



## **Request for Proposals (RFP)**

### **Customs House Workforce Housing Development Opportunity**

[https://www.astoria.gov/Public\\_Notices.aspx](https://www.astoria.gov/Public_Notices.aspx)

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Astoria is seeking a qualified development partner to redevelop the City-owned Customs House property into a permanently affordable workforce homeownership project addressing middle-housing.

This opportunity builds on a 2025 Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) and subsequent City Council work sessions, during which Council established four guiding principles for the site:

- 1. Financial feasibility first**
- 2. Site-specific realism**
- 3. Diversity of housing types**
- 4. Authentic community engagement**

The City intends to leverage publicly owned land to expand attainable homeownership opportunities while ensuring architectural compatibility, historic preservation, and long-term affordability. Proposals must demonstrate credible financing, realistic site planning, durable affordability controls, and a community focused process with meaningful integration and coordination with the surrounding neighborhood.

The City seeks a development partner capable of delivering a financially feasible, context-sensitive workforce housing community that reflects Astoria’s heritage, strengthens neighborhood stability, and provides durable, attainable homeownership for local families.

#### **I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

The City of Astoria invites proposals from qualified development teams for the adaptive redevelopment of the City-owned Customs House property into a context-sensitive, permanently affordable workforce housing project.

Council has directed staff to proceed with a focused, site-specific RFP that advances attainable homeownership opportunities for working households earning approximately

**80%–120% of Area Median Income (AMI).** Ownership models serving this income range—particularly Community Land Trust (CLT) or similar shared equity structures—will be prioritized.

This RFP reflects Council housing goals and incorporates findings from the prior RFEI process.

## **II. COMMUNITY HOUSING CONTEXT**

Astoria’s Housing Inventories Report (June 2025) confirms widening affordability gaps, particularly for low- and moderate-income households. Further, Moderate-income households—particularly those earning between 80% and 120% of Area Median Income (AMI)—face limited attainable ownership opportunities within the local market, constraining workforce stability and upward mobility.

The Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA) establishes a 20-year production target of 262 units for households earning 81–120% AMI within the Astoria Urban Growth Boundary. Meeting this target will require strategic use of publicly controlled land, durable affordability mechanisms, and partnerships that expand attainable homeownership opportunities. The Customs House property represents one such opportunity and is intended to directly contribute toward closing Astoria’s moderate-income housing gap through permanently affordable, workforce-oriented homeownership aligned with adopted state housing requirements and local production goals.

## **III. COUNCIL GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Through multiple public work sessions, the Astoria City Council has emphasized that redevelopment of the Customs House site must be grounded in practical execution, neighborhood compatibility, and long-term public benefit. Proposals will be evaluated for clear alignment with the following guiding principles, which reflect Council’s deliberations and direction.

### **1. Financial Feasibility First**

Proposals must be buildable and financeable based on realistic construction costs, market assumptions, and capital stack strategies. Financial feasibility strategies should demonstrate the ability to deliver affordability to households earning approximately 80%-120% of Area Median Income (AMI) based on household size. Concepts that are architecturally compelling but lack credible financing, entitlement strategy, or execution capacity will not score competitively. Financial feasibility and deliverability are primary determinants in evaluation.

### **2. Site-Specific Realism**

Development concepts must demonstrate clear understanding of site constraints, including sewer infrastructure, potential right-of-way adjustments, access limitations, and

buildable area considerations. Proposals should provide a concise narrative explaining how site conditions have been evaluated and addressed in the proposed layout. Unrealistic density assumptions or designs that do not account for infrastructure constraints will not advance competitively.

### **3. Diversity of Housing Types**

The City encourages varied middle housing forms that expand attainable homeownership opportunities while maintaining neighborhood scale. Cottage clusters, duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, or similar configurations are encouraged, provided they demonstrate compatibility with surrounding development.

### **4. Community Engagement**

Redevelopment of this site must be thoughtfully integrated into the surrounding neighborhood. Proposals should outline a meaningful engagement strategy that builds trust and incorporates community input. The selected developer will be expected to participate in at least one neighborhood open house prior to final site plan submission. Proposals should outline their approach to incorporate community engagement and feedback into the design.

## **IV. SITE OVERVIEW**

### **Location & Context**

The property is located between 34th and 35th Streets along U.S. Highway 30 (Leif Erikson Drive), immediately north of John Jacob Astor Elementary School and west of its associated athletic fields (Taxmap: 80909BD05700; Account ID 23522). **See Exhibit A.**

On the western edge of the site stands a 1992 replica of the original 1852 U.S. Customs House, designated as a Local Landmark. The structure is a defining feature of the property and must be preserved and thoughtfully integrated into any redevelopment proposal.

The site offers a rare publicly controlled parcel capable of supporting neighborhood-scale workforce housing.

### **Site Characteristics**

- Size: Approximately 1.0–1.2 acres (subject to right-of-way adjustments)
- Zoning: R-2 (Medium Density Residential)
- Historic Status: Local Landmark structure present
- Infrastructure:
  - Major sewer interceptor along southern right-of-way
  - 8-inch sewer lateral along eastern boundary
  - Potential right-of-way vacation opportunities

## V. DEVELOPMENT VISION & DESIGN EXPECTATIONS

### Income-Based Affordability Context

The City seeks proposals that support attainable homeownership. Presently, Astoria has minimal housing stock within the price range of \$200,000 to \$350,000. Housing is generally considered affordable when total housing costs do not exceed 30% of gross monthly income. The City’s objective is to demonstrate how publicly owned land can support durable workforce homeownership while preserving and integrating Astoria’s historic assets.

Clatsop County’s current AMI is **\$96,400 for a four-person household**, which serves as the baseline used by HUD to calculate income limits. The following table provides illustrative affordability targets for both **two-person and four-person households** within this income range.

Household Size	AMI Level	Annual Income	Affordable Monthly Cost	Approximate Home Price	Typical Unit Size
<b>2-Person Household</b>	80%	~\$61,760	~\$1,544	\$185K – \$215K	650–800 sq ft
	100%	<b>~\$77,200</b>	~\$1,930	\$230K – \$260K	750–900 sq ft
	120%	~\$92,640	~\$2,316	\$260K – \$300K	850–1,050 sq ft
<b>4-Person Household</b>	80%	\$77,120	~\$1,928	\$230K – \$260K	750–850 sq ft
	100%	<b>\$96,400</b>	~\$2,410	\$280K – \$320K	900–1,050 sq ft
	120%	\$115,680	~\$2,893	\$330K – \$380K	1,100–1,250 sq ft

*Income thresholds are derived from current HUD and Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) income limits for Clatsop County. Values shown above are illustrative planning ranges intended to guide proposal development.*

### Community Land Trust Model

The City believes the Community Land Trust (CLT) model represents a particularly strong fit for the Customs House site and the workforce homeownership goals outlined in this RFP.

Under a CLT structure, the land remains under community stewardship while homes are sold to income-qualified buyers through a long-term ground lease. Resale formulas allow homeowners to build equity while ensuring homes remain affordable for future generations. For example, a model that allows an annual increase of 3% in equity for the original buyer without outpricing the home for the second-generation buyers.

For communities like Astoria—where land availability is limited and housing cost escalation can quickly erode affordability—the CLT model provides a durable mechanism to preserve long-term workforce homeownership opportunities while leveraging publicly owned land for public benefit.

Proposals incorporating CLT or similar shared-equity models are strongly encouraged, though alternative affordability structures may be considered if they demonstrate comparable long-term affordability outcomes. The City views the Customs House site as a pilot opportunity to demonstrate how publicly controlled land can support permanently attainable homeownership for local households.

### **Target Program**

- *Housing Types:* Cottage clusters, duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, or similar middle housing
- *Scale:* Approximately 12–20 units (subject to feasibility and entitlement)
- *Home Size:* Generally 650–1,250 square feet
- *Tenure:* Ownership prioritized
- Higher yields must be supported by clear financial feasibility and site realism.
- Cost-effective, high-quality housing through innovative methods such as prefabrication, modular, panelized systems, or mass timber—provided designs maintain neighborhood compatibility are encouraged.

### **Design Expectations**

Proposals should demonstrate thoughtful site planning and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Submissions should address the following:

- **Preserve and thoughtfully integrate the reconstructed Custom House Local Landmark** as a visible interpretive feature of the development. Adaptive reuse is encouraged. The structure may be relocated on-site if necessary to accommodate additional housing, provided it remains preserved, publicly visible, and incorporated into the overall development plan. Proposals should describe the intended treatment, use, preservation approach, and long-term maintenance strategy for the structure.
- Create **pedestrian-oriented site design**, including safe and legible internal circulation.
- Maintain **neighborhood-scale character** consistent with surrounding residential development.
- Coordinate **pedestrian connections to adjacent civic uses**, including nearby schools and community facilities.
- Parking ratios should reflect applicable zoning requirements; creative shared or **clustered parking solutions** are encouraged.

## **VI. ENTITLEMENT, SITE CONTROL & AFFORDABILITY FRAMEWORK**

### **Entitlement**

The site is zoned R-2. The anticipated unit yield may be achievable under Oregon’s middle housing provisions (HB 2001) or may require discretionary approvals.

Development is expected to require:

- Pre-application conference
- Land use and site plan review (Type II or III, as applicable)
- Historic Landmarks Commission review
- Building permit review

Approvals are not guaranteed. The selected developer will prepare and support required land use applications.

### **Site Constraints**

Development must address sewer infrastructure, required easements, and long-term maintenance access. All on-site infrastructure improvements, including utility relocation and upgrades, are the developer’s responsibility unless otherwise negotiated.

### **Site Control**

The City anticipates negotiating either:

- Fee simple conveyance with affordability covenants, or
- Long-term ground lease

Final terms will be established through a Development Agreement approved by City Council. An Exclusive Negotiation Period of approximately 6–9 months is anticipated following selection.

### **Due Diligence**

Available documentation will be provided upon request. Respondents should not assume the existence of surveys, geotechnical reports, or environmental assessments unless specifically provided.

### **Affordability Expectations**

Proposals must clearly define the project’s affordability structure, including the percentage of income-restricted units, targeted AMI bands within the 80%–120% range based on household size, targeted price range of housing product(s), the proposed duration of affordability controls, and the entity responsible for ongoing monitoring and enforcement.

Affordability controls should be perpetual whenever feasible. If time-limited controls are proposed, respondents must clearly state the proposed duration and provide justification for that structure.

While 100% affordability within the 80%–120% AMI range based on household size is preferred, blended-income proposals may be considered if supported by demonstrated financial feasibility and if the majority of units remain permanently affordable.

## VII. CITY SUPPORT & INCENTIVES

Subject to City Council approval and a negotiated Development Agreement, the City may provide the following forms of support to advance the project:

- **City-owned land at nominal cost**, conditioned upon performance milestones. Such milestones may include securing land use approvals, obtaining financing commitments, and commencing construction within an agreed timeframe.
- **Potential or reduction of System Development Charges (SDCs)**, subject to Council consideration.
- **Coordinated entitlement processing**, including assignment of a staff liaison to facilitate review.
- **Technical coordination with the Historic Landmarks Commission** to support appropriate integration of the designated Local Landmark.
- **Support for structured community engagement efforts** in advance of final site plan approval.

Respondents should not assume additional direct subsidy beyond the land contribution and potential SDC consideration unless separately negotiated and approved by City Council.

## VIII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must clearly and concisely demonstrate alignment with the City’s guiding principles, particularly financial feasibility, site-specific realism, and durable affordability. Submissions should present a cohesive and implementable development strategy supported by credible assumptions and sufficient detail to allow evaluation.

Proposals shall include the following components:

### A. Development Concept

- Narrative describing overall vision and alignment with Council guiding principles
- Conceptual site plan illustrating layout, circulation, parking, and open space
- Proposed density, unit mix, and anticipated unit sizes

### B. Affordability Strategy

Proposals should describe the project’s approach to providing and preserving workforce housing affordability, including:

### **Income targeting and unit mix**

- Percentage of income-restricted units
- Targeted AMI bands within the **80%–120% AMI** range based on household size
- Price range of housing product(s) proposed to be constructed

**Affordability mechanism** (*Community Land Trust or comparable shared-equity model strongly encouraged*). Mechanisms may include, but are not limited to:

- Community Land Trust ownership or ground lease structures
- Deed restrictions limiting resale price or rental rates
- Shared equity or resale restriction formulas

### **Long-term affordability**

- Duration of affordability controls
- Entity responsible for long-term monitoring and enforcement
- Summary of resale or shared equity restrictions

## **C. Financial Feasibility & Capital Strategy**

- **Preliminary sources and uses budget** identifying major capital sources (e.g., grants, construction financing, equity, or other funding) and estimated development costs.
- **Development pro forma** with key assumptions clearly stated, demonstrating overall project feasibility.
- **Infrastructure and System Development Charge (SDC) assumptions** used in project budgeting.
- **Capital strategy narrative** describing anticipated financing structure, including potential lenders, equity partners, and public funding programs (if applicable).
- **Illustrative homebuyer financing example** demonstrating the anticipated affordability of the proposed housing product at the targeted AMI range.

*While formal financing commitments are not required at the time of submission, proposals should demonstrate a realistic and credible pathway to project financing and delivery.*

## **D. Development Team**

- Organizational structure and key team members
- Relevant project experience, particularly workforce or shared-equity housing
- Demonstrated capacity to deliver the proposed development

## **E. Project Timeline**

- Entitlement schedule
- Financing milestones
- Construction timeline and estimated completion

## **F. Community Engagement Strategy**

- Proposed approach to neighborhood outreach

- Anticipated public meeting participation
- Incorporation of public comment and community values into design.

**G. Sustainability & Resilience**

- Energy efficiency strategy
- Climate-responsive design considerations
- Long-term durability and maintenance approach

**Proposal Format Requirements**

- Maximum 25 pages (excluding appendices)
- PDF submission required
- 11x17 site plans permitted

*Incomplete submissions or proposals lacking sufficient financial clarity or execution strategy may be deemed non-responsive and may not advance to full evaluation.*

**IX. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals will be evaluated using the following weighted criteria:

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
Financial Feasibility	25
Site-Specific Compatibility and Realism	20
Diversity of Housing Types	15
Community Land Trust or Similar Ownership Model	10
Community Engagement Strategy	10
Sustainability & Resilience	10
Development Team Capacity & Relevant Experience	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Proposals will be screened for financial feasibility and site realism as primary evaluation factors. Submissions that do not demonstrate a credible execution strategy may not advance to full scoring. Short-listed applicants may be invited to interview.

**X. SELECTION PROCESS**

1. Staff completeness review of submitted proposals.
2. Staff evaluation and scoring of proposals based on the criteria identified in this RFP.
3. Based on the evaluation, staff will identify two to three top-ranked proposals to advance to interviews with the City Council.
4. City Council interviews with shortlisted development teams (if applicable).
5. Selection of a preferred developer.
6. Negotiation of a Development Agreement.

## XI. RFP TIMELINE

- March 23, 2026 – RFP Issued
- May 15, 2026 – Proposals Due (5:00 PM PDT)
- June 2026 – Evaluation
- July 2026 – Council Presentations (if needed)
- August 2026 – Preferred Developer Selection

## XII. GENERAL TERMS

**Public Records:** All submissions are subject to Oregon Public Records Law (ORS 192). Respondents should assume materials may become public record unless exempt under law.

**Right to Reject or Modify:** The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive minor irregularities, request clarifications, or modify or cancel this RFP at any time if deemed in the public interest.

**No Obligation to Award:** Submission of a proposal does not obligate the City to select a proposer, enter negotiations, or execute a Development Agreement. All proposal preparation costs are the responsibility of the respondent.

**City Council Approval:** Final selection, land disposition, financial incentives, and execution of any Development Agreement are subject to approval by the Astoria City Council at a public meeting. No binding agreement exists until fully executed.

**Protest Procedure:** Written protests must be submitted within five (5) business days of the Notice of Intent to Award and must state the specific grounds. The City Manager or designee will issue a written decision, which shall be final.

**Insurance and Indemnification:** The selected developer shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City, its officers, employees, and agents from claims arising out of project activities and shall maintain insurance coverage in types and amounts acceptable to the City, as specified in the Development Agreement.

### CONTACT

John Roberts, Community Development Director  
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### SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Deadline: May 15, 2026 – 5:00 PM PDT

Email Submission

- Subject Line: “Customs House RFP”
- Send to: [jroberts@astoria.gov](mailto:jroberts@astoria.gov)

Optional Hard Copy

City of Astoria – Customs House RFP  
Attn: Community Development Director  
1095 Duane Street  
Astoria, OR 97103

**Exhibit A – Customs House**

