

Form C: Proposer Qualifications Questionnaire

General Management

Highland Sanitation has a strong background in the waste industry, being that we are the only garbage collection company that is owned, operated, and managed by people who have directly worked on the front lines of the business: driving the routes, dumping the carts, getting trucks unstuck in the winter, and talking directly with the customers we service. At Highland Sanitation, we understand the challenges and how to get the job done better than our competitors. The decision makers at Highland Sanitation have this direct experience that our competitors do not, and as such we can communicate quicker, understand the challenges that are happening and make decisions to adapt and overcome those challenges faster than our competition.

The contract will be managed and overseen directly by both Bobby Stewart and Logan Hanus. Bobby Stewart has managed all of the operations at Highland Sanitation since November of 2015 and 20 years of experience going back to 2004 when he first started working in the business as a driver for his family's business. Logan Hanus has helped manage the mechanical side of the fleet for 10 years and assisted with numerous truck rescues when our trucks have gotten stuck, as well as having a background in managing teams of people with Kane Transport prior to working with Highland Sanitation.

Logan Hanus will be overseeing the day-to-day execution of the contract and ensuring that the routes are completed as expected, that any disputes or conflicts from residents to the City are resolved and handled quickly and that all reports are submitted in a timely manner. Logan will have a team working underneath him of a route supervisor, about 25 drivers, 2 dedicated mechanics and 3 office staff to help respond to any City emails. This team will be comprised of our most experienced drivers, who we know will be capable of getting the job done right from day one of the new contract.

Highland Sanitation & Recycling Inc. is a 3rd generation family waste company that has been providing services to customers since it was established in 1950 by Susan Stewart's parents Emil and Alice Oehrlein. Our family values and work ethic have always been a part of the business. Susan and David Stewart bought the company from Alice in 1985. They started out with two trucks hauling in the Highland Park, Woodbury and Newport neighborhoods and have since substantially grown the business into a large operation that services four counties.

Financial Stability and Strength:

Highland Sanitation & Recycling Inc. has a solid history regarding financial stability and strength. We have always been able to secure any financing needed for equipment upgrades, fleet expansion as well as keeping current on our back-office support and technology to keep pace with the ever-changing needs of our customers. This is possible due to our great working relationship with two banks, Star Bank & Security Bank.

Attached to our proposal is a letter of recommendation from both Star Bank & Security Bank. We acknowledge that this RFP would significantly expand our business, but in exploring our ability to provide a proposal we have already secured approval for all funding needed for this project.

One of the best strengths of Highland Sanitation is that we are family owned and not at the mercy of private investors. We control our own destiny and are not controlled by outside shareholders who often seem to demand corners be cut and great service sacrificed to increase profits. Being free of this burden on our company is a great strength of ours and has given both us and our customers the ability to continue to prioritize customer service over profits.

Residential Municipal Collection Experience for the Service(s) Proposed

Highland Sanitation has over 70 years of experience with hauling residential and commercial waste and recycling. There are few companies who have a dedicated staff with as much experience in all aspects of waste and recycling collection as Highland Sanitation has. We are the only company whose leaders and decision makers have direct experience with driving the routes and providing collection services. Bobby Stewart was a route driver daily for 10 years and has directly overseen the successful operations of the family business since 2015. Having decision makers like me with this direct experience gives my family's business a wealth of knowledge to pull from to ensure successful completion of the routes day to day.

It is because of this knowledge that we are not bidding with any automated trucks, as single pass collection in Saint Paul is a terrible idea. The alleys were designed for horse & buggies, not big commercial trucks. This is the type of poor decision making that can happen when the decision makers (who have no firsthand knowledge of these difficult conditions) are more worried about stops per hour and spreadsheets than real world knowledge of what is needed to be successful in a City like Saint Paul.

Speaking directly to Saint Paul, Highland Sanitation has performed nearly flawlessly since the start of the consortium and City managed services in October of 2018. We've worked with residents in alleys and streets that have had icy conditions or construction blockages to service carts in an alternative location temporarily as needed. Highland Sanitation has even gone above and beyond by having taken on an additional yard waste route in 2021 after one of the other haulers in the consortium was unable to complete all its own routes, proving that here at Highland Sanitation we figure out ways to get things done even if we have less resources than most of our competitors.

Going back to before the current contract, Highland Sanitation has serviced Saint Paul both residentially and commercially since 1950. There are very few alleys or streets that we have not had direct experience with. Whether it's the "I" alleys most trucks can't make the turns in off of White Bear Ave or narrow alleys such as the Osceola/Fairmount alley between Pascal & Saratoga Street where there is barely 3 inches of space between the truck mirrors and the garage gutters, we are familiar with some of the toughest spots to provide service in Saint Paul. We have factored these challenges into the equipment we will be purchasing to provide services for the contract.

Description of Approach to Service Provision:

At Highland Sanitation customer service is our #1 priority. We put the highest emphasis on providing the best customer service available in the industry, whether it's customer service while collecting trash or recycling, or customer service when someone calls our office with a question or request. The beauty of our proposal is by Highland Sanitation providing access to our live data with Routeware, the City will be well equipped to handle and resolve customer service questions and complaints. Anything that requires additional investigation, the City will have the ability to reach out directly to our staff to reach a resolution quickly.

Highland Sanitation has a policy of honesty, integrity, and family when it comes to all aspects of our business. Our goal is that every customer in every interaction with Highland Sanitation is performed with these policies in mind. Honesty in that we are always honest with our customers, especially if we make a mistake. Lying or skirting responsibility in business is shamefully common and we will not contribute to that toxic culture. Integrity in that we will not take advantage of a customer or situation. Integrity and honesty go hand in hand. If there was an error with a customer invoice, we would be honest about our mistake and have the integrity to go back and correct it. Family is a value that has two meanings for us. One is to treat our customers like we would treat our own family. Leave the cans standing up, with the lids closed and make sure they're completely empty. The second meaning is that our employees' families are important too. We keep all our routes between 40 and 45 hours each week, to ensure that our employees can have sufficient home time each day. We will not require our drivers to work more than 45 hours each week, as everyone should be entitled to a

job that not only provides them with the ability to support their families, but to be able to spend time with them as well!

Staff and Equipment Resources Dedicated to the Agreement

Highland Sanitation knows that none of what we do is possible without the employees who drive our trucks, mechanics who fix them and administrative staff who keep everything running behind the scenes. What is shocking to us is how so many businesses in today's job environment have forgotten this and are intent on racing to the bottom on pay, overloading their workers with 50 or 60 hours of work each week and generally having a work environment that is high turnover due to how miserable it is by design. Then these same businesses act like they're helpless with being understaffed when being understaffed is the natural consequence of the choices their executives have made resulting in such awful working conditions.

Highland Sanitation strives to do things differently. We want the best drivers in the industry to be the drivers who provide services to Saint Paul as part of this contract. To make sure that we are appealing to such sought-after drivers, we will be paying well above the average pay for the industry at \$35.00/hour for drivers who work as part of the Saint Paul contract. We are also limiting the hours to the drivers who will be regularly scheduled for no more than 45 hours/week, as we believe that hours worked over this result in a driver who is fatigued and less safe than a well-rested and alert driver.

We have built our proposal to have more than sufficient trucks and drivers to get the job done. We will be overstaffing slightly with 23 trucks for trash collection. That way if there are breakdowns, employee vacations or illness, employee turnover, or other unforeseen challenges we are prepared to be able to get the job done, day in and day out. For yard waste, we will have 5 dedicated yard waste trucks that will also both help with trash routes in the off-season, as well as the x-mas tree collection routes for the first two weeks of January. Beyond the normal drivers, we will have two dedicated swing drivers who will be helping cover any vacations as well as with new driver training in the case of turnover and both the route manager and contract manager are licensed Class B drivers as well, giving us the built in ability to cover up to 20% of the routes being open on any given day. Beyond this, our normal swing drivers and additional staff Highland Sanitation currently has on-hand will still be available to assist as needed!

For the equipment itself, Highland Sanitation will be purchasing all new trucks, with a mix of both rear load and manual side load collections. Both styles of trucks will facilitate the single-pass collection allowing for servicing both sides of an alley with a single pass down the alley. Of our 23 trucks for trash collection, 3 will be smaller 13-yard trucks that are better equipped for dealing with the most difficult alleys to provide services in and to ensure that services in these alleys are not interrupted by normal weather conditions in the winter.

Customer Service Standards and Training

We have numerous standards at Highland Sanitation to ensure the highest levels of customer service. For our drivers, we will have a tablet in each truck that enable fleet tracking, to ensure our drivers are driving safely as well as allowing the driver to take pictures of any not out carts or extra charges, and to help verify any questions from residents. These pictures of either extra items or carts that are not out will be available to the City via the Routeware web portal to view within a few minutes of being taken by our drivers. Each truck is also equipped with 1-2 cameras that auto-record to an SD card, allowing for further service verification, if needed.

In addition to the tablets and cameras the trucks are equipped with, Highland Sanitation drivers are trained to treat each customer as if they were family. Each cart should be left standing up, facing the proper direction and off to the side of the driveway or garage apron in an alley with the lids closed. Our goal is that after the cart has been emptied, the cart is put back in the same place as it was prior to being dumped. With walk-up customers, the carts should be brought back up and put back in the same location that they were removed from. We train our staff to treat each customer as if they were their parent or grandparent and for our

staff to ask themselves, would they leave the cart the way it is for their own parents or grandparents? This is what it means when Highland Sanitation says that we treat each customer as if they were family.

Transition Plan and Data Integration

If awarded the contract, transition planning will begin immediately and be overseen by myself, Bobby Stewart. New equipment is already secured for this agreement, so the focus will be on setting up the data integration with our software provider Routeware. The data for RDUs will be imported into our customer service software where I will personally review and optimize the routes to ensure that they are structured in a way that is both as safe as possible while also achieving high efficiency. This means reducing dangerous interactions like crossing over major streets, avoiding turnarounds and backing unless unavoidable and making sure that the requirement for single-pass collection is maintained as promised.

Data integration would take place first and should be completed within 60 days of receiving the RDU data from the City. The RDU data needed would be each RDU address, RDU name & contact information and the cart size(s) assigned to that address. Starting February of 2025, residents in St. Paul would be able to sign up on our new designed website to create an online account to review their services with Highland Sanitation. No billing would exist as the charges for service would be paid for by the resident to the City directly, but this will allow for an additional way for residents to view work order images like pictures of extra items, not out or inaccessible carts as well as sign up for notifications if there is any route delays due to holidays or weather.

Highland Sanitation is also utilizing a software called ReCollect to help increase recycling participation. While Highland Sanitation is not submitting a bid for recycling as part of this RFP, Highland Sanitation will work with the chosen recycling provider so that the ReCollect tool on the new Highland Sanitation website is setup with the correct recycling information to help further increase access to accurate recycling information for City of St. Paul residents.

The data integration option that Highland Sanitation will opt for is option 2, the daily transfer of data using an SFTP (secure file transfer protocol) site. This transfer of data will be automated to ensure that the data is sent as required twice per business day, once between 7-8am and again between 2-4:30pm. Our software partner Routeware has discussed and ensured that this will not be an issue. In addition to this data transfer, the City staff will have the ability to login to our Routeware server to view the live data for our St. Paul routes and have access to assigned work orders, driver pictures, driver comments, route completion percentages and also the truck GPS data. Having direct access to this data is important to Highland Sanitation, as it will help provide transparency into our routes so the City can verify and review if there are any questions regarding non-contracted trash being hauled. By seeing the work orders assigned to the routes, it is very easy to determine if out of contract work orders were incorrectly assigned to a St. Paul route and as such, charge liquidated damages as needed.

For route training, prior to the start of the contract we will be training drivers for the month of March to ensure that all the drivers for the agreement are familiar with how the equipment and tablets operate and are prepared to perform at the highest levels from day 1 of the new agreement. Many of our routes operate with a single driver currently, which allows for training via ride-a-longs with our existing routes to reduce unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions from being created by driving empty trucks around to learn the routes.

For ongoing training, there will be monthly meetings of all Highland Sanitation staff working with the Saint Paul services to ensure that everyone is familiar with the requirements of the agreement and any questions regarding services can be answered. Any new employees will receive at least 3 weeks of training prior to going alone, to ensure they are familiar with their routes and the requirements of the agreement. Any issues brought up by the City to Highland Sanitation will be reviewed by our staff to ensure that those issues are resolved quickly.

To help facilitate the City handling the billing and customer service part of the contract, for the first 60 days of the contract Bobby Stewart will be available for weekly meetings to review internal processes and act as a consultant to City

staff on customer service for the trash, yard waste and bulky item collection. After this initial period, quarterly meetings to review contract progress and help answer any ongoing questions or challenges that are presenting themselves to City Staff.

Highland Sanitation does not anticipate any challenges which may delay or affect the transition timelines proposed above. We have multiple equipment vendors to source equipment through, an outstanding relationship with our software provider Routeware and plenty of time to facilitate the data integration prior to the start of the contract in April of 2025.

Labor Management Practices

Highland Sanitation understands that investing in future talent is essential for all companies, and it is critical for long-term success. There are currently more driving jobs available than there are commercial drivers prepared to fill them and this shortage of drivers will only worsen as this gap continues to grow. This is why Highland Sanitation actively works to recruit and provide training for employees who do not have a commercial driving background or experience. This also opens a pathway for those in underserved communities to obtain the skills to become a certified commercial Class B driver by going through Highland Sanitation's entry level driver training program to obtain their Class B commercial driver's license! Our focus on training new drivers and providing an outstanding work environment and pay scale is what has allowed us to not have our routes and operations impacted by Covid-19 or the nationwide driver shortage over the past several years.

If awarded the St. Paul contract, Highland Sanitation will setup outreach programs to help get the information out on job openings and training openings in these underserved communities. Our goal is to make it easier to discover the job and training opportunities available with Highland Sanitation and to share them more easily with the diverse populations inside of the City of St. Paul. With our entry level driver program, it is possible for new employees and training candidates to obtain their CDL at nearly no cost, avoiding the expensive \$6,000+ tuition costs that commercial driving schools are currently charging. Our yard is located only minutes away from St. Paul just off Highway 61 in Newport, making us one of the most accessible companies to work for and have access to for these communities.

Highland Sanitation has a thorough worker safety plan and workplace safety practices in place to help ensure that our drivers and employees are safe, day in and day out. Waste and refuse collectors are in the top 10 for most dangerous jobs in the country every year and this is a key priority in how we structure our operations. Our goal every day is that each of our employees can complete their route safely and without accidents or injuries during the day. It is because of this focus on safety that Highland Sanitation does not overburden our routes and require dangerous excessive hours to be worked each day, instead focusing on keeping each route around a normal 8-9 total hours worked each day (from clock in to clock out). Having driven the routes for many years, I know firsthand how dangerous it is to be driving a 50,000 lb. truck and to be fatigued from working a long day. It's inevitable that the longer the hours worked, the more fatigued a person becomes and as such the less safe they are to be operating a commercial vehicle. In addition to keeping our routes shorter, we also have ongoing online training, driver safety meetings and pre-trip inspection tests to ensure that not only our drivers are knowledgeable but that they are doing their jobs in making sure the truck is safe each day as well.

For benefits we offer multiple health insurance plans to give employees more control over which plan fits their needs the most. For both health insurance plans and dental, Highland Sanitation covers 75% of the monthly premium costs for employees, no matter if they are claiming just themselves or have a full family plan. In addition to this, Highland Sanitation also contributes \$850 per year to employees who setup a health savings account and we also have a 3% payroll match with a simple IRA retirement account with Edward Jones to enable our employees to plan and save for their retirement and futures.

For wage scales, our employees working with the St. Paul contract would be some of, if not the highest paid residential refuse collectors in the State of Minnesota with starting pay at \$35/hour for a licensed class B driver. This will help make sure that there are no problems with staffing during the term of the contract and that the City of St. Paul and its

residents will be receiving the absolute best in terms of customer service and reliability from our drivers and staff that are working as part of this contract.

Environmental and Community Benefits

For environmental benefits, Highland Sanitation will be utilizing high efficiency and low emissions trucks that are equipped with the very latest in emissions control technology to help reduce emissions created by the trucks while out on route. We have a company idle policy in effect to help incentivize reducing emissions caused by idling. Thinking longer term, this contract will be a perfect opportunity to test out electric collection vehicles. The technology is still being developed and sadly, current lithium-ion battery technology for electric vehicles is a net-loss for the environment. Ideally, a better battery solution is developed for commercial use that can replace the current lithium-ion batteries. Highland Sanitation eagerly awaits this development and to be an early adopter of better, more sustainable electric vehicle technology to replace the diesel trucks that the contract starts with. With how much is being invested into battery technology across nearly all industrial sectors, it is only a matter of time before a better battery solution becomes available.

Highland Sanitation is a strong believer in being an active partner in the communities that we service. We are committed to giving back to the communities that we serve. If chosen to be the hauler for St. Paul, Highland Sanitation is going to implement a volunteer program to work with local organizations such as Hands on Twin Cities, Urban Roots, the Frogtown Neighborhood Association, and others to help work to make our communities better to live in.

Beyond volunteering, Highland Sanitation can provide comprehensive education and outreach services with our goal of inspiring sustainable behavior. Our team will work closely with local and community leaders, tailoring outreach programs to best serve the needs of our customers and communities. These education and outreach services can be presentations and training, site visits and consultations and being an active participant in community events such as festivals, parades, fairs and Earth Month celebrations.

References

Please provide on separate page(s) at least three (3) your collection references. For each reference, please provide municipality, number of households per day, number of multi-unit households per day, agreement structure between the proposer and the municipality, type and frequency of service provided, etc.

Reference 1:

Contract Holder: City of Afton

Contact Person: Ron Moorse

Municipality: City of Afton

Contact Phone: (651) 322-6005

Contact Email: rmoorse@ci.afton.mn.us

Agreement Structure: Written multi-year agreement. Direct invoicing to residents.

Number of households per day serviced: Approximately 550

Number of multi-unit households per day: None

Type and Frequency of service provided: Weekly, every other week and on-call trash, recycling and yard waste collection to all residents and businesses with the City of Afton with 35, 65 and 95 gallon carts and between 2 yard to 8 yard front load containers for businesses.

Reference 2:

Contract Holder: City of Saint Paul & St. Paul Haulers, LLC

Contact Person: Sarah Haas

Contact Phone: (651) 266-6216

Municipality: City of Saint Paul

Contact Email: Sarah.Haas@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Agreement Structure: Written multi-year agreement. Direct invoicing to residents.

Number of Households per day serviced: Approximately 1500

Number of multi-unit households per day: City of Saint Paul has this information.

Type and Frequency of service provided: 1x/week & every other week pickup of all residential trash carts in our collection zones. Carts vary in size between 35, 65 and 96 gallon sizes. Yard waste is optional and collected 1x/week on the same day as trash collection for the residents who have either subscribed to seasonal service or called in a 1x pickup.

Reference 3:

Contract Holder: JPA with Lakeland Shores, St. Mary's Point and Lake St. Croix Beach

Contact Person: Cindy Reiter **Contact Phone:** (651)436-1099 **Email:** clerksmp@comcast.net

Municipality: Cities of Lakeland Shores, St. Mary's Point and Lake St. Croix Beach

Agreement Structure: Written multi-year agreement. Invoicing to Cities directly.

Number of Households per day serviced: 785.

Number of multi-unit households per day: 10

Type and Frequency of service provided: 1x/week recycling collection of recycling carts in all sizes, 35/65/95 gallons.

Authorized Signature

Signature of person duly authorized to sign submittal on behalf of the Respondent:



Authorized Signature

Printed Name



12/28/23

Date