



Request for Qualifications

Chatham County Deep River State Trail Corridor Feasibility Study

Issue Date: March 26, 2026

Email Questions By: April 9, 2026

Due Date/Time: April 16, 2026

Purpose

Chatham County is seeking to engage a planning or engineering firm in the development of a feasibility study for the land trail portion of the Deep River State Trail corridor in Chatham County. The selected consultant will provide data-driven recommendations that plot the rationale for selected development corridors, develop realistic strategies for implementation, and strategically prioritize how to cost-effectively build out trail infrastructure along the Deep River. Direct impacts will result in creating intentional opportunities for increased outdoor tourism, greater economic activity and community resiliency practices, and entrepreneurial support.

Background

The Deep River State Trail (DRST) was authorized by the NC General Assembly in 2007. The vision for the DRST is a hiking and paddle trail that extends approximately 125 miles from Jamestown to Moncure. Much of the trail development to date has occurred in Randolph County, with recent paddle trail access points developed in Chatham and Lee Counties.

The DRST corridor is an adopted element of the Chatham County Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Plan Chatham Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, a feasibility study for the Chatham County land trail segment is included in the Deep River State Trail 5-year plan.

Project Area

The Deep River in Chatham County runs approximately 26 miles from Carbondon to Moncure, where it converges with the Haw River to become the Cape Fear River. Much of this corridor is rural, consisting of farms and woodland with small townships.

Scope of Work

1. Facilitation of Meetings

- a. Conduct at least three stakeholder meetings to gather input from relevant project partners throughout the planning process.
- b. Facilitation of meetings includes scheduling, engaging participants, preparing meeting agendas and summaries, and ensuring that meetings are productive and yield results that serve to advance the final study.
- c. Meetings can be a mix of in-person and virtual, with the kick-off being held in person in Chatham County.

2. Information Gathering

- a. Collect relevant GIS and other data from Chatham County, DRST Steering Committee, and other relevant stakeholders to inform the study process, including topographical, natural heritage, land use, historical, cultural features and other points of interest.
- b. Review relevant past plans and reports that pertain to the study area to inform the existing conditions for the project.
- c. Capture the existing conditions along the river corridor, identifying opportunities, potential constraints, and perceived gaps. This should include field site visits.
- d. Conduct project partner interviews to inform existing conditions, project opportunities and constraints.

3. Public Outreach

- a. Engage the local community in outreach and educational efforts which ensure the trail is planned and developed in an accessible and equitable manner.
- b. Methods for public input should include:
 - i. Tabling at public events
 - ii. Conduct an online public opinion survey with a printed survey distributed to local community locations
 - iii. Conduct an online map to gather public input on proposed trail locations

4. Study Outcomes

- a. A final document to be provided in high resolution digital format should include the following.
 - i. Maps of the proposed corridor, identifying two-three preferred alignment alternatives at the parcel level and highlighting key features for connectivity such as conserved or protected land, historic landmarks, existing trail networks and other relevant elements.
 - ii. Identify opportunities for access (trailheads) and ROW acquisition,
 - iii. Actionable steps for developing the trail corridor, identifying near-term, mid-term and long-term opportunities.

- iv. Identify and address the unique challenges and circumstances impacting local underserved populations, such as mobility, safety, and connectivity barriers, and identify feasible solutions to mitigate such challenges.
- v. A benefits analysis of the proposed trail corridor to highlight health, economic, and ecological benefits of the project.
- vi. Accurate cost estimates for development of proposed trail segments and trail amenities including permitting, right of way acquisition, engineering and design costs, etc.
- vii. Identify locations where the trail will cross bridges or right of ways associated with state owned bridges.
- viii. Identify locations for historic and cultural interpretation along the proposed trail corridor such as dam and mill sites, mines, and historic bridges.
- ix. Identify lead agencies and key partners for successful project implementation, identifying roles and responsibilities.
- x. Identify additional resources needed (staffing, equipment, supplies) for the implementation and ongoing maintenance of priority projects.
- xi. Appendix
 - 1. Provide direction to the most current and relevant online resources concerning programs, policies, design guidelines, and the benefits of trail infrastructure. This information will be used as educational content for local elected officials, stakeholders, and members of the public.
 - 2. Incorporate existing plans and other relevant documents into the appendix (as needed).
 - 3. Any additional items the consultant deems necessary and relevant to include.

Chatham County will work with the selected consultant to ensure that all items of the scope are achieved throughout the planning process. In some instances, certain tasks will be undertaken by county staff. This will be negotiated and will occur as outlined in the final contract.

Project Timeline

Once a contract is signed the selected party must complete the study within one year.

Submittal Instructions

- A. Submittal Deadline:** Submittals must be received by Chatham County no later than **April 16, 2026, by 5:00 pm.**

B. Submission: Vendors must submit both an electronic PDF version of the submittal (excluding any materials that are non-electronic) and one hard copy with all attachments, including signatory pages, which should be received by the deadline above. The hard copy must be sent to one of the following delivery addresses in a clearly marked package “ DRST Feasibility Study RFQ”:

- Postal Address: Michele Peluso, Chatham County Finance Office
P. O. Box 608, Pittsboro, NC 27312
- Street Address: Michele Peluso, County Finance Office, Courthouse Annex
12 East Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312

The **electronic PDF version** of the submittal (excluding non-electronic materials) must be submitted by the deadline above to: purchasing@chathamcountync.gov or may be included in the submittal packet on digital media.

C. Withdrawal of Submittals: Proposing vendors may withdraw their submittal any time before the deadline for submission on April 15, 2026, by 5:00 pm. The withdrawal must be submitted in writing and signed by the proposing vendor.

D. Inquiries and Corrections: All inquiries relating to this request should be in writing and addressed to:

Michele Peluso, Chatham County Finance Office
P.O. Box 608, Pittsboro, NC 27312

They may also be faxed to 919-545-4261 or emailed to:
purchasing@chathamcountync.gov

If a proposing vendor finds discrepancies in or omissions from the specifications or should require additional clarification of any part, a written request for interpretation shall be submitted to Michele Peluso. Any interpretation of or changes made to the RFQ will be made by written addendum to each proposing consultant and shall become part of the request for any contract awarded. The County will not be responsible for the accuracy of any other oral explanations, interpretations, or representations. All inquiries must be submitted by 5:00pm on April 9, 2026. It shall be the responsibility of each proposing organization or individual to verify that every addendum has been received prior to submittals. If needed, addenda will be posted to the County’s Bids and RFQ Opportunities at www.chathamcountync.gov/bidsandopportunities.

E. Vendor Certification: The submittal shall be deemed a representation and certification that the proposing vendor:

- Has carefully read and fully understands the information provided by Chatham County in this RFQ;
- Is financially solvent and has the capability to successfully undertake and complete the responsibilities and obligations of the submittal;

- Represents that all of the information contained in the submittal is true and correct;
- Did not in any way collude or conspire with any other parties, directly or indirectly, in regard to the amount, terms, or conditions of this submittal;
- Acknowledges that Chatham County has the right to make any inquiry it deems appropriate to substantiate or supplement information provided by proposing vendors and hereby grants Chatham County permission to make these inquiries; and
- Acknowledges that any submittal cannot be modified after its submission for any reason.

F. Format and Deadline of Submittals: Late submittals will not be accepted under any circumstance and will not be opened or reviewed. We will not accept submittals by fax or any method other than is outlined under item B of Submittal Instructions. The sender must allow ample delivery time for the selected shipment or transmission methods.

G. Definition and Context: Unless otherwise specified in this document, all words shall have a common meaning unless the context in which they are used clearly requires a different meaning. Words in the singular number include the plural, and in the plural include the singular.

RFQ Schedule

RFQ Process	RFQ Deadline
RFQ Issued	March 26, 2026
Deadline for Questions	April 9, 2026, by 5:00 PM
Response to Questions Posted (if needed)	April 10, 2026, by 5:00 PM
Deadline for Submittals	April 16, 2026, by 5:00 PM

Submittal Contents

These instructions cover the format, content, and development of submittals. The submittals should be no longer than 30 pages (15 pages double-sided) to cover the sections listed below. Attachments A and B are required to provide necessary information and are not included in the page count. Only that information deemed essential to convey the proposing vendor’s understanding of the County’s requirements for this RFQ should be submitted. Items not listed below and not explicitly related to the RFQ (i.e. general marketing materials and examples of unrelated work) will not be considered in the evaluation process.

All submittals should include the following items in the order listed and must be organized as follows:

Section 1 - Description of Organization - Submit documentation describing your organization including, but not limited to, specific credentialing and licensing, accreditation, and professional affiliations your organization has in the areas related to this RFQ.

Section 2 - Vendor Information and Signature Form - This form is provided as Attachment A. The form should be completed and signed by the person with authority to approve contracts.

Section 3 - Service Delivery Information - Provide evidence of your expertise and experience in delivering the services required by this RFQ. Relevant work experience should include projects of similar nature and size undertaken within the last five (5) years, involving the personnel who will be assigned to this project.

Section 4 – Staffing - Describe your proposed staffing structure and qualifications of key personnel who will have direct involvement on this project. Specifically, demonstrate the technical competence to manage, write, rewrite, consolidate, and implement comparable projects.

Section 5 - Project Management - Detail your organization’s planned approach to engaging in and completing this project, including methodology, timelines, key benchmarks, and available capacity of principal staff who will be involved in this project.

Section 6 - Service Information - Detailed Professional Services to perform the scope of work as herein described.

Section 7 - References - Vendors must provide a list of services provided and successfully completed or on-going within the last five (5) years that demonstrate the vendors’ skills and capabilities with the type of services being requested. Please include the project name, location, cost, client contact name and telephone number, and a brief description of the project.

Section 8 – General Fee Structure

Evaluation Criteria

1. Agency Experience with Similar Scope and Size of Projects
2. Project Team Qualifications
3. Project Team Location
4. Innovative Project Approach
5. Proposed Schedule for Completing Identified Tasks
6. MWBE/HUB
7. Other factors that may be appropriate for the project.

The County may or may not conduct interviews. If interviews are held, firms are hereby notified that the interview process will quickly follow the submittal deadline and firms should prepare their submittal and proposed team accordingly. Elaborate presentations and submittals during the interview process are not expected or requested. Each interview will last no more than two hours and will be conducted by county staff.

Chatham County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy or genetic information.

Appendix A



Purchasing Division
PO Box 608
Pittsboro, NC 27312
Phone 919-545-8321
vendors@chathamcountync.gov

Date of Application
[]

Company/Firm Name as shown on Federal Tax Return
[]

Alternate Name if applicable (doing business as)
[]

Corporation [] Individual [] LLC [] Partnership [] Non-Profit [] Foster Care []

Federal ID Number (SSN if Foster Care)
[]

Contact Name
[]

Phone number
[]

Email for Contact Person
[]

Corporate Address (must match W-9)
Line 1
[]

Address for Remittance [] Same
Line 1
[]

Line 2
[]

Line 2
[]

City
[]

City
[]

State
[]

State
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Zip
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Zip
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State
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State
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Zip
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Zip
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What specific products and/or services will you be providing to Chatham County?
[]

Certificate Holder & Additional Insured: Chatham County
Address: P.O. Box 1809,
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Do you have a Certificate of Insurance (COI)? [] Yes [] No Provide copy of COI.
If you are a HUB vendor registered with the statewide vendor database (SWUC), please mark your classification and attach your certification.

Minority [] Disadvantage [] Disabled [] Female []

I hereby affirm that all information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I bear the responsibility of any error or mistake in data.

Signature
[]

Date
[]

Title
[]

Internal Use Only Date Initials
Checklist Completed []

Vendor ID#
[]

Dept Approval-Products/Services
[]