

I. Application for AFID Planning Grant

October 29, 2015

Project Title: Rockfish Valley Area Plan	
Applicant Jurisdiction: Nelson County	
Other Localities involved (for multijurisdictional applications only): N/A	
Start Date: January 6, 2016	Anticipated End Date: January 31, 2017
Requested Amount: \$16,000 (Not to exceed \$20,000)	
Primary Contact Person for Project	
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Abstract: 200 or fewer words	<p>Nelson County's Rockfish Valley is a remarkably special place to local residents and to the many visitors that come to experience the area's many assets.</p> <p>The area is defined by a beautiful rural landscape of the Blue Ridge Mountains and working farms and forests; an abundance of high-profile outdoor recreation opportunities including the Blue Ridge Parkway; and an impressive and growing concentration of agritourism industry venues, activities, and products.</p> <p>This special place has experienced significant increases in commercial development and economic activity, and those trends seem to be continuing and strengthening. While those trends are in many ways very positive for the Rockfish Valley and for Nelson County, they also have created questions about the amount and the location of growth. This is an important time for the County to ensure that these ongoing changes do not negatively impact the special qualities that are the foundation of the area's sense of place, quality of life, and economic vitality.</p> <p>With those considerations in mind, the Rockfish Valley Area Plan (RVAP) is an important and timely initiative that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - produce an up-to-date evaluation of the area's attributes, characteristics, and patterns of growth and land use; - engage the public to better understand local values, concerns, and priorities; and - identify strategic opportunities to develop a framework for balancing land development activities with the preservation of the area's rural heritage and community assets – including the preservation and promotion of local orchards, vineyards, farms, forests, and agritourism and agribusiness enterprises.

II: Project Purpose:

In addition to the following summary responses (below), please reference page three (3) of the attached “RVAP Scope of Work” document which provides “Project Intent & Purposes” organized as follows:

- economic development
- community development
- Nelson County Mission Statement
- public participation
- Code of Virginia
- Nelson County Comprehensive Plan
- Nelson County Zoning Ordinance

Project Importance:

The Rockfish Valley is presently in need of a public planning process that establishes a thorough, strategic, asset-based community development framework, with an emphasis on accomplishing the following public benefits:

- to provide appropriate guidance and policies for current and future land uses;
- to ensure that private investments are well-coordinated and positioned for success;
- to maximize the efficient use of public resources and capital improvement projects; *and*
- to identify, protect, and enhance the area’s rich treasury of community assets.

Issues of Focus:

The RVAP is a relatively wide-ranging planning project, with a focus on the following issues:

A responsibility to:

- identify future land use patterns that are appropriate and desirable
- avoid unplanned land development and undesirable growth or change(s)
- protect rural residential areas and maximize quality of life for area residents
- protect working farms and forests and promote the area’s agricultural heritage and economy

A timely opportunity to proactively:

- help attract the desired types of growth and development in target industries
- help guide development towards the most appropriate areas
- maximize Nelson County tourism / agritourism “brand”
- ensure continued economic vitality, especially in the thriving agritourism and agribusiness industries
- help preserve prime agricultural soils and landscapes and other rural agricultural features

Project Activities / Components:

For a complete overview of project activities and work product deliverables, please see responses to questions III and V as well as the attached “RVAP Scope of Work” and “RVAP Work Products” documents.

Proposed project components and activities include the following:

- Summarizing all relevant existing plans and policies associated with the Rockfish Valley
- Producing an asset inventory to identify the area’s special features, characteristics, and attractions
- Conducting a public survey (and possible other public engagement activities)
- Producing an area assessment which synthesizes the numerous issues and opportunities
- Preparing a vision statement and a strategic plan for the Rockfish Valley area
- Undertaking a policy review (focusing on the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Map) to identify potential updates, revisions, and/or amendments (as appropriate and as determined by the BOS)

III. Goals and Deliverables

Project Goals:

Undertake and complete a strategic planning process for the Rockfish Valley to provide the following:

- an inventory of the area’s community assets;
- an accurate assessment of the area’s current conditions and trends;
- an analysis of anticipated future opportunities, issues, and threats;
- an analysis of deficiencies with existing land use policies and patterns; and

- asset-based development recommendations that best serve the area’s families, businesses, and visitors by protecting and enhancing the Rockfish Valley’s community assets, character, and sense of place
 - a clear, coordinated vision for facilitating positive economic development activity and inducing private investment – especially in the growing sectors of agritourism, agribusiness, and the craft beverage industry (*with an emphasis on attracting targeted industries into the most appropriate locations*)
 - a clear vision and strategies for the protection and enhancement of the area’s authentic rural character, agricultural heritage and activities, special sense of place, and high quality of life

Project Deliverables:

Please see the attached “RVAP Work Products” document for a more complete overview of the following deliverables:

- Summary & Synthesis of Existing Plans
- Rockfish Valley Asset Inventory
- Rockfish Valley Zoning Map
- Rockfish Valley Land Use Map & Analysis Summary
- Rockfish Valley Business Inventory and Tax Revenue Analysis
- Analysis of Transportation Infrastructure: Conditions & Needs Report
- Rockfish Valley Area Assessment Summary
- Property Owners’ Survey

Measures of Success:

- Board of Supervisors adoption of RVAP, either as a stand-alone document or element of the Comprehensive Plan, including:
 - Specific land use policy recommendations for the Rte. 151 and Rte. 664 corridors, which are the fastest-changing, highest-profile portions of the Rockfish Valley
- Identification of important opportunities to update the Zoning Ordinance and/or Zoning Map, including:
 - Specific, reasonable recommendations for Zoning Ordinance and/or Zoning Map amendments which respond to current development activities and which anticipate future growth potential.
- Increased public awareness, engagement, and participation in land use and planning issues.
- Continued success and growth of agritourism, agribusiness, craft beverage, and local food systems enterprises in the Rockfish Valley.

IV. Board/Committee/Working Group:

Describe the composition of the board/committee/working group, how they participate in the development and delivery of the project, their relevant expertise, and the support they have from local government and the agricultural and/or forestland community in the locality.

- Nelson 151's "AFID Committee" – TBD; possible committee members:
 - Mr. George Hodson, Veritas Vineyard & Winery (proposed)
 - Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, Afton Mountain Vineyards (proposed)
- Agricultural & Forestal District Advisory Committee representative:
 - Mr. Andy Wright, Advisory Committee Chair (proposed)
- Greenfield Agricultural & Forestal District representative:
 - Ms. Joyce Burton (proposed)
- Nelson County Board of Supervisors representatives:
 - Mr. Tommy Harvey, North District Supervisor
 - Mrs. Connie Brennan, Central District Supervisor
- Nelson County Planning Commission representative:
 - Mrs. Philippa Proulx, North District Commissioner, PC Chair (proposed)
- RVAP Project Team:
 - Nelson County Staff –
 - Mr. Stephen A. Carter, County Administrator
 - Ms. Maureen Kelley, Economic Development & Tourism Director
 - Mr. Tim Padalino, Planning & Zoning Director
 - Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission –
 - Mr. Chip Boyles, Executive Director
 - Mr. Will Cockrell, Director of Planning

V. Work Plan

Project Activity	Who	Timeline (Month/Year)
Phase I – Area Analysis:		
Public Meeting #1: Project Introduction	NC Staff and TJPDC	<i>Completed: October 28th 2014</i>
Prepare (Draft) Phase I Work Products: – Rockfish Valley Zoning Map – Rockfish Valley Land Use Map – Property Owners’ Survey	NC Staff and TJPDC	<i>Completed: Early 2015</i>
RVAP Working Group Meeting #1	NC Staff and TJPDC and Working Group	1/2016
Project Team Continues Phase I Work Products: – Summary & Synthesis of Existing Plans – Rockfish Valley Asset Inventory – Rockfish Valley Zoning Map – Rockfish Valley Land Use Map & Land Use Analysis Summary – Rockfish Valley Business Inventory and Tax Revenue Analysis – Analysis of Transportation Infrastructure: Conditions & Needs Report – Rockfish Valley Area Assessment (Phase I Summary)	NC Staff and TJPDC	1/2016 – 4/2016
Project Team Conducts Public Survey: – Begin compiling initial responses from 2014 – Translate existing survey into online format using “SurveyMonkey” – Relaunch existing survey (paper and online)	NC Staff and TJPDC	1/2016 – 4/2016
RVAP Working Group Meeting #2	NC Staff and TJPDC and Working Group	4/2016
Project Team Finalizes Phase I Work Products and Prepares for Public Meeting #2:	NC Staff and TJPDC	4/2016 – 6/2016
Public Meeting #2: Phase I Presentation	NC Staff and TJPDC and Working Group	6/2016
PHASE II – Area Planning:		
RVAP Working Group Meeting #3	NC Staff and TJPDC	7/2016
Project Team Begins Phase II Work Products (TBD by Board of Supervisors)	NC Staff and TJPDC	7/2016 – 10/2016
Public Meeting #3: Charrette/Workshop	NC Staff and TJPDC and Working Group	10/2016
RVAP Working Group Meeting #4	NC Staff and TJPDC and Working Group	11/2016
Project Team Refines Phase II Work Products	NC Staff and TJPDC	11/2016 – 1/2017
Public Meeting #4: Phase II Presentation	NC Staff and TJPDC and Working Group	1/2017

RVAP Presented to Planning Commission	NC Staff and TJPDC	2/22/2016
RVAP Presented to BOS	NC Staff and TJPDC	3/14/2016

VI. Budget Narrative

Describe local match and how it will be used to accomplish project goals. Describe use of grant funds.

Local Match: \$16,079

- \$8,040 – Cash:
 - \$4,020 – Dept. of Planning & Zoning FY16 budget
 - \$4,020 – Dept. of Economic Development & Tourism FY16 budget
- \$8,039 – In-Kind Donations:
 - County staff time:
 - Tim Padalino @ \$34.75/hour x 160 hours = \$5,560
 - Maureen Kelley @ \$43.38/hour x 40 hours = \$1,735
 - Steve Carter @ \$76.01/hour x 8 hours = \$608
 - Andrew Crane @ \$27.20/hour x 5 hours = \$136

Proposed Use of Grant Funds: \$16,000

\$12,750	Negotiate technical assistance contract with TJPDC, whose staff provided extensive technical assistance with the initial RVAP efforts in 2014 (and with whom County staff have an existing working relationship from previous collaboration on other local and regional planning issues)
\$1,200	Negotiate technical assistance contract with charrette facilitator or public engagement specialist
\$1,000	Meeting materials and refreshments for public meetings and/or charrette(s)
\$750	Printing costs [large-format printing/plotting and/or final Area Plan document(s)]
\$300	Annual subscription to SurveyMonkey “Gold Plan” professional service

SUBMISSION ATTACHMENTS

- VII. Letter from chief administrative officer of applicant locality(ies) expressing their support and how they will assist:**
- Letter from Mr. Stephen A. Carter (dated 9-18-2015)
- VIII. Letters of support from the agricultural and/or forestry industry:**
- Letter from Nelson 151 (dated 11-29-2013)
 - Letter from Agricultural & Forestal District Advisory Committee (dated 10-4-2015)
- IX. Letters of support from other affected constituents:**
- X. Other documents (studies, articles, brochures, etc.) referenced in the application or that the applicant wishes to be considered as part of the application:**
- Rockfish Valley Area Plan “Scope of Work” (dated 4-25-2014)
 - Rockfish Valley Area Plan “Project Work Products & Timeline” (dated 8-29-2014)
 - Rockfish Valley Area Plan “Project Overview” (dated 10-2014)
 - Rockfish Valley Area Plan “Public Survey for Phase I” (dated 4-14-2015)