

RESOLUTION NO. 5211, AS AMENDED

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND
EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE SALE AND REDEVELOPMENT OF
THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 123 LACEY STREET**

WHEREAS, the former Polaris Building site is a prominent, City-owned property in downtown Fairbanks and represents a key opportunity for private reinvestment and economic activity; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fairbanks seeks to encourage development that is financially viable, constructible in Interior Alaska conditions, and capable of long-term operation without reliance on ongoing public subsidies; and

WHEREAS, redevelopment of the site is intended to support a safe, active, and well-maintained downtown environment that serves residents, businesses, and visitors year-round; and

WHEREAS, the City has prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit qualified development teams and establish a fair, competitive process for project evaluation and selection; and

WHEREAS, the RFP includes ~~an~~ two-stage evaluation process designed to assess development team qualifications, project feasibility, design approach, and overall alignment with City goals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAIRBANKS, as follows:

SECTION 1. The City Council supports the issuance of the Polaris Site Redevelopment RFP and the solicitation of qualified development proposals.

SECTION 2. The City Council supports the use of the evaluation criteria ~~and two-stage review process~~ outlined in the RFP to identify the most responsive and capable development team.

SECTION 3. The City Council retains final authority to approve or reject any proposed development agreement provided by the City evaluation team resulting from this process.

SECTION 4. The effective date of this resolution is six days after adoption.


Mindy O'Neal, Mayor

AYES: Tidwell, Cleworth, Marney, Ringstad, Sprinkle
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Therrien
ADOPTED: April 27, 2026

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


D. Danyielle Sprider, MMC, City Clerk


Thomas A. Chard II, City Attorney

FAIRBANKS POLARIS SITE SALE AND REDEVELOPMENT RFP

The City of Fairbanks is issuing this **Request for Proposals (RFP)** to secure private sector redevelopment of what is known as the recently removed and now vacant Polaris building site in downtown Fairbanks, Alaska. Qualified development firms (or teams) are invited to submit proposals no later than July 31, 2026. At its discretion, the City may select one or more proposals as a basis for exclusive negotiations leading to a development agreement with the most responsive firm.

RFP Contents

- ✓ Site Overview
- ✓ RFP Structure
- ✓ Redevelopment Goal
- ✓ Submittal Requirements
- ✓ Proposal Evaluation
- ✓ Selection & Negotiation
- ✓ Further Information
- ✓ City Council Resolution

SITE OVERVIEW

Current ownerships of the approximately 35,674 square foot on the downtown block bounded by First and Second Avenues, Lacey and Noble Streets involve 12 tax parcels comprised of:

- **City owned** parcels totaling 20,898 square feet – the former Polaris building site noted as including **City West** (13,614 square feet) and **City East** parking area (7,284 square feet).
- **Privately owned** parcels with two owners totaling 14,776 square feet situated mid-block.

The block south of the Polaris site is a City owned 377-space, 5-story parking garage with spaces that may be allocated for use by redevelopment site business and residential occupants. The City will not be acquiring privately owned parcels. The developer will be responsible for securing any as-needed added properties.

Polaris Building @ Fairbanks' Tallest



Source: Google – as seen prior to demolition.

Polaris Redevelopment Site Area



Source: FNSB GIS.

I. RFP STRUCTURE

By way of introduction, this redevelopment Request for Proposal (RFP) begins by outlining document contents and supplemental materials available as background information.

RFP TOPICS

This RFP document is organized to cover the following topics:

- **Redevelopment Goal** – predicated on market/financial feasibility as preferred outcomes for the City of Fairbanks and project developer as a public-private partnership (PPP).
- **Submittal Requirements** – distinguishing between initial submittals from all Proposer(s) with follow-up responses from development firms or teams selected for further review.
- **Proposal Evaluation** – addressing Proposer conformance with threshold project requirements together with supplemental evaluation criteria.
- **Developer Selection** – as recommended by an evaluation team with City Council concurrence for either a single firm or more than one proposal to be further evaluated.
- **Exclusive Negotiations** – preferably with one development firm or team with clear benchmarks for developer deliverables leading to a final PPP development agreement.
- **Further Information** – outlining resources that prospective development firms or teams may contact or utilize in preparing proposal submittals.
- **Appendix: City Council Resolution** – as an expression of City and regional support for successful redevelopment meeting City and private sector investment objectives.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Redevelopment: Phase 1 Market Assessment is attached. Attached is a plot plan (a digital file is available upon request).

II. REDEVELOPMENT GOAL

The primary goal of the Polaris site redevelopment is to re-energize downtown as a place people choose to live, work, and spend time—supporting a consistent, year-round presence that strengthens local businesses, builds trust in the downtown experience, and catalyzes broader economic vitality across the City and Borough.

MARKET CONTEXT

Whether and to what extent market demographics continue or change favorably going forward will be affected by the scope and scale of downtown redevelopment investment – starting with renewed private and public reinvestment in the Polaris site.

For Fairbanks and Interior Alaska, new construction coupled with subsequent operating costs often exceed what residential and commercial rents and sales values will readily support. **A pivotal challenge for reuse of the Polaris site is likely to be construction of a project that can prove out as financially viable short- and long-term.**

Key “take-aways” from market data and stakeholder contacts for site reuse suggest:

- Market rate **residential** to affluent seniors and working professionals has been identified as a need.
- Downtown **retail** is enhanced with ground-floor store fronts and maybe top floor dining.
- **Office space** demand is uncertain but with opportunity for greater downtown presence.
- There may be opportunities for limited but leading-edge **events and office-lodging** products.
- The adjacent **public garage** can provide parking as needed to support site re-occupancy.

Contributed as well as occupant derived revenue will be pivotal for financial feasibility. The City of Fairbanks is **committed to support local, state and federal incentives** that will improve development feasibility without requiring direct local taxpayer funding support.

PREFERRED OUTCOMES

While not required, the following outcomes will enhance opportunity for developer selection:

- Year-round activity (including winter)
- Safe, well-maintained public realm
- Active, people-oriented ground floors
- Availability of parking in the adjoining public parking garage as needed to support 100% of on-site parking needs.

III. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Submittal requirements address both initial submittal and possible follow-up responses from firms selected – either as preferred developer or invited for additional consideration.

INITIAL SUBMITTALS

Interested development firms and/or project teams are invited to submit proposals encompassing the following materials. All proposals should be compiled and submitted as a single PDF electronic file document, transmitted by email to purchasing@fairbanks.gov and received no later than 5 pm (AKDT) on July 31, 2026.

A. Cover Letter – briefly describe in no more than two pages the nature and location of the proposed project, organizational structure of the proposing firm(s), estimated project investment, and team experience as applicable to Polaris site redevelopment. The letter should be signed by individual(s) authorized to make a binding proposal for a period of not less than 120 days from date of submission.

B. Development Team Qualifications – should include the following information:

- 1) Name of lead firm or entity with overall authority and responsibility to undertake and complete the project being proposed, including contact information for project manager together with location of firm, website, phone and email information.
- 2) Identification of participant entities in addition to lead entity which may include (to the extent known) lead contractor and key sub-contractors, anticipated project ownership structure, entities proposed as sources of equity and debt financing, architectural design and legal counsel and other individuals or entities with significant project responsibilities.
- 3) Disclosure of the existing ownership interests in the project site and/or immediate downtown area currently and prospectively (if different) – with the proportion of ownership interests identified – together with delineation of active versus passive (or limited) partnership roles.
- 4) Lead firm and team history describing at least three similar completed projects including scale of development, single- or mixed-use occupancy, and project performance in terms of timeliness of construction, occupancy and space absorption, debt repayment, and return to project investors.

C. Site Control – with map showing proposed site location and site area in square feet (by phase if appropriate), identification of current and proposed or in-process site ownership arrangements, demonstrating planned site control for all parcels as proposed for development. The City welcomes both phased, site-specific proposals and larger block-scale concepts, recognizing that successful redevelopment may occur incrementally over time.

D. Project Overview – with exterior building rendering and/or massing diagram plus site plan illustrating planned building placement and key design features accompanied by narrative description of major design features on-site and in relationship to neighboring uses, together with current and anticipated transportation access. Proposals should demonstrate a clear architectural and place-based vision appropriate to downtown Fairbanks, as design quality will be a key evaluation factor. *Note:* More detailed architectural and design plans will be reviewed if submitted but are not required by this RFP for initial proposal submittals.

E. Detailed Project Description – addressing the following items:

- Estimated square footage and number of levels of building area by use of components.
- Preliminary estimate or range of development cost – itemized to cover all relevant cost categories including site acquisition, site/infrastructure, building construction, and indirect/soft costs.
- Anticipated phasing of development if the project is to be built in two or more phases, including square footage and development cost associated with each phase.
- Parking plan as consistent with recognized parking standards.
- Existing site or neighboring uses that may be displaced – directly in conjunction with project construction and occupancy with completed development including conditions and timing of the planned displacement and provisions for replacement or mitigation.

F. Community Use & Access

- Support **year-round public use and accessibility**, including winter conditions.
- Provide **welcoming spaces across ages, incomes, and abilities**.
- Integrate with surrounding businesses, public spaces, and community activity.
- Description of proposed **community partnerships, public-facing benefits, and any measurable commitments** (e.g., local hiring, affordable commercial space, programming access, or other community-serving outcomes).
- Description of proposed community partnerships and public-facing benefits.
- If applicable, describe how the project minimizes or mitigates **unintended impacts on existing residents, businesses, and cultural assets**.

G. Preliminary Market & Financial Feasibility – assessment is requested to be submitted with all project proposals addressing:

- 1) Preliminary listing of projected sources of capital and financing with anticipated equity. Identifying likely remaining gaps in project financing as needed to be addressed for feasibility going forward.
- 2) Preliminary list of local, State, Federal, and private incentives that may be used for this project.

H. Follow-up Clarifications & Verifications – may be requested for one or more proposals selected by the City for further review prior to or in conjunction with developer selection – with additional information expected to cover any or some combination of the following items:

- 1) Clarification and/or provision of further information requested by the City as follow-up to review of initial proposal submittals.
- 2) Verification of anticipated availability of debt and equity financing including letters of interest or preliminary commitment from potential sources of financing including statement of sources of equity (including private and contributed non-profit or public funds) – allocated by ownership interest.
- 3) Revised and refined listing of detailed sources and uses of project funding through to

normalized occupancy.

- 4) Provision of the most current CPA-prepared or audited financial statements including balance sheet, income/expense statement, and cash flow for all identified or relevant individual, joint and corporate ownership interests and/or federal tax returns as submitted for the past two years (with determination of specific documents to be reviewed as agreed to by Proposer and City in advance).
- 5) For any project proposal recommended as being selected for exclusive negotiations, submission of items G (1-4) may be required subject to provisions related to confidentiality and/or public release by the parties – including City review as appropriate in executive session and/or via independent 3rd party review. For item G (4), Proposer(s) should describe what information would be publicly disclosed versus withheld as part of its initial submittal. Some form of negotiated public disclosure is anticipated to be required prior to execution of a final development agreement.**

ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP RESPONSES & REVIEW

Follow-up Clarifications & Verifications – may be requested for one or more proposals selected by the City for further review. Verification of anticipated availability of debt and equity financing including letters of interest or preliminary commitment from potential sources of financing including statement of sources of equity.

IV. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposals received will be reviewed and evaluated by a City Council-designated evaluation committee of individuals having no identified conflict of interest with any of the Proposers from whom development proposals have been received. As described below, all identified threshold project requirements must be met or the proposal may be disregarded at the sole discretion of the City.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Proposal & Shortlisting

All proposals will be evaluated based on submitted materials to assess:

- Development team capability and experience
- Conceptual design and site approach
- Preliminary financial feasibility
- Alignment with City goals, including **year-round activation, accessibility, and community benefit**

Up to three (3) development teams may be shortlisted for further consideration.

THRESHOLD PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The following are threshold (or minimum) requirements which must be met for a project proposal to be considered:

- Commitment to complete redevelopment of the City West publicly owned Polaris site.
- No permanent use of the City-owned West site for at-grade surface parking.
- Ground floor active uses shall occupy primary street frontage, providing transparent, publicly engaging spaces (e.g., retail, food, services, community uses) that contribute to year-round street activity.
- If not developed concurrently with the Polaris (City West) site, provision for public parking on the City East site for added parking as may be needed on an interim basis terminating at time of City East site redevelopment.
- Requiring construction to commence within 12 months of developer selection unless the selected developer can propose an alternative timeline with rationale for modification.

While compliance with threshold requirements is required for consideration, it does not ensure selection. Proposals will be competitively evaluated based on how effectively they go beyond these minimum conditions to deliver high-quality, year-round activation, safe and well-maintained environments, and strong, place-based design. Supplemental criteria as outlined below will also be taken into consideration at the sole discretion of the City.

SUPPLEMENTAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

In addition to meeting threshold requirements, proposals will be evaluated based on how effectively they deliver:

- **High-quality, year-round activation and design**
- **Safe, accessible, and well-connected public environments**
- **Meaningful community benefit and inclusive development outcomes**
- **Long-term financial and operational sustainability**

Supplemental criteria include both objective and subjective determinations to be made at the discretion of the City's Project Evaluation Committee. These criteria will involve evaluations as to whether and to what extent the Proposers submittal can be expected to:

- Meet applicable legal requirements of City code, state statute and federal law including findings that the project funding is for a valid public use and/or purpose – as determined by the City attorney and/or other legal reviewers such as bond counsel acting on behalf of the City.**
- Be consistent with adopted public policy including applicable provisions of the FNSB Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code and Downtown Fairbanks 2040 Plan.
- Meet community criteria for market need, competitive advantage, public benefit, plan consistency, stimulation of added investment, and/or enhanced community image.
- Successful project history (with experience in Alaska and/or elsewhere on the west coast of the U.S. and Canada).

- Stipulations of City engineer related to qualifications of firm, project manager and staff, quality and value of design, scheduling and overall conformance to RFP.
- Financial backing and plan (covering refined anticipated sources and uses of funding).
- Conformance to availability of realistically available incentive funding with no impact to the City's General Fund tax-based resources.
- Capacity to complete the project (including contingency and backstop funding sources in event that full project funding does not occur as initially proposed).
- Long-term financial sustainability of project with end-use capitalized valuation at least equal to all-in cost with supporting operating pro forma at normalized occupancy – also with adjustments if necessary to account for significant changes in expected income and/or expense beyond initial normalized occupancy extending over up to a 20-year net present value (NPV) period at a discount rate consistent with risk-adjusted capitalization rates typical for similar projects locally and statewide.*

PRELIMINARY & FOLLOW-UP REVIEWS

The City of Fairbanks Project Evaluation Committee will review all proposals received for conformance to threshold project requirements and consistency with supplemental evaluation criteria, subject to City Council review and approval.

Up to three development firms/teams will be interviewed followed by preliminary selection of 1-3 proposals for further evaluation. Recommended selection of a preferred development firm (or team) will be made based on both written and oral presentations – utilizing the above noted criteria plus any additional factors determined as appropriate and consistent with this RFP.

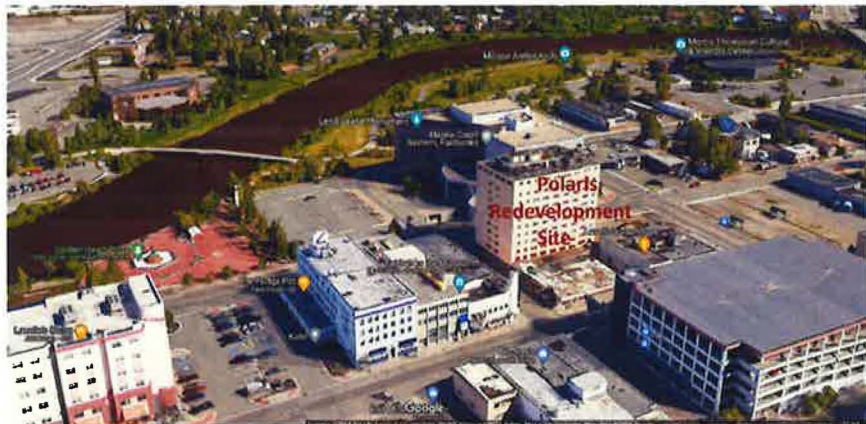
V. SELECTION & NEGOTIATION

Selection of a preferred development team will be made based on review of formal RFP responses). The City may incorporate community benefit commitments, partnership agreements, and performance benchmarks into the final development agreement as part of exclusive negotiations. Developer deliverables over the term of an **exclusive negotiation period** are expected to:

- Further detail proposed uses for redevelopment of City-identified available Polaris site (including site and floor plans, and perspective rendering(s)).
- Confirm responsibilities of lead developer and other firms/individuals as participants with the full development team.
- Provide current and recent financial statements (P&L, balance sheet) for the lead firm (maintaining confidentiality as mutually determined).**
- Provide a refined line-item preliminary development budget (covering land/site acquisition, hard construction and soft costs).
- Provide estimates for anticipated sources of funds (including incentive offsets, if any) and backstop financing in the event that anticipated sources do not fully materialize.

- Provide confidential year-by-year operating pro forma projections from project opening to normalized end-use occupancy.**
- Provide a refined end-use capitalized valuation and/or 20-year NPV calculation subject to independent third-party review demonstrating valuation exceeding all-in project costs.**
- Outline anticipated timeline from planning/design to construction and occupancy – including performance targets as conditions for project planning and completion.
- Make a good faith deposit with cashiers check, certified check or letter of credit.***
- Identify other terms and conditions associated with a purchase and sale agreement (or related transaction) together with determination of items subject to public disclosure or confidentiality with the City – as appropriate prior to start of construction.**

Assuming satisfactory compliance with developer deliverables, the selected development team(s) would proceed pursuant to a **refined development agreement** (or term sheet) to prepare detailed plans and submittals as mutually agreed which the City will review as a basis for subsequent plan and agreement finalization. The result should be a **final PPP development agreement** between the City and selected Proposer.



VI. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or questions regarding any aspect of this development RFP and associated development prospectus, please contact:

Christina Rowlett
 Purchasing Agent
 City of Fairbanks

Phone: 907-459-6779
Email: purchasing@fairbanks.gov

Notes Applicable to All Proposals:

- * Information on commercial, residential and mixed-use sales pricing, rents and expenses is typically available from local real estate brokerage sources. Capitalization (cap) rate data is not widely available for properties outside Anchorage. The 2024 Phase 1 market assessment assumed cap rates of about 7.00% for residential and 8.00% for commercial development. Cap rates for retail properties range from about 7.60% to 8.43% depending on location, tenant mix and asset quality (inferred from retail and multifamily data in the area). Specific

rates are less frequently published but Copilot indicates office and special purpose properties are trending higher (at 8.5-9.6%) due to vacancy and valuation pressures.

Cap rates applied by project Proposers for proposal valuation estimates should be justified as consistent with current local and regional practice as well as changing national conditions to the extent reasonable and possible.

- ** City Council executive session(s) or independent 3rd party review may serve to resolve proprietary or disclosure questions – as mutually agreed by the parties. If a selected Proposer declines to submit City requested items, the City at its discretion may choose to exclude the Proposer’s Proposal from further consideration and have the optional right to select a runner-up for exclusive negotiations or re-start a developer RFP process at a time of the City’s exclusive determination without any further obligation to disqualified Proposer(s).
 - *** Good faith deposit by preferred or selected developer is planned to be in the amount of at least \$50,000 or otherwise be mutually determined. If the project proceeds, the deposit may be credited to developer incurred project costs. If the project is terminated through no fault of the developer, the deposit may be returned in full (or as otherwise agreed).
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APPENDIX. CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Recommended is inclusion of a 1-2 page City Council resolution inviting proposals from qualified developers with knowledge of the statewide and Interior Alaska market including the Fairbanks FNSB or metro area. State the importance of the project as a catalyst for downtown redevelopment – as a good place to live, shop, work and enjoy. Include reference to key incentives most viable for consideration – both those of City and other public/private partners.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Proposals received will be evaluated by a City Council-appointed Project Evaluation Committee based on the following criteria and scoring with top firm(s) short-listed for consideration.

Evaluation Criteria	Point Score	Weight	Weighted Score
1. Development Team Qualifications & Local/Alaska Experience – Roles, ownership, relevant comparable projects; Alaska experience preferred.	0-5	10%	= PS x W
2. Site Control & Build-Out Commitment – Clarity on site control, including ownership, phasing, and near-term start; minimizes contingencies. Commitment to near-term development and construction (12 months)	0-5	10%	= PS x W
3. Safety, Cleanliness & Winter Maintenance Plan – Concrete strategies for lighting, safety presence, cleanliness and snow/ice management across phases.	0-5	20%	= PS x W
4. Design Concept & Identity Alignment. Building rendering and/or massing diagram plus conceptual site plan.	0-5	20%	= PS x W
5. Walkability, accessibility and wayfinding – pedestrian connectivity, ADA-compliant and universally designed environments, site circulation and intuitive wayfinding that supports users of all ages, abilities, and familiarity with the area.	0-5	12%	= PS x W
6. Parking Strategy & Demand Management – use of Livery Transportation Center and percentage of reliance and inclusion of non-automotive access and minimal barriers for non-automotive users.	0-5	8%	= PS x W
7. Preliminary Market & Financial Feasibility. Anticipated range of construction costs and adequacy of funding sources.	0-5	10%	= PS x W
8. Community Partnerships, Communication and Equity Commitments. Demonstrated approach to inclusive engagement, equitable development, and community benefit, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early and ongoing stakeholder engagement beyond minimum requirements • Partnerships with local organizations, workforce programs, or small businesses 	0-5	10%	= PS x W
SCORING TOTALS	0-5	100 %	Total of Above

Point Scale: 5-Exceeds expectations, clear innovation, directly addresses Fairbanks conditions. 4-Strong, complete, aligned. 3-Adequate, but generic. 2-Weak / unclear. 1-Major gaps. 0-Non-responsive

Half-point increments (e.g., 3.5) may be used.

All proprietary information must be labeled as such. Tie-breaker will be determined by the overall financial feasibility score.