



# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

*BUSINESS PLANNING: JPUD BROADBAND EXPANSION*

## Overview

Jefferson County Public Utility District (JPUD) invites information technology engineering consultants to submit qualifications for the performance of services necessary to provide a strategic business plan for the deployment of last-mile broadband infrastructure in Jefferson County. JPUD reserves the option to include additional related services in the resulting vendor contract after reviewing vendor proposals.

The consultant will develop and detail business plans, policies, and products for the deployment of both wholesale fixed wireless and fiber to the premises (FTTP) service in JPUD's service territory. The consultant will advise on JPUD's current product and rate sheet, determine funding sources from existing pools of revenue, and project income from future broadband development. Utilizing revenue projections, the consultant will create detailed five and ten-year cash flow projections for JPUD. The consultant will also advise on staffing plans and marketing strategies for last-mile broadband deployment. Planning work will be conducted during the second half of 2020 with the final report to be completed in January of 2021. A more detailed description of the desired scope of work and timeline is provided in the following sections of this document.

## Background

JPUD provides electric, water, sewer, and wholesale telecom utility services to over 19,000 customers. JPUD is governed by an elected three-member Board of Commissioners and run by General Manager Kevin Streett who oversees a staff of 50 employees. JPUD is unique in that it only recently acquired its electric utility services, having taken over from Puget Sound Energy in 2013, after a lengthy purchase negotiation and transition. Our service area is comprised of the northeastern most section of Washington's Olympic Peninsula, backed by Olympic National Park to the West, Puget Sound to the East and the Strait of Juan De Fuca to the north. Jefferson County is home to approximately 30,000 residents, a third of whom live in the county seat of Port Townsend, a popular tourism destination. Jefferson County is rural and designated economically distressed. The county hospital district is the largest employer, followed by the

county government and a paper mill. Jefferson County is home to many retirees and has one of the highest median ages in the state. Jefferson County is known regionally for its natural beauty, quality of life, numerous arts festivals, and wooden boat community.

## Current State of Broadband in Jefferson County

Jefferson County PUD currently owns approximately 45 miles of fiber optic cable, half of which was installed as part of a successful Broadband Telecommunications Opportunity Program (BTOP) grant in 2014 and the other half of which installed by the PUD to expand its Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition Network (SCADA) system as well as other utility communications needs. The initial BTOP fiber was installed to provide wholesale high speed broadband internet and networking capabilities to government buildings and community anchor institutions in Jefferson County. The joint operating agency Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet), of which the PUD is a member, serves as the network operator and system manager.

Though over 45 end users currently contract to make use of Jefferson County PUD fiber, the PUD has no dedicated telecom staff members and receives little revenue from wholesale services. **Washington State law does not allow PUD's the authority to provide retail internet service to end users.**

Like many rural communities, much of Jefferson County is either unserved or underserved regarding access to high speed broadband. Our two largest private Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Wave and CenturyLink, have only extended limited service and infrastructure beyond the county's few more densely populated areas. Other ISPs operating in our county are few in number, small in size, and lack resources for greater investments. They do however offer a variety of technology solutions, both wired and wireless.

In 2019, the PUD hired Magellan Advisors to lead a strategic planning process that cataloged broadband availability, demand, and opportunities for expansion in Jefferson County. The plan identified two paths forward for the PUD: the creation of neighborhood by neighborhood fiber-based local utility districts and exploring a partnership with an industry provider to deliver fixed wireless to the hardest to reach customers. [Magellan's report is available for review on the PUD's website.](#)

## Anticipated Scope of Work

The PUD has identified several consulting needs that are summarized below. The successful consultant and the PUD will further refine the scope of work and schedule during the contract negotiation process.

### **1. Last Mile Policy and Program Development**

- a. Fiber to the Premise Program
- b. Fixed Wireless Network

### **2. Broadband Products and Wholesale Rates**

- a. Lit Service Rates
- b. Speeds Offered
- c. Dark Fiber Leasing
- d. ISP contracts

### **3. Funding Sources**

- a. Existing Revenues
- b. Projected Revenues
- c. Grant and Loan Opportunities

### **4. Detailed Five- and Ten-year Cash flow projections**

- a. Break Even Models
- b. Cash Positive Projections

### **5. Staffing Plan**

- a. 1-3 years
- b. 3-5 years

### **6. Marketing Plan and Strategy**

## Deliverables

The following deliverables shall be provided to the PUD in accordance with the above scope of work:

1. Complete copy of final report in a single electronic file (PDF format).
2. The consultant shall provide ESRI GIS compatible maps for all maps developed.
3. Preliminary rate schedule
4. Possible network designs and take rates
5. LUD Models.
6. Profitability and take rates.
7. Presentations: all presentations must be made available to JPUD in pdf format for posting on JPUD's website within one business day of delivery.
  - a. Following selection, the successful consultant shall, within no less than 2 weeks of contract signing, provide JPUD staff and elected officials an interactive audio-visual presentation of their approach to conducting the process for creating the strategic business plan for broadband expansion.
  - b. At the mid-way point of plan development, the consultant will again present to JPUD staff and elected officials, sharing any and all progress on plan development, strategy and timelines for completing the plan, as well as any challenges or impediments to completing the plan.
  - c. Upon completion of a final draft of the plan, and its approval by staff, the consultant shall present the final draft plan to JPUD's elected officials in a special public meeting.

## Submission of Qualifications

Please provide the following information in an organized fashion in the order listed. Failure to provide enough information may lead to a PUD determination that the consultant's qualifications are not responsive to this Request For Qualifications (RFQ):

### Letter of Interest and Introduction

Describe your interest in the anticipated scope of work.

### Qualifications of Consulting Firm and Examples of Previous Projects

Provide summary information, including references, on two other projects similar to the anticipated scope of work that the firm has been involved in during the last 3-5 years. Provide a sample of a completed broadband/telecom business plan as Appendix A.

### Project Management Team

Identify the project manager and any additional subconsultants to be used on the project. Provide a summary of qualifications and experience for the project manager and other consultants including work on similar studies. Identify to what extent travel expenses could affect the project cost. Describe the project

management approach to be used, including how costs will be managed and controlled.

#### Proposed Staff

List the experience and number of years with the firm for the key members of the staff proposed. Also include the experience of any proposed sub-consultant staff. Local experience and prior experience with PUDs and/or rural communities is considered desirable. Resumes may be included as Appendix B. The PUD is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

#### Staff Availability

Demonstrate your ability to provide the proposed staff for the studies and the ability to perform the anticipated scope of work in a timely manner. Indicate your anticipated schedule following the receipt of the Notice to Proceed, including total duration of the project to completion.

#### Demonstrate Your Understanding of the Needs of a Rural Electric Utility Lacking Retail Authority

List and briefly describe what you think are important issues and what your approach would be for successful completion of the anticipated scope of work. Include a discussion of schedule and milestones that may impact the timely completion of the studies.

#### Proposed Contract and Agreement

The PUD has included a proposed Contract for Professional Services and a Non-Disclosure Agreement in this RFQ. The consultant shall indicate if it is willing to execute the PUD's proposed Contract and Agreement with or without exceptions.

#### **Qualifications Submission Format and Deadline**

The consultant's qualifications shall be submitted as a single PDF document, not to exceed 20 letter sized pages. Appendices for references, resumes, and examples of prior work will not be counted in the page totals. Send qualifications (via email) to:

[wodonnell@jeffpud.org](mailto:wodonnell@jeffpud.org),

**No later than 5pm PST**

**Friday, Sept 25, 2020.**

Qualifications submitted by other means will not be accepted.

Qualifications submitted after the deadline date and time will not be accepted.

## Milestones and Schedule

Milestones	Completion
RFQ Advertisement	Aug. 31, 2020
RFQ Response Due	Sept. 25, 2020
Short List Consultant Interviews	Sept. 29, 2020
Scope of Work Negotiations	Oct. 1, 2020
Submit contract to BOC for approval	Oct. 6, 2020
Consultant Notice to Proceed	Oct. 7, 2020
Final Draft Plan to Staff	Jan. 15, 2021
Public Presentation Final Draft Plan	Feb. 2, 2021

## Review and Selection

Consultant selection will be according to Chapter 39.80 RCW and based on the evaluation of qualifications unless it is deemed necessary by the PUD to conduct interviews of closely scored consultants. The consultant determined best qualified to perform the studies will be recommended to the BOC for acceptance, subject to successful negotiation of a contract for professional services.

## Scoring Criteria

A select group of PUD staff and advisors will review all submitted qualifications. The review team will recommend finalists for interviews and those finalists will be notified via email. Qualifications submitted will be ranked based upon the merits of the written qualifications and experience of the firm or consultant team. Each reviewer will award a score based on a 30-point total as follows:

- a. Demonstrated understanding of the needs of JPUD and its proposed Scope of Work. (5)
- b. Qualifications of the consulting firm and its project team (5)
- c. Experience working with rural communities and/or small to medium sized public utilities lacking retail telecom authority. (5)
- d. Quality and applicability of examples of previous work and references from past clients. (5)
- e. Degree to which the project design approaches the scope of work with innovative and creative solutions or methods. (5)
- f. Likelihood that the proposal provides the best value compared to other submitted proposals. (5)

*NOTE: The PUD's selection process will utilize above scoring criteria, but applicant scoring will not be the only factor in selecting a successful applicant.*

## Terms and Conditions

The PUD reserves and has the sole discretion to:

- a. Award a contract for Professional Services for all, any, or any combination of the

- anticipated scope of work described within the RFQ.
- b. Reject any and all consultant qualifications considered by the PUD to be non-responsive or not in the best interest of the PUD.
  - c. Supplement, amend or otherwise modify this RFQ or cancel this RFQ without substitution.
  - d. Waive any or all informalities in the consultant's qualifications or failures to comply with the RFQ requirements.
  - e. Request further information, or presentations from consultants as needed to support the PUD's selection of the most qualified consultant.
  - f. Select any consultant that in the opinion of the PUD is most qualified.
  - g. Modify the anticipated scope of work, and milestones and schedule.
  - h. Award the contract for Professional Services with no additional discussions.

## Public Records Act

Under Washington State Law (reference RCW 42.56 – the Public Records Act) all materials received or created by the PUD are considered public records. These records include but are not limited to qualification submittals, agreement documents, contract work product, or other information submitted by a vendor to the PUD.

The State of Washington's Public Records Act requires that public records must be promptly disclosed by the City upon request unless the RCW or another Washington State statute specifically exempts records from disclosure. Exemptions are narrow and explicit and are listed in Washington State Law (RCW 42.56 and RCW 19.108).

Respondents must familiarize themselves with the Washington State Public Records Act and the limits of record disclosure exemptions. For more information, visit the Washington State Legislature's website regarding the Public Records Act at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=42.56>. If the consultant believes that any of the records it submits to the PUD as part of your informational material are exempt from disclosure, you can request that they not be released. To do so, you must notify the PUD in writing. You should clearly and specifically identify each record and the exemption(s) that may apply.

The PUD will not withhold materials from disclosure because they have been marked with a document header or footer, page stamp, or a generic statement that a document is; subject to non-disclosure, exempt, confidential, proprietary, or protected. Do not identify an entire page as exempt unless each sentence is within the exemption scope. Identify paragraphs or sentences that meet the specific exemption criteria you cite. Only the specific records or portions of records properly identified will be reviewed for potential non-disclosure. All other records will be considered subject to full disclosure upon request.

If the PUD receives a public disclosure request for any records you have properly and specifically listed for nondisclosure, the PUD will notify you in writing of the request and will postpone

disclosure. While it is not a legal obligation, the PUD, as a courtesy, will allow you up to ten (10) business days to file a court injunction to prevent the PUD from releasing the records (reference RCW 42.56.540). If you fail to obtain a court order with the ten (10) business days, the PUD may release the documents.

The PUD will not assert an exemption from disclosure on your behalf. If you believe a record(s) is exempt from disclosure you are obligated to clearly identify it as such on and submit it with your solicitation. Should a public record request be submitted to the PUD for that (those) record(s), you can then seek an injunction under RCW 42.56 to prevent a records release. By submitting a response to this Request for Qualifications, respondent acknowledges this obligation; and also acknowledges that the PUD will have no obligation or liability to the consultant if the records are disclosed.

*Should you have any questions or wish to request additional information, please contact:*  
Will O'Donnell, Communications Manager, at 206-265-1820 or [wodonnell@jeffpud.org](mailto:wodonnell@jeffpud.org)

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Kevin Streett, General Manager  
Jefferson County PUD

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Date