

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION FOR
ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR
WHITE BLUFFS RAIL REHABILITATION PROJECT.
PORT OF BENTON**

I. INVITATION

The Port of Benton (Port), owner of the Port of Benton Industrial Railroad, is requesting Statements of Qualifications (RFQ) from consulting firms with demonstrated experience in railroad track and rail signal engineering. The Port has received a \$9.56 million federal Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant, supported by a \$2.44 million Port match, to implement a comprehensive rail infrastructure improvement project throughout its railroad system.

The BUILD-funded program is anticipated to include system-wide track replacement, rail signal modernization, and related infrastructure improvements designed to enhance safety, reliability, operational efficiency, and long-term asset performance. The overall project is expected to be delivered in multiple phases to accommodate railroad operations, construction sequencing, resource availability, schedule constraints, and stakeholder coordination.

The Port seeks a qualified consultant to provide planning, engineering, design, bidding support, construction administration, and related professional services. The selected consultant shall incorporate all applicable federal grant requirements and develop project deliverables that address phasing, operational constraints, railroad coordination, outage requirements, and other measures necessary to maintain safe and efficient rail operations throughout project implementation.

II. BACKGROUND

The Port owns and operates the Southern Connection Rail Line, a freight rail system originally constructed by the federal government in the late 1940s to support operations at the Hanford Site. The line entered service in 1950 and was transferred from the U.S. Department of Energy to the Port in 1998. Today, the system includes approximately 16 miles of industrial rail, multiple rail bridges, sidings, turnouts, roadway crossings, signal systems, and related railroad infrastructure serving manufacturers, agricultural processors, energy-related industries, and other freight-dependent businesses throughout the Tri-Cities region. The railroad provides critical freight connectivity through direct access to both Union Pacific and BNSF Railway and plays an important role in supporting regional economic development, industrial growth, and supply chain efficiency.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The project includes rehabilitation and replacement of critical railroad infrastructure on the White Bluffs Southern Connection Rail Line. Anticipated work includes replacement of the entire WYE track, replacement of approximately three (3) miles of elevated track in curved segments, modernization of railroad signal systems at Jadwin Avenue and Battelle Boulevard, and installation of approximately 8,000 to 10,000 railroad cross ties. The selected consultant shall provide professional engineering, surveying, permitting, coordination, cost estimating, and related services necessary to advance the project from preliminary design through final design and bidding. The scope below establishes minimum expectations and does not limit the consultant's ability to propose additional services or a delivery approach needed for successful project completion.

1. Existing Conditions Assessment and Surveying

- Conduct field investigations and surveys of the rail corridor, track, crossings, drainage, signals, utilities, and related infrastructure.
- Confirm existing conditions, constraints, and right-of-way requirements that may affect design or construction.

2. Preliminary Engineering and Alternatives Analysis

- Develop preliminary engineering concepts, technical analyses, and planning-level cost estimates.
- Evaluate alternatives and recommend improvements for track, crossings, signals, drainage, and related infrastructure.
- Develop preliminary construction phasing and operational strategies to support uninterrupted rail service where feasible.

3. Final Design and Construction Documents

- Prepare final plans, specifications, engineer's estimates, and bid-ready construction documents.
- Incorporate applicable railroad, federal, state, and local requirements, including grant, regulatory, and permitting obligations.

4. Railroad Operations Coordination and Construction Phasing

- Coordinate with the railroad operator and key stakeholders to maintain rail operations during construction.
- Identify track outages, operational constraints, construction windows, and required phasing.

5. Traffic Control and Crossing Improvements

- Develop traffic control plans
- Coordinate roadway and railroad crossing impacts with applicable agencies and affected stakeholders.

6. Permitting, Environmental Review, and Agency Coordination

- Support environmental review, permitting, regulatory coordination, and agency approvals.
- Prepare technical documentation required for permits, approvals, and project delivery.

7. Cost Estimating and Risk Review

- Prepare and refine construction cost estimates at appropriate design milestones.
- Identify key cost drivers, project risks, and value engineering opportunities.

8. Bidding and Procurement Support

- Prepare bid-ready documents and support procurement activities.
- Provide technical support during bidding, including responses to bidder questions, addenda, and bid evaluation.

9. Project Coordination, Schedule Management, and Grant Compliance

- Develop and maintain project schedules, milestones, and coordination timelines.
- Coordinate with the Port, railroad operator, utilities, funding agencies, regulators, and other stakeholders.
- Support grant compliance, reporting, documentation, reimbursement and other project delivery requirements.

10. Design Closeout and Deliverables

- Provide record drawings, final design files, CAD files, reports, calculations, and other required project deliverables.
- Submit all required closeout documentation and electronic project files in a format acceptable to the Port.

11. Optional Construction-Phase Services

- Provide construction administration and engineering support during procurement and construction, if requested by the Port.
- Support site visits, inspections, submittal reviews, RFI responses, change order reviews, and grant documentation.
- Provide additional services requested by the Port to support project delivery.

IV. CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND GOOD FAITH

Consultants must declare among their team any business entity or individual who is associated with or is in any way likely to create conflict of interest or a perception of conflict of interest.

The Consultant declares that its submittal is in good faith and will disclose to the best of its knowledge, whether there are any circumstances whereby any member of Commission or any employee of the Port would gain any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect.

The Consultant declares that it has not and will not participate in any collusive scheme with any entity or person in developing this RFQ.

If a Consultant considers that a particular relationship or association does not create a conflict of interest and will not create a perception of conflict of interest, but is concerned that the Port could arrive at a different conclusion, the Consultant should fully disclose the circumstances to the Port at the earliest possible date, and request that the Port provide an advance interpretation as to whether the relationship or association will be likely to create a conflict of interest or a perception of conflict of interest.

Failure to comply with the provision may result in disqualification of your proposal from the RFQ process or, if the Port becomes aware of the breach of this provision after the detailed proposal has been requested, disqualification from the further processes.

V. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Information provided to a Consultant by the Port or acquired by the Consultant by way of further inquiries or through investigation is confidential. Such information shall not be used or disclosed in any way without the prior written authorization of the Port. The Consultant shall not make any statement of fact or opinion regarding any aspect of the RFQ and any subsequent proposal to the media or any member of the public without prior written authorization of the Port.

Consultant shall be advised that the Port is subject to freedom of information laws, such as the Washington State Public Records Act, and that the Consultant will be expected to comply with the obligation imposed by the Port.

To the extent permitted, the Port shall treat all submissions as confidential. However, the Consultant is advised that any information contained in any submission may be released if required by the Port policy or procedures, by other authorities having jurisdiction, or by law, such as RCW 42.56, as determined by the Port in its sole, good faith determination. All Proposals submitted to the Port will be kept in confidence with the Port administration for the sole purposes of evaluating and developing the best possible strategic option for the Port. Submitted Proposals will become the property of the Port. The Port will have the right to make copies of the Proposal for its internal review process and to provide such copies to the staff, legal, technical, and financial advisors, and representatives. The Port is held to RCW 42.30, the Open Public Meetings Act, and may be required by law to disclose certain items within a public session.

All information will become and remain the property of the Port; none will be returned. If the proposal contains any proprietary or trade secret information, said information must be indicated as such.

VI. INSURANCE AND INDEMNIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Consultant shall, at all times during the term of the Agreement, carry, maintain, and keep in full force and effect commercial general liability insurance with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage arising from the Consultant's performance of services under the Agreement.

Consultant shall maintain professional liability/errors and omissions insurance with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per claim and \$1,000,000 aggregate covering negligent acts, errors, or omissions arising from the performance of professional architectural, engineering, surveying, or other professional services under the Agreement.

Consultant shall maintain workers' compensation insurance as required by applicable law and employer's liability insurance as required by the Agreement.

Consultant shall provide the Port with certificates of insurance evidencing the required coverage prior to commencing work. Consultant shall be responsible for all deductibles and self-insured retentions associated with its insurance policies.

Consultant shall require its subconsultants and subcontractors to maintain insurance appropriate to the services they perform and consistent with the applicable requirements of the Agreement.

If Consultant fails to maintain the required insurance in full force and effect, the Port may exercise the remedies available under the Agreement, including termination.

VII. CONTENTS OF STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

Consultants interested in providing railroad engineering services for the proposed project shall submit a Statement of Qualifications. Submittals shall be limited to no more than ten (10) pages, excluding a cover letter or letter of transmittal that contains introductory information only.

A. Submittal Format. The Statement of Qualifications shall include the following:

- Cover letter or letter of transmittal.
- Narrative statement describing the Consultant's understanding of the Port's requirements and its ability to perform all or most of the engineering services and tasks contemplated by this RFQ.
- General firm profile, including organizational structure, company size, recent experience with comparable railroad projects, and experience with government-owned or port-owned projects.
- Identification of key personnel assigned to the project, including each individual's qualifications, background, relevant experience, and specific responsibilities.
- Representative list of comparable clients and projects, including contact person, railroad, brief project description, and phone number.
- Demonstrated ability to meet schedules and deadlines, control costs, avoid delays and claims, and deliver projects within established requirements.

B. Delivery Requirements. The Port invites qualified firms to submit a Statement of Qualifications for the services described in this RFQ. Interested firms must submit one (1) electronic copy in PDF format no later than **3:00 p.m. PST on Thursday, October 22, 2026**, to:

Ms. Sheri Collins
PORT OF BENTON
3250 PORT OF BENTON BLVD.

RICHLAND, WA 99354
509-375-3060
procurement@portofbenton.com

- C. Questions shall be submitted no later than Monday October 19th, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. All questions shall be submitted by email to **procurement@portofbenton.com**.
- D. Submittals shall include the name, address, email address, and daytime telephone number of the primary contact person. The Port may request follow-up interviews with selected firms.
- E. Following completion of the selection process, the selected Consultant's proposal may be made available for public review, except for information the Consultant has identified in writing as confidential and that is exempt from disclosure under applicable law.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process will be conducted in accordance with Port of Benton policies. The Port will select the Consultant determined to be most qualified to complete the work, meet the Port's schedule, and provide the required services in a professional and effective manner.

IX. SELECTION CRITERIA

- A. Evaluation Criteria. Submittals will be evaluated based on the criteria and weighting shown below:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Railroad engineering experience and expertise in rail track, signal, crossing, and related infrastructure design	30%
Qualifications of the project team, including experience working with Union Pacific (UP) and BNSF Railway	20%
Project approach, understanding of the scope, and ability to perform all required services	15%
Project management capabilities, including schedule management, budget control, cost estimating, grant compliance, and reporting	15%
Past performance, references, professional integrity, and quality of work	10%
Familiarity with the Port, project location, local conditions, regulations, and permitting requirements	5%
Responsiveness, completeness, and overall quality of the proposal	5%
Total	100%

The Port reserves the right to consider each firm's overall qualifications, experience, project approach, and demonstrated ability to successfully complete the required services.

- B. Shortlisting and Interviews.** The Port may develop a short list from the submittals received. Short-listed Consultant may be invited to participate in interviews before the Port makes a final selection.
- C. Fee Negotiation.** The Port will negotiate a schedule of fees with the selected consultant for the services to be performed.
- D. Contract Award.** The Port intends to enter into a contract with the firm determined to be the most qualified to perform the engineering services required for the project. The contract shall not be awarded until the Federal Grant contract is fully executed.
- E. Federal Contract Requirements.** Any contract awarded to the successful consultant will be subject to all applicable federal laws, regulations, requirements, and terms and conditions of the Port's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant agreement. These requirements include, as applicable, U.S. Department of Transportation requirements regarding Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation under 49 CFR Part 26 and other applicable federal contract provisions. The successful consultant and its subconsultants will be required to comply with all applicable federal requirements incorporated into the resulting agreement.
- F. ADA and Civil Rights Compliance.** Consultants shall comply with all applicable Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), civil rights, and nondiscrimination requirements of the Port of Benton and any applicable funding agencies.
- G. Title VI Notice.** The Port of Benton, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and applicable U.S. Department of Transportation regulations, notifies all bidders that disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded a full and fair opportunity to submit responses to this solicitation and will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.
- H. Right to Reject.** The Port reserves the right to reject any or all submittals, waive minor irregularities, request additional information from consultant, and accept the proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the Port.

Publication dates Tri City Herald:

Sunday September 27th and October 4th, 2026.