



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

City of Astoria: Development Review Audit

https://www.astoria.gov/Public_Notices.aspx

Background

The City of Astoria invites proposals from qualified consultants to conduct a **Development Review Audit** of the City's land use, permitting, and regulatory review processes. This initiative is a key step in modernizing and streamlining the development review system to ensure it is timely, more predictable, consistent, objective, solutions-oriented, and customer-focused.

Astoria is committed to continuous improvement of its development services. This project builds upon prior efforts, including the 2009-2010 Development Permit Customer Service Review and recent internal work to modernize site plan review processes among the Planning, Building, Engineering, and Fire departments. Key focus areas include interdepartmental coordination, clarity and consistency in code interpretation, timely permit processing, streamlined/updated process and procedures, effective customer communication, and removal of unnecessary barriers to development review.

The City Council has identified updating and improving development review as a critical priority to support new development, redevelopment opportunities, and housing production as well as livability goals.

Project Funding and Timeline

- **Budget:** Not to exceed \$80,000
- **Desired Timeline:** July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Scope of Work

The City anticipates the following task elements for this project:

1. Project Kick-Off
2. Staff Interviews and Stakeholder Engagement
3. Process Mapping and Operational Practices
4. Policy, Code and Site Plan Review

5. Comparative Analysis and Best Practices
6. Final Recommendations for Implementation Strategy

Task 1: Project Kick-Off

The consultant will begin by collaborating with City staff to confirm the scope, review project goals, and finalize the schedule and deliverables. This task establishes the foundation for the audit and process improvement recommendations.

- **Facilitate a kick-off meeting with City staff to:**
 - Confirm project scope, goals, and desired outcomes
 - Review existing documentation and data
 - Establish communication protocols and points of contact
 - Finalize the project schedule
 - Deliverables:
 - Formalized project schedule and workflows
 - Form Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Task 2: Staff Interviews and Stakeholder Engagement

This task includes targeted outreach to internal and external stakeholders to understand current challenges, strengths, and opportunities for improvement in the development review process.

- **Interviews**
 - Interview staff from departments involved in development review (City Manager, Planning, Building, Engineering, Fire)
 - Identify key decision points, roles, responsibilities, and coordination opportunities
 - Deliverables
 - Interview summaries and synthesis of key themes
 - Identification of major decision points and approval timelines
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
 - Conduct up to five external stakeholder interviews
 - Deliverable:
 - Document public perspectives on strengths, frustrations, and suggested improvements

Task 3: Process Mapping and Operational Practices

Using insights from Task 2, the consultant will map current workflows and assess operational conditions.

- **Process Mapping**

- Document workflows across departments (Planning, Building, Engineering, Fire)
- Include pre-application, intake, routing, review, inspections, and final approvals
- Workflows should examine a large complex project, a commercial tenant improvement, a redevelopment project, new residential building, and a remodel of an existing residential building, and a retaining wall project.
- Deliverables:
 - Workflow maps for current development review processes
 - Gap analysis identifying inefficiencies and redundancies
 - Current State Assessment Memo outlining existing challenges and coordination gaps

- **Operational Practices**

- Assess policies, technology, staffing, current practices, permit tracking and coordination, permit approval practices, and organizational structure
- Deliverables:
 - Evaluation of departmental work practices
 - Technology system assessment
 - Analysis of review timelines and customer service practices
 - Staffing evaluation and resource needs analysis

Task 4: Policy, Code and Site Plan Review

This task evaluates the Astoria Development Code (ADC) and related procedures to streamline site plan review and align with state mandates.

- **Site Plan Review**

- Analyze the ADC and relevant procedures to enhance the efficiency, clarity, and effectiveness of the site plan review process
- Deliverable:
 - Identify inconsistencies, inefficiencies, ambiguities, and regulatory or administrative barriers that hinder timely and functional site plan review
 - Develop a draft ordinance language that staff can use to insert the Site Plan review into the ADC
 - Formalize a land use application process to determine project vesting as well as tracking timelines of approval per ORS 227.178
 - Create a mock site plan routing form

- **Policy and Code Audit**

- Review ADC and procedures for clarity and efficiency

- Identify uses that could be administrative / ministerial (Type I) or limited land use decision
- Focus on State law compliance, including housing legislation and ADUs
- Deliverables:
 - o Identification of inconsistencies, barriers, and outdated language
 - o Annotated ADC sections with recommended clarifications or revisions for the highest priority amendments
 - o List of activities eligible for over-the-counter permitting (Type 1)
 - o Evaluation of ADC against state mandates and priorities
 - o Draft Land Use Application Form/Package

Task 5. Comparative Analysis and Best Practices

This task will evaluate the City's development review operations in comparison with peer jurisdictions and nationally recognized best practices. The objective is to identify proven strategies to improve process efficiency, enhance customer service, and modernize review procedures.

- **Activities**

- Benchmark Astoria's development review against comparable cities
- Identify:
 - o Over-the-counter permitting opportunities
 - o Public-facing improvements (handouts, transparency tools and possible training)
 - o Enhanced coordination and customer service strategies
 - o Site Plan Review fee levels in comparison to comparable cities
- Deliverables:
 - o Summary of peer city models and innovations and respective cost for site plan review
 - o Side-by-side assessment comparing Astoria's practices to those of peer jurisdictions
 - o Strategic recommendations for aligning Astoria's development services with contemporary best practices and emerging trends in the field

Task 6. Final Recommendations and Implementation Strategy

This final task synthesizes all findings into actionable recommendations and a roadmap for implementation.

- **Activities**

- Develop prioritized recommendations for procedural, staffing, policy, and technological improvements
- Identify strategies to improve interdepartmental coordination

- Deliverables:
 - **Draft and Final Reports** with:
 - Final recommendations for improvement
 - Coordination enhancements between Planning, Building, Engineering, Fire.
 - **Implementation Roadmap**, with:
 - ✓ Prioritized actions (short-, mid-, and long-term)
 - ✓ Staffing considerations and technology recommendations
 - ✓ Code adoptions or amendments
 - ✓ Cost estimates and resource implications
 - ✓ Timeline and responsible parties
 - Executive Summary

Proposal Requirements

Submit a proposal that includes:

- **Statement of Understanding** (1 page): Summary of project understanding and objectives
- **Qualifications** (2 pages): Relevant firm or consultant experience and past projects
- **Proposed Approach & Work Plan** (up to 4 pages): Task methodology, deliverables, and timeline
- **Budget and Fee Proposal** (1 page): Project cost by task, hourly rates, and reimbursables
- **References** (1 page): List of recent clients with similar projects

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>	<u>Points</u>
Understanding of Project, Current Situation, Outcomes	25
Relevant Experience and Team Capacity	25
Approach, Methodology, and Deliverables	30
Cost and Value	10
Schedule and Delivery Plan	10

Short-listed applicants may be invited to interview.

General Terms and Conditions

Agreement: The selected firm or consultant will enter into a contract with the City of Astoria outlining the terms and conditions of the funding.

Reporting: Regular progress reports and a final report detailing the outcomes and financial expenditure will be required.

Attachments

- 2009 City of Astoria/Development Permit Customer Service Reviews
 - Phase 1 – Permit Recipient Interview Findings and Recommendations [LINK](#)
 - Phase 2 - Development Permit Staff Interview Findings and Recommendations [LINK](#)
- City of Astoria ‘Working Drafts’
 - Site Plan Review Exemptions [LINK](#)
 - Site Plan Review Guide [LINK](#)
 - Project Proposal Form [LINK](#)
 - Site Plan Review Requirements Worksheet [LINK](#)
- City of Astoria Development Code [LINK](#)
- Sample of Contract: Provided upon request [LINK](#)

Contact

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Community Development Director
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Ph: 503-298-2410

Submittal

- **Deadline:** June 6, 2025, 5:00 PM PDT
- **Email Submissions:** Subject line: "Astoria Development Review Audit"
Send to: jroberts@astoria.gov
- https://www.astoria.gov/Public_Notices.aspx

Hard Copy Submissions:

Submittal for City of Astoria Development Review Audit
Attn: Community Development Director
1095 Duane Street
Astoria, OR 97103

Any proposals received after the specified time will not be considered. Consultants responding to this RFP do so solely at their expense, and the City is not responsible for any Consultant expenses associated with responding to this RFP.

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.