A. Introduction and Background

Lynden is located in rural Whatcom County, Washington, within the fertile Nooksack River Valley. The community is one hour south of Vancouver, BC, and two hours north of Seattle, and about eight miles east of Interstate 5.

The City has a population of 12,730, but the population of the area typically served by the City is more than 18,000. The City is approximately five square miles in size and extends from the Nooksack River on the south to a state highway to the north. The North Whatcom Fire and Rescue Services (NWFRS) currently contracts with the City Lynden Fire Department to provide automatic first response and mutual aid to an additional 30 square miles around the Lynden community.

Major employers within the community include the agricultural industry, the Lynden School District, Lynden Door, Christian Health Care Center, People’s Bank and variety of locally based industries. The Chamber of Commerce has more than 325 members representing a diverse mix of business and industry within the community. Property tax valuation for the City of Lynden in 2012 was $1,229,260,726 resulting in tax assessments of $2,606,047.

The motivation to set an Ambulance Utility in place is based on the demand for emergency response service for the citizens of Lynden. The City of Lynden Fire Department’s call volume is 85% EMS and 15% other responses including fires, hazardous materials, and auto accidents.

In 1997 the City of Lynden Fire Department (LFD or Department) was a volunteer department led by a career Fire Chief with all of the emergency response needs of citizens being met by a volunteer fire/EMS department. In 1997, the Department responded to 459 emergency calls. By 2005, the call volume had more than doubled to 983 calls and the population had increased by 8% over those years.

The increase in demand for service prompted City leadership to hire the first career firefighter/EMT in 2005; adding a second career responder in 2006. Volunteers could no longer meet the citizen’s needs especially during day time hours when people serving as volunteer firefighter/EMTs were working. Because the call volume continued to escalate, the City hired two additional career firefighter/EMTs in 2007.

By 2009, the call volume was over 1100 calls and the Department was awarded a 5 year SAFER federal grant to hire 2 additional full time responders. The City was able to sustain those positions through general funds, specifically tax revenue based.

In 2012, the call volume reached 1260 and again the Department was awarded a federal grant to hire 3 additional firefighter/EMTS on a full time basis bringing the Department’s career staffing...
to 9 responders working 3 rotating 24 hour shifts with augmentation by volunteer responders. The City’s projected tax revenue does not indicate the ability to carry forward the cost of the most recent three firefighter/EMTs hired with grant money. The citizens need these three positions to meet the demand for emergency services. Therefore the City needs the revenue source to support staffing the EMS needs of Lynden’s citizens.

**B. Contact Person/Information**

Proposals and questions about this request for proposals should be directed to:

Sandra Dalessandro, Fire Service Support Manager  
City of Lynden Fire Department  
215 Fourth Street  
Lynden, WA 98264  
360-354-4400  
dalessandros@lyndenwa.org

**C. Description of project**

The Revised Code of Washington State 35.21.766 states that the legislative authority of a city may establish an ambulance service to be operated as a public utility. An ambulance utility is a fee structure used to fund a city’s ambulance services. Lynden’s City Council is considering the establishment of such an ambulance utility to meet the emergency medical services the residents of Lynden require.

The RCW directs the City to determine, through a **cost-of-service study**, the total cost of regulating, operating and maintaining an ambulance utility. It is performance of the cost-of-service study for which the City now seeks proposals.

These proposals need to be provided by organizations experienced in public service funding designs in which the funding is utilized to support services provided to the public.

The Cost of Service study and Rate Setting Proposal will:

- Differentiate between costs for availability and costs for demand
- Exclude capital expenditures
- Reflect impact of direct billing revenue
- Be compliant with RCW requirements regarding impact of general fund support for EMS services
- Provide for exemptions of specified users
- Provide a plan that emphasizes equity of cost for the users
- Provide a plan that emphasizes utility administration ease

The final cost of service study document will describe, in text and graphics, the availability costs and the demand costs for an ambulance utility for the City of Lynden and meeting the
requirements of applicable RCW propose appropriate rates to support the Lynden community’s ambulance service.

The proposal will be guided by the Ambulance Utility Cost of Service Study Team. This team is composed of a City Council member, the Mayor and City Administrator, the Fire Chief, the City Finance Director, and the Fire Service Support Manager. The team will take part in the selection of the consultant, work with staff and the consultant to develop the scope of work and provide guidance and support throughout the project.

D. Process for Selection

1. Proposals due to the address listed in Section B, above by 5:00 P.M. on August 30th, 2013. Any submissions received after this time will not be considered.
2. The Team will select 2-5 consultants to interview in person. Interviews will be held in early September. Once the Team makes its selection, contract negotiations will take place and the scope of work will be finalized in preparation for presentation to the City Council.
3. The Consultant should be prepared to begin work upon Council approval.

E. Submittal Requirements

1. The Consultant must submit 6 copies and an electronic copy of a proposal that includes the following:
   i) An explanation of the consultant’s understanding of state legislation which guides ambulance utilities as well as an explanation of how the availability and demand costs will be determined.
   ii) A description of methods to be utilized by the consultant to ensure the study is cost effective. A preliminary scope of work and breakdown of any phases, their timing and completion dates as well as an estimated time frame for completion of the entire project.
   iii) A description of the firm and its principles. This section should also identify the qualifications of the actual individuals that will be assigned to this project and the roles that each will play in the project.
   iv) A comprehensive list and description of similar projects the firm has provided consultation for, with name, phone number, and contact person for references.
   v) A commitment from the firm to begin work as noted in Section D (4) above if selected, or identification of the date the consultant could begin work.
   vi) The proposal is not to exceed fifteen pages, excluding samples and references.