



## CITY OF ASTORIA

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### REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

#### Economic Development Services

for

#### Five Year Economic Development Strategy

**DUE: April 22, 2016 11 am**

The City of Astoria is seeking statements of qualifications from qualified professional economic development consultants for technical analysis, planning, and strategic services for the City's first Five Year Economic Development Strategy. The project includes technical assistance with creating an Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) and developing an inventory of key business sectors to grow, expand, retain, and attract, create a clusters strategy of traded sector or knowledge based industries, an entrepreneurial/economic gardening strategy to support startup and first phase businesses, a review of current technical assistance and financial tools, and an overall action plan to achieve each strategy.

### BACKGROUND

The City of Astoria has historically benefited from the natural resources industries that have dominated the economic and cultural landscape of Oregon coastal communities, including fish processing, forestry, and marine industries. In the last decade, Astoria has become a destination town on the Oregon Coast for tourism: Astor Column, Lewis & Clark National Historic Park, Downtown Astoria, and various other year round events and attractions. Astoria needs to diversify its economy to supplement the tourism and natural resource based economies. To some extent, Astoria has done this with key investments from the City and State. The craft brewing/fermentation sector has boomed with four breweries, another under construction, and a startup kombucha brewer. Related to the beverage industry is a strong "foodie culture" with restaurants, bakeries, small batch producers, culinary arts and tourism, new commercial kitchens, and a growing community capacity to support this sector. The City has offered technical and financial assistance to some of these businesses, and makes referrals to partners such the Clatsop Economic Development Resources (SBDC affiliate) but does not have a coordinated strategy to support these industries as well as other high growth industries that could expand the labor market and provide more living wage job and workforce development opportunities.

The City of Astoria has an updated land inventory for commercial and industrial lands, and the Comprehensive Plan policies and objectives for Goal 9 are not without merit, but are generic statements with little strategic value. As a result, a new Economic Opportunities Analysis is needed to take a fresh look at the next wave of economic development in a global and regional context and a strategic approach to growing specific business sectors. With

an EOA as a baseline, the City needs a five year action plan to guide its asset management and investment portfolio to drive more private investment, including traditional commercial real estate, equity and debt participation, startup capital, angel investing, and venture capital.

Despite being a small town, the City of Astoria has a long history and proven record on executing complex public-private partnerships. The CMH Field, Mill Pond Neighborhood, Liberty Theater, and Fort George Brewery expansion are all success stories and an impressive legacy of projects to build on for a new strategy. The City's Community Development Department is acting as project manager on behalf of the City Manager's Office, the City Council, and regional partners.

## **PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS**

The project stakeholders identified to date include the following:

- Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (Main Street Organization)
- Astoria Sunday Market (Entrepreneur Hub)
- Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce
- Clatsop Community College
- Clatsop Economic Development Resources (SBDC/Regional Partner)
- Columbia Memorial Hospital (Largest Private Employer)
- Columbia Pacific Economic Development District (3 County EDA District)
- Columbia Pacific Preservation Council (Historic Preservation Group)
- Craft 3 (CDFI)
- Lower Columbia Hispanic Council
- Pacific Power
- Port of Astoria
- Various City Boards, Commissions, and Departments

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The following tasks are envisioned by the City and will be modified as necessary during the scope and fee negotiation process once a qualified consultant team is selected:

**1. Project kick-off.** City will hire a consultant through a competitive selection process. City staff will compile background materials from its records and other appropriate sources for the consultant to review. An ad-hoc committee will be formed, with the assistance of the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce and CEDR. The committee and consultant will conduct an initial citywide tour of sites and local businesses, followed by a kick-off meeting at which the consultant and city staff will outline and clarify the process and project objectives, as needed, based upon feedback from the group. A technical advisory group may also be formed that includes a small group of key staff with the Chamber of Commerce, City of Astoria, CEDR, Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (ADHDA), Col-Pac, and other partner organizations.

Timeline: Month 1-3

Product & Outcomes: Memo documenting consultant selection process, formation of an advisory committee with meeting schedule, and the outcomes of the kick-off meeting (including any process adjustments/ clarifications).

Additional outcomes include a specific charter for the advisory committee, expectations for attendance and input, and a City drafted public involvement strategy with clear objectives and expectations.

**2. Update Economic Data and Prepare Employment Forecast.** Consultant will conduct EOA, which includes evaluating relevant national, state, regional, county and local economic development trends, particularly traded sector industries and knowledge based industries, such as medical and educational facilities, and will review the information and approach with staff and the advisory committee. Consultant will further prepare an employment forecast considering this information and will review the forecast methodology with staff and the ad-hoc committee prior to finalizing the trend data and employment forecast. Targeted stakeholder interviews, focus group, or site tours may be a component of this effort.

Timeline: Months 3-5

Products & Outcomes: Draft Economic Trends and Employment Forecast for the City of Astoria. Outcomes will include infographics and visual displays to help tell the economic story of Astoria and a business case for why Astoria needs an economic development strategy in the face of global competition for talent, resources, and private capital.

**3. Evaluate Employment Land Availability, Site Needs, & Tenant Strategy.** Consultant is to outline approach to identifying available employment lands, redevelopment potential of properties within the community, brownfield identification, likely employment densities, land capacity, short term land availability, and a tenant strategy to fill vacancies based on results of Task 2. This will include outreach with industrial and commercial owners and the approach will be vetted and adjusted as needed based upon feedback from staff and the advisory committee. A report with maps will be prepared which will also be vetted with the committee.

Timeline: Months 5-7

Products & Outcomes: Draft Employment Land Availability and Site Needs Report & Map. Outcomes will include proposed sites for redevelopment and reinvestment targets, potential sites outside the UGB if needed, and a portfolio of private and public properties to market, and specific types of tenants to retain or recruit.

**4. Conclusions, Policy Recommendations, and Implementing Measures.** Consultant is to compare and analyze land capacity and demand, identify case studies where similar challenges in other communities were overcome and a cluster strategy led to new private investment, and select key clusters and strategies to support those industry sectors, and discuss implications with staff and the advisory committee on existing tools, development code obstacles, or public-private partnership opportunities. Policies and implementation measures will also be prepared and reviewed and refined by the advisory group.

Timeline: Months 7-9

Products & Outcomes: Memo Outlining Key Conclusions, Policy Recommendations and Implementing Measures. Outcomes will include infographics and visual displays that capture the policy choices between current or expected economic climate and an enhanced economic climate based on key economic factors using socioeconomic data, livability criteria, job growth, and workforce development indicators to delineate the choice. Recommendations will also include regulatory changes to the development code or other obstacles to development.

**5. Economic Element of the Comprehensive Plan Draft Report.** Consultant is to finalize the above referenced reports and prepare a new Economic Section to the Astoria Comprehensive Plan for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council. Documents are to be adjusted as needed based upon feedback from these policy making bodies. Public hearings are to be held and a signed adoption ordinance is to be forwarded to DLCD.

Timeline: Months 9-12

Products & Outcomes: Amended Economic Section of the Astoria Comprehensive Plan and supporting Economic Opportunity Analysis documents. Outcomes are a clearer direction on economic development policy and programs, including making a policy decision on expanding the UGB for commercial land.

**6. Economic Development Strategy Draft Report.** Based on the above results, the Consultant will prepare a concise, five year economic development strategy (action plan) with specific actions, assigned partners, and resources and tools to implement, and present it to the stakeholder advisory committee, Port of Astoria Commission, CEDR Board, and City Council for final adoption.

Timeline: Months 9-12

Products & Outcomes: Five Year Economic Development Strategy. Outcomes will include numerical job targets, identity of at least four key business clusters to retain, expand, or attract, and measures of success including expected changes in socioeconomic indicators and economic impacts to local economy, and summary of technical and financial assistance tools.

**TENTATIVE PROJECT SCHEDULE**

Following is a general schedule of activities for the project:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Estimated Date</u>
Request for Qualifications 1 <sup>st</sup> Publication	April 4, 2016
Qualification statements due to City	April 22, 2016
Selection of design consultant team	May 6, 2016
Issue Notice to Proceed	May 20, 2016
Task 1-3: Develop Alternatives	Summer/Fall 2016
Task 4: Final Report & Presentation	Winter/Spring 2017

**QUALIFICATION STATEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

The consultant is to provide adequate information that will render it qualified and capable of effectively accomplishing the project. Sealed qualifications (5 COPIES) must be received no later than **11:00 AM Friday, April 22, 2016** at the address on the cover sheet. Faxed or emailed submissions will not be accepted. Qualifications received after the appointed time will be returned unopened. Limit submittals to 10 pages or less, not including resumes.

- Cover letter
- Specialized experience and knowledge including related experience with complex economic development programs, tools, analysis, public private partnerships, and financing
- Experience and capabilities of proposed team members
- Professional qualifications
- Experience coordinating outreach activities and gathering of input from project stakeholders
- Graphic design capability, layout of proposal, and branding of work products

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The consultant will be evaluated and ranked based on proven experience, expertise, and technical merit for the requested services. Added consideration will be given to those applicants who have successfully completed similar projects. After a consultant is chosen, they will be asked to develop a project management plan, budget and schedule for the project. If an acceptable plan, budget, schedule, and contract cannot be developed, the selection panel will meet and select another consultant from the original RFQ submittals and restart negotiations.

1	Specialized experience in the type of work to be performed. Technical knowledge of economic development concepts, financing, and public private partnerships. Demonstrated ability with problem identification and developing creative solutions.	20 Points
2	Capacity and capability to perform the work within the time limitations.	20 Points
3	Educational and professional record, including past record of performance on contracts with governmental agencies and private parties with respect to cost control, quality of work, and ability to meet schedules.	20 Points
4	Availability to perform the assignment and familiarity with the area in which the specific work is located.	20 Points
5	Demonstrated ability to assist outreach activities to gather input from multiple stakeholders and meet expected outcomes.	10 Points
6	Graphic design capability, layout of proposal, and branding of work products	10 Points
	TOTAL	100 Points

### DELIVERY OF QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS

Deliver five (5) hard copies of the qualification statement to:

Kevin A. Cronin, AICP, Director  
Community Development Department  
City of Astoria  
1095 Duane Street  
Astoria, OR 97103

RE: Five Year Economic Development Strategy  
RFQ for Economic Development Services

Any qualification statements received after the above specified time will not be considered.  
Electronic submittals will not be accepted.

The City reserves the right to cancel this request in whole or in part at any time, or otherwise reject any and all submissions for reasons deemed by the City that such an action would be in the City's best interest.

Address questions, comments or concerns regarding the project directly to Kevin A. Cronin, Community Development Director at (503) 338-5183 or [kcronin@astoria.or.us](mailto:kcronin@astoria.or.us).