

Astoria Waterfront Master Plan Request for Qualifications

March, 2021

Consultant Questions

Submittals & Selection Process Protocols

- In light of COVID-19 restrictions, will the City consider allowing electronic submittals, or will the City only accept hard copy submittals as stated in the RFQ? Would the City consider an extension of the deadline if it requires hard copy submittals?
 - The City still requires hard copy submittals as set forth in the RFQ, which must be received in City offices (1095 Duane Street, Astoria), by the established deadline of April 12th, 4:00 p.m.
- Has the City reserved a block of times when interviews will take place?
 - We are tentatively planning on conducting interviews on the afternoons of Monday April 26th and Tuesday April 27th.
- Who will serve on the Selection Committee for the RFQ?
 - The Selection Committee will consist of select permanent staff of the City and Port, and possibly one or more elected officials from either the City Council and/or Port Board.

Background Information

- The RFQ does not appear to include any information on resilience or mitigation plans with regards to either a Cascadia earthquake/tsunami, major flooding or sea level rise. Have these studies been done? Would they be considered if included in a proposal?
 - It is correct that the RFQ does not address these issues. The City does not have a resiliency plan. That said, the City and Port are well aware of these challenges, and we do expect these issues to inform the range of solutions in the Master Plan.
- Is there information available on the condition of pilings in the River, within the Study Area?
 - The consultants may assume that the condition of pilings is generally acceptable for existing and possible new development. We do not expect an evaluation of pilings in determining possible new uses on the docks which the pilings support. If we determine that there is the need for such an evaluation to inform the analysis and recommendations of the Waterfront Master Plan, the City may opt to either retain a firm for that purpose, or amend the contract with the selected consultant to incorporate this expertise (unless of course the selected team already has such expertise).
- Does the Commission or Port (or others) have information about the environmental status of properties within the study area?
 - We do not have any current information on the environmental condition of properties within the study area, nor do we necessarily expect an evaluation of these conditions as part of the Master Plan work. As with the condition of pilings, the consultant team may presume for the purposes of planning efforts that environmental conditions do not preclude proposed development. That said, we will consider expanding the selected

consultant's scope during the course of the plan effort, or alternatively retaining an environmental firm through an independent contract, if we deem it appropriate to do so, e.g. for the purpose of better understanding the feasibility of redevelopment of a strategic site. That is to say, we recognize that environmental or other conditions may bear on the cost and timeline of redevelopment of properties within the Study Area, and the City and/or Port may elect to seek additional services during the course of the Plan effort or after its completion to better assess development feasibility.

- What is the status of the Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan (2007) and the Uniontown Reborn Plan (2019) on this new effort?
 - The Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan, while never formally adopted, does bear on this project. It serves as a high level framework for the City's intentions for its waterfront, which comprises a much larger geography than the current Port Waterfront Master Plan. The City did implement the Riverfront Vision Plan by incorporating the identified Plan Areas (Bridge Vista, Urban Core, Civic Greenway, and Neighborhood Greenway) into the Astoria Development Code as overlay zones. Each of these zones have unique design guidelines and modified processes based on the Riverfront Vision Plan. The new planning effort should be viewed as a refinement to the Vision Plan and Astoria Development Code, focused solely on properties within the specific Study Area boundary. For instance, this new work may well include a reconsideration of some of the zoning regulations that stem from the 2007 effort. The new Port Waterfront Master Plan will build on and refine the earlier Vision Plan, not replace it.
 - Similarly, the Port Waterfront Master Plan is intended to build on the Uniontown Reborn Plan, on properties that overlap the two study areas. As with the 2007 Vision Plan, we anticipate that the new work will incorporate changes to the zoning code as set forth in the Uniontown effort.
- Why was the 2007 Riverfront Vision Plan *not* adopted? Why, if it was not adopted, is this Plan referenced as something to build on in the current Waterfront Master Plan?
 - The Vision Plan identified a number of initiatives (some of which have been implemented) that enjoy community support, and so the City and Port want to honor that support. The Vision Plan is also particularly salient in that it set in motion subsequent modifications to the zoning code, some of which may merit re-consideration.
- Which sections of the Waterfront Vision Plan does the client like, and which provisions does the client not like? Are there provisions that are problematic?
 - This is a good question but one that requires analysis beyond the scope of this Q & A. The question will be discussed with the selected consultant, early in the planning process.
- Are there developments in Astoria where the Riverfront Vision Plan was implemented?
 - Similar to the prior question, the response is complex and will be thoroughly discussed with the selected consultant.
- Is there a recent economic/market analysis of the Study Area, or of the larger context?
 - The best source is probably the Port's Strategic Plan (see RFQ for link). We have also posted the City's 2017 Economic Development Strategy on the website, as well as recent data on the economic impacts of the Cruise Ships.

Areas of Firm Expertise

- Will it be difficult for an out-of-state firm to be part of a team?
 - We welcome the most qualified firms regardless of where they are based. That said, we anticipate that the best team will include members with deep familiarity with Astoria (again, regardless of where they are based).
- What are the City's and Port's thoughts on the inclusion of firms with expertise in various aspects of pre-development for specific sites within the Study Area, sites that may be identified as suitable for nearer term redevelopment? This question stems from an awareness (noted earlier) that in determining suitable redevelopment sites, technical considerations may bear on which sites are most suitable for development, especially if technical analyses were to reveal significant barriers to development – environmental, structural, in-water, traffic, geo-technical, in-water, etc.
 - The City and Port are open to responses that incorporate firms in technical services that are available to be part of the team on an as-needed basis, without necessarily identifying such firms as part of the “core” team that will provide the key services identified in the RFQ.
 - Another option is to wait until the process is underway. Once the need for a specific pre-development expertise is identified, the City, Port, and consultant can then negotiate the specifics of how to pull that expertise into the project. This might be accomplished through a separate contract between the City or Port and the new contractor, or adding that contractor to the original consultant's team as a new sub, via a negotiated contract amendment.
- Can the City provide any more thinking on services of a structural engineer?
 - The purpose of including a structural engineer on the team relates to evaluating the viability of rehabilitating the Chinook Building for adaptive re-use (i.e. a use or range of uses that the market analysis would suggest as worth examination). We view this as a high level structural analysis, and it is acceptable if a different type of professional (e.g. an architect) provides this analysis in lieu of an engineer. The upgrade of the Chinook Building represents the potential for an early “win” for the Port (as a revenue generator), but at this stage the structural analysis need not be exhaustive or costly.
- What kind of firms is the Redevelopment Commission and Port seeking for this project? Which type of firm ought to lead the effort?
 - The RFQ lays out the types of firms that we believe will be essential to a successful response. However, we are open to a variety of firms providing some of the services that would benefit this effort, and we welcome the inclusion of a wide array of sub-consultants with specific expertise that may be of value. Ultimately, we are looking for respondents to review the RFQ and background docs, and manifest their understanding of our objectives, both in the type of firms they pull together for a team and in the specific relevant experience of those team members.
- Related to the prior question: is the City looking for a particular kind of economic/market analysis firm?
 - Again, the City (and Port) are looking to consultant teams to read the RFQ and background documents to secure a solid understanding of the City's and Port's

objectives, and then demonstrate that understanding by selecting firms with appropriate expertise.

- Is any geotechnical analysis or guidance needed or desired for the project?
 - As with environmental analysis, we do not expect or require that teams responding to the RFQ incorporate a geo-technical firm onto the team. However, as with other areas of technical expertise, it is acceptable for teams to include geo-technical firms, in anticipation of the possible need for such expertise during the planning process.

Response Content

- Is there a project budget?
 - There is no project budget, and we do not expect respondents to incorporate a cost proposal in their responses to the RFQ. Instead, once we have selected a team, we will negotiate the scope and price with that team. It is possible that the cost of the selected team's scope will be more than we can afford. In this case, we will negotiate either a reduction in services, or a transfer of some scope items (i.e. some of the community engagement) to the City and/or Port. Ultimately, if notwithstanding best efforts we fail to negotiate an acceptable scope and price, we reserve the right to cease negotiations and instead begin discussions with an alternate team.
- Will submittals be required to include hourly rates for staff who will be involved in the project?
 - No rates are required in response to the RFQ, in part because it is premature to even identify some of the staff who will be involved in the project. That won't happen until we've negotiated a scope with the selected consultant team.

Miscellaneous

- Is there information from the pre-submittal meeting on March 29th, available on the website?
 - Yes, we have posted the recording of the attendee list and the pre-submittal meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCkdf8kHuhc>) on the website. We have also posted the following reports on the website, in response to questions/discussion at the pre-submittal meeting:
 - Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan (2007)
 - Astoria Economic Development Strategy (2017)
 - Economic Impact Data - Cruise Ships
 - Structural reports for various buildings
 - Astoria Transportation System Plan
- Are there tribal interests that consultants should be aware of that will influence this Plan?
 - While the City and Port always welcome input from the Tribes, we are not aware of any specific tribal concerns that will necessarily influence the planning process. The entirety of the Study Area was historically in the Columbia River, and indeed that remains the case with much of the Area even today. Those portions of the Study Area that are now land were filled over the past century, long after the establishment of an American settlement in Astoria.
 - There is no formal tribal jurisdiction on the Study Area.
- There was a recent joint meeting between the Boards of the Redevelopment Commission and the Port. Could you provide a summary of that meeting? Is a recording available?

- Yes, a recording is available on the project website.
- Some high level comments that were made by various individual members of either Board:
 - The traditional “bread and butter” of Astoria’s economy centered on logging, fishing, and travel/tourism. The Master Plan should acknowledge that reality, although we are open to fresh ideas on new additions to our economy.
 - The Plan should be a long term vision which allows for flexibility and adaptation over time.
 - The Plan should set forth a vision that takes advantage of the extraordinary setting.
 - Future development should incorporate a mix of uses (not merely industry, for instance), and should generate more activity. There should be good public access, for residents as well as visitors.
 - The Plan should help provide greater development certainty.
- The RFQ states a goal of having the plan completed by September, 2021. How firm is this goal?
 - The City and Port recognizes that this is an aggressive goal, and will likely not be achieved. We will negotiate the scope and budget with the selected team, and these two items will allow us to generate a refined and “realistic” timeline.
- Does the City or Port have a particular kind of user of economic generator in mind for the Study Area? For example, is the Port in communications with an as-yet unidentified business that looms large in this planning effort taking place *now*?
 - This effort is not being driven by a major new use that is waiting “in the wings”. That said, the Bornstein fish processing plant has indicated an interest in augmenting their presence by introducing a tourist-oriented component somewhat along the lines of the Tillamook Cheese Factory in Tillamook.
- Do the City have insights on community engagement, particularly in light of COVID?
 - Astorians are engaged with the City’s and Port’s planning and development initiatives. It is not uncommon to have 100 people attend a community workshop on matters of this sort, and we anticipate interest in the Port Waterfront Plan effort. We look to teams to be creative in accommodating this community interest and desire to engage within the context of COVID. That said, we anticipate forming a Citizen Advisory Committee (as well as a Technical Advisory Committee). As noted in the RFQ, we hope to engage our Latino community in this effort, and intend to work with Cosejo Hispano (a local advocacy organization) to that end. Many workers at businesses in the Waterfront area speak Spanish as their first language.
- What is John Southgate’s role in the project?
 - John is serving as a Project Coordinator on this project for the City, in consultation with the Port. He drafted the RFQ, is assisting the City and Port in the Selection process (including drafting this Q and A, facilitating the pre-submittal meeting and the site tour, assisting in the evaluation of teams but not voting or doing the actual evaluation, arranging interviews of the “Short List”). He will also assist the City in the negotiations on scope, budget and timeline with the selected consultant team. Once the work begins, John will oversee the team’s work, especially budget, timeline, and deliverables.
- Thoughts on parking?

- There was a parking study in 2006, but it didn't focus specifically on the Port's properties.
- Parking will definitely require serious consideration as part of this planning effort. We are interested in solutions to redevelop the ample number of surface parking lots within the Study Area while at the same time accommodating adequate parking for more intense development. We perceive that there are opportunities for more intelligent parking utilization, likely through some kind of Parking Management Plan, incorporating such ideas as "double" use of parking lots through complementary uses whose parking requirements don't overlap with other uses.
- Will firms from the selected Waterfront Master Plan consultant team be conflicted out for future work, i.e. working with the Port and/or private developers for post-Plan adoption implementation efforts?
 - We do not anticipate there being such a conflict. A team that plays a role in this plan can also play a role with a developer and/or the Port on a follow-on project.
- Similarly, will a development firm that is part of the selected team be conflicted out of future development opportunities that emerge from this Plan?
 - Again, we do not anticipate such a conflict.
- Could you provide a summary of the Study Area Tour held on March 31st?
 - We did not record the tour. That said, here are some notes from remarks made by City and Port officials at the tour:
 - Outreach should focus foremost on those most affected by the Plan, i.e. property owners, businesses, workers. But the Port District boundary includes the entirety of Clatsop County, and the success of the Plan (in ultimately leading to new investment and jobs) is of interest to all residents of the County. Outreach efforts need to keep this in mind.
 - Fish processing remains an important part of the Astoria economy, and within the Study Area itself. There are currently about 600 jobs (at least seasonally) in this sector.
 - The boatyards are another important economic sector.
 - The Port's mission includes creating and maintaining jobs; consequently the Plan must be about more than housing and lodging.
 - This is a working waterfront and the Port's mission as an economic driver will weigh heavily in this process. We expect to incorporate a rich mix of uses along the waterfront (tourism/lodging, housing, office, retail/restaurant) but uses that create jobs and support local industry will be a very high priority.
 - Most streets within the Study Area are Port owned, i.e. not City right-of-way.
 - The Port generally does not sell land to private development, but instead ground leases sites for private development.
 - The Chinook Building is unremarkable in appearance, but it has some interesting interior features (old growth timber structure). Perhaps it lends itself to a use like the "Local Ocean" in Newport.
 - There is a need for a grocery store and/or convenience mart in the vicinity.

- The partners are open to fresh thinking on the zoning (including height caps related to view corridors). I.e. the current regulatory framework is not sacrosanct.
 - There are six years left in the current agreement between the Port and the business that operates the Riverwalk Inn. In non-COVID times the hotel is a big draw.
 - We anticipate convening a major “all hands” kick off with the City, Port, and members of the selected team, at which we will cover a lot of ground – information sharing, discussion of past planning and policy initiatives that bear on this Plan, brainstorm ideas, identify opportunity and challenges, etc.
 - In normal times (non pandemic), the cruise ships come most frequently in the late Spring and early Autumn. Ships often unload as many as 2500 people for the day (arriving in the morning and departing in the evening). Some of these people take bus tours to places as distant as Mt. St. Helens, but many simply stay in Astoria, patronizing local restaurants and shops. There is a seasonal market of sorts on the pier serving the ships. Food carts are allowed under City zoning.
 - The Port of Astoria’s long term growth is impacted by the lack of rail service to Portland and environs, lack of a nearby Interstate freeway, lack of land for loading/unloading of goods, and a small population base. It would take tens of millions of dollars or more to address these circumstances; hence the future of the Port does not lie in competing head-on with ports up-river (Kalama, Vancouver, Portland).
 - The City has made affordable/workforce housing a high priority City-wide.
- We understand there are a lot of potential scenarios and options, but generally, upon completion of the master plan, is there an execution framework in place for the development of vertical and horizontal assets? I.e.) Will the Port/City become the master developer and issue Ground Lease RFP’s for various development sites / uses as defined in the MP with the expectation that the development community will take on the capital risk associated with executing the vision? I.e.) Will the Port/City develop the assets under an alternative scenario via a PPP structure or a participating scenario for development?
 - These are relevant questions, but they require much more reflection and discussion than is suitable in this Q & A. These questions will instead be addressed through the course of the planning effort.
- Has the Port/City began to strategize financing scenarios for infrastructure assets or considered the pool of funding options to enhance its development strategy?
 - See prior answer. We are certainly aware of a variety of funding scenarios including TIF/urban renewal, State infrastructure dollars, SDCs, LID, etc. But this question will be addressed in the development of the Plan itself.
- Or, alternatively is there capital available within an existing capital plan to fund infrastructure enhancements?
 - There is not a specific capital improvement plan type of funding commitment for infrastructure enhancements. We anticipate something along these lines as a likely outcome of the Waterfront Master Plan.

- Does the Port/City have any green building or environmental mitigation targets that the proposing teams should strive to target, i.e. “net zero development”?
 - Both the City and the Port value sustainable/green development and practices, but neither currently have formal green building targets.
- Does the Port/City intend to leave all “existing development” in place to be integrated into the plan or is there contemplation that some of the existing footprint is repurposed or redeveloped?
 - We anticipate the possibility that the Plan may call for the replacement of some of the existing development, to be replaced with higher and better uses.
- Aside from the Parking issues we heard today, are there other “hot button” issues the community is generally concerned about as new development is planned at the Port? I.e., viewsheds, historic preservation, marine industries enhancement and/or preservation, public access and open space, etc.?
 - These are all topics that have arisen to varying degrees in discussion among staff, Board members, and the community at large. We believe that the RFQ lays out the concerns and priorities of the partners, and we expect that the planning process will provide a framework for identifying, clarifying, and responding to these topics and issues.
- Do the City and Port anticipate a total redevelopment of the area? Or will this be more about preserving the working waterfront?
 - As noted earlier, it will be important to keep a strong focus on jobs, including jobs in traditional waterfront businesses. So we do not anticipate a “total redevelopment”. We do however anticipate a mix of new uses with the old, and a general intensification of development on these currently under-developed properties.
- What are the City’s and Port’s thoughts about transportation planning. Will the number of trips planned as a part of this redevelopment trip any thresholds?
 - Please see the City’s Transportation System Plan, which provides a considerable amount of focus on the waterfront. The TSP will be included on the project website.