Ferry County and the Colville Confederated Tribes

Broadband Action Team (BAT)

Planning Request for Qualification (PRFQ)
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1. Overview
Ferry County and the Colville Confederated Tribes Broadband Action Team (BAT) are collaborating to strategically plan for better access to and expansion of broadband internet across Ferry County. The Ferry County and Colville Confederated Tribes BAT meetings have shown significant progress leading to measurable planning, including issue identification, some preliminary goal discussions, initial mapping, and a consideration of fiber and wireless alternatives. The final plan will help to anchor institutions, public and private partners, as well as other community stakeholders who are willing to pursue strategic measures in order to improve access to and expansion of broadband in Ferry County, and ultimately serve the economic and community development interests of the region.

In April 2018, the Ferry County and Colville Confederated Tribes Broadband Action Team (BAT) was formed to address the broadband deficit, facilitate stakeholders, and form a plan of action. Much like the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 that worked to bring electricity to every home in the 20th century, today many local, state and Tribal governments are collaborating to achieve similar results with broadband in rural communities. This is an effort to bridge our own digital divide that will utilize a formal planning process to accurately identify the problems, set preliminary goals, inventory local data and conditions, analyze that data and conditions, select alternatives and/or a combination of alternatives, and set the stage for actual implementation projects and program evaluations.

The BAT has also developed the following statement as a mechanism to outline the current community and economic development goals that would benefit from the presence of broadband. Those goals include economic development, public safety preparedness and response, and access to healthcare and education that rely on a strong broadband internet connection for rural communities across the US. Therefore, increasing the quality of, and access to, broadband, and the implementation of a wireless broadband emergency management system is a widespread community goal for Ferry County. As a region, we know broadband knows no boundaries, and this local effort remains committed to this goal, which has also required the involvement of many regional and state level stakeholders including Washington State University (WSU)-Ferry County; the Colville Confederated Tribes; Brad Smith, President of Microsoft; Governor Jay Inslee; and the Stevens County/Spokane Tribe BAT.

2. Background
Much of Ferry County, including the Colville Reservation within Ferry County, is plagued with high unemployment, excessive poverty, and an absence of quality of life amenities that have proven to be
undesirable to most residents and insurmountable barriers to 21st century economic and community development. Ferry County and the Colville Confederated Tribes are historically and economically a distressed area. Historically, the surrounding areas within Ferry have been dependent on a resource-based economy. Community and economic resources have decreased dramatically as a substantial employer, the Kinross Goldmine, closed. Many individuals have struggled to find work elsewhere and have either had to move, find government work, or start their own business.

Simply put, this area lacks reliable, widespread broadband access necessary to overcome these challenges. Broadband will help bolster both a dormant and burgeoning economy within Ferry County and on the Colville Indian Reservation. Broadband will help support both tribal and county relations with local community and economic development, as well as the potential for more robust communication tools like telemedicine, virtual classrooms, videoconferencing, VoIP, big data or block chain opportunities, etc. In addition, it will also help existing business retention efforts and other economic development strategies that should subsequently support and/or help to provide new employment opportunities. The increase in distance learning options for K-12 and higher education for local students, should help improve the homework efficiency gap and competitive academic divide. It will also provide improvements to public safety communications systems needed by local EMRs and residents ultimately improving the landscape for building community resilience.

The short-term benefits will include national media attention, improved federal/state political support, additional local stakeholder buy in, more community awareness, establishment of public/private partnerships, and through the BAT we have generated regional awareness of Ferry County community and economic development. Another short-term benefit is community progress with local and regional economic development strategies through Ferry County Sunrise that will help to enhance the quality of life for all area residents, including the elderly, young adults, and other local youth in the community. The long-term benefits of improving broadband access in Ferry County will lead to better articulated economic development plans, equal access to broadband for youth and elderly, improved access to cell phone coverage or Wi-Fi, increased awareness of broadband opportunities, robust home-based and/or rural small businesses and other cottage industries, improved access to Town Hall or county meetings through live streaming, and increased business development and retention or recruitment campaigns.

Ideally, planning and analysis will unify the community as key stakeholders to economic vitality and success. The planning process values stakeholder input, lending to community involvement and ownership of broadband deployment efforts. To achieve sustainability in economically distressed areas such as Ferry County and the Colville Reservation, stakeholder input facilitated through the planning process is required and will reflect our shared values of respect for our natural environment, yet balanced with the built environment, and bolstering the economic opportunity each community member and stakeholder is afforded as their birth right. As a broadband desert, seeing this project to completion will be monumental in bringing the economic benefits associated with broadband to the community. Economic stability is the ultimate goal in bringing better access to broadband to the community.

3. **General Specifications**

The Ferry County and Colville Confederated Tribes BAT accomplished a successful launch in 2018 and has continued to meet monthly to continue its work on promoting local broadband access. As a result of its continued collaboration with the Colville Confederated Tribes staff and the Ferry County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), Ferry County now has the potential to become a state leader in local economic growth, community revitalization and stability.
Current BAT activities include work on area institutional assessments, an informal audit of community broadband inventory, a draft development of a community broadband statement, and initial work on a sponsored market assessment survey. Through reliable broadband connectivity in the county seat of Republic, BAT team members have accomplished the successful implementation of a Customer Relation Management (CRM) System and the creation of an economic development portal called Ferry County Sunrise, which is located at www.FerryCountySunrise.com.

Reliable broadband in Republic helped WSU Extension and other county leaders to integrate other technologies into Ferry County Sunrise, which as an online community platform allows for online video hosting and streaming, data exchanges, and uses machine learning to improve overall community communication strategies and other marketing campaigns. The aim of this effort is to expand our local capacity to provide and promote these sorts of opportunities for both local residents and area businesses as a means to improving local business recruitment and retention efforts. This vital element will be accomplished through broadband and as a direct result of this effort, better economic stability and local job growth will rise within and around the county and with the tribes.

4. Anticipated Scope of Work

According to the Tri-County Economic Development District (TEDD), the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report identified specific key industry clusters including transportation, utilities, wastewater, education, and emergency services as high priorities for local broadband access and/or expansion. In addition, the Ferry County CEDS report also listed both broadband and other telecommunication infrastructure as key priorities, especially as it directly correlates to and with both businesses and other local industries.

So, in collaboration with the Colville Tribes, Ferry County will continue to leverage the BAT in order to achieve better planning success that leads to both implementation and construction projects. There is a dire need for broadband in Ferry County. As a result, there are several key community stakeholders and other national enterprises that are participate in the Ferry County BAT with a vested interest in the County's public network (including its infrastructure), including the Colville Confederated Tribes, Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet), Microsoft and Declaration Network Group, Airband Partners, and the North Star Opportunity Zone (OZ).

This collaborative gesture and Declaration Network Group’s involvement as a Microsoft partner through the Airband initiative strengthened the proposal to Microsoft for supporting the market assessment survey. The market assessment will be achieved through a mixed methods approach to data collection (qualitative and quantitative) and data analysis, which will result in a detailed and objective evaluation to determine internet speeds, market implications, and quality of life when considering the size of each community and business ecosystems in these very remote, frontier communities.

This project is value driven, and through its collaboration with all of its stakeholders, broadband will have a cost-benefit to the following: anchor institutions, rural small businesses, schools and libraries, county and tribal departments, as well as other county and tribal satellite locations. In other words, the planning scope of the work will identify the needs, challenges, and opportunities for common County and Colville Tribal Departments like IT, Emergency Management Services (EMS), Public Works, Planning Department, public hospitals, Sheriff's Department, and various local schools and districts which demonstrate a significant need for, and/or improvement of, local broadband access. Broadband will highly benefit these collaborators and stakeholders because it lends to equal access of broadband in a
way that supports the community and stabilizes the economy. Overall, this collaboration across both political and geographic boundaries with Tribes, institutions, agencies, departments, businesses, individual departments and individuals will improve both data collection and data analysis, which are extremely vital to broadband connectivity and planning in Ferry County.

5. Duration

Estimated Schedule for Public Project Completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Service Chosen</td>
<td>08/02/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Begin Work</td>
<td>08/16/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Draft Report</td>
<td>11/01/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Final Report</td>
<td>01/10/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant End Work</td>
<td>01/24/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Complete</td>
<td>02/01/2020</td>
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6. Requirements and Deliverables from Consultant

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

a. Facilitate Joint Planning with the BAT Team and its Stakeholders
b. Host at least four public meetings, two in North County and two on the Colville Reservation; specifically in the communities of Keller, Republic, Curlew, and Inchelium.
c. Identify Industry Role Models and Best Practices
d. Perform Local Market Analysis
e. Inventory and Map Local Infrastructure and Demand (or Need)
f. Model Broadband Infrastructure Expansion Projects
g. Perform Business Case Evaluation on Each Expansion Model
h. Identify and Recommend Funding Options for Each Expansion Model
i. Review PUD Telecom Utility
j. Recommend Action Plan
k. Facilitate Adoption of Metrics and Follow Up

7. Proposal Process and Submission of Qualifications

Please provide the following information organized in the same order as listed. Failure to provide enough information may lead to the Ferry County BAT determination that the consultant’s qualifications are not responsive to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ).

Letter of Interest and Introduction
Please describe your interest in the anticipated scope of work.

Qualifications and Prior Performance
Provide information, including references, on two to three other projects the firm has been involved in in the last 3-5 years that are considered to be similar to the anticipated scope of work. Provide a sample of a prior study as Appendix A.
Project Management
Identify the project manager and any additional sub-consultants 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 proposed staff. Also include the experience of any proposed sub-consultant staff. Local experience and prior experience with Ferry County BAT and/or rural communities is considered desirable. Resumes may be included as Appendix B.

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 Ferry County BAT’s Needs
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 Ferry County BAT 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 Ferry County BAT’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 40 letter sized pages. Graphics shall be kept to a minimum. Appendices for references and resumes will not be counted in the page totals. Send qualifications (via email) to: William Folks at plan@co.ferry.wa.us.

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

8. Milestones and Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RFQ Advertisement</td>
<td>07/01/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFQ Response due</td>
<td>07/12/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short List Consultant Interviews</td>
<td>07/19/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of Work Negotiations</td>
<td>08/02/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit contract to Ferry County BAT for review</td>
<td>08/09/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit contract to BOCC for approval</td>
<td>08/12/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Notice to Proceed</td>
<td>08/16/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Strategic Plan Report</td>
<td>01/10/20</td>
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Consultant selection will be based on the evaluation of qualifications unless it is deemed necessary by the Ferry County BAT to conduct interviews of closely scored consultants. The consultants determined best qualified to perform the studies will be recommended to the Ferry County BOCC for acceptance, subject to successful negotiation of a contract for professional services.

A select group of Ferry County BAT members and other stakeholders will review all submitted qualifications. The review team will recommend finalists for interviews and those finalists will be notified via email. The review team will interview finalists between July 22nd and July 26th and select the final consultant on July 29th. 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 25 point total as follows:

a. Demonstrated understanding of the needs of the Ferry County BAT and its proposed Scope of Work. (5)
b. Qualifications of the project team (5)
c. Experience working with rural communities and/or small to medium sized public utility companies. (5)
d. Degree to which the project design approaches goals with innovative and creative solutions or methods. (5)
e. Likelihood that the chosen proposal will provide the best value in comparison to other submitted proposals. (5)

10. **Contract Award and MOU w/Consultant**

The Ferry County BAT 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 Ferry County BAT to be non-responsive or not in the best interest of the Ferry County BAT.
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 Ferry County BAT selection of the most qualified consultant.
f. Select any consultant that in the opinion of the Ferry County BAT 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.

Should you have any questions or wish to request any additional information, please contact:

William Folks, Planning Director
Ferry County Planning & Building
147 N Clark Ave, Suite. #7 (Physical) or PO Box 305 (Mailing), Republic, WA 99166
Phone: (509) 775-5225 Ext. 3102
Email: plan@co.ferry.wa.us