



## **DOWNTOWN SPOKANE PARTNERSHIP**

### **REQUEST FOR QUOTES: STRATEGIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

The Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) has initiated a Request for Quotes (RFQ) process to identify a qualified consultant to guide and execute an evaluation of the downtown housing market and a strategic policy development process to enhance the growth of its residential market. The DSP seeks a consultant with a deep understanding of urban housing development, housing policy and economics, and proven success in strategic planning.

#### **Timeline:**

RFQ Issued	August 5, 2024
Deadline for Responses	August 16, 2024
Contract Award/Notification	September 2024

#### **Background**

The DSP serves as the leading advocate for the creation of a dynamic, vibrant, livable and sustainable downtown as the basis of an economically healthy region. The DSP is a member-based, not-for-profit organization with more than 100 members, representing a variety of business sectors including real estate, banking/finance, law, transportation, insurance, communications, energy, and tourism. The DSP's members are committed to creating a vital and vibrant urban core for the second largest city in the State of Washington.

Downtown Spokane has seen major renewal beginning in the late 1990s with billions of dollars in public and private investment reversing the preceding two decades of decline in the regional urban core of Eastern Washington. Investments in hospitality, retail and entertainment have propelled growth in those sectors while downtown Spokane remained a major employment center. During the COVID-19 pandemic and in the years since, downtown Spokane's office market has declined considerably as vacancy rates have jumped back to all-time highs close to an estimated 20%. While destination and recreation experiences have excelled and the office market has declined, downtown's residential market has lagged in comparison to similar downtowns in the western US. Restoring a strong and vibrant downtown Spokane will require adequate housing supply alongside thriving retail, commercial and lifestyle amenities.

While recent advocacy by the DSP has supported progress in the implementation of new incentives, reduced regulations and fees, and more generally in educating policy makers on the need to maximize downtown's potential as a residential center, Spokane continues to desperately need more housing – in particular in its urban core. The DSP has taken a preeminent role in advocating for policies at the local and state level that foster residential growth in downtown and is now working with the City of Spokane to build policies and opportunities to create more places for people to live.

#### **Deliverables**

The DSP seeks a consultant to produce a downtown housing evaluation and action plan that includes:

1. **Current housing stock assessment:** Evaluate the current housing inventory and complete assessment of downtown's current housing by type and quantity based on a variety of



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information sources including a recently updated housing inventory completed by the DSP with support of the City of Spokane.

2. **Development targets:** Assess housing gaps and determine missing quantity and ratio of housing – by type – downtown needs to develop to be a thriving urban district, with goals identified for the next 5, 10 and 15 years. This may include focus groups, workshops and/or 1-on-1 meetings where the DSP will support coordination.
3. **Action Plan:**
  - Assess economic and policy factors that are currently hindering residential development in downtown.
  - Identify and inventory useful incentives and specialty economic zones (state and federal historic tax credits, tax increment finance districts, new market tax credits, opportunity zones, etc) to foster further residential development.
  - Recommend opportunities to expand and/or enhance existing policies, repeal prohibitive policies and/or adopt new policies that can support achieving development targets.
  - Provide recommendations from case studies of similar downtowns that have maximized residential growth and sustained residential populations.
4. **Downtown amenities assessment:** Assess the residential population size and other demographic metrics (e.g. area median income) the study district needs to attract urban residential amenities to accelerate growth of residential attractiveness.
5. **Opportunity sites:** Identify, assess and prioritize the most viable candidate sites for new residential/mixed use development and conversion of office to residential.

### **Submission Requirements**

Respondents should provide a brief description of your organization and experience doing this kind of work. Responses should be structured into deliverable and consider the specific activities, time and budget Includes:

- **Summary:** Provide a brief description of recommended approach, activities, including outcomes.
- **Scope of Work:** Include high-level approach and outline activities.
- **Timeline:** Include milestones and key deliverables, including outreach meetings and final presentations.
- **Budget:** Identify total cost, including labor and indirect expenses.
- **Additional Information:** Any other information deemed important, but not specifically required elsewhere.
- **Experience:** Include at least one relevant example of prior experience with reference contact.

### **Considerations**

Work will begin upon selection of the consultant and completed by early 2025. Final deliverables should include a separate public-facing document and should consider mechanisms for staff and stakeholder involvement and deliverables that ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation to measure progress and make adjustments based on changing conditions.

A review panel of the DSP Board's Housing and Strategic Development Committee will review all



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responses. In evaluating, the price will not be the sole factor. The review panel may consider any factors it deems necessary and proper, including but not limited to price, quality of service, response to this request, experience, staffing, and general reputation. Respondents with experience working with downtown associations and/or local government are preferred. The respondent shall not discriminate because of race, creed, color, religion, sex, criminal record older than seven years (other than convictions for crimes of dishonesty or sexual assault) or national origin, nor otherwise commit an unfair employment practice and shall make a good faith effort to utilize minority business enterprises and women-owned business enterprises. The DSP reserves the right to reject all quotes or portions thereof. All respondents will receive written notification of the the DSP's decision regarding their quote, and an announcement of the award will be posted on the DSP website.

### **Submission**

Submit all questions and proposals by 5PM on Friday, August 16, 2024 in PDF format via email to:  
Andrew Rolwes, Downtown Spokane Partnership

[arolwes@downtownspokane.org](mailto:arolwes@downtownspokane.org)

### **Questions**

All questions should be submitted via email no later than 5PM on August 12 to Andrew Rolwes at [arolwes@downtownspokane.org](mailto:arolwes@downtownspokane.org) and Kevin Campbell at [kcampbell@downtownspokane.org](mailto:kcampbell@downtownspokane.org).