



# Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

January 11, 2016

Victor City Council  
32 Elm Street  
P.O. Box 122  
Victor, Idaho 83455

Re: Recommendations and Opportunities for City-owned Land on South Beryl Avenue

Dear Council Members:

We understand the city of Victor is considering auctioning off the land located on South Beryl Avenue - a prime city location with enormous development potential. *This is an exciting opportunity for Victor* that uniquely positions the city to catalyze investment in its downtown core starting right here with this property.



**A restaurant and adjoining public space proposal from an RFP process in Moscow, Idaho**

Valley Advocates recommends that the city, through its Urban Renewal Agency (URA), consider recruiting an experienced developer to create a high-quality project on this land. This can be accomplished through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, which would enable Victor to directly control and maximize the city's interest in terms of use, configuration, design, and public presence.

**The numerous experiences of peer communities in Idaho and beyond demonstrate that a public-private partnership like this will achieve the best outcome for the city.**

Consider the following:

- An RFP process will allow the city to ensure that a high-quality project will be built, and that such development will spur revitalization in the downtown area quickly – and in a manner consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan and new Land Use Code.
- As part of the RFP process, developers can provide drawings and other visualizations that will create interest and excitement in Victor.
- A city-sanctioned project can harness the robust housing market, get units built downtown, and increase demand for commercial development. A housing shortage can be a happy problem - building more units will not only address vast and growing demand, but will spur the “peopling” necessary for a vibrant downtown.

285 E Little Ave, PO Box 1164, Driggs, Idaho 83422

208.354.1707 ph ♦ 208.354.1709 fax ♦ [www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org](http://www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org)

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- An RFP process can expose the project to top developer talent from around the country.
- Most importantly, if the city does not receive an acceptable bid, it can then opt to auction the land instead.

The RFP process for development on city-owned lands is an option utilized by many similar communities here in Idaho and in the Intermountain West. Examples include:

- McCall and Ketchum are currently drafting RFPs for city-owned land for development under their URAs.
- Ketchum, Moscow, and Nampa have all used the RFP process to develop city-owned lands to meet housing, redevelopment, and economic goals.
- Steamboat Springs recently completed an RFP process that included the redevelopment of city-owned land and seed money for other community oriented projects.



**A 32-unit housing development was built through an RFP process in Ketchum.**

“*The benefit we found to doing an RFP versus auctioning the property is that you have more controls over what use goes onto the land, the timeframe, and assurance that the developer has the financial backing to make the project work.*”

-Robin Collins, Assistant Economic Development Director, City of Nampa

Valley Advocates is enthusiastically willing to assist the city in seizing this opportunity. We have contacted Micah Austin, the Community Development Director for Ketchum, to provide technical assistance to the city in drafting an RFP for the Beryl site. He has worked with several different URAs in Idaho (Jerome, Hailey, and Ketchum) and the state's leading legal expert on Idaho URAs, Ryan Armbruster.

To manage the RFP process, we suggest including a budget to provide contract assistance to the city's Planning & Zoning Administrator. This will provide the experience and resources necessary to ensure the development of a successful project. Mr. Austin has expressed a willingness to assist the city in this regard as well.



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In sum, we strongly encourage the city to take a proactive stance toward its future and catalyze the redevelopment of its downtown.

Respectfully,

Shawn W. Hill  
Executive Director