

# City of Oronoco

Home of Downtown Oronoco Gold Rush



## PLANNING AND ZONING RFP PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS UPDATE FAQ

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**Q: What is the budget for this project? (asked multiple times in various ways)**

A: We think we have planned for the project. That said, the city is looking to your proposal to help define what is needed.

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**Q: Staff and Planning Commission know of code changes needed. What is the process for making these changes?**

A: The city seemingly has a history of identifying inconsistencies, but identification is not sufficient; some inconsistencies have been allowed to continue without change. For example, the Planning & Zoning Commissioner just recently (09/14/23) recommended and City Council adopted (09/19/23) Ordinance No. 2023-03 amending city code for the creation of an Interim Use Permit; the Conditional Use Permit was in code, but no IUP. In other cases, changes might be made in one area but not addressed in another creating yet another inconsistency or unintended consequence. In yet other cases, an issue might arise that is not addressed in the code but is deemed necessary. Again, this reactive response has given way to enacting an ordinance that may create further inconsistencies or unintended consequences. The goal is a product that is consistent throughout and user-friendly for all.

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**Q: Is there a list of priorities for the code amendments that can be shared?**

A: City staff has been apprising the Planning & Zoning Commission along the way and working with a professional planner to move some code amendments forward. The Planning & Zoning Vice Chair has been tracking a list separately, but it has not yet been shared with staff. One aspect of the project will be to assist commissioners in prioritizing the list. If/when the list becomes available to city staff it will be shared.

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**Q: With such a huge utility project – a new wastewater treatment facility and system and water system improvements – how is it impacting the community?**

A: As one might expect, the project has received mixed reactions. For the majority, however, reactions to the improvements are favorable. This is in part because these improvements have been considered for years. When the state and county determined that improvements were required because of failing septic systems in the city, talking about the improvements took on a new level of urgency and action. Fortunately, funding was such that the Phase 1A project totaling \$46.2M was able to move forward with assessments to affected parcel owners far less (26.4%) than what they might have been and

are spread over 20 years for the water system improvements at 2.252% and 30 years for the wastewater system improvements at 2.047%.

**Q: It is clear that your new utility project will bring about change in the community. What types of development pressures are you feeling the most right now? Commercial? Residential? Industrial?**

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A: Because of its proximity to Rochester, the city of Oronoco has long had interest from developers in all areas – commercial, residential, and industrial. Lacking public infrastructure, however, has long been a deterrent to development. With the new project winding down, city staff and officials are fielding an increasing number of interested developers.

**Q: Can you share the staging plan that will require properties to hook up to the new city utilities?**

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A: The Planning & Zoning Commission just recently (09/14/23) recommended and City Council adopted (09/19/23) Ordinance No. 2023-04 amending the city utility code to require hookup within one year of availability for public water and/or public sewer. Prior to this, there was inconsistency between the required hookup timeframes. The code is now aligned with a one-year requirement for both utilities. Because the city previously had a public water utility, residents can more easily connect to that utility. Hooking up to the public sewer system is the more challenging piece as the facility has experienced some delays in delivery of necessary components for operation. The City Engineer early on established a method of creating zones for the improvements. Those zones are the basis for issuing guidance letters to residents notifying them of when they can expect to have availability to services. The date of that letter becomes the basis for the start of the one-year period for hookups.

**Q: The RFP references development interest related to an upcoming major infrastructure project. Does the 2020 Future Land Use Map available on the City’s website identify these areas and what type of future land use is desired?**

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A: The 2020 Future Land Use Map does not adequately identify the infrastructure project but there are plenty of maps at City Hall that do. The FLU plan/map has been developed with a great deal of thought and care. There may be some adjustment necessary but only in conjunction with an updated Comprehensive Plan.

**Q: What is the staffing capacity for providing additional information, if needed, to the successful respondent?**

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A: Admittedly, Oronoco is a small city with limited administrative staff covering many bases. The City Administrator and Deputy Clerk are key administrative staff and available as needed to support this project. The Planning & Zoning Commission is an advisory board of seven members, two of whom are also City Council members. Each commissioner brings a great deal of experience and professionalism to the city and will be as helpful as they can be, as well. Time, as we all know, is a limited yet valuable resource. Though certainly supportive and committed to being engaged, it is lack of capacity that is the basis for outsourcing the project.

**Q: What do you envision for community engagement for this project?**

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A: The average age of residents responding to a recent Age-Friendly survey is 36. This was surprising in that the survey was largely geared toward a different demographic but certainly welcome news, as well. By and large, Oronoco is an actively engaged community. Some are very connected to technology; others not so much and prefer in person or paper.

**Q: The RFP did outline what was expected but have you experienced any preferred methods for reaching out to residents?**

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A: No, there is no known preferred method. Certainly, the successful respondent will be able to use creativity in reaching out to residents.

**Q: How does sustainability fit into the City's future and into the new land use regulations?**

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A: This is a large undertaking for the city. It is important that the project will result in a product that will serve the city not only in the short term but in the long term, as well. The city has annexation potential for 640 acres. It will be important, too, that any future updates or revisions can be made easily.

**Q: Our company has done a number of illustrative zoning ordinances in the past. Have you seen any specific illustrative ordinance that you really liked and that could be looked to as an example of what you are hoping for with this project?**

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A: No, the city is looking for the successful respondent to be able to prove their creativity and experience in this regard.

**Q: What GIS services will be needed with this project? Will a new zoning map be part of this project?**

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A: The city wants GIS services and graphics to be integrated into the project. A new zoning map may be part of the project in conjunction with an updated Comprehensive Plan.

**Q: Your RFP states that the current comp plan is under review. Are you in the process of updating this plan?**

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A: This project contemplates the successful respondent guiding the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan in terms of community engagement and an updated plan is an expected output.

**Q: The RFP references that the Comprehensive Plan is currently under review. What is the timing for completion of that review and generally what types of updates are anticipated?**

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A: The Comprehensive Plan is from 2006. There may be few changes or there may be many depending on feedback from community engagement efforts. Again, the Comprehensive Plan will be important to all stakeholders and particularly to the Planning & Zoning Commission and the EDA.

**Q: Does the City have any unique challenges?**

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A: Yes. Not only is there a geographic divide (east and west sides of Highway 52) in the city, but there are also two constituencies – long term residents and new/newer residents. It is important to bridge these divides and input from both constituencies in this project will be important to its success.

**Q: Does the City anticipate having the City Code on its website in the same format as it is today?**

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A: No. The city is looking for a more user-friendly format for all stakeholders. City staff are also looking for a format that is more easily updated on the website.

**Q: When it comes to a consultant, what are the traits you look for?**

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A: Please see Selection Criteria, Section G. on page 4 of the RFP. Beyond that, remember that you will be working with city administrative staff of at least two, a Planning & Zoning Commission of seven members, and an EDA comprised of seven members – each will have their own view. Impress us!