

**City of Albany**  
**Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**  
**Albany Waterfront Visioning Project**

**Summary of Requested Services**

The City of Albany is requesting statements of qualifications from firms with the appropriate expertise to carry out a community visioning program for the Albany waterfront. The City has decided that a proactive, community-driven planning process is necessary to develop a common vision for the future of the waterfront, when and if the racetrack is closed. Qualified firms should have relevant experience in strategic planning, community outreach, public policy research, communications and civic engagement.

**Notice to Consultants**

The City of Albany intends to undertake a competitive selection process for a consultant to assist the community in creating a vision for the future of the Albany waterfront. The City invites Statements of Qualifications from consultants, either in an individual capacity or in teams. The submittals should not include a scope of services or cost estimate. The City's objective is to select a consultant with demonstrated capability to synthesize a range of divergent views, guide a community in developing a course of action, and promote understanding and commitment to a chosen course of action, using non-traditional and innovative techniques, as appropriate. The City is looking for a consultant to help define a course of action that will draw support from a broad spectrum of the community.

The selection process will involve a review of the Statements of Qualifications, followed by interviews of the most qualified firms (to discuss how they would approach this project and how their experience and qualifications best qualify them for this work). Based on the interview results and the review of qualifications, the top-rated firm will be invited to prepare a Scope of Services in consultation with the City and then to negotiate a budget for the project.

**Submittal Deadline**

Statements of Qualification will be received only at the City of Albany offices **no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon), January 25, 2008**. All applications received thereafter, whether by mail or otherwise, shall be returned unopened. Statements of Qualifications may not be submitted via FAX or email.

Submit Statements of Qualifications to:

City of Albany  
Attention: Ann Chaney  
Community Development Department  
1000 San Pablo Avenue  
Albany, CA 94706

## **I. History and Background**

Over the past 30+ years the issue of new development on the Albany waterfront including the site of the Golden Gate Fields racetrack (see Map #1 attached) has been a continuing divisive and controversial topic on the civic stage in the City of Albany. A succession of landowners has proposed a long string of development plans which have all been found lacking by the community. Development proposals have ranged from large office complexes to shopping malls to casino gambling. Meanwhile the horse racing industry has continued its long decline. Most recently the news that the racetrack owners, Magna Entertainment Corporation, have decided to sell off half of their chain of racetracks has once again highlighted the importance of the City developing a long term plan for the future of the racetrack property. Against this setting the City has decided that a proactive community driven planning process is necessary to develop a common vision for the future of the waterfront.

Public opinion in Albany shows strong support for land use options that include a substantial amount of open space at the Albany waterfront. This open space might at some point be added to the adjacent Eastshore State Park. Meanwhile another significant faction of the community supports substantial development at the waterfront. Distrust between these factions intrudes into many other aspects of community affairs and the City hopes the planning process will aid in reconciling the different sides. Even on the different sides of the issue there are no readily apparent consensus positions as to the acceptable type, intensity or specific locations for future land uses on the racetrack property.

Given the amount of property taxes, bond assessments and parcel taxes paid by the racetrack it is important to the community that future waterfront development continue to generate an equivalent amount of revenues for the city, schools and city library. This position is widely held.

Beyond the public sector fiscal issues are the real estate economics of the Golden Gate Fields property. One issue that needs to be considered is what amount of development might be necessary to provide the property owner a sufficient incentive to enter into a development agreement providing for the dedication of a significant portion of the property for open space uses.

## **II. Program Planning**

The City recently engaged Don Neuwirth & Associates to assist in defining the scope of the City's waterfront planning process. From that body of work the City Council has chosen to use Planning Scenario #3 from the Don Neuwirth & Associates Preliminary Report (referred herein as Planning Scenario #3) as a high level conceptual guidance for this waterfront planning process (see Section VI below).

The City Council has designated the City Waterfront Committee as the primary body to provide detailed guidance for this planning project. As part of this the Council has delegated to the Committee the development of a more detailed work program to guide the planning process. While Planning Scenario #3 will serve as a general guide, additional elements have been added and other elements will be added based on the final definition of the planning process to be prepared in cooperation with the selected project consultant(s).

Planning Scenario #3 calls for a visioning process that would be grounded in a detailed resource analysis and the administrative realities for the property. The planning process is not intended to immediately develop a traditional planning implementation outcome (general plan amendment, specific plan or rezoning). Instead the City desires a vigorous civic engagement and educational process aimed at developing a shared vision for the future of Albany's waterfront.

The City envisions an intensive public participation process that will engage a broad cross section of the community in examining the future of the waterfront. Education would be the keystone to supporting the creative process. A variety of public involvement techniques would be utilized such as large and small group meetings and public opinion surveys. While traditional large group meetings utilized in many planning efforts might be included as part of the overall process they should only be part of a much broader and more innovative process. The goal is to generate understanding and insights into the tradeoffs between various land use options that the opposing issue groups might desire to be incorporated into a future plan for the waterfront.

The outcome would be a vision of the waterfront with specific goals and objectives for future land use changes. Natural and cultural resources issues as well as public services would be examined in the public process.

The City is open to working with the landowner during the planning process. To date little interest in participating in this process has been expressed.

At the end of the process the City's goal is to have a high level roadmap for the future of the waterfront.

### **III. Statement of Qualifications**

The City welcomes Statements of Qualifications that best expresses the qualifications of the respondent. Statements of Qualifications are restricted to no more than 40 pages in total length and must include the following items:

#### **A. Qualifications**

Identify the individuals who would be primarily responsible for directly managing the work, if different from the entity's principals. Describe the background and experience of the individuals who have actually performed the services, with particular emphasis on

projects that most directly illustrate capabilities to be utilized in this project. For each such planning process or project, provide:

- Name, location, description of project
- Detailed description of the services performed, the time period in which they were performed;
- The name and telephone number of at least one reference for each such project that can attest to the quality and effectiveness of the Respondent's work.

#### B. Methodological Approach for Planning Process

Describe, in no more than two pages, the organizational approach the Respondent would recommend/use to carry out this planning process, including special methodologies that the team uses to ensure a fair and open process while meeting budget and schedule expectations.

#### C. Compensation Terms

Provide a complete list of current hourly rates for all billable staff positions. Also indicate reimbursement provisions for sub-contractors and reimbursable expenses.

### **IV. Selection Criteria and Process**

The Waterfront Committee has created a Consultant Selection Subcommittee that will review the Statements of Qualification. Consultants considered to be the most qualified for this process, will be invited to an in-person interview by the Waterfront Committee at a date to be determined. Respondents will be asked to make presentations of their qualifications and respond to questions from the Committee. Based on the interview results and review of qualifications the top rated firm will then be invited to prepare a proposal in consultation with the City and develop a budget for the project. The final selection decision will be made by the City Council after receiving a recommendation from the Waterfront Committee.

The Consultant Selection Subcommittee and Waterfront Committee will evaluate qualifications based upon, but not limited to the following criteria:

- Demonstrated capabilities in synthesizing a range of divergent views and guiding communities in developing courses of action.
- Building understanding and commitment to a chosen course of action using non-traditional and innovative techniques.
- Experience and demonstrated success of the Respondent in facilitating complicated governmental or organizational planning process with multiple issues and stakeholders.
- Evidence that the Respondent is familiar with land use entitlement processes.
- The respondent's compensation rates.
- Evidence of the Respondent's ability to prepare well-written documents with well drafted graphics.

- Evidence of the Respondent's ability to facilitate an open and productive community planning process.
- Other extraordinary elements or creative approaches to assisting the City in preparing land use alternatives for the waterfront area. This particular selection criterion is intended to allow the City to expressly consider creative aspects of statements of qualifications that do not necessarily fall into other selection criteria.
- Responsiveness to the RFQ.

As a part of its evaluation, the Committee may request additional information or data from Respondents.

### **Format and Number of Copies**

Respondent teams must submit nine (9) copies of their qualifications printed on both sides submitted on 8½ by 11-inch paper. Submission packages also should include an electronic copy of the Statement of Qualifications in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. The City reserves the right to make all submissions available to the public pursuant to legal requirements.

## **V. General Conditions**

1. Any material clarifications or modifications to the RFQ or the selection process will be made in writing and provided to all recipients of the RFQ.
2. The City reserves the right to:
  - Waive minor irregularities.
  - Modify or cancel the selection process or schedule at any time.
  - Negotiate with the second choice Respondent if it is unable to negotiate an acceptable contract with the first choice Respondent within a reasonable period of time.
  - Reject any and all proposals, and to seek new qualifications when it is in the best interest of the City to do so.
  - Seek any clarification or additional information from Respondents as is deemed necessary to the evaluation of a response.
  - Judge the veracity, substance, and relevance of the Respondents' written or oral representations, including seeking and evaluating independent information on any of the Respondents' work cited as relevant experience.
  - Contract with separate entities for various components of the services.
3. All expenses related to any Respondent's response to the RFQ, or other expenses incurred during the period of time the selection process is underway, are the sole obligation and responsibility of that Respondent. The City will not, directly or indirectly, assume responsibility for such costs except as otherwise provided by written agreement.

4. The City will negotiate a final scope of services and terms of compensation following the consultant's selection. As such, Respondents should expect their statement of qualifications to constitute a point of departure for such negotiations rather than fixed offers to be accepted or rejected.
5. The contract for the performance of these services will provide that: (i) the consultant will perform its services at the direction of the City in a manner consistent with State law and City policies; and (ii) the consultant will be subject to the State law and the City's conflict of interest policies, including disclosing any work for the property owner or its affiliates or partners in other communities.
6. Questions concerning this RFQ can be addressed to:  
Ann Chaney  
Community Development Director  
510-528-5768  
achaney@albanyca.org

## **VI. Attachments and References**

The following attachments provide background summary information on the property and various actions leading up to the present:

- Scenario #3 – Albany Waterfront Planning Preliminary Report by Neuwirth & Associates
- Albany Waterfront Planning Preliminary Report and Final Report prepared by Neuwirth & Associates.
- Map #1 - depicts the planning area boundaries and acreage (i.e., Albany portion of Golden Gate Fields)
- Map #2 - Eastshore State Park plan map depicting surrounding planned land uses
- Summary of General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance regarding the subject property (including Measure C language).

For further information, you may wish to refer to:

- [www.albanyca.org](http://www.albanyca.org) “Waterfront Planning for Golden Gate Fields property” for a fact sheet and maps, and the 2003-04 City Visioning process;
- [www.albanyshoreline.org](http://www.albanyshoreline.org)
- [www.albanywaterfrontcoalition.org](http://www.albanywaterfrontcoalition.org)