

Accessing Broadband in Your Community through the  
**Community-Driven Broadband Process**

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## **ADDENDUM**

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# Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a contract between a public sector entity and a private company, where the partners agree to share some portion of the risks and rewards inherent in an infrastructure project (*Private Capital, Public Good*, Brookings, 2014). The PPP contracts used by our communities are wide-ranging. Each of these were defined based on the community's decisions around ownership of the infrastructure and revenues, and the ability of their chosen internet service provider to partner based on those decisions.

## LOCAL EXAMPLES

*Find these numbers on the following table to see where they fall on the Risk/Reward spectrum.*

- 1 MATINICUS ISLE:** Township Assessors informally negotiated with the existing ISP. Leveraging the fact that federal subsidies were contributing to the ISP-planned upgrades of the existing network, the community expended resources to demand higher-than-planned service levels. The ISP owns, upgrades and operates with full control.
- 2 AROOSTOOK COUNTY:** An ISP established an innovative business model of buying up defunct cable companies, benefiting from pole licenses and attachment locations. Not needing returns from former investments, the ISP replaces old infrastructure with fiber networks where communities engaged on attracting state funding to reach previously unserved areas. Since the ISP owns all the risk, it controls all revenue.
- 3 CLIFF ISLAND:** Residents of Cliff Island created a new Limited Liability Company (LLC) to own the infrastructure. The LLC is able to see an accelerated return on investment due to negotiated subscription prices. The internet service provider (ISP) is contracted to construct and operate the network. The ISP shares a negotiated portion of subscription revenue with the LLC.
- 4 CRANBERRY ISLES:** The municipality funded and owns the infrastructure, contracting with one ISP to construct and operate the network. The community benefits from a timely project period and negotiates on prices and revenue sharing with the ISP. The ISP enjoys market certainty.
- 5 ISLESBORO:** The municipality funded construction and separately selected an ISP to operate and maintain the infrastructure. While the ISP offers service, the municipality owns and administers (billing, subsidizes subscriptions, etc.) the network. The benefit for these upfront and on-going costs is control of affordable prices for property owners.
- 6 DOWNEAST BROADBAND UTILITY:** Municipalities formed and funded a new utility, which contracted with an ISP in separate design, construction, and operation phases. With this newly formed utility owning the infrastructure, it holds the risk and the reward. It also allows for the possibility of leasing it to multiple ISPs, which could incentivize competitive pricing.

These local examples are public-private partnerships that vary in the amount of private control versus public control, given the actions taken by the communities and the ISP(s) involved. The risk, and reward, to the community varies, where some actions taken can be very risky or costly but provide high potential rewards or benefits. Increasingly communities are willing to take on risk, as they realize that increased local participation allows for alignment between the goals of the community and those of the ISP.

# RESULTING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS



		PRIVATE —ISP ACTIONS—						
PUBLIC —COMMUNITY— ACTIONS		DESIGN Engineer upgraded, expanded or new network	SCHEDULE Determine timeline for upgrades or construction	CONSTRUCT Buildout infrastructure	PRICE Determine prices of subscription packages	OPERATE Provide service or light up the network	SHARE Determine how much revenue is shared between ISPs and community	COMPETE Lease access to the network and potentially compete with other ISPs
<b>COMMUNICATE</b> Share community perspective and needs with ISPs		EXISTING ISP	EXISTING ISP	EXISTING ISP	EXISTING ISP	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>NEGOTIATE</b> Bargain on ISP actions	1	EXISTING ISP ISP WITH AGREEMENT	EXISTING ISP ISP WITH AGREEMENT	EXISTING ISP ISP WITH AGREEMENT	EXISTING ISP	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>AGGREGATE</b> Generate demand- side evidence to spur ISP actions		EXISTING ISP ISP WITH AGREEMENT	EXISTING ISP ISP WITH AGREEMENT	2 EXISTING ISP ISP WITH AGREEMENT	EXISTING ISP	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>REQUEST</b> Issue a request for information or proposals		ISP WITH AGREEMENT COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	ISP WITH AGREEMENT COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	ISP WITH AGREEMENT COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS
<b>CONTRACT</b> Hire ISP or firm to complete private actions		COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	ISP WITH AGREEMENT COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER	ISP WITH AGREEMENT COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	ISP WITH AGREEMENT COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER	Not applicable
<b>FUND</b> Contribute public funding upfront		COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	Not applicable	3 4 ISP WITH AGREEMENT COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	Not applicable	COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>SUBSIDIZE</b> Contribute on-going public funding		Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	COMMUNITY W/AGREEMENT COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER	COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>ADMINISTER</b> Oversee prices, operations, revenue sharing and leases		Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	5 COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS	6 PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS

**PUBLIC CONTROL**

- COMMUNITY W/ AGREEMENT** LESS: Public control is gained by agreement in the community-driven broadband solution
- COMMUNITY SINGLE-PAYER** SOME: Community consolidates individual subscriptions, becoming single payer to chosen ISP
- PUBLIC OPEN-ACCESS** MORE: More control can be gained when a community-owned network is opened to multiple ISPs

**PRIVATE CONTROL**

- EXISTING ISP** MORE: Control is maintained by the existing ISP(s) in private markets
- ISP WITH AGREEMENT** LESS: Some private control is relinquished by agreement

# Community Surveys

A community survey is a tool that can be used to help engage the community by identifying priorities and assess infrastructure options as part of a feasibility study. *These goals are best accomplished after the community has been educated on broadband.*

A survey can be designed to assess the lack of broadband and interest in improvements, or to assess the interest in a broadband solution and willingness to pay. A survey can be a great way to generate buzz about broadband and contribute to community outreach.

## PLANNING THE SURVEY

- Determine the purpose of the survey, which should be what drives the survey design; don't just copy other surveys: What information do you need to collect?
- Determine how the results will be used and what response rate is required.
- Design around the survey takers' characteristics/needs.
- Determine the cost/budget limitations.

## CHOOSING A SURVEY MODE

- Internet surveys (SurveyMonkey, Google Survey, etc.) are the cheapest, but only those who have internet already are likely to respond. Engage libraries to get more people to participate.
- Hard copies could be mailed with tax bills, mailed to the premise and/or placed in a high-traffic area along with a drop box.
- Door-to-door is very expensive but improves response rate and community engagement in the broadband project.
- Phone surveys are more difficult given cellphone users, and it's more difficult to avoid duplicated results from multiple respondents in the same premise.

## DESIGNING THE SURVEY

From survey title, to introduction, to series of questions: frame the content to the community's interests/concerns. "Broadband" is not a known term. Frame the survey around a broader community goal/concern that people care about, e.g., attracting residents, increasing job opportunities, supporting businesses, improving education and health access.

- Include a confidentiality statement. Being truly anonymous is unlikely and shouldn't be promised.
- Questions must be clear, and the survey must be short, to keep attention of respondents and increase completion/response rate.
- Background information should persuade participant to respond, but information provided ahead of questions will influence responses to subsequent questions.
- Surveying expertise in customer-satisfaction or willingness-to-pay questions is required to avoid biases and help ensure good response rate.
- All personal/demographic/identifier questions should be at the end to increase completion/response rate.
- Include contact information for the broadband working group, and consider asking respondents to provide contact information if they want to become more involved.

# Survey Question Examples

1. Who is your internet provider?
2. If you do NOT currently have internet service at home, please indicate all the reasons.  
 Cost  
 No provider available  
 Internet isn't important to me
3. What is your current internet usage in/on (town/island name) \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Please indicate whether or not you are satisfied with each of the following:  
 The overall internet service at your home  
 The reliability/consistency of the internet connection at home  
 The internet speed of your current connection at home  
 The customer service when you call your internet service provider  
 The customer service of local technicians  
 The capacity of the internet service for business use or telecommuting
5. Whether or not you are currently satisfied, would you like internet service that is more reliable, more consistent, and/or faster?
6. How many devices are accessing your internet service? (Please count all computers, laptops, iPads, tablets, cell phones, TVs, wifi printers, gaming systems, etc., that may be connected to the internet.)
7. How often do you experience speed issues?
8. Would you be willing to do two speed tests and report your results?
9. Open another internet browser, go to: [speedtest.tds.net](http://speedtest.tds.net) and click Begin Test. Report your results below.  
 Download speed (Mbps):  
 Upload speed (Mbps):
10. Is the cost of your internet service reasonable?
11. How much are you currently paying each month for internet service?  
(Please include only the internet service charges of your bill.)
12. Do you or anyone in your household use the computer to work from home?  
(i.e. telecommute, run a business, or do work for your job)
13. If members of your household use the internet for homework or education, please identify the age(s) of the member(s):  
 Pre-K – 8th grade  
 Grade 9-12  
 Adult student  
 none

14. How would you benefit from improved internet service? Please select all of the uses that would apply if you had improved internet service.

- General communication (email, social media, etc.)
- Access to information or services
- Video conferencing/chatting (Skype, Zoom, etc.)
- Gaming
- Entertainment (download or stream movies, videos, music, etc.)
- Work from home
- Online shopping
- Online education
- Uploading pictures

15. Would you like training on how to use the internet? If yes, check the topics that most interest you:

- Basic knowledge of computers and the internet (Setting up a device, protecting identity online, etc.)
- Connecting to family and friends (using programs like Skype, facetime, WiFi calling, etc.)
- Using Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc),
- Using tools to make me more productive in my home or business (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Photo management, Quickbooks accounting, etc.)
- Streaming video content online in addition to or instead of watching through a TV service (Like Netflix, Hulu, Sports channels, etc.)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

16. Would you pay more for reliable, consistent, high-speed internet service?

17. Would you be willing to support community funding to collaborate with an internet service provider in order to improve internet service in the future?

18. Please indicate your type of residency:

- Year-round
- Seasonal

19. Would fast, reliable internet service allow you to extend your stay in (town)?

*Reliable internet service means it doesn't cut out and you can rely on the connection being there for typical activities, e.g., you can run transactions without interruption, update websites or upload files without failure, and you can complete tasks without having to reload webpages or come back later, etc.*

20. For you personally, how important is having reliable internet access where you stay/live on/in?

21. As a community, how important is having access to reliable internet service at the premise (home, business, etc.)?

22. If you are interested in joining our working groups for this internet project, please provide your contact information below or contact the (Economic Development Committee at the Town Office.)

# Scoring Rubric

The Scoring Rubric is intended to provide an opportunity to score multiple RFI/RFP responses (or lack of) side-by-side with an unbiased lens on the review process. There are many times throughout the community-driven broadband process where individuals or groups will create positive or negative relationships or opinions about potential bidders. Because of this, a clear scoring matrix will take the focus away from these relationships and/or opinions and refocus the decision-making body on the community priorities. This also provides documentation for decisions that community and municipal leaders can review for understanding and engagement.

The criteria scored by the rubric should be derived from the community's RFI/RFP. We outline common guidance for scoring and review, but the reviewing community should adapt criteria and scoring column to fit their need.

Things to keep in mind while using:

- Criteria can be adapted to best fit the community's RFI/RFP priorities and goals.
- All responses, both informal and formal, should be scored for full transparency to community.
- Mark any questions that arise in the scoring worksheet and reach out to submitting companies promptly for response and finalization of review and selection.

# Scoring Rubric

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	ADEQUATE	POOR	N/A
<b>BROADBAND GOALS</b> Ability to meet the communities outlined goals and/or priorities for broadband service	Meets all community goals even if data counters some goals; design supports the broadband needs/uses outlined; demonstrates community-tailored solution to meet goals.	Attempts to meet community's broadband goals and priorities; however, allows data (provided) to counter some goals and/or fails to meet all goals. Able to meet majority of goals.	Meets 50% or less of the community's designated broadband goals and priorities. Provides little to no data to demonstrate why goals cannot be met.	Insufficient ability to meet any of the community's established broadband goals and priorities.	Lack of adequate submission.
<b>TARGET SPEEDS</b> Ability to meet the communities desired speeds for service while meeting the minimum broadband level speeds	Design demonstrates infrastructure able to meet and exceed the community's requested speeds for service to all premises included in design. Designed network can carry increased capacity and speeds in the future.	Design demonstrates infrastructure able to meet (not exceed) community's requested speeds for service to a majority of premises included in design. Designed network can carry increased capacity and speeds in the future with additional cost.	Design demonstrates infrastructure able to meet (not exceed) community's requested speeds for service to a 50% or less of the premises included in the design. All premises will have broadband level speed available. Designed network can carry increased capacity and speeds in the future with additional cost.	Design provides improved speeds but fails to meet broadband level speeds for the community.	Lack of adequate submission.
<b>TIMELINE</b> Provide design that will be completed within the designated timeline established by the community	Design will be completed well within the timeframe designated by the community. Milestones are documented.	Design will be completed by deadline supplied by community. No milestones are documented.	Design will be completed within 1 month following deadline with reasoning provided. No milestones are documented.	Design cannot be completed within the timeframe provided by the town and exceeds 1-2 months following deadline. No milestones documented.	Lack of adequate submission.
<b>DESIGN COST</b> Provide a design that is within a cost range deemed appropriate for the community. Costs can range from \$15,000-\$30,000 (or more), depending on the level of engineering involved.	Design cost is less than \$15,000 or is rolled into the cost for buildout.	Design cost is \$15,000 - \$20,000.	Design cost does not exceed \$25,000.	Design cost exceeds \$25,000.	Lack of adequate submission.
<b>DESIGN CONTENT</b> Provide a design that meets the requirements for content requested.	Provides a detailed description of all requirements requested. This can include: assessing infrastructure, financial plan, deployment options, quality assurance plan, speeds and capacity.	Description of most, if not all, requirements requested. This can include: assessing infrastructure, financial plan, deployment options, quality assurance plan, speeds and capacity.	Many, but not all, requirements are described to a level that provides the community with the means to move forward with the design.	Submission fails to provide a description for the design content requested by the community.	Lack of adequate submission.
<b>PPP ON DESIGN</b> Ability and interest to establish a Public-Private Partnership (PPP)	Submission clearly defines the roles and responsibilities within the PPP. There is adequate balance between both parties. Outlined plan for community engagement, plan dissemination, and surveying the community.	Submission defines the roles and responsibilities within the PPP. Partnership feels unbalanced, but all needs are met. Description of plan for community engagement, plan dissemination, and surveying the community.	Submission covers some of the PPP strategy. Partnership feels unbalanced with some needs not being met. Description of plan for community engagement, plan dissemination, and surveying the community would need revised.	Respondent demonstrates an unwillingness for the PPP strategy. The plan relies very little on community engagement and input.	Lack of adequate submission.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b> Ability to clearly layout implementation plan that is beneficial to the PPP	Implementation plan is clearly defined and respondent has proven ability to implement the plan. Design can be shared publicly.	Implementation plan meets the needs of the community and design requested. Design could be shared publicly upon request.	Implementation plan is adequate but there is need to request some improvements if possible. Design is confidential.	Implementation plan does not meet the needs of the community or design requested.	Lack of adequate submission.
<b>FINANCIAL MODEL</b> Provide a financial model that aligns with the community's request and share in the responsibility for funding in the PPP	Cost of building out the design meets the community's expectations based on taxpayer input. Submission shows a willingness to partner with the community to seek public and private funding.	Cost of building out the design meets the community's expectations based on taxpayer input. Submission provides some suggestions on funding to seek, but does not demonstrate willingness for the PPP.	Cost falls within reasonable range of exceeding the community's expectations, but provides clear reasoning as to why. No PPP willingness for seeking funding.	Cost far exceeds the community's expectations with little to no reasonable explanation. No PPP willingness provided for seeking funds.	Lack of adequate submission.



# Scoring Worksheet

	ISP #1	ISP #2	ISP #3	ISP #4
<b>BROADBAND GOALS</b>				
<b>TARGET SPEEDS</b>				
<b>TIMELINE</b>				
<b>DESIGN COST</b>				
<b>DESIGN CONTENT</b>				
<b>PPP ON DESIGN</b>				
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>FINANCIAL MODEL</b>				
<b>ADDITIONAL CRITERIA:</b> -----				
<b>ADDITIONAL CRITERIA:</b> -----				
<b>ADDITIONAL NOTES</b>				

RFI/RFP Examples  
+  
RFI Template

Dear Internet Service Providers and other interested firms:

The Down Bay Technology Task Force is seeking an engineered design for broadband infrastructure to serve three unbridged islands (Chebeague Island, Cliff Island, and Long Island) in Casco Bay, Maine. Attached you'll find a Request for Information that will begin the process of finding internet service providers or other partnering firms who wish to design a broadband network. We hope you will respond to the RFI.

For a more stable year-round community, with great economic and social opportunities, to attract and retain young families, these islands have identified the need for a long-term broadband solution that will last for decades. Broadband will help support economic, telehealth, and education opportunities for our year-round population and also allow summer residents to stay on-island longer. Broadband will also improve municipal services including the ability to video conference and stream meetings, and to access training opportunities remotely.

We have obtained municipal and nonprofit funding, and we continue to investigate future sources of funding for a broadband project, at the private, local, county, state and federal levels. With a high quality of life, a thriving fishing industry, easy access to the Portland area, and great schools, we are well poised to achieve our goal of building a stable year-round community. Broadband will help us attract and retain young families who are already drawn by the way of life and wonderful communities on our islands.

The task force anticipates receiving responses by June 16, 2017, and having an engineered design completed by August 31, 2017. We hope to hear from you.

Please direct your questions about the project to:  
Stephenie MacLagan, Island Institute, [smaclagan@islandinstitute.org](mailto:smaclagan@islandinstitute.org)

Sincerely,

Down Bay Technology Task Force

## Down Bay Technology Task Force Request for Information

### 1 Introduction

The Down Bay Technology Task Force, hereinafter also referred to as “the task force” and/or “the islands,” issues this Request for Information (RFI) to obtain information about providing an engineered design for broadband infrastructure to serve three islands in the Casco Bay: Chebeague, Cliff Island, and Long Island; hereinafter referred to individually and/or jointly as “the islands.” “The task force” includes the Town of Chebeague Broadband Working Group, Sustainable Cliff Island, and Town of Long Island Broadband Exploratory Committee.

The task force seeks information in order to help determine the interest of internet service providers (ISP) or other firms, hereinafter also referred to as “respondents,” to design infrastructure for bringing broadband to the islands. This objective is further described in Section 3 of this RFI.

The purpose of the request is to pursue a long-term broadband solution that will enable telecommuting, provide educational opportunities, support telehealth services, and provide municipal services including the ability to video conference or stream meetings. The islands’ vision is a more stable year-round community, with great economic and social opportunities, to attract and retain young families, and improving internet service helps achieve this vision. This RFI further describes the islands and the objective for which information is requested, in Section 3.

The task force proposes a timeline in Section 3 and a business model in Section 4. The task force requests that responses address all information requested in Section 5. The process and timeline for responding to this RFI is outlined in Section 2.

### 2 Response Process

The task force foresees the following RFI schedule:

5 May 2017	RFI issued
12 May 2017	Questions from Respondents Due
26 May 2017	Answers to Respondent Questions Posted
16 June 2017	Deadline for the Task Force to Receive Responses

Responses must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on June 16, 2017. Please submit responses:

as a pdf emailed to  
[smaclagan@islandinstitute.org](mailto:smaclagan@islandinstitute.org)

or in a sealed envelope to  
Island Institute  
Attn: Stephenie MacLagan  
386 Main Street  
Rockland, ME 04841

Respondents interested in designing a broadband network for the islands should provide the information requested in Section 5. Responses will not be considered final or binding; however, respondents are strongly encouraged to submit information that could be used as a basis for negotiating an agreement. By seeking an engineered design from an ISP, the task force is able to entertain the possibility of said ISPs partnering with the task force to construct and operate the network, for delivery of broadband service to these islands. Other firms are welcome to respond, and are encouraged to provide information about partnering with ISP(s). Responses to this RFI will help the task force determine its next steps, which may involve either a bid process or the selection of a respondent for in-person meetings where the potential for a public-private partnership will be explored. All responses will be carefully considered and respondents will be notified shortly of next steps. The task force reserves the right to discontinue these efforts based on the responses to this RFI or other changes in circumstances.

Any questions from potential respondents to this RFI must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on May 12, 2017. Please direct questions regarding this RFI to: Stephenie MacLagan, Island Institute, [smaclagan@islandinstitute.org](mailto:smaclagan@islandinstitute.org). The task force will make a best effort to post answers to written questions at least three weeks prior to the RFI deadline. Responses will be posted to some or all of the following websites:

[www.islandinstitute.org/blog/economic](http://www.islandinstitute.org/blog/economic)  
[www.sustainablecliffisland.org/broadband](http://www.sustainablecliffisland.org/broadband)  
[http://townoflongisland.us/wp/?page\\_id=1914](http://townoflongisland.us/wp/?page_id=1914)  
[www.chebeague.events/blog-1/](http://www.chebeague.events/blog-1/)

### 3 Background and Broadband Goals

The Town of Chebeague has a year-round population of 341 according to the 2010 US Census. Cliff Island, which is part of the City of Portland, is inhabited year-round population of around 50. According to the 2010 US Census, the year-round population of Long Island is 230. Summer population of these islands is between 2 and 4 times the year-round population. In addition to the schools and libraries, other anchor institutions include: ferry docks, recreational and community centers, and clinics and developing telehealth facilities. Businesses include: grocery and general stores; lodging businesses; lobster and aquaculture processing and shipping services; restaurants; home-based businesses including photography, jewelry, information technology, and pottery; and bookkeepers for fishermen and other businesses.

Chebeague established its own ISP, which was sold to Axiom Technologies in 2016. This ISP and the island's other incumbent provider, FairPoint, provide DSL speeds of 6/1.5 mbps via an undersea cable. FairPoint provides Cliff Island with quickly diminishing 7/1 mbps via a submarine copper cable from Long Island, and the school and library share a 10/10 mbps connection through MSLN. With an undersea fiber cable from the mainland, FairPoint was recently able to upgrade a portion of the network on Long Island, to provide up to 15/1 in some locations. In 2015, Tilson Technology completed a broadband feasibility study that included the islands. Additional information related to the existing infrastructure is contained in that study, which can be accessed on this website: <http://www.islandinstitute.org/resource/broadband-island-and-coastal-sustainability>.

Our vision is a more stable year-round community, with great economic and social opportunities, to attract and retain young families. In 2015, community input was taken to develop broadband-related community goals for the islands: increasing the year-round population and extending the stay of

seasonal residents, by enabling telecommuting and improving other economic opportunities; and providing educational opportunities, telehealth services, and municipal services. These uses are extremely limited or even impossible with the current lack of broadband.

The task force is in pursuit of a broadband solution that will last for decades, not just a few years. The task force anticipates a broadband project will likely be expensive and require a long-term payment structure; therefore, the islands expect that the solution will last just as long if not longer without additional, substantial hardware upgrades. For the purposes of this RFI, “broadband” means internet service that meets both the federal and state definitions of broadband (e.g., 25/10), and is consistent and reliable despite seasonality of the islands’ populations. The broadband network must accommodate extreme swings in usage, greater saturation of the network in summer months. The network must have the capacity for the uploading needs associated with future, typical municipal and telehealth facilities including, but not limited to, video conferencing, streaming meetings, and secure database sharing. The broadband network must reach all premises with consistent and reliable speeds regardless of location on the islands. We have a strong preference for technology that is primarily a fiber-to-the-premise network, but we will consider a hybridized solution that could cut costs and still provide equivalently reliable, high-speed internet service. We are intending to “build once” and will not consider proposed design(s) of technology that cannot be upgraded for increasingly higher speeds as our needs change in the next 10-40 years.

The task force expects to obtain an engineered design by August 31, 2017.

#### 4 Business Model

The task force will support the chosen respondent with travel coordination to the islands for on-the-ground assessments as part of the engineering. The islands have contributed funds, and the task force has obtain grant funding, to cover the cost of an engineered design of the broadband network. It may be advantageous for the cost of the engineered design to be rolled into the cost of building the broadband network.

By seeking an engineered design from an ISP or other firm, the task force expects to obtain a broadband infrastructure design that said respondent or other ISP may use to construct and operate a network, for delivery of broadband service to these islands. The islands are interested in opportunities to work on the install, as this aligns well with the islands’ history and culture of providing for themselves.

The task force has already convened and decided on our joint broadband goals (Section 3) and will not need to work with the respondent on goal identification. We have also ready deployed digital education workshops through the Island Institute and secured funding for future digital literacy work; we do not need this process to address digital literacy. We would like the chosen respondent to be available after the engineered design completion date, in order to work with the task force on presenting the results in community meetings and/or to town government authorities.

The task force entertains responses that propose variations on this model. For the eventual build-out, the task force is investigating sources of funding, at the private, local, county, state and federal levels.

## 5 Information Requested

Please provide information requested in an organized and formatted manner, by following the outline of this Section 5, in order to help facilitate the task force's review. Please do not refer to attachments or other materials or resources. To facilitate the task force's review, please include any additional information you would like to share within the appropriate sections (below) of your response. This additional information may include:

- Any outcomes or conditions you consider to be essential or strongly desired in a potential partnership that you would like to highlight
- Any particular ways that your participation could provide value to the islands
- Any information that you believe the task force should consider

5.1 The respondent must submit a cover letter signed by an authorized representative of the entity. The cover letter must include the following:

- A concise summary of the response to the RFI
- The legal name of the entity, its headquarters address, its principal place of business, its legal form (i.e. corporation, joint venture, limited partnership, etc.)
- The name, address, email address and telephone number(s) of the principal contact for all communications pertaining to the RFI

5.2 Please provide a point of contact for your response, including a name, address, e-mail address, and phone number.

5.3 Please describe your company, including:

- How long the company has been in operation
- How long the company engineered internet infrastructure networks
- Where the company headquarters is located, and where any field offices are located
- Technical, managerial and operational experience of the team, highlighting any key members as appropriate to this project

5.4 Please describe at least one past project where you have engineered designs of broadband networks for a rural area. In your description of past performance, please list:

- The number of premises included
- Description of the physical environment (e.g., density of premises, terrain)
- Description of the network capacity (speeds, reliability, etc.)
- Description of the technology proposed
- Timeline of engineering and date of completion of the design
- Cost of the engineered design, and whether it was rolled into the cost of building the network
- Customer (community/client) contact information (name, title, phone, email, physical address)

5.5 Please provide one additional reference with contact information.

5.6 The respondent is invited to provide information on how to meet the broadband goals described in Section 3 above. In the response, please also demonstrate understanding of the community goals and background. Please provide an estimated timeline, including a proposed start date and a response to completion date for an engineered design proposed in Section 3 above.

5.7 Please indicate whether engineered design(s) would target speeds of 25/10, 100/100, and/or 1000/1000 mbps, and whether the cost of said design(s) would vary based on the speeds. Please provide an estimated cost for the engineered design(s). The respondent is invited to propose service levels that they deem technologically and economically achievable; however, respondents should propose solutions that at least meet the minimum speeds and other broadband goals described in Section 3.

5.8 The respondent should prepare a detailed description of what the engineered design(s) would include. This should include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Implementation plan
- Synthesis of current assets and potential leverage points
- Necessary hardware and facilities
- Geographical and topological network schematics
- Options for backhaul
- A plan that includes all elements of possible deployment rationale, cost, and operations of designed network, including a pro-forma of revenue and expenses expected from the network
- Quality assurance plan
- Possible upgrades for increased speeds, capacity, etc. for the future

5.9 Please comment on the proposed business model in Section 4 above, including availability and willingness post completion date for community presentations, but please do not include proposed goal-setting or digital literacy as part of the response to this RFI. If there are any variations or exceptions that you would require to participate, please identify and explain them. The respondent is invited to state high-level terms for this business model. Please provide any knowledge or experience of operating this business model.



# *Town of Searsport Mass Communications Committee*

## **Request for Proposal**

### **Town of Searsport, Maine**

#### **Assessment and Inventory of Existing High-Speed Internet and Development of a Broadband Plan for the Town of Searsport**

##### **General Statement:**

The Town of Searsport is seeking a qualified consultant or consultant team (hereafter referred to as the "Consultant") to prepare a Broadband Plan. This Plan shall be a comprehensive report ("Plan") that:

- Identifies existing high-speed internet assets in the Town,
- Identifies areas of the Town lacking adequate high-speed internet service, where augmented high-speed internet service will be required to meet the demands of future "smart" infrastructure,
- Identifies the available public computer access locations through the Town,
- Identifies the need for greater access to affordable high-speed internet and computer equipment for low-to-moderate income individuals and families,
- Identifies the need to meet with businesses, community and municipal leaders, and residents to discuss Computer Skills and Digital Literacy Training,
- Identifies the economic impact adequate high-speed internet service and public community HotSpots would have on the Town,
- Identifies one or more potential network designs, cost estimates, funding sources that would address any broadband gaps identified in your Plan.

The Town has assembled a 'Broadband Team,' made up of Mass Communications Committee members that include residents of the Town, members of the education community, business representatives and town selectmen, to oversee this project.

##### **General Plan Principles**

The primary scope of the Plan shall be as follows:

- Collect relevant data throughout the entire City,
- Meet with the Broadband Team as needed to facilitate the project,
- Lead one public meeting,
- Prepare a final written plan with findings and strategies.

The plan shall include cost estimates for any proposed expansion of high-speed internet service.

# *Town of Searsport Mass Communications Committee*

## **Scope of Services**

Desired deliverables include the following. Consultant is encouraged to prioritize these items in submissions of this RFP:

- Project timeline.
- Meetings with City staff and the Broadband Team at each step of the development of the Plan to coordinate efforts and solicit City input.
- Facilitation of one public meeting (including under-served populations) after the plan is in draft to solicit public input.
- A written plan that shall include:
  - ❖ Graphic and written representation of high-speed internet assets in the City
    - Location and direction of existing lines,
    - Type (e.g. DSL, fiber optics, coaxial cable),
    - Ownership,
    - Download and upload speeds.
  - ❖ Recommendations (in graphic and/or written form) of areas of the City likely to require expansion of high-speed service and the most appropriate download and upload speeds to satisfy future demand. This may include low-to-moderate income neighborhoods,
  - ❖ Recommendations for enhanced Digital Inclusion of low-to-moderate income households
  - ❖ Summary of public comments and input.
  - ❖ Recommendations for funding sources that would address the cost of planning and implementation of any broadband gaps identified in your Plan.
- All survey and assessment data collected in support of the findings shall be included in the Plan as appendices.

The Points of Contact (PoC) for questions associated with the RFP shall be the Mass Communications Committee Chairman or the First Selectman:

George Kerper  
Mass Communications Committee Chairman  
Town of Searsport  
PO Box 499  
Searsport, Maine 04974  
207.548.6372  
[sctv7@searsport.maine.gov](mailto:sctv7@searsport.maine.gov)

Douglas Norman  
First Selectman  
Town of Searsport  
PO Box 499  
Searsport, Maine 04974  
207.548.6372  
[selectmandougnormanchair2@gmail.com](mailto:selectmandougnormanchair2@gmail.com)

## **RFP Submission Deadline**

5:00 p.m. (EDST) Friday May 15, 2020. Twelve (12) copies of the proposal, must be received at the Searsport Town Office, and one emailed copy to each PoC.

## *Town of Searsport Mass Communications Committee*

### **Proposals should be concise, and must include:**

- 1. Summary** Provide a brief summary of the Consultant's understanding of the project and relevant knowledge/experience. Provide information on all collaborators if more than one firm is involved.
- 2. Work Plan** Provide an outline of the approach proposed to accomplish the Scope of Services and the manner in which the Consultant will work with the Town of Searsport and the Searsport Mass Communications Committee Team to complete the project. Creative approaches to the project are encouraged. Optional approaches, if any, must be clearly identified.
- 3. Qualifications** Provide a description of the Consultant's qualifications, capabilities, and organizational structure. Identify the project team including qualifications, experience, and specific responsibilities of the project manager and staff that will be assigned to the project (include a resume for each person).
- 4. Relevant Work Experience and References** Provide examples of projects similar in scope and scale completed by the Consultant, especially related to similar work for municipal entities (by the staff that would be assigned to this project if possible). Provide a brief description including completion date, type and scope of project, and contact person with telephone number for reference.
- 5. Work Schedule** Provide a detailed schedule indicating how the project tasks will be organized to complete the work. The schedule must include a matrix of the project tasks and hours assigned broken down by personnel assigned to each task.
- 7. Indemnification** Acknowledge that the selected Consultant shall agree to indemnify and hold the Town harmless from claims, demands, suits, causes of action and judgments arising from the Consultants performance including claims of professional malpractice or negligence.
- 8. Cost Proposal** The Consultant's proposed budget and "not to exceed" cost for completing the project must include a task breakdown of project cost by each staff/team member and hours assigned to each staff/team member. A separate cost breakdown for any proposed additional items shall be provided apart from the Scope of Services outlined herein.

### **Modification of Proposals**

Modifications to proposals received prior to the submission deadline will be accepted, and must be submitted in a sealed envelope identifying the name and address of the Consultant and clearly marked "MODIFICATION TO PROPOSAL – TOWN OF SEARSPORT, BROADBAND PLAN".

Twelve (12) copies of the modification, must be received at the Searsport Town Office, and one emailed copy to each PoC. Modifications shall include insertion pages or replacement pages and a transmittal letter explaining the reason for the modification. The Town will not be responsible for misdirected or poorly labeled modifications.

# *Town of Searsport Mass Communications Committee*

## **Selection Process**

Upon release of this RFP, Searsport Board of Selectmen, the Points of Contacts, and Mass Communications Committee will be responsible for the review of proposals and the Searsport Board of Selectmen under advisement from the Mass Communication Committee and PoC will make the selection of a Consultant. All Proposals will be opened after the submission deadline and be available for public inspection.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

1. Submission of a complete and concise proposal with the Consultant's approach to the project, which contains all information, services, and requirements in this RFP.
2. Thoroughness of services the Consultant proposes to provide.
3. Familiarization with the Town of Searsport and its technological network regarding highspeed internet.
4. Stated ability to execute the contract and to perform and complete all work as indicated in the final Scope of Services.
5. Overall experience and past performance on similar projects.
6. Stated ability to appear for an interview, if requested.
7. Adequate assigned resources and staffing to do the work.
8. Comparative costs of the proposals will be considered, but will not be the only basis for selection.

Proposals will be evaluated based on technical merit and on the criteria listed above. Finalists may be interviewed by the Searsport Board of Selectmen and/or Searsport Mass Communication Committee as part of the evaluation process. The Mass Communication Committee will rank the finalists, and recommend to the Searsport Board of Selectmen that a contract be awarded to the Consultant submitting the proposal most favorable to the Searsport Board of Selectmen and the Searsport Mass Communications Committee.

## **Announcement of Award 9:00 a.m. (EDST) Wednesday, June 3, 2020 .**

## **Disclaimers**

- The Town reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submittals received, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the RFP guidelines, when the Town believes it is in their best interest to do so.
- The Town will not be responsible for any costs incurred by the respondent in the preparation of a response to this Request for Proposals.
- The Town reserves the right to delay or discontinue this selection process at any time during the process.
- The Town will not be held responsible if, in its opinion, the best interests of the project will be served by not awarding all or parts of the study as defined in this Request for Proposals.
- The Town reserves the right to: Request the submission of statements modifications at any time before the selection is made, if the Town believes it is in their best interest. Consider statements or modifications received at any time before the selection is made, if the Town believes it is in their best interest.

## *Town of Searsport Mass Communications Committee*

- Request clarification and/or additional information from the Respondent during the evaluation process.
- Utilize ideas submitted in the statements received, regardless of whether the respondent is selected.
- Negotiate with the selected respondent(s) to include further services not identified in this RFP.
- All proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the Town of Searsport. The Town of Searsport has the right to disclose information contained in the proposals after an award has been made. All submitted reports, documents, and materials shall be considered public information and shall be the property of the Town of Searsport.

# **3BI Broadband Task Force**

June 30, 2020

Re: Request for Proposal

349 Baldhead Rd Arrowsic ME 04530

Tel: 207-443-3450

E-mail: [Info@3bibroadband.com](mailto:Info@3bibroadband.com)

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The 3 Bridged Islands Broadband Task Force, “The Task Force” issues this Request for Proposals (RFP) on behalf of 3 Bridged Islands Broadband Company (“3BIB”), a municipally owned company in formation, for:

- (a) Constructing and testing a dominantly fiber-based broadband network to serve three bridged islands in mid-coast Maine, the “Service Area”, by the “Contractor”; and
- (b) Operating the network, including day-to-day maintenance, as an Internet Service Provider (“ISP”) in coordination and partnership with 3BIB.

The company 3BIB will be owned by three towns - Arrowsic and Georgetown in Sagadahoc County and Southport in Lincoln County. The Task Force includes individual members from each town and has been working since 2016 in assessing the communities’ broadband needs, interests, and options. The Island Institute of Rockland has been a strong supporter and advisor in this effort. The Task Force anticipates completing the formation of 3BIB in October 2018. It is also anticipated that 3BIB will become a non-profit 501-c-3 corporation by March 31, 2019.

The Task Force seeks proposals to construct a dominantly fiber-based network providing symmetrical high-speed service of nominally at least 100/100 mbps (download/upload speed) to all housing, business, and town units in the three towns. Housing units in the three towns numbered 2331 in 2016 as estimated by The Census Fact Finder. For a small minority of outlier service locations for which non-fiber technologies may be appropriate, speeds shall be at least 25/25 mbps.

Our plan assumes the Towns will own the broadband network via 3BIB and will contract out to third parties (a) the construction, and (b) the operation, marketing, and administration of the network service. The third parties contracted to perform (a) and (b) may be the same or different business entities. In 2017, the Task Force commissioned Axiom Technologies LLC to provide an infrastructure design and preliminary financial revenue/cost estimates for the planned network. Design elements from this report are attached as Attachment A - Axiom Report. Vendors are encouraged but not required to tailor their proposals to the Axiom design.

The **objectives** of 3BIB are to establish a network that will:

1. Offer retail internet access primarily via fiber-to-the-home (premises) network architecture to 100% of the households, separate business locations, and government offices in the Service Area;
2. Support high quality voice, data and video services;
3. Be installed and made operational as soon as possible, having the greatest overall value to the communities and maximum number of persons on-line
4. Promote the long term economic and community interests of the Towns; and

## **Request for Proposal**

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5. Facilitate opportunities for local small and medium-size enterprises to provide services to the Network and community.

To expedite the construction schedule, 3BIB will assist the towns in providing quick, diligent review of all applications for permits, including those necessary for construction work on the network within Town rights-of-way. 3BIB will assist the Towns in providing expedited inspection of all work for which inspection or permitting are required.

### **PROPOSAL(S) FROM VENDOR**

The Proposal(s) from Vendor should provide the details specified below, as relevant to parts (a) or (b) of this RFP, or both. Details required for all proposals are listed immediately below.

#### **Details required for all proposals**

1. Vendor qualifications: Vendor should submit documents that show its financial stability; including at least the last three years of audited financial statements, D&B agency reports, and banker's credit reports. All such documents will be held in confidence by 3BIC.
2. Technical and Managerial experience: Brief biographies should be provided for key managerial and technical staff.
3. Sub-contractors: All subcontractors you plan to employ should be listed with their references and your history of working together, especially in Maine and New England.

#### **Part (a): Details required for proposals to construct the network**

The network shall provide internet access to all housing units, separate businesses, and government offices. The network should be extended along most roads and streets. Connections to the fiber backbone shall utilize predominantly fiber-to-the-premises technology but in limited cases (e.g. small islands and the far reaches of the longest driveways) may utilize other technologies if these do not preclude eventual 100% fiber buildout.

The Proposal should show, describe, or identify:

#### **CONTRACT DETAILS**

1. Type of contract: fixed price, cost plus, or other.
2. All business entities (including sub-contractors) proposed to be involved in construction, administration, and maintenance of the network.
3. Warranties and guarantees: Describe and provide the proposed warranties and guarantees you would provide for the network.
4. If a cost plus contract is proposed, identify the costs most subject to cost overruns. Describe the reserves you would provide to cover such overruns and unexpected events.

## CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN DETAILS

5. Connection(s) to the Maine Broadband Network, which is located generally along U.S. Highway 1.
6. Each premises served.
7. Type of fiber and other technologies (if any) to be used on all roads, including the main trunk fiber line to carry bulk bandwidth throughout the system, drop cables to be strung along poles, on-ground fiber, and other means. Respondents may propose using on-ground fiber where practical if its overall cost (including construction and make-ready cost) is lower than for than pole-strung fiber.
8. Hardware equipment and proposed locations.
9. Construction phasing and scheduling. Show the proposed construction time line by neighborhoods (areas) or on a street-by-street basis. Indicate risk factors that may cause delay. Note: 3BIB encourages a schedule in which construction in the three towns is completed substantially at the same time.
10. Redundancy alternatives that can provide uninterrupted service in case of a line break, including opportunities for linking Southport to Arrowsic/Georgetown.

## COST DETAILS

The Vendor should provide total construction cost as well as the following details, at minimum:

11. Cost of the main trunk lines (by town) running down Route 127 in Arrowsic and Georgetown and along Routes 27 and 238 in Southport.
12. Costs tallied geographically, i.e. by street, road, or neighborhood.
13. 'Make ready' costs (High, Low, and Expected cases) payable to pole owners (Central Maine Power and Consolidated Communications).
14. Monthly costs: Show the anticipated monthly cash costs of building the network and the progress payments you would expect from 3BIB.
15. Approximate cost comparison for 100% three-town buildout in a single mobilization versus building each town's network separately at different times.
16. Data backhaul cost for each Town.

### **Part (b): Details required for proposals to operate the network:**

The Vendor should propose to provide vertically integrated retail services and may operate the network on a wholesale basis. The Vendor is not required to provide open access; however, if it chooses to do so, it must ensure that other vendors of retail services are given treatment equal to that it provides to itself. Specifically, the Vendor must not limit (through speed restriction or other means) the ability of customers of the network to run applications, use services, and connect devices of their choice to the network.

The Vendor should include the following details, describing how you would:



## INTERNET SERVICE DETAILS

1. Offer a range of services, including internet, TV, telephone, and other services.
2. Promote and market the system jointly with the towns to maximize the Take Rate as soon as possible. Please describe how you would initially package and price the range of services offered and would design incentives to increase the take rate in the early years of the project.
3. Provide 24/7 repair and maintenance service.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

4. Administer all billing and collections.
5. Administer all payables, excluding debt service.
6. Provide service representatives to answer customer queries and problem resolution on a timely basis.
7. Cover times of unexpected emergencies (Major storm damage and downed lines).
8. Purchase and manage purchases of internet bulk capacity for the service, including forward contracts.

## FINANCIAL DETAILS

9. Structure your proposed fee to 3BIB: This payment could be structured in various ways as a percentage of gross revenues, net cash flow or a combination of performance related financial criteria.
10. Create a reserve to cover future capital expenditure, including upgrades to the network's hardware.

Vendor should submit in excel spreadsheets the detailed expected quarterly revenues and operating costs from network services for at least seven years of operation. Please show assumed take rates by town. The projections should show revenue by service level (e.g. 25/25, 50/50, 100/100 mbps), by town, and by take rate; and should show other fees or sources of revenue, if any. Expenses should be broken into direct costs and overhead costs and include marketing/advertising, administrative services, repair and maintenance, personnel costs as well as the number of full and part time employees.

## OTHER DETAILS

Please describe how you would:

11. Contribute to the 3BIB communities, including supporting education and health.
12. Provide Retail Marketing Assistance. 3BIB will work with the Vendor to design and implement pre-construction efforts to market and obtain commitments for network services. Vendor should specify the assistance they would expect from 3BIB.
13. Offer public services if any, e.g.: public infrastructure monitoring- health service network, patient telemedicine services, EMR data extraction, managed home health care portfolio, physician/patient secure video network access.

### SCHEDULE

The Task Force anticipates the following timeline:

RFP issued	October 17, 2018
Deadline for receipt of proposals	November 16, 2018
Evaluation and negotiation of contracts	November 17 to December 31 2018
Task Force releases recommendation report to Towns	December 31, 2018
Award and Letter of Intent for contract no later than	January 15, 2019
Task Force presents financial model for funding	January 31, 2019
Task Force presents Proposals to Town meetings	February 28, 2019
Town meetings to approve proposal	June 15, 2019
Construction begins	August 31 2019

Proposals must be received no later than November 16, 2019. Responses should show a point of contact, including a name, address, e-mail address, and phone number. Proposals should be submitted by email in pdf format with excel spreadsheets for tables and budget projections to:

3BIBroadband: email: [info@3bibroadband.com](mailto:info@3bibroadband.com)

Responses to this RFP will help the Task Force make a recommendation to the Towns on next steps for bringing broadband to our communities. All proposals received will be carefully considered and respondents will be notified shortly of next steps. The Task Force expects the chosen respondent to be available for meetings to help explain their recommendations and financial modeling.

The Task Force reserves the right to discontinue these efforts based on the proposals received or other changes in circumstances.

### Ownership and Confidentiality of Proposal

3BIB will not pay for the information requested herein, and proposals submitted become the property of the 3BIB. Proposals will not be returned and may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the federal Freedom of Information Act and/or the Maine Public Records Act. Pricing and other information that is an integral part of the proposal cannot be considered confidential after an award has been made. 3BIB may receive information that may be confidential as part of your response. If you believe that any

portion of your proposal includes proprietary or other confidential information, please clearly mark it as such and state the basis for your claim to confidential treatment. Unless otherwise required by law, 3BIB will treat the information as confidential and will not disclose it to a third party without your permission. However, pricing and other information that is an integral part of the proposal will not be considered confidential.

Attachments:

- A. Excerpts from Axiom's Regional Technology Plan: For Arrowsic, Georgetown, and Southport Islands

Please go to the following link to view and download the report:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/barirpif778hcma/AAC8nkmLfsAp1fHmQRaphzGOa?dl=0>

**Town of Penobscot**

**Request for Proposals**

**To Design, Build and Operate a High-Speed Broadband  
Internet System**

**Public / Private Partnership**

**May 2019**

Dear Internet Service Providers:

The Town of Penobscot is seeking broadband service for this coastal town. Attached you'll find a Request for Proposals that will begin the process of finding a partner to design, build and operate world class high-speed broadband internet service. We seek a public-private partnership with providers who wish to design, construct and operate a broadband system. We invite you to respond to the RFP.

The Town's goal for the network is competitively-priced broadband service to, municipal and other Town institutions, businesses, and residential premises, in order to serve the current population and to attract new residents & businesses. The Town is investigating sources of funding at the private, county, state and federal levels, to supplement committed Town funding. Having commissioned a Technology Plan, the Penobscot Broadband Committee has worked for over two years identifying the long-term goals and technical options. With a clear vision for its future, an expanding school population, and a strong sense of identity, the Town is well poised to achieve its goals of strengthening businesses and attracting new families with improved internet service.

We wish to extend fiber throughout the Town and connect fiber to each residence. We anticipate receiving responses by June 7, 2019.

Sincerely,

Joel Katz,

Penobscot Broadband Committee

Town of Penobscot, Maine

## 1. Introduction.

The Town of Penobscot, hereinafter also referred to as **“the Town,”** issues this Request for Proposals (**RFP**) to provide a fiberoptic Penobscot Broadband Internet System, hereinafter also referred to as the **“Broadband System,”** to offer high-speed internet service to residents throughout the Town. The Town has established and authorized the Town of Penobscot Broadband Committee, hereinafter also referred to as **“the Broadband Committee”** to oversee this proposal solicitation and selection process. Internet service providers (ISP), hereinafter also referred to as **“Providers,”** are invited to submit proposals in response to this RFP. Responding Providers are hereinafter also referred to as **“Responders.”**

The purpose of this RFP is to obtain Proposals to design, build and operate a Broadband System that will provide high-speed internet service to municipal and other Town institutions, businesses, and residential premises throughout the Town, meeting both the current and future needs of the population as well as to attract new families into the Town.

## 2. The Town foresees the following RFP schedule:

6 May 2019 RFP issued  
16 May 2019 Questions from Respondents Due  
31 May 2019 Answers to Respondent Questions Posted  
7 June 2019 at noon Deadline for the Town to Receive Responses

### 2.1. Submission and Deadline.

Please submit responses electronically to [katzvolenik@gmail.com](mailto:katzvolenik@gmail.com) or in a sealed envelope to the Town of Penobscot, Board of Selectmen at the address below. Please mark the outside of the envelope with the label, “Town of Penobscot Broadband RFP.” Responses may be mailed to:

Town of Penobscot  
PO Box 4  
Penobscot ME 04476

or delivered by hand or via FedEx or UPS to the Town Office at 1 Southern Bay Rd. Responses must be received no later than noon on June 7, 2019.

### 2.2 Content and Questions.

Respondents should provide the Proposals in accordance with requirements in Section 7. Responses will not be considered final or binding; however, respondents are strongly encouraged to submit Proposals that could be used as a basis for negotiating a binding agreement.

Potential respondents are encouraged to submit questions in writing to: Joel Katz, [katzvolenik@gmail.com](mailto:katzvolenik@gmail.com).

Questions must be received no later than 5:00 P.M. on May 16 2019. The Town will make a best effort to post answers to written questions at least one week prior to the RFP deadline.

2.3 Selection Process.

The Town will evaluate the responses to this RFP and select one or more of the Responders for continued consideration, including in-person presentations, meetings and discussions. After an initial review and evaluation of each of the proposals, the offerers submitting the most highly rated proposals may be invited for interviews prior to final selection, to further elaborate on their proposals. The Town reserves the right to award a contract without holding interviews, in the event the written proposals provide a clear preference on the basis of the criteria described. No agreement with the Town is in effect until both parties have signed a contract.

Evaluation Criteria Item	Points Possible
Project Understanding and Approach.	25
Respondent’s Experience Building Similar Network.	15
Respondent’s Regulatory Plan.	10
Respondent’s Timeline to Completion.	15
Documentation.	10
Funding Assistance.	<u>25</u>
TOTAL.	100

**3. Background.**

The Town of Penobscot has a population of 1200 according to the 2010 US Census with approximately 850 sites on approximately 60 miles of public and private roads. The population is overwhelmingly full-time residents. In addition to the school and town hall, other anchor institutions include: two houses of worship, the Penobscot Community School (grades K-8), the town hall, fire department and post office. The Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) provides 100 mbps symmetrical service to the Penobscot School. Local businesses include: numerous family farms, a year-round convenience grocery store, two seasonal eateries, seasonal vacation rentals, and home-based businesses including timber harvesting, jewelry and woodworking, art galleries, gift shop, pottery shop, computer services, video production, and other businesses.

Many Penobscot residents are self-employed and rely on internet capability to conduct their businesses. Providing broadband internet access will help ensure their success and will also help to attract new residents. Broadband can also extend the “shoulder seasons” by enticing seasonal residents and visitors to come earlier and stay longer, which will extend the time they contribute to the Town. Both year-round and seasonal residents exhibit a creative resourcefulness that makes Penobscot a rich place to live and work. To sustain this close-knit, year-round Town, surrounded by natural beauty, and, proud of its marine heritage, Penobscot has identified the need for reliable, high-speed internet for attracting and retaining young families and their business aspirations.

**4. Overall Town Goals.**

The Town seeks reliable, high-speed internet service that has an affordable subscription price. The internet service must accommodate the future uploading needs including but not limited to: municipal and Telehealth facilities including, video conferencing and database sharing. All premises in the Town should be able to access the network at consistent speeds, and should have reasonable assurance that advertised speeds paid for will consistently match realized speeds. Internet service packages must be affordable for the different tiers of service. The Broadband System must be capable of being upgraded to faster speeds as technology improves and demand increases.

The Town's current population needs Internet service for applications ranging from email to business operations and telecommuting. The Town's students require broadband speeds to complete assignments at home and in school. Broadband will help support and potentially expand Telehealth access.

Additionally, town and home-based business, are poorly served by substandard Internet connections. In addition to serving the needs of the current population, broadband internet will attract new families and businesses to the Town and continue to support the school's future viability.

In sum, current needs are poorly served and the long-range vision seriously jeopardized because of the lack of broadband. The envisioned Broadband System will provide fiber infrastructure to entire Town including fiber to residential connections, and operate a fast, reliable, and affordable network that will serve for at least 30 years

#### **5. Broadband System Requirements.**

The broadband system must:

- 5.1 Provide capacity for a minimum 25/25 mpbs (megabits per second down/upload speeds)
- 5.2 Provide a service level at with a 99% reliability as a yearly average.
- 5.3 Designed and built for at least 30 years.
- 5.4 Provide subscription tiers of service at 25/25 mbps, 100/100 mbps and 1,000/1,000 mbps.
- 5.5 Directly connect to the three-ring binder (fiber internet) so that each subscriber in the Town communicates directly to the three-ring binder
- 5.6 Provide fiber infrastructure to every public utility pole (phone and/or electric) allowing for potential access throughout the entire Town.

#### **Business Model.**

The Broadband System will be designed, built and operated through a public/private partnership between the Provider and the Town. The Town anticipates contributing funds to the total cost of the



project up to \$1 million to be obtained through local taxes and funding opportunities at the private, county, state and federal levels.

Town will not contribute to the yearly operating costs of the broadband system. The provider will provide the remaining portions of the cost to design, build and operate the broad band system using revenues from the Town subscribers monthly service charges and connection fees. The ISP will be expected to bill individual customers.

While the Town is more interested in a public/private partnership, it may be advantageous for the network to be owned by the Town in order to access additional funding sources. The Town would consider responses that propose variations on this model including, but not limited to, acquiring the network at some point in the future, as/if funding sources allow.

The Town also proposes considering an open-access network although if the network is not owned by the Town, it would not be required to be open-access. The Town entertains responses that propose variations on this model including, but not limited to, limiting access at the time of relinquishing the network, as/if funding sources allow.

The Town proposes that the provider own the risk of operating the network. The provider will include software upgrades as part of the project in order for internet service provided to meet the objective described. The provider will upgrade or replace hardware as necessary to ensure that the longevity objective is met.

**7. Proposals Requirements.**

7.1 Please include all relevant supporting materials within the proposal document.

7.2 Please include any additional proposals you would like to share within the appropriate sections (below) of your response. These may include:

- Any outcomes or conditions you consider to be essential or strongly desired in a potential partnership.
- Ways in which your participation could provide value to the Town.
- Any other Proposals that you believe the Town should consider.

7.3 Respondent(s) must submit a cover letter signed by an authorized representative of the entity. The cover letter must include the following:

- A concise summary of the response to the RFP.
- The legal name of the entity, its headquarters address, its principal place of business, its legal form (i.e. corporation, joint venture, limited partnership, etc.).
- The name, address, email address and telephone number(s) of the principal contact(s) for all communications pertaining to the RFP.

7.4 Please describe your company, including:

- How long the company has been in operation.
- How long the company has provided internet service.
- The approximate number of internet customers you serve.
- The approximate number of employees in the company.
- Where the company headquarters is located.

- Where any additional field offices are located.
- Growth of the company over the last 3 years.
- Technical, managerial and operational experience of the team, highlighting any key members as appropriate to this project.

7.5 Please describe at least one past project which has provided reliable high-speed internet service to a rural area. This may include building a new network or use of an existing network. In your description of past performance, please list:

- The number of premises served.
- Description of the physical environment (e.g., density of premises, terrain).
- Description of available speeds at premises.
- Description of the technology employed.
- Timeline of deployment and date of completion.
- Project size (e.g., subscribers and cost).
- Customer (Town/client) contact Proposals (name, title, phone, email, physical address), and two references with contact Proposals.
- The minimum take rate

7.6 Please describe the current services you now provide, including:

- Overall description of services.
- Business internet services and features.
- Geographic areas where services are provided.
- Speed tiers offered.
- Take rates for your services broken out by speed tiers.
- Pricing, packaging and bundling of services.
- Technologies and equipment employed.

7.7 Customer Installations. Describe how you typically build, manage and maintain customer drops. For example, do you outsource this or manage it in-house?

7.8 Please describe how you currently provide customer service and market to your subscribers:

- How customer service is handled for business and non-business accounts.
- Whether these services are in-house or out-sourced.
- What approaches and systems are used to trouble-shoot and resolve customer issues.
- Your billing and collections system, including payment options available to subscribers.
- How you market to and recruit new business and non-business subscribers.
- Your retention rates for business and non-business subscribers.

7.9 Respondents are invited to propose service levels that they deem technologically and economically achievable; however, respondents should propose solutions that provide the minimum speeds and other requirements.

Please comment on providing network reliability, network operator service, and responsiveness. Respondents should propose mechanisms to ensure that service providers live up to a reasonable service life agreement. Please demonstrate understanding of the longevity requirement.

7.10 The respondent should prepare a detailed technical approach for meeting the objective. This should include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Necessary hardware.
- High-level geographical and topological network schematics.
- Options for backhaul.
- Quality assurance plan.
- Implementation plan.
- Possible upgrade paths for future service improvement.

7.11 Please identify any infrastructure assets or requirements for taking this technical approach:

- Do you have fiber or other assets in the area that could be leveraged?
- What would be feasible Points of Interconnection with your network and the existing networks in the area?
- What options are available to meet the requirements you've identified for taking this technical approach?
- What other key technical considerations do you wish to highlight for the Town that could improve outcomes under your participation?

**8. Procurement Strategy.** After the proposals are submitted, reviewed and one or more respondents are selected for further consideration, the Town plans to offer an incentive for residents to commit to being a Broadband System subscriber in the form of collecting advance deposits for future service connections. The Town will also seek citizen approval to supply up to \$1 million from taxes and from grants. Based on the outcome of these efforts, the town will call for a binding best-and-final offer(s) to design, build and operate the Penobscot Broadband Internet System from the selected respondents. Although it is the intention and plan of the Town to proceed with establishing a public-private partnership for implementing a project that meets Town goals, the Town reserves the right to discontinue these efforts based on the responses to this RFP or changes in circumstances.

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE: Could be on letterhead.

Dear Internet Service Providers and other interested firms:

The Town of \_\_\_\_\_ is pursuing broadband infrastructure to provide high-quality internet service this \_\_\_\_\_ County community. Below is a Request for Information that will begin the process of finding internet service providers or other partnering firms who wish to design a broadband network and who also willing to construct the network as a potential next phase.

To retain current businesses, attract new ones, and further incentivize tourism, all while improving the daily life of our year-round population, (town/city) has identified the need for reliable and consistent high-speed connections to our community. (Could add something about your community and the what benefits connecting to broadband could potentially bring).

(Town/City) is exploring all options for broadband. One option seems to be a public-private partnership with an internet service provider, but we are open to all possible solutions. In (year), the Town voters approved \$\_\_\_\_\_ to match a planning grant for the design phase. For implementation of a broadband project, we continue to investigate sources of funding at the private, local, county, state and federal levels. With a strong downtown and working waterfront, providing residents and visitors with an authentic Maine experience, we are well poised to achieve our goal of sustaining a year-round community for a long time to come.

The committee anticipates receiving responses by (Month day, year), and having an engineered design completed by (month day, year).

Please direct your questions about the project to:  
(Contact info here)

REQUESTING ENTITY  
Request for Information  
NAME OF PROJECT

## 1 Introduction

The REQUESTING ENTITY, hereafter referred to as “the ENTITY”, is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to obtain information about providing an engineered design for broadband infrastructure to serve this community located in NAME County.

The Town seeks information in order to help determine the interest of internet service providers (ISP) or other firms, hereinafter also referred to as “respondents,” to design infrastructure for bringing broadband to the community. This objective is further described in Section 3 of this RFI.

The ultimate goal is to pursue a broadband solution that provides BROADBAND GOAL SUMMARIZED, which will COMMUNITY BENEFITS SUMMARIZED. The vision of REQUESTING ENTITY IS. Improving internet connectivity will HELP MEET VISION HOW.

This RFI further describes the community and the objective for which information is requested, in Section 3. A business model is proposed in Section 4. Responses should address all information requested in Section 5. The process and timeline for responding to this RFI is outlined in Section 2.

## 2 Response Process

The following RFI schedule is anticipated:

DATE	RFI Issued
WITHIN 2 WEEKS	Optional Conference Call
WITHIN 6 WEEKS	Deadline for Responses to be Received

Responses must be received no later than TIME on DATE. Please submit responses as a pdf emailed to EMAIL, or in a sealed envelope marked to: ADDRESS

All responses will be carefully considered and respondents will be notified shortly of next steps. The target date for a decision is DATE. The right to discontinue these efforts, based on the responses to this RFI or other changes in circumstances, is reserved. We encourage potential respondents to join an optional conference call for questions and answers with the Committee. This call will take place at TIME on DATE. Please indicate interest by emailing the address above.

Respondents interested in designing a broadband network should provide the information requested in Section 5. Responses will not be considered final or binding; however, respondents are strongly encouraged to submit information that could be used as a basis for negotiating an agreement. By seeking an engineered design from an ISP, we are able to entertain the possibility of said ISP partnering with us to construct and operate the network, for delivery of broadband service to this community. Other firms are welcome to respond, and are encouraged to provide information about partnering with ISP(s). Responses to this RFI will help the Town determine its next steps, which may involve either a bid process or the selection of a respondent for meetings where the potential for a public-private partnership will be explored.

### **3 Background and Objectives**

VISION (WHAT). FOCUS (HOW).

#### **3.1 Community Background**

POPULATION. NUMBER OF RESIDENCES AND BUSINESSES. SEASONALITY. DEVELOPMENT CONCENTRATION, NEIGHBORHOODS, ETC.

Anchor institutions include:

- US Post Office
- Public Library
- Community Center
- Town Hall
- Medical Center
- MAJOR BUSINESS
- OTHER COMMERCE OR USE RELATED TO BROADBAND

DESCRIBE COMMERCE. DESCRIBE OTHER TYPICAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO BROADBAND.

PAST COMMUNITY SURVEYS AND BROADBAND NEEDS OF VARIOUS SECTORS. LEAST SERVED AREA(S).

PROBLEM STATEMENT. DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT INTERNET AND PROVIDERS.

GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION. LIMITATIONS SUCH AS FERRY ACCESS. DETAILS ABOUT ROAD MILES, UTILITY POLE NUMBERS AND OWNERSHIP. TOPOGRAPHY DETAILS LIKE LEDGE OR LINES OF SIGHT.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN. COMMITMENT OR DELEGATION OF BROADBAND.

### **3.2 Broadband Goals**

OVERALL GOAL BEING PURSUED. BEST CASE SOLUTION. ANY PHASING OR FOCUS POINTS? DESIRED LEVEL OF SERVICE AND COST? We are open to infrastructure designs that are economically feasible and meet the goals of this project.

For the purposes of this RFI, “broadband” means internet service that meets or exceeds the national average internet speeds (i.e., 30/10), and infrastructure that can support greater capacity and speeds (i.e., 100/100). We anticipate weighing the cost of broadband solutions with the longevity expected, and will entertain proposals that provide much higher speeds now or in the future (i.e., 1000/1000). The network must have the capacity for ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED. CAPACITY NEEDS AROUND SATURATION OR OTHER CURRENT BOTTLENECKS. The network must have the capacity to ensure internet service is consistent and reliable. TECHNOLOGY INCLUSIVE?

### **3.3 Project Timeline**

The goal is to bring broadband to the community by the SEASON AND YEAR. POSSIBLE PHASING OR FOCUS POINTS? In pursuit of this goal, we expect to obtain an engineered design by DATE.

MORE ON POSSIBLE PHASING?

NEED FOR, OR TO AVOID, COMMUNITY SURVEYING.

OTHER LIMITATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR TIMELINE.

## 4 Financial Model

For the design phase, HOW THE ENGINEERING WILL PHASE BE SUPPORTED. SPECIFICS ABOUT FUNDING for an engineered design of a broadband network. It may be advantageous for the cost of the engineered design to be rolled into the cost of building the broadband network. We would like the chosen respondent to be available after the engineered design completion date for presenting the design in community meetings.

By seeking an engineered design from an ISP or other firm, THE ENTITY expects to obtain a broadband infrastructure design that said respondent or other ISP may use to construct and operate a network, for delivery of broadband service to the community. Otherwise, THE ENTITY anticipates using the engineered design to pursue the next phase of obtaining broadband. RECEPTIVENESS TO CREATIVE SOLUTIONS. POTENTIAL PPP? ANTICIPATED COST OF INFRASTRUCTURE BUILDOUT. FUTURE WILLINGNESS TO PURSUE SOURCES OF FUNDING.

ANY ACTIVITIES THE ENTITY IS TAKING ON, OR WOULD TAKE ON DURING OR AFTER THE DESIGN PHASE, AND WHAT PARTNERS ARE INVOLVED.

COMMUNITY SURVEYING OR TAKE RATE MODELING: IF NEEDED, THEN AS PART OF OR AFTER DESIGN PHASE?

Further, the Island Institute has committed to funding efforts to improve digital literacy; this should help ensure a high subscription rate, and we do not anticipate that the design would address digital literacy. INTEREST IN RESPONDENT ADDRESSING AFFORDABILITY OR OTHER DIGITAL INCLUSION FOCI.

THE ENTITY will entertain responses that propose variations on this model. For the eventual buildout, we are investigating sources of funding, at the private, local, county, state and federal levels.



## 5 Information Requested

Please provide information requested in an organized and formatted manner, by following the outline of this Section 5, in order to help facilitate the review. Please do not refer to attachments or other materials or resources; instead, please include any additional information you would like to share within the appropriate sections of your response. This additional information may include:

- Any outcomes or conditions you consider to be essential or strongly desired in a potential partnership that you would like to highlight
- Any particular ways that your participation could provide value to the island
- Any information that you believe we should consider

The respondent must submit a cover letter signed by an authorized representative of the entity. The cover letter must include a concise summary of the response to the RFI; the legal name of the entity, its headquarters address, its principal place of business, its legal form (i.e. corporation, joint venture, limited partnership, etc.); and the names, addresses, emails, and telephone numbers of the principal contact(s) for all communications pertaining to this RFI.

### 5.1 Company Description

Please describe your company, by providing the following information or experience:

- How long the company has been in operation
- The location of the field office closest to the island
- Technical, managerial and operational experience of the team, highlighting any key members as appropriate to this project
- How long the company has engineered internet infrastructure networks
- How long the company has constructed broadband networks
- How long the company has provided internet service
- The number of communities you serve
- The number of internet customers you serve and your retention rates
- How the company typically builds, manages, and maintains customer drops
- How customer service and trouble-shooting is handled
- Any contract terminations and the reasons why
- Growth of the company in recent years
- How services are marketed and customers are recruited
- Services offered, including but not limited to, business and residential internet services and features, speeds offered and other measures of internet quality, subscription/take rates for your services, seasonal or bundling services offered, tiers of service and pricing provided, and technologies and equipment used
- The payment options available to customers and how billing and collection is handled

## 5.2 Example Project

Please describe at least one past project where you have engineered designs of broadband networks for a rural area. Preference will be given to an example project which has successfully provided high-quality internet service to a rural area. In your description of past performance, please list:

- The number of premises covered and served
- Description of the physical environment (e.g., density of premises, terrain)
- Description of the network capacity (speeds, reliability, etc.)
- Description of the technology proposed and deployed
- Timeline of engineering and date of completion of the design
- Time period between completion of the design to completion of deployment
- Cost of the engineered design, and whether it was rolled into the cost of building the network
- Cost of the network deployed
- Number of internet customers
- The customer (community/client) contact information (name, title, phone, email, physical address)
- Key lessons learned that would be relevant for this RFI
- Two additional references with contact information

## 5.3 Proposed Project

Please demonstrate understanding of the community background when providing information:

- How the project would meet the broadband goals described in Section 3 above
- The estimated timeline, including a proposed start date and a response to completion date for an engineered design proposed in Section 3 above
- Whether the engineered design(s) would target speeds of 30/10, 100/100, and/or 1000/1000 mbps
- Whether the cost of said design(s) would vary based on the proposed capacity of the network or speeds supported by the network
- The estimated cost for the engineered design(s)

The respondent is invited to propose service levels that they deem technologically and economically achievable; however, respondents should propose project(s) that at least meet the minimum speeds and other broadband goals described in Section 3.

## 5.4 Design Content

The respondent should prepare a detailed description of what the engineered design(s) would include. This should include details on what would be included for the following components and how these components will be addressed during design work:

- Synthesis of current assets and potential leverage points
- Consideration of possible bottlenecks in on-island and/or backhaul infrastructure, and how the proposed broadband infrastructure design(s) would address or avoid these bottlenecks
- Feasible points of interconnection with existing networks in the area, and other backhaul options
- Geographical and topographical network schematics, and an easy to use topo map for community meetings
- Necessary hardware and facilities
- Comparison of pole-attached, in ground, and on ground deployment
- Implementation plan, including any plans for phasing the build-out
- The potential service levels (speeds and reliability) offered by the designed network
- Financial Plan: One-time cost of infrastructure & implementation, minimum annual revenue required for operation, and expected annual operational and maintenance costs
- Quality assurance plan both on the design and potential construction/operation, including comment on providing network reliability, operator service, and responsiveness to system issues
- The capacity of the designed network, including potential for increased service levels after the initial network is built
- Other options for future service or network upgrades

## 5.5 Proposed Financial Model

Please comment on the proposed financial model in Section 4 above, including availability and willingness after the completion date for community presentations, but please do not include EXCLUSIONS as part of the response to this RFI. If there are any variations or exceptions that you would require to participate, please identify and explain them. The respondent is invited to state high-level terms for this financial model. Please provide any knowledge or experience of operating this financial model.