

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Comprehensive Subdivision Regulation Revision with Emphasis on Affordable Housing and Department Efficiency

Issued By: Lincoln County, Montana

Date Released: March 3rd, 2025

Due Date and Time: March 21st, 2025 @ 5pm

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lincoln County (LC) is requesting proposals from qualified professional consultants to complete a land-use planning-related project which includes a comprehensive revision of the Lincoln County Subdivision Regulations (LCSR), Buildings for Lease or Rent (BLR) Regulations and related documents with an emphasis on support for affordable housing and department efficiency. The County anticipates this project to take approximately 8-10 months to be completed.

The Director of the Lincoln County Planning Department (LCPD) will provide hands-on guidance throughout the duration of the project and will assist the selected consultant in creating a steering committee to help ensure the participation of public and private stakeholders. Although some of the project work can be done remotely, the selected consultant must be able to meet the Director in-person at the Courthouse in Libby, MT regularly throughout the course of the project, and must be able to attend public meetings in Libby, and Eureka, MT. The LCPD will make desk space available at the LC Courthouse in Libby for the selected consultant to work at as needed for the duration of the project.

A contract will be awarded to a qualified consultant under this RFP through an open and competitive process. The contract will be partially funded by a \$23,694.40 grant awarded to Lincoln County through the Montana Community Reinvestment Act Grant. Lincoln County will provide \$5923.60 in matching funds, 50% of which will be provided as in-kind match of LCPS staff time for assisting with the project. Therefore, the total budget available to fund this contract will be \$26,656.20.

The Director of the LCPD, Jesse Haag, is available to answer questions regarding project details or the RFP process via email at jhaag@libby.org, or phone at 406-283-2456.

RFP Schedule

RFP Released	March 3 rd , 2025
1 st Advertisement Published	March 5 th , 2025
2 nd Advertisement Published	March 12 th , 2025
Proposals Due	March 21 st , 2025 @5pm
Review of Proposals	March 24 th -28 th , 2025
Interviews, If necessary	March 31 st -April 2 nd , 2025
Contract Award	April 4 th , 2025
Anticipated Start	No later than May 1 st , 2025
Anticipated Completion	February 2026

PROJECT GOALS

Since the time of the most recent revision to the LCSR in 2020, Lincoln County has become one of the fastest growing counties in Montana which has led to a significant increase in the cost of housing. This issue is compounded by the transition from a resource-extraction-based economy to one rooted in tourism. This had led to a loss in good-paying jobs and decrease in availability of workforce housing due to the increase of vacation rentals. Moreover, the increased rate of land development has put a strain on the limited resources of the LCPD, which appears to have a lower staffing rate per population as compared with most counties in Montana.

Given the complex nature of land-use regulations and cost of professional consultants, the process of subdividing land, creating RV/Trailer parks, and building rental housing can be unapproachable to the average landowner. While there are seasoned developers and non-profit organizations working to create affordable housing in Lincoln County, the need still greatly outweighs availability. It is clear however that many average landowners in LC recognize the lack of housing and have a desire to help remedy the situation but become over-burdened by the cost and difficulty of the planning and permitting. As a result of conversations on this topic with numerous LC residents, the LCPD has recognized the potential that a calculated streamlining and simplifying of the planning and permitting process involved in numerous aspects of land development could have a significant impact in making housing development more feasible for both the average landowner, and seasoned developer. This could be further catalyzed by providing vision and framework for potential development projects such as tiny home villages or accessory dwelling units.

In addition to assisting the uninitiated, streamlining and simplifying land-use regulations and the development and incorporation of system efficiencies into department procedures may free up LCPD staff to have more time outside of our statutory review workload to dedicate to assisting landowners (who generally need more guidance compared to developers) with various land-use questions and processes in addition to working on affordable-housing initiatives as outlined in the Lincoln County Growth Policy.

Lincoln County has identified the following goals for this project:

- 1) Revise the LCSR to incorporate:
 - a. Changes in State law from the 2023 and 2025 legislative sessions
 - b. Identified procedural efficiencies
 - c. Clarification on any poorly described processes
 - d. Expansion of listed Rebuttable Presumptions of MSPA evasion criteria
 - e. Support for the development of affordable housing
 - f. Revision of the LC Road Design Standards, to include:
 - i. Plan and profile drawings for typical road and driveway design examples
 - ii. Plan drawings for typical cul-de-sac, and other various turnaround designs
 - iii. Description of standard construction materials and methods
 - iv. Recommendations from public safety agencies (law enforcement, fire, ems), and the Project Steering Committee
 - g. Revision of the Fire Protection Standards, to include:
 - i. County-wide standard for structural fire protection infrastructure requirements per recommendation of the LC Fire Co-Op board.
 - ii. Updated standards for fuels reduction work per recommendation from the LC Firewise Council, LC Fire Co-Op Board, and the LC-designated Fire Risk Evaluators
 - h. Recommendations from the Planning Board, Planning Staff, Project Steering Committee, and Public Comment
 - i. The current LCSR can be found on the department website
<https://lincolncountymt.us/planning-homepage/>
- 2) Revise the LC BLR Regulations to incorporate:
 - a. Changes in State law from the 2023 and 2025 legislative sessions
 - b. Identified procedural efficiencies
 - c. Clarification on any poorly described processes
 - d. Support for the development of affordable housing
 - e. Recommendations from Planning Staff, Steering Committee, and Public Comment
- 3) Revise all subdivision and BLR-related forms and documents to incorporate:
 - a. Changes in State law from the 2023 and 2025 legislative sessions
 - b. Identified procedural efficiencies
 - c. Updated letterhead and department information
 - d. Updated Fee amounts
 - e. Updated questionnaire to better assist applicants in providing sufficient information per expectations of changes in law and recent judicial rulings (i.e. Environmental Assessment criteria in the wake of Upper Missouri Waterkeepers VS. Broadwater County and DNRC)
 - f. Recommendations from Planning Staff and Steering Committee
 - g. Subject forms are available for inspection on the LCPD website at
<https://lincolncountymt.us/planning-homepage/planning-forms/>
- 4) Revise the content of the LCPD website and public information interface to incorporate:
 - a. Updated FAQ for typical land-use questions
 - b. Simple, bulleted how-to guides describing the subdivision review and BLR processes and timelines
 - c. Planning Staff and Steering Committee recommendations

- d. Work with planning staff to develop a streamlined method for making documents available to the public
- 5) Develop a comprehensive FAQ for land-use planning questions
 - a. Revise current FAQ content if necessary
 - b. Develop new content based on Planning Staff and Steering Committee recommendations
- 6) Audit of LCPD processes and recommendations for creating department efficiencies
 - a. Develop and/or revise checklists for subdivision and BLR applicants
 - i. Element review
 - ii. Sufficiency review
 - b. Develop and/or revise checklists for LCPD review of subdivisions and BLR
 - i. Element review
 - ii. Sufficiency review
 - c. Meet with Planning staff to discuss current procedures for exempt survey and subdivision review
 - d. Prepare recommendations for creating department and system efficiencies
- 7) Provide recommendations for the design, implementation, and promotion of affordable housing
 - a. Develop content which will be hosted on the web and on brochures which provide vision and framework to inspire and assist landowners in creating affordable housing
 - i. Provide examples of various types of land and housing development projects
 - 1. Include bulleted list explaining the basic steps for developing subdivisions, RV/Trailer Parks, BLR, ADU
 - 2. Include brief overview of sanitation requirements (DEQ rewrites/modifications, County septic permits), and DPHHS requirements
 - 3. Include example layouts
 - b. Create a list of funding resources
 - c. Create a list of organizations who partner on affordable housing initiatives
- 8) As described in the aforementioned project goals, it will be necessary for the awarded consultant to meet with and/or petition for comment from various stakeholders including but not limited to the LC Residents, LC Planning Board, LC County Commissioners, LC Environmental Health staff, LC Fire CO-OP Board, LC Sheriff's office, LC EMS, LC Firewise Council, USFS, DNRC, FWP, LC-contracted Engineer, LC-designated Fire Risk Evaluators, and the Project Specific Steering Committee which may include representation from any of the above and various land-use professionals working in LC such as surveyors, engineers, and real-estate agents. The steering committee should also include representation from experienced developers and non-profit housing organizations.
 - a. LCPD staff will assist with putting together the project steering committee and organizing any and all meetings with stakeholders.
 - b. While remote participation may be satisfactory for certain meetings, preference will be given for ability to accommodate in-person meetings.
 - c. As part of LC's in-kind match contribution, the Director shall provide hands-on guidance and along with other planning staff, be available to assist with any aspects of the project

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals shall include and be organized as follows:

1. Cover Letter

2. Consultant Information and Experience

Provide a brief description of the firm's history, location, and relevant experience and familiarity with the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act, Lincoln County, and affordable housing issues and initiatives. Include three references.

3. Project Team

Identify members of the proposed project team and provide summary of relevant experience. Include resume(s) or CV(s) as attachments.

4. Project Approach

Given that the project goals are already quite specific, please describe a proposed approach to completing the project goals. Describe your ability to attend meetings and work sessions in Libby and Eureka, MT, include a summary proposal describing which goals and tasks would be handled on-site or remotely. Estimate a sufficient number of public and stakeholder meetings necessary to meet the project goals. Include potential aspects of the project that assistance from LCPD staff would be requested.

5. Project Completion Capability

Identify a budget, and preliminary schedule for completion of the project. Make sure to include the estimated costs required to cover travel costs. Describe the team's ability to complete the project goals while staying within budget and timeline constraints.

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Proposals shall be emailed to the LCPD at lcplanning@libby.org, or hand copy sent to Lincoln County Planning Department, 512 California Ave., Libby, MT 59923, to be received no later than **March 21st, 2025 @ 5pm**. A receipt of submittal will be sent to the main contact as listed in the proposal unless otherwise specified. Proposals not received by the specified deadline or organized in the requested format may be disqualified.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation will be based on the Evaluation and Selection Committee's understanding of the prospective consultant's capability for providing the Scope of Services requested within the available project budget and timeline. In making this judgment, the Evaluation and Selection Committee will review all consultant submissions subject to the individual firm's responses to the following criteria - which must be addressed in the consultant's proposal:

1. Qualifications of the professional personnel to be assigned to the project
2. The consultant's capability to complete the project goals at or below the available budget amount as detailed in the general information of this RFP
3. The consultant's capability to complete the project by the end of February, 2026
3. Ability to accommodate on-site meetings and work sessions in Lincoln County
4. Related experience on similar projects (Include experience with affordable housing initiatives)
6. Familiarity with Montana Land-use Regulations, (MSPA & BLR)
7. Familiarity with the Lincoln County Subdivision Regulations
8. Quality of the proposal package

The listed criteria will be evaluated and individually scored based on a rating scale of 1-5; 1 - Insufficient, 2 - Below average, 3 - Average, 4 - Above average, and 5 - Exceptional. Each listed criteria will be awarded points based on how each Selection Committee member grades the Consultant's proposal package. Upon completion of the Selection Committee's initial evaluation, the Committee will tally the rating score of all reviewed proposals to determine an initial collective score awarded to each Consultant. Scores will then be reviewed, and final scores assigned by consensus of the Selection Committee. The highest scoring consultants may be invited to an in-person or virtual interview with the Evaluation and Selection Committee with final scoring adjusted as necessary, according to the consensus of the Committee. Lincoln County reserves the right to pursue additional information for purposes of clarification from respondents during the evaluation period.

ISSUANCE OF AWARD

Following the review of submitted proposals and candidate firms, the Evaluation and Selection Committee will make a recommendation to the Lincoln County Commissioners to award to the highest scoring consulting firm. Upon acceptance of a proposal and intent to award, the successful respondent will be required to execute and return all required project documents and certificates of insurance within 15 days from the Notice of Award. Negotiations could be necessary to arrive at a final cost for the contract. Should the selected firm fail or refuse to execute the project documents, Lincoln County reserves the right to accept the proposal of the firm with the next highest score from the selection committee in light of the above criteria.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Each respondent is responsible for reviewing and understanding all terms of this RFP. Failure to thoroughly examine or request clarification on RFP terms may result in disqualification.
- Any proposal may be withdrawn at any time prior to the due date with a written request signed by the authorized respondent representative. Revised proposals may be submitted up to the original due date/time.
- Issuance of this RFP and receipt of proposals does not commit Lincoln County to move forward with an award or complete the project described. Lincoln County reserves the right to postpone the RFP award process, to accept or reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP, and to modify the scope of the project at any time.
- Successful respondent will be required to enter into a formal Professional Services Agreement with Lincoln County.
- Contract negotiations will include, but are not necessarily limited to, the scope of work, concepts, project timetable, products of work, and fees. If negotiations result in mutually acceptable terms, a contract will be submitted to the Governing Body for approval. If mutually acceptable contract terms cannot be reached, as determined by the County at its sole discretion, the next most qualified firm will be invited to participate in contract negotiations. This process will continue until a contract is awarded or the list of firms is exhausted. If the list of firms is exhausted without a contract being awarded, a request for proposals may be advertised.
- Lincoln County reserves the right to select a firm the County deems to be in the County's best interest and to reject any or all proposals for any reason.