



From Site Selection magazine, March 2004

NORTH AMERICAN REPORTS

Project Olympus: 'One for the Record Books'

by **ED McCALLUM**, Senior Principal
and **JEANNETTE GOLDSMITH**, Principal
McCallum Sweeney Consulting, Inc.



Ed McCallum



Jeannette Goldsmith

The Challenge

There are many adjectives that could be used to describe The Boeing Company's recent 7E7 site selection process: "unique," "comprehensive," "rigorous," and "fast-paced" are a few that come to mind. There is little doubt that this project was exceptional in terms of both process and approach. The goal was to select the location with a world-class work force capable of producing the finest aircraft in the industry. And the process to get there was indeed one for the record books.

The process was distinctive in several areas. First, the competition was open to any state or community that wanted to submit a proposal. Second, the process was intensely data-driven, and our firm's ability to analyze large amounts of complex data quickly and efficiently using GIS technology helped Boeing to complete the project on schedule. Third, Boeing dedicated a team of in-house subject matter experts to work closely with our firm in all aspects of this project. Finally, ask anyone involved in the process, and they are certain to tell you that this project was on an extremely fast track.

'An Open and Fair Competition'

Probably the most extraordinary aspect by far was the "open bid" process insisted upon by Boeing. Never before, in this consultant's experience, had a company actually solicited invitations from the economic development community at large. The press release from The Boeing Company stated that the site selection criteria were available on the Boeing Web site and that any community interested in the process should contact McCallum Sweeney Consulting. The underlying message of this statement was very clear: This is a competition and every community has an equal chance to participate.

The economic development community took the message to heart – and the response was overwhelming. As expected, more than 80 proposals literally rolled in the door. Boxes and crates from a myriad of locations arrived on June 20th and were sequestered in a secure location. The proposals were categorized and stored on bookshelves that required an entire room to contain them.

The Boeing mandate to McCallum Sweeney was



Boeing's Everett site is approximately 1,000 acres (405 hectares), including 215 acres (86 hectares) of paved yards and parking, and 282 acres (113 hectares) of building area.

clear: all submittals would be meticulously reviewed, and all inquiries would be recognized and responded to appropriately and fairly. Boeing wanted to make sure that every single community had an equal shot and that not a single potential opportunity was overlooked.

A One-of-a-Kind Team

In order to accomplish this task, Boeing and McCallum Sweeney Consulting assembled a one-of-a-kind team to conduct the site selection process. The Project Olympus Team had experts in engineering, finance, environmental concerns, utility operations, logistics, human resources, public relations, legal issues, and a number of other areas. Each team member provided input into the process from the beginning and assisted in nearly every aspect of the

project, from determining the site selection criteria, evaluating proposals, visiting multiple sites and communities, to running the financial models and speaking with the media. The dedication and talent of all of the team members helped us to better manage what would otherwise be a Herculean task.

Data, Data, and More Data...

A tremendous amount of data was analyzed prior to receiving bids from prospective communities and states. The Federal Aviation Administration, National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Geological Service were some of the data sources used to analyze potential regions and communities for technical suitability.

In addition, the request for proposals asked communities to submit a substantial amount of data with their responses. The project required that enough information be provided to accurately analyze all of the sites that were submitted. And to make sure we had covered all of our bases, we asked several different members of our team to review the responses and the data in order to have a complete and comprehensive evaluation.

Because of the rigorous screening process, it became apparent in short order that only a few dozen candidates were capable of meeting the stringent project requirements established by the site selection team. However, to the credit of many state and community development organizations, the extraordinary amount of creativity and effort applied to this project enabled a few candidates to level the playing field to their advantage and remain in strong consideration. This creativity applied to training, logistics and financing ideas that were both functional and creative – way out of the box from any traditional site selection process we had encountered in the past.

McCallum Sweeney Consulting's approach took into account not only specific technical screening criteria, but also considered the possibility that certain candidate locations could provide improvements or other solutions not specifically addressed in the volumes of data reviewed. The process, though arduous and exhaustive, accomplished its mission. Each and every airport with even the remotest possibility of meeting the project requirements was considered.

Faster Than a Speeding Bullet

And all of this was to be completed in less than six months. From June 20, 2003 – when proposals were due – until the final announcement on Dec. 16, 2003, the submittals were reviewed and examined in detail, airports and communities were visited, financial models were run and re-run and various negotiations took place – until decision time.



The nature of this project – the complexity, the comprehensive due-diligence, the schedule and the open-bid approach – makes Project Olympus one for the record books.

Return to: “[The 7E7: A Bold Gamble . . .](#)”



PLEASE VISIT OUR SPONSOR • [CLICK ABOVE](#)



| [Site Selection Online](#) | [SiteNet](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Search](#) |

©2004 [Conway Data, Inc.](#) All rights reserved. SiteNet data is from many sources and not warranted to be accurate or current.