

Town Of Harrisville

Office of the Select Board
705 Chesham Road, Harrisville, NH 03450
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Request for Proposal (RFP) Broadband Improvement Implementation Version 1.0

November 27, 2019

1. Overview

The Town of Harrisville seeks proposals to improve broadband coverage in Town to the unserved locations as defined by RSA 38:38, I(c). An unserved location is defined as a location that does not have access to at least 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload speeds. The location does not need to be subscribing to this service, but the service must be available at the street location (State or Town Road). The Town currently has very uneven broadband access availability and speeds. About 78% of the town does not have the availability of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds (FCC spec). Town service is provided by Consolidated Communications, Inc. (CCI) with other providers supplying service for a handful of locations (for example, WiValley).

Figure 1 shows a summary of the best coverage available from Consolidated Communication to residents. This can also be found at:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1YCt0UtdYmS1wn6IDvIOsC-8SOiSNsB3D>

See Also: Broadband/Cell Feasibility Study completed in 2017, available on the Town of Harrisville website at <https://www.harrisvillenh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Ph-I-and-II-Brdbnd-Cell-Study-for-Harrisville.pdf>.

2. Business Model: General Considerations of Town

The Town is soliciting proposals to improve broadband coverage in the town to address the needs of the unserved population. The Town aims to form a partnership(s) with one or more providers to achieve this goal.

- **Both wired and wireless** technologies will be considered.
- The Town is willing to work with any and all providers with regards to siting equipment, e.g. poles on town right-of-way or town-owned property.
- If there are additional costs to connect customer premises, those costs must be identified in the proposal.

- The town is not willing to fund plans or parts of plans to provide service to those areas already having 25Mbps service available from other providers. However, providers are free to compete in those areas of town with their own funding, and with the cooperation of the Town with regards to right-of-way access.
- A significant portion of the unserved population must be covered in the initial phase of the implementation, along with a schedule for covering 100% of the unserved and underserved population.
- The Town is willing to consider providing funding for improvements for served areas if a case can be made for significantly improving overall system reliability. Terms therefore to be specified.

The Town of Harrisville is following, or may decide to follow, the requirements of New Hampshire SB 170 in order to pursue the option of the Town Bonding upgrades to the Broadband infrastructure to meet the 25/3 Mb specification. This would allow the Town to Bond, and enter into a public-private partnership or other similar relationship/contract, for these improvements. If the Town were to Bond improvements, there would be some requirements of the Bonding Bank and the State to do this. The most significant is the requirement that the Town owns the Bonded assets until the Bond is paid off, subject to all contractual and legal provisions. After the Bond is paid off, the Town would be willing to consider a transfer of ownership of these assets to the partner(s) in the agreement. This transfer may be at no cost or some previously agreed on price. "Buyout" provisions need to be part of the proposal.

Once bids are received, the Selectboard will review these proposals and select the partner or partners it proposes to work with. Final approval and acceptance of the Bid and the resulting contract, however, must be given at Town Meeting where an appropriate Warrant Article will have to be accepted by the Town voters. Several Public Hearings are required before this is submitted for a Town vote. Town Meeting is currently scheduled for March 10, 2020.

3. Proposal Guidelines

All proposals must be submitted by the Response date: 11:00 AM EST, Friday, January 24, 2020.

Include within each proposal package:

- A letter of transmittal with the name, signature and title of the person authorized to commit the Bidder to the proposal terms;
- Ten (10) hard copies of the proposal;
- One electronic version of the proposal as an attachment in Adobe Acrobat (pdf format).

Mail to: Harrisville Selectboard
RFP: Broadband Improvement
705 Chesham Road
Harrisville, NH 03450
selectboard@harrisvillenh.org

The Town reserves the right to cancel this RFP, to reject any and all proposals, to waive any defect or informality in the proposals received, to negotiate alterations to the proposal(s) received prior to any final agreement, and accept the proposal deemed to be most favorable to the best interests of the Town, including, but not limited to, bidder qualifications, project cost, project size, schedule, and Business model.

Final approval of proposal, and agreement to any contract, requires the acceptance and agreement by the Selectboard and by the Town Voters at a Town Meeting.

All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by the Town of Harrisville's Attorney, and will include scope, budget, schedule, and all other material or necessary items pertaining to the project. Any resulting contract must also comply with all relevant laws and, potentially, with guidance or direction provided by Bond Counsel.

4. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Overall proposal suitability: proposed outlines must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner
- Highest priority will be given to solutions that cover all unserved locations as well as increasing speeds at served locations
- Organizational Experience: Organizations will be evaluated on their experience, financial strategy and credit rating as it pertains to the scope of this project
- Previous work: Evaluation of organizations will include consideration of examples of their work as well as client testimonials and references
- Value and cost: Organizations will be evaluated on the cost of their solution(s) based on the work to be performed in accordance with the scope of this project
- Technical expertise and experience: Organizations must provide descriptions and documentation of staff technical expertise and experience
- Bidder Creditworthiness
- Project Design
- Business Model
- Project Schedule
- Agreement with Contract terms including, but not limited to, costs and service terms and coverages
- Insurance

5. Proposal Elements

Proposals must include the information set forth below:

1. Letter of transmittal, signed by an individual authorized to bind the Bidder contractually, certifying that the Bidder will, if awarded a contract, execute contracts in accordance with the terms of the proposal within a reasonable time.
2. The Bidder's qualifications demonstrating the skill, ability, creditworthiness, and integrity necessary to faithfully perform the work required, including those of any subcontractors proposed to be used by the Bidder. Such qualifications shall include a description of the Bidder's project experience, including project name, location and project costs, a brief description of the project and its outcome, the firm's role in the project, project team member roles in the project, a project reference and a contact phone number.
3. Bidder's proposed Project design, including a description of the technology to be used and how it meets the requirements.
4. Bidder's proposed Business model, including Cost of monthly service for different performance specifications including rental of all equipment and if there is a required time commitment for such pricing. If data caps are part of the service, these must be specified and should be high enough that a typical family of 4, with students, will not reach them. The Service Level Agreement (SLA) must be attached or described in detail. Include any buyout provisions of Town investment after Bond is paid off.
5. Anticipated Project schedule with approximate timeline for installation. This should include estimates for tasks that may or may not be fully under provider's control, such as "make ready requirements" or easements.
6. List of easements or approvals required from third parties.
7. Cost to install to the home from Street level for each specified unserved area of Town. This can include a per foot charge.
8. Bidder's proposed insurance coverages and performance bond
9. Contract recommendations/requirements for bidder to work with Town
10. Contingency Plans, if appropriate

6. Terms of RFP

No Costs: This solicitation does not obligate the Town or any other person associated with the Project to pay any costs incurred by Bidders in preparing and submitting a proposal.

No express or implied services: This solicitation does not obligate the Town or any other person associated with the Project to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services.

Bidder duty to examine: Submission of a proposal shall be conclusive evidence that the Bidder has examined all relevant locations and facilities (“the Premises”) and the contract documents and is familiar with all the conditions of this procurement. Upon finding any omissions or discrepancy in the proposal documents, the Bidder shall notify the Town immediately so that any necessary addenda may be issued. Failure of the Bidder to completely investigate the Premises and/or to be thoroughly familiar with the contract documents (including plans, specifications and all addenda) shall in no way relieve the Bidder from any obligation with respect to the proposal. Bidder is responsible for verifying all statements in this RFP with the proper authorities.

Incomplete Proposal: Proposals that are incomplete, contain any omissions, erasures, alterations, additions or irregularities of any kind may be rejected, but the Town is not obligated to reject such proposals.

Withdrawal or Modification of Proposal: Any Bidder may withdraw or modify its Proposal by written request at any time prior to the Response Date. Telephonic proposals, amendments or withdrawals will not be accepted. Unless otherwise specified, no Proposal may be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days from the Response Date. The Town may waive minor errors or omissions or informalities, or allow the Bidder to correct them. The Town may permit a Bidder to withdraw a proposal if a mistake is evident on the face of the document but the intended correct offer is not similarly evident. Negligence on the part of the Bidder in preparing the Proposal confers no rights for the withdrawal of the Proposal after it has been received.

Bidder Inquiries: All substantive inquiries from prospective Bidders concerning this RFP must be submitted via email with subject line “Harrisville Broadband RFP” to SelectBoard@harrisvillenh.org up to Thursday, December 12, 2019 and may be shared with other prospective Bidders. A bidder’s conference is tentatively scheduled for December 12, 2019. All responses to substantive questions shall be via email and will be simultaneously distributed to all recipients of the RFP, and will be made available to all interested parties.

After opening of the bids, the Town may seek such additional information and enter into negotiation of contract terms as the Town, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate.

The Town is not obligated to select the lowest bid, the lowest responsible bid or follow any other criteria in selecting the successful bidder. The Town shall select the Proposal which in the Town’s view, after evaluation of the qualifications of the Bidder and proposed design, business model, and schedule, is most advantageous to the Town.

Appendix

Figure 1

Consolidated Communications information regarding unserved and underserved residences in Harrisville, NH

