

# City of Blaine

## Gateway Property Development



### Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

THE CITY OF BLAINE IS INVITING QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNER TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY OWNED AND ENTITLED GATEWAY PROPERTY, OVER 28 ACRES OF FULLY SERVICED PRIME COMMERCIAL LAND WITH ACCESS TO I-5 AND THE US/CANADIAN BORDER.

DUE DATE: MARCH 28, 2014

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Photo by Richard Sturgill

# Invitation Request for Qualifications

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The City of Blaine has the unique opportunity to take the next steps, in partnership with the private sector, to develop city-owned and entitled property. We are inviting qualifications from the private sector to be considered for a long-term, public-private partnership with the City.

This document will describe the entitlements and accomplishments to date to encourage the private sector to partner with the City to develop the Gateway Property, the site of the former Blaine Municipal Airport.

See the City's Gateway General Binding Site Plan for the depiction of the Gateway Property. The document is included on the city's website: [www.cityofblaine.com/home/featured](http://www.cityofblaine.com/home/featured) links/RFPs-RFQs-Bids.

This is a non-binding solicitation until such time as the City negotiates and approves an agreement with the successful respondent.

# Request for Qualifications Objectives

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- The City of Blaine is seeking a real estate company, firm, partnership, or individuals to lead and facilitate the development of the City-owned Gateway Property.
- The City is interested in negotiating a long-term, public-private partnership with a firm or entity that has a proven record of successful experiences in public – private partnerships. The nature and manner of the partnership, is open to negotiation.
- The City is open to a variety of approaches including public-private partnerships consistent with state law that facilitate the development of the property.
- The City will interview selected firms that meet its criteria including demonstrated leadership working with other cities and communities on similar projects.
- The City expects a modest level of effort to be put into your response to this RFQ to help the Ad-hoc Economic Development Committee and City Council understand why you believe your firm is the most qualified for the project.
- The response should include draft site plans or other representations, including descriptions of potential private/partnership or development scenarios that provide options and opportunities to meet the goals of the City.
- We are anticipating an agreement that encourages the best outcomes for both parties, subject to the negotiation and approval of each party.

# Proposal Requirements

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*The overall content of the proposal is primarily at the discretion of the Proposer and whatever is deemed necessary to communicate the ideas, plans and its financial benefits to the City. However, the following items are required as a minimum to help the City evaluate the proposal.*

- **Cover Letter** — showing the RFQ subject, the legal name, address, email address, and telephone number of the Proposer. The letter should outline all partnerships, subcontractors etc. that would be part of the project team along with the name and position of the person who will be the primary contact throughout the project. The cover letter should be signed by the person who has the authority to bind the proposing firm to the submitted proposal.
- **Project Justification** — explaining any market research or current experience that would support the type of uses being proposed.
- **Conceptual Site Plans** — showing the applicants' initial thoughts regarding spatial development of the sites, proposed uses, approximate square footage of each use, approximate number of parking spaces, and open/civic areas.
- **A Preliminary Economic/Feasibility Analysis** — should be provided showing the overall construction costs and potential revenue from sale or direct lease payments and potential increased tax revenues.
- **Architectural Elevations** — are not required of each proposed building; however a typical architectural style showing compatibility with the City's design guidelines must be included.
- **Qualification Statements** —for the development team showing past experience in similar development projects and assurance that there is sufficient financial resources to complete the project in a timely manner.
- Any further information that will assist the City in reviewing the proposal.

*See page 12 for further details of the RFQ proposal requirements.*

# Project Goals

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- The City's goals for this project is to stimulate economic growth and increase population density from the development, sale and/or leasing of the Gateway Property.
- The City is interested in development scenarios that will improve livability for local residents and encourage new business to start up or relocate to our City.
- The City's economic goals include developing the properties to produce quality businesses outcomes, working wage jobs, and energize development in other areas surrounding the site and city.
- The City is interested in a creative mix of uses for the Gateway property. The Hebert Report focuses on seven major categories of target industries: advanced manufacturing, software development, medical devices, civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering services, information services, warehousing & distribution, and trucking & transportation services.



# Gateway Property Description

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- The City owned Gateway property is approximately 28.4 acres of fully serviced, flat, prime commercial, industrial, manufacturing and warehouse property within the Blaine City limits in an ideal location with easy access to Interstate 5 that is ready for development.
- The Gateway Property is accessed by “H” and Boblett streets providing quick and easy access to I-5 South and Highway 543 North to the Canadian/US Border, only minutes away.
- Within the 28.4 acres, 11.09 acres is occupied by conservation and storm water easements. The remaining developable 17.31 acres is divided by Boblett Street with 9.29 acres north of Boblett and 8.02 acres south of Boblett.

# About the City of Blaine

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- The City of Blaine is located on the American-Canadian border in northwest Washington State in Whatcom County. The City population is nearly 5,000 people inside the city limits.
- What makes Blaine so unique is its beautiful seaside location on the border and immediate proximity to the major metropolitan area of greater Vancouver, Canada with a population of more than 2.5 million people within a 30 minute drive.



# About the City of Blaine *cont.*

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Photo by David Riffle

*The City of Blaine is poised for growth. As cited in the Hebert Report, the following attributes are solid research based reasons to look at Blaine for development:*

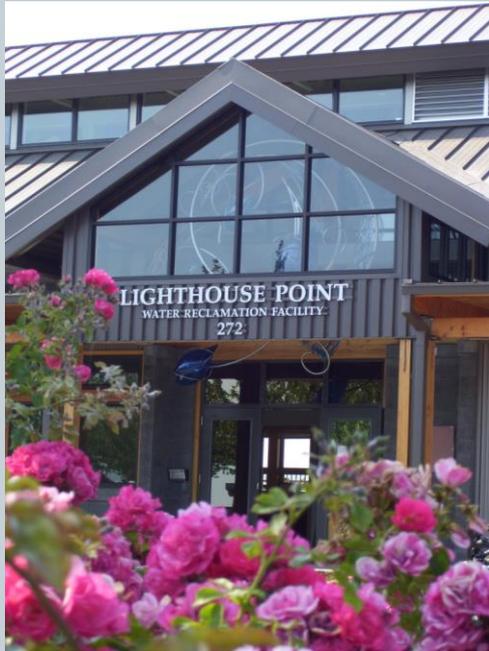
- Its beautiful location;
- Access to the Interstate-5 transportation corridor;
- Proximity to Vancouver, BC, and the greater Seattle area population of 7.9 million people;
- Accessible deep water ports in Vancouver, Canada and Seattle, Washington;
- Affordable housing;
- Available commercial and light industrial zone property;
- Development entitlements;
- City owned utilities, and;
- Great K-12 school system, nearby Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College and Western Washington University.

These attributes are in place now and resolve many hurdles developers, industry, and retail ventures must overcome to ensure successful business outcomes. The City of Blaine is a very viable and productive location in which to do business. Other major businesses have already discovered this including but not limited to Nature's Path, Golden Nut, Bio Plex, Totally Chocolate, TC Trading, Rite Aid and the Semiahmoo Resort and Golf Course.

# City Investment & Utilities

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*The City brings an approved binding site plan, and feasibility study, storm detention facilities, wetland mitigation opportunities, utilities, together to create an inviting property with existing potential. This property offers a wide range of uses, the development of which includes strong City Council and community support.*



- The City Council has approved a general binding site plan to facilitate commercial, industrial, manufacturing, and/or warehouse type uses on the Gateway Property.
- The Gateway Property is fully serviced with water, sewer, electrical, and natural gas. The following is a summary of the utility service providers:
- Water: City of Blaine
- Sewer: City of Blaine
- Electrical: City of Blaine. The City is able to provide power at rates roughly 40% lower than adjacent communities serviced by private electrical utilities. The City is able to do this because it owns and operates the electrical power utility and buys power directly from Bonneville Power Administration. Furthermore, because most of our power system is underground, our system reliability consistently exceeds 99 percent for our entire service area.
- Gas: Cascade Natural Gas
- Fiber Optics: High speed fiber optics is also available in the vicinity; the City is working closely with Wave Cable to ensure necessary infrastructure for new development is accommodated.

# Predevelopment Analyses

*Many of the major predevelopment analyses have already been prepared by the City or at the direction of the City and are available for inspection and use by respondents to this RFQ. These include:*

## The Hebert Report

- A development analysis completed by Hebert Research Inc. (<http://hebertresearch.org>) that quantifies and identifies several critical development attributes in Blaine and answers why the Gateway Property is ideal for development. The Hebert Report, attached to this RFQ, provides recommendations on possible uses and opportunities including commercial, light industrial, medical, software development, advanced manufacturing and science-based businesses. These research-based recommendations are supported by evidence suggesting a high probability of success; Following a detailed survey and statistical analysis, the resulting report provides significant information about the City of Blaine, the Gateway area and recommendations regarding potential development alternatives. Jim Hebert has agreed to provide ongoing support for this public-private partnership and will be important in supporting many elements of the project. and its exciting conclusions are the foundation of this RFQ.

## Storm Water Management

- A feasibility analysis and plans to manage storm water regionally onsite as well as off-site for qualified neighboring properties consistent with applicable City and State of Washington Department of Ecology storm-water regulations. Adjacent property owners have shown favorable interest in participating in a regional solution;

## Wetland Studies

- Wetland studies and delineations are completed for the site. The studies show opportunities for wetland banking for on-site mitigation as well as off-site mitigation. Adjacent property owners have shown favorable interest in participating in a regional solution.

# Proposal Requirements *cont.*

*Continued from page 5*

- Proposals received after the stated time and date will not be considered. It shall be the sole responsibility of the Proposer to have their proposal delivered to the City of Blaine, City Clerk's office for receipt on or before the stated date and time. If proposals are sent via U.S. Mail, the Proposer shall be responsible for its timely delivery to the City of Blaine, City Clerk's office. Proposals delayed by the U.S. Mail shall not be considered. Arrangements will be made for their return to the Proposer at their request and expense.
- The City of Blaine shall not be responsible for qualification submittal preparation costs, including oral interviews (if held), nor costs including attorney fees associated with any challenge to the determination of the highest ranked consultant and/or award of contract and/or rejection of qualification submittal. By submitting a qualification submittal, each consultant agrees to be bound in this respect and waives all claims to such costs and fees.
- Fax or e-mail submittals will not be considered. The City of Blaine accepts no responsibility for misdirected or lost documents. The City of Blaine reserves the right to reject any or all submittals and to waive any irregularities and/or informalities. All submittals become the property of the City of Blaine and will not be returned.

# Proposal Requirements *cont.*

## **Clarification and Addenda**

- Each proposer shall examine the RFQ document and shall judge all matters relating to the adequacy and accuracy of the document and attachments. Any inquires suggestions or requests concerning interpretation, clarification or additional information pertaining to the RFQ shall be made through the City Manager.
- The City shall not be responsible for oral interpretations given by any City employee, representative or others. The issuance of written addendum is the only official method of interpretation, clarification or additional information can be given. If any addenda are issued, the City will notify all prospective Proposers who have contact the City Manager by email. Addenda will be posted on the City webpage as well. However, it is the responsibility of the each Proposer, prior to submitting their proposal, to check the webpage.
- This RFQ is not a request for architectural or engineering services under RCW 39.80. This RFQ is not a solicitation for bids for any work.

## **Legal Name**

- Proposers shall clearly indicate the legal name, address and telephone number of the Proposer (company, firm, partnership, or individual). Proposals shall be signed above the typed or printed name and title of the signer. The signer shall have the authority to bind the Proposer to the submitted proposal.

## **Disclosure**

- Upon receipt, responses become "Public Records" and shall be subject to public disclosure.

# Proposal Requirements *cont.*

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*Parties interested in responding to the Request for Qualifications for the Gateway Project must submit five (5) signed copies of the proposal to be received **no later than 2:00 pm, Friday, March 28, 2014**. Your proposal shall be submitted in one sealed package, clearly marked on the outside, "Gateway Project", and addressed to:*

Attn: Gateway Project  
City of Blaine, Washington  
435 Martin Street  
Suite 3000  
Blaine, Washington 98230

This document is available on the City's website: [www.cityofblaine.com](http://www.cityofblaine.com) or may be picked up at the City Clerk's Office. For further information contact:

David Wilbrecht, City Manager  
City of Blaine  
435 Martin Street  
Suite 3000  
Blaine, Washington 98230  
360.332.8311  
Or  
Email: [dwilbrecht@cityofblaine.com](mailto:dwilbrecht@cityofblaine.com)

# Selection Process

*All submitted proposals will be reviewed by the City's Ad-hoc Economic Development Committee. The Committee will advise the City Council and administration of all responsive proposals and arrange for public presentations at which time the City Council will select a Proposer to negotiate a detailed agreement for development. The City Council has the right to reject all proposals as being not in the best interest of the City.*

The criteria used to evaluate the submitted proposals may include the following:

- Prior private development experience – where, when, brief scope, and value of projects
- Prior successful experience in public-private partnerships
- Proposed uses and development of the land
- Public and private use component
- Market justification
- Ability to complete the project
- Past performance completing similar projects
- Ability to finance the project or support financing
- Creative use of space
- Plan to provide public participation
- Qualifications of principles
- Other information you feel is relevant to your qualifications

# Reserved Rights

- The City reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all proposals, to waive irregularities and technicalities, and to request resubmission. Any response received by the submission date may or may not be rejected by the City, depending on available competition and timely needs of the City. The City reserves the right to award the contract to a responsible Proposer submitting a responsive proposal, with a resulting negotiated agreement (which is most advantageous and in the best interests of the City) that meets the long-term goals of the City. The City shall be the sole judge of the proposal, and the resulting negotiated agreement that is in its best interest and its decision shall be final. Also, the City reserves the right to make such investigation or to request clarifications, as it deems necessary to determine the ability of any Proposer to perform the work or service requested. The Proposer shall provide information the City deems necessary to make this determination. Such information may include, but shall not be limited to, current financial statements prepared by an independent CPA; verification of availability of equipment and personnel; and past performance records. The City of Blaine reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any ideas in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the firm of the conditions contained in this RFQ, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between the City of Blaine and the firm selected. No proposer may rely on any statement, either written or oral, of the City, except for such express representations that may be included in a written agreement approved by the City Council for the City of Blaine. The successful proposer shall not be considered retained or hired, nor shall the City be bound or obligated in any manner until such time as a professional services or other agreement with the City is approved by the City Council for the City of Blaine at an open public meeting.
- The successful firm must be licensed to conduct business both in the State of Washington and the City of Blaine, and have a Washington State Unified Business Identifier (UBI) number. In addition, the successful firm must not be debarred, suspended, or otherwise ineligible to contract with the City, and must not be included on the General Services Administration's "List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement Programs.
- All applicable laws and regulations of the State of Washington and ordinances and regulations of the City of Blaine will apply to any resulting agreement.
- If subcontracting or joint proposals are to be done, that fact, and the name of the proposed subcontracting firms, must be clearly identified in the proposal. Following the award of the public-private agreement contract, no additional subcontracting will be allowed without the express prior written consent of the City of Blaine, which consent may be withheld in the sole and absolute discretion of the City.
- All Proposers must comply with the City's Non-Discrimination Policy.

# Supporting Documents

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Copies of supporting documents are available on the City of Blaine website:

<http://www.cityofblaine.com/index.aspx?NID=578>.

- New RFQ (Extension to March 28, 2014)
- Original Request for Qualifications
- Hebert Report
- Gateway Property General Binding Site Plan
- Ordinance No. 08-2692 and Comp Plan Amendment
- Blaine Fact Sheet

