendations and share them at a public meeting and at a City Council work session. Based on feedback, they will then produce a draft report that includes a summary of the public process, technical analysis, and plan recommendations. Staff will use this as a basis for preparing area specific guidance for incorporation into the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Both documents will be made available for public review before being finalized. The final draft will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration and adoption.

**A2.4 Project Staffing**

The Department of City Planning will serve as the project manager. Additional department and division staff including Department of Transportation and Raleigh Parks will provide project insight and design feedback.